

SAR History 1876 +”. **Feb 16, 2019**

Talk presented by Mike Hutchins to the GWC of the WA SAR on 20 April 2019

I began thinking about this topic in a conversation with Dr Dale Harshman shortly after he was elected President of our chapter and I was elected Historian. I reflected on the need I had as a new member to know more about the past of not only the George Washington Chapter but also SAR in general. More recently, I found that President General Alter message from the current SAR Magazine of “What We Do Matters” states my message more succinctly than I.

I originally titled this talk “SAR History 1876 +” while the formal establishment of the Sons of the American Revolution came some years later. I wanted to go back to the roots of our Society and briefly discussing our heritage I want to share successes of our chapter and encourage you to continue to contribute to our history through our current activities and actions. The George Washington Chapter of the Washington State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (GW WA-SSAR) was chartered January 2013 at The Calico Cupboard Old Town Café and Bakery, Mount Vernon. Thirteen charter members and Compatriots from the State Society previously met in organizational meetings the prior year

Let me share an article from the NY Times 25 July 1876.

Reference article

As we note in 1876 there were many celebrations to commemorate the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. As part of this patriotic fervor, a group of men in the San Francisco, California, area who were descendants of patriots involved in the American Revolution, formed an organization called the Sons of Revolutionary Sires. Their objective was to have a fraternal and civic society to salute those men and women who pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to the battle for independence from Great Britain. The Sons of Revolutionary Sires desired to keep alive their ancestors’ story of patriotism and courage in the belief that it is a universal one of man’s struggle against tyranny - a story that would inspire and sustain succeeding generations when they would have to defend and extend our freedoms. Note Sons of Rev Sires Booklet in our chapter

library.

Some twelve years later, out of this organization grew the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution organized on April 30, 1889, on the one hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of George Washington as our nation's first president. We have used the acronym SAR to identify ourselves for over one hundred and thirty years. The SAR was conceived as a fraternal and civic society composed of lineal descendants of the patriots who wintered at Valley Forge, signed the Declaration of Independence, fought in the battles of the American Revolution, served in the Continental Congress, or otherwise supported the cause of American Independence. The National Society was chartered by an Act of the United States Congress on June 9, 1906. The charter was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, who was also a member of the Empire State Society, SAR. The charter authorizes the granting of charters to societies of the various states and territories and authorizes the state-level societies to charter chapters within their borders. **Federal Legislation** then established a federal charter for the National Society, SAR.

Other Hereditary, Patriotic and Historical organizations were established as well, such as The Daughters of the American Revolution and The Sons of the Revolution. (The Society of the Cincinnati of course was established in 1783 with a limited membership scope.)

Originally Oregon and Washington comprised a single society formed 06 Jun 1891. When it was determined sufficient members were located in Washington the two societies separated, with Washington State Society being officially established 17 June 1895. More can be found on the WA-SSAR website.

Note WA/OR 1895 Yearbook

Compatriot Gary Gray's great grandfather, William Henry Eades, was a charter member with WA SSAR number 21, transferring in from the Oregon and Washington Society.

In Washington State, the Spokane Chapter was organized 1 February 1894 with Seattle following 25 September the same year. In Tacoma the Alexander Hamilton Chapter was founded 20 February 1896. Yakima Compatriots Formed the George Washington Chapter April 21, 1914. These Chapters were soon followed by Hoquiam in 1915, Olympia in 1916 and The General George Washington Chapter in Mount Vernon sometime around 1927. Disbanding around 1954 it was reestablished as the General Washington Chapter 30 October 1979, disbanding sometime during the 1980's.

Chapters that also ceased to exist are Hoquiam, Olympia, and Walla Walla. There

are currently eight chapters in Washington State. Spokane No 1, Seattle, Alexander Hamilton (Tacoma), Cascade Centennial, (Bellevue), John Paul Jones (Bremerton), Fort Vancouver (Clark County), George Washington (Mt Vernon) and Mid – Columbia (Tri-Cities, Yakima, Walla Walla).

During the October 2012 meeting I mentioned earlier it was agreed that the new chapter would be “christened “ The George Washington Chapter as proposed by Chair John Ernest. According to the meeting minutes there was unanimous agreement after extensive debate. Thus the George Washington Chapter WA-SSAR was reformed during this meeting in the fall of 2012 providing Skagit, Island, San Juan and Whatcom County Compatriots a more convenient gathering opportunity than traveling to Seattle.

Official recognition was bestowed on 12 Jan 2013 at The Calico Cupboard Old Town Café and Bakery, Mount Vernon. Many Compatriots forming the chapter were long time SAR members who felt there would be more opportunity for growth as a number of WA –SSAR members lived in the are that were “at large or affiliated with distant chapters. The Charter, currently lost, is signed by the founding members.

In February it was decided to relocate to a site with better acoustics. March, April and May meetings were held at Denny’s in Mount Vernon then Bob’s Burger and Brew from September 2013 through April 2014 when it was decided to move to the Farmhouse where we currently meet the third Saturday of each month except June, July, Aug and on the 2nd Saturday in December.

The first year saw the Chapter establish its monthly book raffle, established responsibilities and began searching for Award nominations. Chapter Awards include five flag appreciation stars, one Partner in Patriotism certificate and a Proclamation from the City of Mount Vernon.

When you check out our excellent website you see that over the previous four and half years the chapter has presented twelve Flag awards, nominated an additional Flag Award for recognition at the state level and awarded by WA-SSAR, one Fire and Safety award, nine Jr ROTC Awards, two Law Enforcement Awards, five Knight Essay Awards including this past years State Winner and one Good Citizenship Award. Twelve Compatriots have been inducted into the NSSAR Veterans Service Corps. The Chapter has received recognition for many chapter activities.

Our membership continues to grow with thirty-four Compatriots proudly pursuing our goals of promoting Patriotism, History and Education. In this light I want to challenge each of us to give considerable thought to what we might individually do to improve what we do in our efforts here that tomorrow will be our history.

One thought that I want to suggest and conclude this presentation is for you to place your Patriot Ancestors biographical information on the national SAR website if you have not already done so. This should be more than just his service or pension. Include as much biographical information that you can prove, such as birth, marriage, children, occupation and burial.

Currently several Compatriots have yet to submit a bio on our chapter website. Remember in the words of our President General “Weather you are a color guard member who teaches students or commemorates a historic battle to the public or a chapter members arranging for speakers, you are impacting and changing the lives of those present”.

Thank You