



HISTORY OF THE LEE CHAPTER

On Saturday April 5th, 1924, a meeting was held in the home of Mrs. Virginia Bitzer Hirst for the purpose of organizing a chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Mrs. N. H. Heaton chairman of the Fourth District of Virginia Division & President of Leesburg Chapter, along with Miss Nannie McIntosh Treasurer of Leesburg Chapter came to help in organize the new chapter. The naming of the chapter was one of the first items on the agenda. The chapter was first named in honor of Col. E.V. White of Loudoun County. The dues of the organization to were to be one dollar a year.

The following officers were elected for one Year,

- President - Mrs. Virginia Bitzer Hirst
- 1.st Vice President - Mrs. J. V. Nichols
- 2nd Vice President - Mrs. J. B. Hackley
- Recording Secretary - Mrs. Raymond Case
- Corresponding Secretary - Miss Fannie Reid
- Custodian - Mrs. Terry Hirst

The 13 Charter Members were as follows:

Mrs. Sarah Walter Case - R.D. of Frank G. Walter of ³⁹⁾ Va. Battalion
Mrs. Nan Brewster Cornwell - R.G. of Alphonse Brewster 9th Arkansas Inf.
Miss Annie Gregg - Niece of Henry Gregg of 35th Va. Battalion
Mrs. Bessie Millner Hackley - Application is missing
Miss Elizabeth Heaton - R.G. of Capt. Nathaniel R. Heaton 8th Va. Inf.
Mrs. Virginia Bitzer Hirst - Conrad Bitzer of the Co. A. 8^o Virginia
Mrs. Katherine Fox Hirst - R.G. of John Henry Fravel of Chew's Battery
Mrs. Catherine Brown Hirst - R.D. of W. Brown of Co. H. 2nd Va. Battalion
Miss Amy Howell - R.D. of Benton Dallas Howell of 35th Va. Battalion
Mrs. Delia Ratcliffe Merchant- R.D. of James E Ratcliffe of 49th Va.
Mrs. Louisa Kilgour Nichols - Neice of Thomas M. Leslie of the 6th Va. Cay.
Miss Fannie Reid - R.G. of Jonas Cornwell of 38th Va. Battalion
Miss Lucile W. Taylor - R. G. of Joseph Osbum 7th Va. Cavalry

On April 14th, 1924, a called meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Virginia B. Hirst for the purpose of changing the name of the chapter. Members voted to call the chapter "Lee". Miss Elizabeth Heaton was elected Historian, and the president

appointed the following committee to write the constitution; Mrs. Lynn Cornwell, Mrs. V. Nichols, Mrs. T.N. Carruthers. It was on this day that the fourteen Charter Members signed their applications to join the Lee Chapter No. 1842. Twelve of the thirteen original applications are held in safe keeping in a Lee Chapter UDC safe deposit box at the BB&T Bank in the Purcellville Shopping Center in Purcellville, Va.

At the June 1924 meeting the new constitution was read by the chairman Mrs. Lynn Cornwell. The constitution was accepted as framed and read. The secretary to record the same in the back of the minute book but not trace of it has been found. On July 14, 1924, the new Lee Chapter Charter was signed by Mrs. Allene Harrold, President General in New York City N.Y.

Our first President, Mrs. Virginia Bitzer Hirst joined the Lee Chapter under her Uncle, Conrad R. Bitzer. Conrad Bitzer enlisted on April 19, 1861 in Loudoun County, under Co. A. 8th Virginia Infantry locally known as the "Blue Ridge Mountain Boys". He was elected as First Lieutenant on April 26, 1862 and resigned on September 30, 1862, due to a medical disability. President Virginia Bitzer Hirst was born on September 13, 1857 and was 66 1/2 years of age when she was first elected President.

The following year of 1925 the meetings were held in the Veteran of Foreign Wars room. The charge was one dollar a month and to see that it was to be kept clean.

The Charter that was read in June 1924 was framed in September 1925. ***(The original Charter was donated by Lee Chapter President Dot Rickard to the Loudoun Museum in Leesburg, Virginia.*** In August 2006, President Becky J. Fleming removed the Charter from the Museum for restoration. The Charter was in good condition but was no longer in a frame).

On January 19, 1932, Lee Chapter presented a picture of Robert E. Lee to the Purcellville School. The inscription on the print reads:

"This picture of General Robert E. Lee was presented to the Purcellville Public School by the ladies of the Lee Chapter United Daughters of the Confederacy on January 19, 1932"

Somewhere over the years the picture was sold and it turned up in 1987 in an antique store in Harrisonburg Va. It was purchased by collectors Ronnie and Linda Ogburn of Mount Olive, Ala. The couple found the inscription on the back of the photo and wanted to learn more about it and contacted Lee Chapter President Dot Rickard for more information. Dot wrote the couple and sent them copies of the 1932-chapter minutes which told the story. A copy of this letter was stored at Balch Library as part of the Lee Chapter archives. This is where Loudoun County's local historian, Eugene Scheel learned of the photo's fate and eventually contacted the Ogburn's and purchased the print for \$75.00. In September 2004, Scheel surprised the Lee Chapter members during a luncheon held at the Loudoun Country Club in Purcellville (in which he was the key speaker) by returning the print to the

Chapter. The print was refurbished with new framing, matting & acid free backing. The inscription can now be seen in the front matting.

(September 2006 - The print is currently in temporary housing at the home of Lee Chapter President Becky J. Fleming of Round Hill, Va.)

On April 4th & 5th 1933 Lee Chapter entertained the Fourth District Convention (Conference). At this meeting we had two different distinguished speakers, Dr. William Dodd Prof. of History at University of Chicago, and Gen. Billy Mitchell of the U.S. Army.

In 1949 we entertained the District Convention (Conference) again. On May 18, 1951, Lee Chapter presented to the Loudoun County Hospital a mahogany hall table in memory of John E. Benedum, the last confederate soldier in our town.

In June 2006 we restored Loudoun's Confederate Monument located on the Leesburg Courthouse lawn. Total cost was approximately \$10,000.00. The monument was erected and dedicated by the Loudoun UDC Chapter in May 1908 in honor of Loudoun's Confederate Soldiers.

Lee Chapter Presidents

- Mrs. Virginia Bitzer Hirst
- Mrs. Bernard "Bessie" Hackley
- Mrs. George "Nell" Grove 1963-65
- Mrs. I. Clifton "Eula" Warner 1965-67
- Mrs. C.T. "Marguerite" Potterfield 1967-69
- Miss. Addie Purcell 1969-71
- Mrs. Frank "Esther" Terrill 1971-73
- Mrs. W. P. "Anne" Frazer 1973-77
- Mrs. W. Jasper "Dot" Rickard 1977-2004
- Mrs. Kenneth "Becky" Fleming 2004-

(Portions of this document was obtained from the writings of Bessie M. Hackley. Information from Mrs. Hackley's recollection of the Charter Members was changed and corrected to match original charter and applications.)

*President - Becky Fleming
August 2006*