

## HISTORY

Upon a petition dated 13 October 1894 for the purpose of organizing a Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Illinois, the General Society of Colonial Wars meeting in New York City granted the request of this petition on 12 November 1894. The sixteen petitioners were: Messrs. Seymour Morris, Captain Philip Reade, U.S.A., Lieutenant John T. Thompson, U.S.A., William Ruggles Tucker, John Smith Sargent, Lyman Dresser Hammond, Edward McKinstry Teall, George Francis Bissell, Frederick Hampden Winston, Edward Milton Adams, Charles Cromwell, Rodman Carse Pell, Samuel Eberly Gross, Henry Sherman Boutell, Josiah Lewis Lombard, and Robert Patterson Benedict. The Secretary of State of Illinois issued a Charter on 13 October 1894 for the said Society to Messrs. Seymour Morris, John Smith Sargent, and William Ruggles Tucker.

The First Court of the Charter Members was held in Parlor 23 of the Grand Pacific Hotel on 7 December 1894, the 274th anniversary of "Ye First Encounter." The Charter from the General Society of Colonial Wars for the formation of the Illinois Society, and also the Charter from the State of Illinois were read. The Constitution and By-Laws of the Illinois Society were then submitted for adoption, and read section by section, and article by article, and adopted as a whole. The Chairman of the Meeting then called upon Captain Philip Reade, U.S.A., to take the Chair as the First Governor of the Illinois Society.

On 19 December 1894, the 219th anniversary of "The Great Swamp Fight" in King Philip's War, the first Court was held at the Union League Club. In 1895 the Council met eight times and approved for membership seventy-five applicants. By the time of the Second Annual Court there were seventy members in the Illinois Society, and at the Third Annual Court membership stood at 109. The Fourth Annual Court saw one hundred members present, and from that point onwards the Illinois Society was a stable institution.

Until about 1900 an Annual Directory was produced by the Illinois Society, with each member's photograph on the left hand page, with his lineage following. When the Annual Directory reached 300 pages, the production of this type of Directory was discontinued for a more simple form that appeared periodically.

Prior to World War I there was a period of years when only one or two meetings were held each year and membership became greatly reduced. By December of 1915 meetings, and applications for membership, increased so that a steady membership was maintained at 120-130 despite deaths, resignations, and military service during the War. Contributions to the Fatherless Children of France were made, and a list of fourteen children was given to the Society indicating those receiving the aid.

In 1918 our Library of books was moved from the offices of a member to the Crerar Library. The first contribution to the Newberry Library was *The Index of Ancestors* of 1922, and during that year the entire library of books of the Illinois Society was moved from storage to the Newberry Library on loan. This began a relationship with that Library that continues to this day.

On 14 May 1925 the Secretary of the Illinois Society was authorized by the Gentlemen of the Council to create a platinum star with the Illinois Society seal in the center of the star to be worn by Governor of the Illinois Society. This emblem of authority is still worn by each succeeding Governor on formal occasions. On the same date arrangements were made to establish a scholarship for colonial research at the University of Chicago, which was continuously renewed every year until 1945. It became a grant for research assistantships in 1932, which was matched by the University. In 1942, there being no male scholars available, the research assistantship was extended to one Miss Minnie Margaret Adams.

The years of World War II saw a steady decline in membership, reaching its nadir in 1946 with sixty-three members. From that point onward there has been a steady upward trend, and on 22 October 1970 the Council of the Illinois Society unanimously passed a resolution that "the sense of the Council is that its membership be limited to 200 persons." Since then it has fluctuated between 188 and 210 members, plus forty-nine life members.

From 1945 on, the Illinois Society has attempted to revitalize, or to assist, the moribund Societies in the states of Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. It has accepted members on a non-resident basis, and then assisted in the activation, or reactivation, of interested Societies. Currently Minnesota members associate with those of Wisconsin, and belong to that Society. Indiana and Iowa seem to have totally disappeared. In 1956 at the General Society Meeting in New York Charters were given to Alabama and Texas Societies. The Illinois Society was deeply involved in this action, and received a Letter of Commendation from the General Society for the assistance given.

On 6 December 1978 the Annual Court, held at the Chicago Club, had an outstanding illustrated presentation by Mr. Clyde A. Sanders, President of the American Colloid Company on "History Cast in Metal." It covered the development of the foundry industry in the United States from the Saugus Works in Massachusetts, in which the Winthrop family had an interest, to the foundries operated by the Washington family in Virginia, Lawrence Washington being its ironmaster. Mr. Sanders pointed out that the Revolution was delayed a few years until the foundrymen had cast a sufficient number of cannon and other armaments, and materiel necessary to conduct military operations. He also stated that whenever Washington was in desperate straits it was the foundrymen to whom he turned for help. Valley Forge and the house he occupied while there, was actually the possession of the Valley Furnace (foundry) and Forge.

Spring of 1979 saw the Illinois Society sponsoring a seminar in conjunction with the Newberry Library and Northwestern University on "The Transfer of Old World Cultures to America, 1607-1700." The year 1982 brought a renewal of the commitment to support Colonial Research at the Newberry Library and Northwestern University. In addition, the Illinois Society gave the Winnetka Library over 400 of its books for its historical records and research department. 1985 was the end of a period of grants to the Newberry Library and Northwestern University. Subsequently, Professor Timothy Breen of Northwestern has been awarded a grant for a book he is writing on the colonial period in the United States. In 1990 several students of Northwestern University were extended grants from the Illinois Society for study and research among original records in England.

In January 1991 the Gentlemen of the Council approved financing the microfilming of some 85,000 pages of Colonial and Revolutionary records held by the Virginia Historical Society, and in danger of crumbling to pieces. It basically covers all of the record involving the Illinois County of Virginia, and the military action of the Illinois Rangers of the Virginia Line during the Revolution, including muster rolls, court martials, payrolls, sick rolls, all legal matters, etc., of the Illinois Country. This will-result in some 1,000 rolls of microfilm. The Illinois Society of the Sons of the American Revolution are also joining with the Illinois Society of Colonial Wars in this project, so that two sets of these microfilms can be made, one set to go the Newberry Library, and one set to the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, Illinois.

We find that the General Society has been to Chicago for several Meetings and Triennial Meetings: 1933, 1957, 1972, and 1989.