



Judge Benjamin Harrison Powell
National Society Sons of the American Revolution
President General 1948-1949

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SAR Magazine XLIII-NO-3 January 1949, pp. 122-124

The President-General's Message

COMPATRIOTS:

With bowed heads and heavy hearts we face the necessity of going forward without the aid and assistance of our beloved President General Shaler, who departed this life on the 2nd day of December. Having been closely associated with him in his work for our Society, I fully realize the extent of our loss. It seems irreparable. And, yet he, himself, would have us look forward rather than backward. We must accept the torch which he carried so actively and do our very best to complete, as satisfactorily as possible, the splendid program he had outlined. It shall be my main, and in fact, only ambition, to complete his year with flying colors. To the accomplishment of this end, I pledge the Compatriots everywhere the very best efforts of which I am capable. In all humility, but with a firm resolve, I take over the work. I am one of those who believe that the dead are near us and know what we are doing. I shall be comforted by his spiritual presence at all times. In his going away we have a case where "man proposed but God disposed." He had proposed and commenced a definite program of great value and promise. What was that program? It was, in part, as follows:



In the first place, he said "we must have a large and aggressive membership." No Compatriot, in my memory, ever equaled his record in obtaining new members. It was a real passion with him. We cannot better honor his memory than by adding more new members this year than ever before. Let's make his year the greatest in all our history in this respect. I call upon all Officers and individual Compatriots to exert every effort to obtain new members during the next few months. It would be a very fine thing if each Compatriot could obtain at least one new member.

In the next place, he desired that true Americanism be taught in our schools. He bitterly assailed subversive teachings. We should all aid California and other States in their courageous fights along these lines.

He was a Patriot himself. He enlisted personally in the defense of his country. He sincerely believed in our history and in the observance of our Constitution and Laws. He rejoiced in the celebration of its great days, such as Constitution, Flag, Bill of Rights and I Am An American Day. We should continue to observe these great anniversary occasions.

We will, of course, have other work. We shall strive to execute all of it. But, for the present, I urge, primarily, a completion of Captain Shaler's program.

I am deeply sensible of the great honor conferred upon me. I accept the assignment most humbly and ask God's guidance in my work. No one man or set of men can meet our need. In unison alone is there real strength. I covet and accept the aid and cooperation of every Compatriot. Thank you so much for that help.

BEN H. POWELL, III
President General

Brief Biography of New President General HON. BEN H. POWELL, III

SAR ACTIVITIES

President of Patrick Henry Chapter, Austin, Texas, and of the Texas Society

Vice President General--two years--of South Mississippi District

Chancellor General--three years

Chairman Organization Committee--two years--during which period some 3,500 new members were added to our rolls

Member Executive Committee--three years

Member of Committee on Resolutions and also on Budget and Finance for several years

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

District Judge of Twelfth Judicial District of Texas--five Counties

Judge of Commission of Appeals, a branch of the Supreme Court of Texas

Served seven years on the Court and as its Presiding Judge for four years

Former President of Texas Bar Association

Also served on several important Committees of American Bar Association and is now a member of its House of Delegates

Is also a life member of the American Law Institute and a Commissioner of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws

Is now senior member of the law firm of Powell, Wirtz & Rauhut at Austin

Head of Austin Community Chest for several years

President of United War Chest of Texas (National War Fund) for two years; By reason of successful record, State Legislature met in joint session and passed commendatory resolutions.

For many years has been Chairman of Local Advisory Board of Salvation Army at Austin, during which time some \$100,000 has been invested in its buildings.

Chairman of Board of Stewards of First Methodist Church in Austin for twenty-five years; President of Capitol Area Council of Boy Scouts of America; Director of the American National Bank and also Vice President and Director of the Austin Life Insurance Company

Twenty-five years a member of the Rotary Club; Also a Knight Templar and 32 Degree (KCCH) Scottish Rite Mason

A member of Texas State Historical Society and Texas Fine Arts Association; An active member of Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity, being Chairman of its Local Board of Trustees

Judge Powell married Marian Leigh Rather of Huntsville and they have one son, Lieutenant Colonel Ben H. Powell, IV, who is now President of Patrick Henry Chapter of SAR at Austin.

SAR Magazine XLIV-No-4_April-1949, p. 164

The President-General's Message

COMPATRIOTS:

Since my message in the last MAGAZINE, I have been very actively engaged in the work of our Society. My activities have included extensive travels, the writing of numerous letters, delivering several addresses, sending many telegrams, placing quite a number of long distance calls and caring for much administrative work in connection with National Headquarters. It has proved practically an all-time task, but one I have greatly enjoyed. I am pleased to report that, generally speaking, all officers and committees are functioning most satisfactorily. I am confident the final reports for this fiscal year will be most gratifying to the membership generally.

We had a very interesting and successful meeting of our Executive Committee in Cincinnati on February 18. The Compatriots there arranged a very challenging program and entertained us most royally. The luncheon and banquet in the evening were most enjoyable. Several State Presidents were with us as were several other officers.

It was my pleasure to visit the Massachusetts Society on the same trip and to enjoy their banquet in Boston. On this same trip I visited several Compatriots in New York City. Continuing South, I was the recipient of many courtesies in Baltimore and Washington, D. C. In fact, I was the guest of honor of the Maryland Society on February 22, filling an engagement which had been made some months ago by President General Shaler. The District of Columbia Society had quite an enjoyable luncheon on the same day and I very greatly enjoyed the Compatriots there. As I travel and meet our members I am more and more impressed with the fine qualities of the Compatriots. No more worthy men may be found anywhere, in my judgment.

On my way home, I visited the Jacksonville Chapter in sunny Florida. Had a real good time with the brethren there. By the way, the program for the coming Congress is most promising. I do hope we will have a very large attendance. Let's show our appreciation of the splendid efforts of our Florida Compatriots. You will never regret your trip to Jacksonville.

On another trip, I was entertained most beautifully by several members of the Illinois Society in Chicago.

I am planning a trip to California early in April. If it materializes, I will have travelled from California to Massachusetts and also from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. It has been a great experience,-a privilege I deeply appreciate.

In closing, let me urge everyone to continue his efforts toward acquiring new members, even after the present fiscal year has ended on March 31. We need them badly. With fraternal greetings to each of you, I remain, very gratefully yours.

BEN H. POWELL, III
President General

Austin, Texas
March 15, 1949

SAR Magazine XLIV-No-1_July-1949, p. 18, 54-57

ADDRESS BY PAST PRESIDENT GENERAL BEN H. POWELL III

IT IS NOW my duty, under our Constitution, to give you an accounting of my Stewardship, including a brief discussion of the "State of the Union," so to speak, with recommendations for the future. The circumstances under which I was elevated to this high office have been stated in the January, 1949, issue of our magazine, and I shall not repeat them here. Suffice it to say that, on the 9th of December last year, I accepted the torch which had been carried by the lamented President General Shaler, and immediately dedicated myself to a completion of the tasks he had begun, as well as others which would naturally arise. In all humility, but with a firm resolve, I determined to do my dead level best to keep the faith and do all I could to finish my course in such a manner as to justify the confidence and esteem of those who had given me an opportunity to render this service. You shall be the judges of the measure of success attained.

My first official act was to request all the Committees appointed by President General Shaler to continue their service. They graciously agreed to do so and I shall never cease to be grateful for their generous, thoughtful and efficient cooperation. The results obtained during the year would not have been at all possible but for their aid and encouragement. Manifestly, it would be impossible to detail, in this report, the work of more than thirty of our National Committees as well as eleven Vice President Generals and other National Officers. However, most of the Committees and Officers have submitted written reports, mimeograph copies of most of which are available for your reading. In addition to these written reports, further reports will be made hereafter orally. I invite your most careful reading of the written reports and your equally thoughtful attention to the accounting to be made orally. On the whole, I believe you will then agree with me that we have had a very successful year and that the National Society is on the road to still greater achievements.

I do desire, however, to invite your special attention to the work of certain Committees. We have no more important Committee than the one on Organization and Membership. This Committee has been headed this year by Compatriot Stanley Gillam of Minneapolis. He has been active and the results of his efforts have been quite satisfactory under the circumstances. The success of this particular Committee depends upon the combined and continuous work of most of our National Officers, and particularly the President General. The latter must inspire the sustained interest and zeal of the entire team, so to speak. As we all know, our beloved President General was confined to his bed in a hospital for some four or five months and could not lead this work as he was so anxious to do. I am certain that the loss in new members and reinstatements this fiscal year, as compared with results obtained last year, resulted from the most unfortunate illness and confinement of our late President General. To be sure, after his most untimely passing, we all did everything we could to reawaken the enthusiasm of our members for this most important work. However, we could not make up for all the time which had been lost. Plans for work of this kind particularly must be made in the beginning of any administration. Captain Shaler made an outstanding record in organizing new



Chapters and obtaining new members generally. Had he lived, I am absolutely certain the fiscal year which has just ended would have far exceeded any other year in our history in this respect. He had already begun an active campaign and was rejoicing in its progress when he was stricken. It was impossible, after his passing, to bring his plans completely back to life.

As it is, the record for the last fiscal year is very good, indeed. The figures are not complete. The final and official totals will likely be more favorable than this preliminary report indicates. Figures to date show 1100 new members last year, as compared to 1407 for the preceding year, and 220 reinstatements this year as against 392 the year before. In other words, our record this year is 307 less in new members and 172 less in reinstatements.

I am unable to give you, at this time, a record of our losses in membership by reason of deaths, resignations and dropping for non-payment of dues. Final statistics will be furnished by the Secretary General and published in the July Magazine this year, if not made public sooner. I will say, even now, that I was not unmindful of the very serious losses sustained during the fiscal year ending March 31, 1948, as reported by President General Foreman at Minneapolis. He reported total losses of 1503 during that year. 832 of these were dropped for non-payment of dues. It was my desire to improve this grave situation if possible. So I contacted the State Presidents early this year, requesting their active help in beginning every effort at once to collect dues. These Presidents were most encouraging. They cooperated in every way, I am sure. I heard from many of them. I am hoping that results will be favorable. By the way, I am a firm believer in close cooperation between the National Society and the several State Societies.

In view of the increase in dues, voted at Minneapolis, and which Amendment became effective for the new fiscal year beginning the first of last April, it is feared that the droppings for last year will increase over the preceding year. At this particular time, it seems likely that our net loss in membership for the last fiscal year will be somewhere between by reason of deaths, resignations and dropping for non-payment of dues, we will more than wipe out the 1320 new additions and reinstatements above reported. These droppings for non-payment of dues present a serious threat which I shall discuss later in connection with my recommendations for the future. We cannot prevent deaths. We may expect a number of deaths in our Society each year because of the average age of our members. But, we certainly should be able, in some way, to avoid resignations and droppings.

All historical days have been generally observed. This is most encouraging for we are, after all, incorporated as a historical and patriotic Society.

The Boy Scout Committee, under the able leadership of Compatriot Shriner of Ohio, has done splendid work. It is most important that the Boy Scouts and the Sons of the American Revolution join hands in youth work. These young men today will be the grown-ups of tomorrow.

Compatriot High, also of Ohio, is still doing excellent work in his oratorical contests. I hope we shall soon have the privilege of hearing these young people during our Congress. These patriotic essays and orations will inspire much needed patriotism.

I have called particular attention to our work with the young people. We must continue to interest them and challenge their attention. Otherwise, we will soon have no field from which we can reap the harvest in the future.

We again celebrated the anniversary of the dedication of the altar of the nation at the Cathedral of the Pines, at Rindge, New Hampshire. This is a most beautiful spot and we should go there every Fall for inspiration. I am looking forward with very great pleasure to my first visit to this sacred place.

The Chancellor General has rendered excellent service. I am thinking especially of his aiding us in the solution of the attempt on the part of the taxing authorities of the District of Columbia to have us pay taxes on our personal property at National Headquarters. We hope to amend our Exemption Statute by Act of the Congress so as to eliminate this claim without question. If we were required to pay this tax, we would spend about \$1,000 up to this time. If Congress refuses us the relief just mentioned, we will defend against the claim in the courts under the present law. We have considerable hope that the courts will rule with us when they properly interpret the present Exemption Statute.

We have lived within our income during the last fiscal year. Rather unexpectedly, we had to spend more than \$1,500 on our heating plant at National Headquarters. But, some of the States very generously advanced us some funds against their dues for 1949-1950. Since the dues had been raised 50¢ per capita per annum for that year, it seemed safe to accept these small advances. The Treasurer General's report is before you and shows that we are in the black, which is most gratifying. I shall have more to say about finances in my recommendations for the future.

The Secretary General's report is also quite interesting. I call your special attention to this very thorough accounting by a faithful Officer who has been with us for many, many years. If his health does not permit his attendance at this Congress, we shall all miss him very much. I understand he has not missed a Congress for some thirty years. I am hoping and praying that he may be able to be with us.

Our Executive Committee had a most interesting session in Cincinnati on February 18. Its Minutes were published in the April issue of our National Magazine which is just off the press. Only two of the nine members of our Committee were absent. And, several other officials from Ohio and neighboring States were with us. We enjoyed them very much. We also attended the annual meeting of the Ohio State Society and were genuinely thrilled by their zeal and enthusiasm. This particular Society is certainly wide awake.

In my personal message in the Magazine just distributed I stated that I planned to attend the annual meeting of the California State Society on April 9 at San Francisco. I did so and am happy to report that this Society is likewise wide awake with a thrilling program. Their main project is a continuance of their very vigorous fight against subversive textbooks. A petition has just been filed by this State Society with the Congress of the United States, urging that Honorable Body to take charge of the investigation of this subversive activity on a nationwide basis. This plot against our schools is too far reaching to be effectively controlled by any one or more individual States. Our National Society filed an accompanying petition asking the Federal Congress to take charge of this matter. I am convinced that this is the most important work we are doing right now and I was quite proud of the privilege of signing this petition as President General of this great Society. Let us all do all we can to secure favorable action at Washington. To that end, we will have a full hour of discussion of this wonderful work at our present Congress when our Compatriots from California will be in charge of the program. These Compatriots have borne the burden of this fight and have raised several thousand dollars to carry on the fight. I am glad the National Society has been able to aid in a fairly substantial amount, but much less than California has raised. We should and must have more individual subscriptions to air in this fight. After Congress takes up the work the financial strain on us will be greatly reduced.

While our Executive Committee was in session in Cincinnati we heard of a serious threat on the part of one of our State Societies to take action which, in its necessary effect, would have resulted in secession from our National Society. We were advised that the question would be determined the next day at a called session of the State Society in this distant commonwealth. The Committee suggested that I visit that meeting and explain the views of the National Society and request the Compatriots of that State not to secede, but to settle our differences, if any, in the legal way provided in our own organization. The motion to sever with the National Society was argued at length by both sides. The negative was represented by me. I am very happy to report that the State Society voted against the motion by practically a unanimous vote. After this action was taken harmony seemed to prevail and I do not believe we will meet any such threat again in the near future. I hope we will never meet it again. We have one nation, indivisible. We should have a National Society of the same kind. Had this effort looking toward dismemberment prevailed, it might have caused trouble elsewhere. It is most gratifying to me to be able to report to you that peace and harmony prevail throughout the nation, as I see the situation. This being true, we should have nothing to fear as to our future prospects. While a House divided against itself cannot stand, it is equally true that in union there is strength. My ability to bring a peaceful solution to this one serious threat will always be most gratifying.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Since assuming my present office, as my message in the April Magazine just issued will show, I have traveled very extensively on official business, in fact, across the nation from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and also from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. And, these travels have carried me to a great many State Societies. I have enjoyed these splendid contacts. The finest possible welcome awaited me everywhere. I have been privileged to meet hundreds of the finest men in the nation and have cemented numerous close friendships which I value most highly. I am glad our Charter provides that we shall "unite and promote fellowship" among ourselves. Such a status is not only pleasant and personally profitable, but it makes much more probable the achievement of our other and greater aims and purposes.

My travels and visitations just mentioned, as well as my experience in other official work covering some eight years in this organization; have enabled me to reach certain conclusions as to what we should do in order to go forward promptly and effectively. I am going to make four definite recommendations, foregoing others for the sake of brevity. Then, too, I know if I make too many recommendations they may all be ignored. If those I shall now suggest, or any of them, appeal to you, I shall be glad to see them adopted. Here they are:

FIRST RECOMMENDATION

We should make every possible effort, at once, to raise an endowment fund of not less than a quarter of a million dollars. If this Society is to progress as it should and if it hopes to achieve its manifest destiny, it must have certain specific projects which appeal to wide awake members. We must remember that history necessarily relates to the past, and, at best, does not readily appeal especially to the young. Youth we must have in our ranks. If we are to receive and hold them as members we must be able to point to certain definite things we are trying to accomplish. As an example, let us take the California fight against subversive textbooks. That will challenge anyone and should inspire all. California needs much more help financially than we have been able to give.

We should remember that monuments of metal and stone, as valuable as they are, cannot equal living monuments in the nature of our young folks growing up. We should and must establish scholarships, give medals, and do everything we possibly can to inspire them with a desire to help us preserve our American way of life.

I know of other organizations which have suddenly awakened renewed enthusiasm by certain worthy projects. For instance, the Shrine, a Masonic organization, moved forward with its crippled children's hospitals. In Texas, the Scottish Rite Masons invested a million dollars in a great dormitory for girls at the University of Texas, a beautiful place where they can be cared for at absolute cost. These Masonic Bodies moved forward. In my home city, the Rotary Club built an orphans' home. The members of this civic organization could see great and helpful things being done and they were awake again.

I think our National Society should limit its activities to its Charter purposes. But, within this Charter, we should start new projects and expand others. We cannot do this on our present budget. Our dues, even as raised recently, will do no more than care for maintenance of our National Headquarters and meeting our payroll for those now employed. We all know we need to expand our organization. I doubt if we should raise our dues again soon. So, it seems to me we should look to an endowment or trust fund, for we must have more money in some way if we are to realize our destiny in the reasonably near future. You may be sure no *project*, however worthy, can prevail in the absence of funds with which to *project* it.

The American Bar Association, the American Law Institute, various hospital organizations, and others, have received large endowments. Why not us? Surely, their work cannot be considered as more important than the preservation of the American way of life. We should strive to interest everyone, Compatriots and others, in our trust fund and permit them to earmark their gifts for any specific purpose if they so desire. We should seek small and large gifts. Each investment, however small, will mean renewed interest by the donor in our work. Let us not forget that the small giver frequently sacrifices more than the large one. So, let us welcome every dollar anyone will subscribe. I suggest that every member of our Society be contacted in this matter as well as others. I really believe that many very wealthy people will give substantial amounts to this fund if we educate them to our needs.

As I look down the years, I can dream of the day when this Society will have a membership of at least 100,000. When that goal has been reached, I do hope the necessary traveling expenses of our Officers can be paid from the Treasury. I say this because I would welcome the day when no Compatriot, *otherwise qualified*, would be unable to serve as President General or in any other office because he was unable to pay his own expenses incurred in the performance of his official duties. Those who hold any of our offices should not be *restricted* to those upon whom fortune in dollars has smiled.

SECOND RECOMMENDATION

We should have an "Organizing Secretary" at once. Our Constitution provides that there may be such an Officer, to be elected by the Board of Trustees and to hold office at their pleasure. Our By-Laws describe this Secretary's duties as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the Organizing Secretary under the Direction and control of the President General and the Executive Committee to promote the growth of membership and interest in State Societies and in Chapters and to assist in organizing new chapters where none exists."

In spite of most active and efficient work of the various Presidents General and Committees on Organization and Membership for the past several years, we are making but little net progress in our membership. A year ago, the *net gain* was only some 300 although we had obtained some 1800 new members and reinstatements during that year. In other words, we are losing too many each year. As already stated herein, I do not know whether we sustained a net loss last year or not. I am reasonably

sure we have had a net loss of at least 400. And, this will probably be true even though we obtained some 1320 new members and reinstatements during that year. Faced with these definite trends, I do know that we need *now* and not *later*, to do something to awaken an interest in many State Societies and local Chapters. As an *experiment*, I recommend the "Organizing Secretary." Let's try it for a year and see what we can do to meet these stern facts which now confront us. We simply cannot afford to show a net loss each year in the future. Our membership is comparatively small now.

If we keep losing, we will soon be without sufficient members to operate at all.

In my first recommendation, I urged the raising of trust funds for worthy projects and purposes. I shall now practice what I have preached. It may be necessary to pay the salary and traveling expenses of this "Organizing Secretary" outside our regular dues. If so, I shall be glad to be one of ten Compatriots who will underwrite this total expense for one year. I feel that nine other Compatriots will join me in making this experiment. We have all to gain and nothing to lose.

It seems to me that I can make this offer with propriety, since I am retiring from office with the adjournment of the present Congress and can have no further ambitions for honors or distinctions at your hands. The "Organizing Secretary" should be a comparatively young man, physically equal to much travel. He should spend much time in the field. Our voluntary work along these lines should and must continue also. We need all possible help. We should have an all-time Officer to lead the work in the several States.

THIRD RECOMMENDATION

It seems to me that we should amend our By-Laws so as to authorize the several States to cast in the Annual Congress the entire vote to which they are severally entitled even though any given State is represented in the Congress by fewer delegates than it has votes. I have no particular wording in mind for this Amendment, but am very favorably impressed with a similar Amendment prepared by the California Society. This Amendment would add Section 3 to Article 20 of our By-Laws, reading as follows:

"Any State Society may, provided it so certifies over the signature of its president and secretary to the Secretary General prior to the opening of any Society meeting, select by a majority vote of its board of managers one of such State's accredited delegates to any annual Congress or special Congress of the Society, who shall have, in the case of elections of national officers and in the case of amendments of the constitution and/or by-laws, the power to cast the requisite number of votes, in addition to his own and those of other accredited delegates present, to make the total vote of such State Society on these matters equal to the total legal delegate opportunity of such State at such meeting as provided in sections 1 and 2 of this Article."

If the foregoing Amendment should pass, we would have to delete the word "*present*" from Section 1 of Article 4, of our Constitution.

I realize that some will say that if a delegate desires to vote at the Congress he should be present. But, we must remember that this is a very large nation and that it is a long way from Washington State or Maine to Florida. In fact, the distance is great from any part of our country to the other, unless you are thinking of particular localities only. Even if the Congress be held in the central part of the country, it requires much travel and time to reach it. I know that traveling across this country requires considerable time and money. I am sure many delegates have neither the time nor means to spare. In that event, I submit it is wrong to deprive them or any others in the election of National Officers or the amending of

the Constitution and By-Laws. If they cannot take part in these elections or amendments they really have no voice in the important work of their Society. I am convinced that, under our present system, we have a case of taxation (they all pay dues) without representation. I am a firm believer in *representative democracy* and not the so-called *mass meeting* type. And, our own By-Laws so provide. These By-Laws set up our Congress as a gathering of *State Delegates*.

A careful review of several recent sessions of the Congress will show that only 33 States were represented in 1946, and but 30 in 1947 and only 36 in 1948. In other words, more than one-fourth of the States were not represented at all. Furthermore, even where the States were represented, many did not have anything like their whole voting strength present. It is clear that, for many years, the Congress has been run by a minority of the authorized votes. That is not a healthy condition.

I am advised by those who have kept statistics that, during several Congresses, the States East of the Mississippi River had a tremendous advantage of those West of this great stream. But, be that as it may, it is clear to me that, in all fairness, every State should be privileged to name one delegate, if it chooses to do so, who would have the right to cast its full vote. Certainly any State Society would be able to pay the expenses of one delegate to the Congress. He could and should vote as they wish. With this Amendment, each State Society would feel that it had an active interest in the Congress and an *equal* voice with all other States in proportion to its membership. In that event, no situation could arise where a few States near the Congress, casting but a few votes compared to the nation's potential could control results. We should pass this or some similar Amendment in the very near future and then see if we do not almost immediately have a Congress where every State will be represented with its full voting strength. Then, indeed, will representative democracy prevail with a real rule by a genuine majority. In that happy day, we will, in fact, have a real *National Society*.

FOURTH RECOMMENDATION

Our main foe is communism. It threatens us from abroad as well as at home. We must show it no quarter if we wish to preserve the liberties bequeathed by our ancestors. When Lenin returned to Russia some years ago he vowed to do all he could to destroy our faith in God and to subject the *individual* and his rights to the good and control of the *State*. Such a declared purpose is in direct conflict with our own aims and ambitions. We are a Christian nation. The Pilgrim Fathers went to Church with a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other. We had altars in our homes. We publicly profess our faith in God by declaring our trust in Him on our coins. We have never known defeat in a war because, as I view it, "twice armed is he whose cause is just." Our record is in keeping with real religion. As long as we follow in the footsteps of the Christ we shall not know defeat. Let all aggressors beware! In Russia, the State is all important. Here we believe the individual is supreme. We are protected in our individual rights by the so-called "Bill of Rights." We must preserve these safeguards and really put into practice throughout the future the thought that those people "are best governed who are least governed."

I fear, however, that there are those in our own country who may be willing to barter away their liberties for so called "security." We must not do that. If we expect the State to make us secure we may be sure we will give it power which will be taken from us. We should provide for ourselves and retain our liberties and self-control. Let us not think that the Government owes us a living. Rather, let us believe that we owe it our support.

We know that Russia is trying to undo our principles and ideology. Whether the *cold* war will become a *hot* one or not, we cannot tell. But, should Russia or anyone else bring on the fire and heat of war, let them beware and remember that we have the fuel and that we are unafraid. My prayer is that

war may be avoided. This prayer can best be realized if we will simply adopt the Golden Rule laid down some two thousand years ago by the Saviour of the world. We have reached the point where, I fear, it is either "Christ or Chaos."

EXPRESSIONS OF PERSONAL APPRECIATION

After serving as President of my local Chapter and of the Texas State Society, I graduated into the service of the National Society. In the Spring of 1941, at the Columbus, Ohio, Congress, I was, while in Washington City myself, elected Vice-President General of the South Mississippi District. In 1942, at Old Williamsburg, in Virginia, I attended my first Congress. It has been my privilege to be very active in our National Society for eight full years. The official and committee assignments are briefly outlined in our January Magazine this year. I shall not mention them here. Suffice it to say that the trail led, early in December of last year, to the very top rung of the ladder. At that time, I became your President General. In my judgment, it is not only the highest honor the Society can confer, but perhaps the highest one of its kind in the world. I accepted the call in deep humility but with a firm resolve to meet its obligations.

I felt especially honored in being the first Texan so honored. And, for that matter, to have the distinction of being the first Compatriot to represent that vast territory South and Southwest of Norfolk, Virginia, and South of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and East of California. I hope it will not be so long next time before this almost half of the nation is again honored.

I am also particularly thankful that every honor conferred upon me came unsolicited, voluntarily, and unanimously. I was never subjected to a contest. This happy status has made my work much more pleasant and, I am sure, also much more effective. One can perform his duties more easily when no scars have been left. Finally, since no one had been in any contest with me, I could naturally love everybody. I do feel very kindly toward and close to every Compatriot in the entire Society. Nor can I cease to be grateful to a very kindly Providence which has blessed me with good health during these years. I have been privileged to attend every Congress since 1941 and have never missed a meeting of any Committee of which I have been a member.

Nor will I ever fail to remember the thoughtfulness of Compatriots over the entire nation who congratulated me on my appointment as President General, offering me their support. No one could have been more cordially welcomed or more generously aided.

Not only did I receive such a welcome for my present term, but the Compatriots from every section of the country urged me to permit my friends to nominate me for reelection. Their loyalty and friendship will be most gratefully remembered throughout my life. I want all of you to know that I could not continue to serve as President General for another term because of litigation recently filed in Texas which I must defend personally. The suits involve a client of more than twenty years and I cannot forsake this company now.

In relinquishing the great office of President General at the end of this Congress, I am, in no sense, stopping or ending my labors for SAR. After all these eight years, I would be lost if I stopped work now. I am only leaving an all-time task. I shall continue, in season and out of season, to work for this organization which has so greatly honored me. And, as a Past President General and as a Compatriot in the ranks, I see no reason why my effectiveness should be curtailed. I hope to be able to continue always to render as worthwhile a service as possible. You have my assurance that no effort on my part will be lacking.

As I reflect on these years of service, and on my membership in this great Society, I have mainly enjoyed two things: In the first place, I have made many intimate and loyal friends. They are the salt of the earth. I shall cherish those friendships always. In the second place, the system of government bequeathed to us by our forefathers is the greatest in the world. We owe a great deal to those who gave us these rights and liberties. I have been delighted to have a part in their preservation. Certainly, it must never be said that we failed to exert every effort to join the martyred Lincoln when he firmly resolved that this Government "of, for and by the people should not perish from the earth."

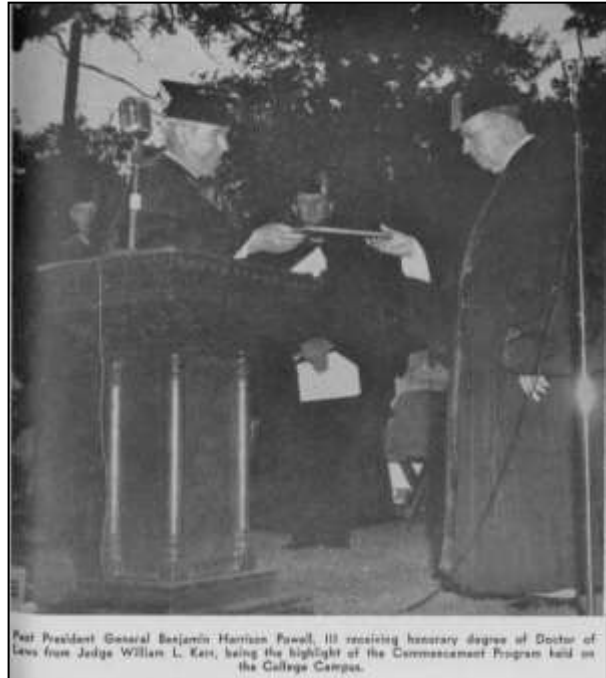
Insofar as the President Generalcy is concerned, I have considered that the fiscal year just ending has belonged to Captain Shaler and myself. I have been honored to have a part in the same year with him. I hope he is looking on at this time, as many of us believe, and giving us his benediction. We owe him a great deal and I gladly pay tribute to his memory.

SAR Magazine XLIV-No-2_November-1949, p. 7

Another High Honor For Past Pres. Gen. Powell

A unique tribute was paid Past President General Benjamin Harrison Powell, III, by the Board of Regents of the Texas State Teachers College on Sunday, May twenty-second, when the President and Faculty of the Sam Houston State Teachers College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws as part of its Commencement Exercises in Huntsville, Texas.

Past President Powell lived at Huntsville at one time and his charming wife taught in the College before their marriage, so it is understandable that this honor was especially touching. This tribute to our Past President General takes on still deeper significance when the fact is recognized that only three of these Honorary Degrees have been conferred during the seventy years of the existence of this institution which was the first Teachers College in Texas, organized in 1878. Today it points to a student body of around 2,500.



The Degree was conferred upon Past President Powell as a civic leader and also as a professional leader who had rendered distinguished service to his State along Judicial lines. As Judge of the Twelfth Judicial District, comprising five Counties, and later as one of the Judges of the Commission of Appeals of the Supreme Court of Texas, Judge Powell had written many opinions during some ten years of his life.

Compatriot Powell was privileged to serve as a member of a Special Committee which aided the Supreme Court of Texas in rewriting the rules governing the trial of civil actions in Texas Courts. These new rules proved a real contribution to the people of Texas as they made it possible to litigate much more speedily and very much more economically, laws' delays in the past having been very burdensome and expensive.

The Doctor of Laws degree further recognized that Compatriot Powell was instrumental a few years ago, when President of the Texas Bar Association, in passing an act which integrated the Bar of Texas, so that today it is a powerful organization with some 10,000 members.

His work for the American Bar Association was also recognized, as Judge Powell is a member of the House of Delegates of that Association and also of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. It was further noted that Compatriot Powell has been for many years, a life member of the American Law Institute which is trying to restate the substantive law of our country.

These highlights of Past President General Powell's Judicial services indicate some of the reasons why he was chosen the one recipient of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws at this Commencement. In closing this all too short account, your Editor would like to note that the official College Song featured

in the Commencement Program was written by Marian Rather Powell, the Judge's charming wife, in 1910, for the Thirtieth Home Coming at which time it was officially adopted as the School Song. Congratulations and may you both long enjoy these honors so fittingly conferred.

SAR Magazine LV-No-3_January-1961, p. 35

In Memorial

Benjamin Harrison Powell

1881 * * * * 1960

*Resolution by the Executive Committee
and the Trustees of
the National Society of the
Sons of the American Revolution
on the death of
Past President General Benjamin Harrison Powell
December 3, 1960*

WHEREAS, Almighty God has seen fit to call to his eternal resting place our distinguished compatriot and Past President General, and

WHEREAS, his passing has caused the loss of an eminent citizen, a dedicated patriot and a loyal member of this Society, and

WHEREAS, the substantial contributions he made during his lifetime to furthering good citizenship, preserving American ideals and serving the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution as a member of the Executive Committee and as President General are recognized;

Now, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Committee. for and on behalf of the members of the National Society of the Son of the American Revolution, expresses the grief and sense of loss we bear in the death of our beloved compatriot and Past President General Benjamin Harrison Powell; that we gratefully acknowledge his contributions to patriotic societies and especially those to the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution; that a special page in the minutes of the Executive Committee be set aside in his memory; that a copy of this resolution be published in the next issue of The Sons of the American Revolution Magazine.

Find A Grave Memorial

www.findagrave.com/memorial/55396594

Texas SAR History Volume 1, Feb. 1980 pp. 69-70

COL. BEN H. POWELL, IV NSSAR #63840, TSSAR #651

Elected to his first term at the last Congress of the National Society, held in Columbus, Ohio, May 21st 1941. Native Texan, born in Montgomery County, November 12, 1881. Graduate of the University of Texas. Admitted to the Texas Bar in 1903. A former District Judge and later a Judge of the Commission of Appeals of the Supreme Court of Texas for several years. A Vice-President of the Austin Mutual Life Insurance Company and a Director of American National Bank and a member of the American Law Institute which was endowed by the Carnegie Foundation. A member of the Committee appointed by the Supreme Court of Texas to revise the Rules of Civil Procedure and which were adopted and became effective in September of 1941. Member of the Patrick Henry Chapter No. 11 of Texas Society at Austin. President of Texas Society 1941. Married to Marian Leigh Rather; their issue was two sons; the oldest is Ben J. Powell, IV, born 1915. The other was Rawley Rather Powell, born 1918; died 1923.



The Texas Compatriot is indebted to the Austin Tribune for the above picture made in the dining room of Judge Ben H. Powell III. The picture is made near the mantel and shows Mrs. Powell and her two granddaughters. The eldest is named for her maternal grandmother, Nancy Duncan Powell; the youngest is named for her paternal grandmother, Marian Rather Powell. Over the mantel may be seen a painted portrait of Captain Ben H. Powell IV, only living child of Judge and Mrs. Powell. Captain Powell was reared in Austin, where he attended the public schools until his graduation from High School. He next attended Virginia Military Institute, where he graduated with highest honors, being awarded the Jackson Hope Gold Medal. He was an honor man in the ROTC at V.M.I. and graduated with an A.B. degree and as Captain of Company E of the Cadet Corps. Because of his record at V.M.I., he was given a commission in the Reserve Corps of the United States Army as a 2nd Lieutenant of Artillery.

Ben H. Powell IV returned to his home in Austin, where he entered the Law Department of the University of Texas. Here he again excelled in scholarship, making an all A record in law and in due time received his degree, Bachelor of Law. He returned to the East and entered Harvard Law School, where he obtained the degree, Master of Law.

After all of the careful preparation and background of a thorough education in law, it was to be only for one year that Judge Powell was to have the pleasure and satisfaction of having his son with the firm Powell, Wirtz, Rauhut & Gideon (an outstanding law firm in both Austin and Texas). Long before the incident of Pearl Harbor or the Draft Law, young Powell came to his father and stated that as a true son of old Virginia Military Institute, he felt he must withdraw from the firm and ask for ACTIVE SERVICE in the United States Army, that he foresaw dark days for our beloved Country, and it was his duty to go wherever he could best serve.

No sooner had Ben H. Powell IV offered his services, than the Chief of Staff of the United States Army called him to Washington, DC, and where today he serves as a Captain of the United States Army, working on the Special Staff of the War Department at the Capitol.

Captain Powell married Miss Kitty King Corbett and he with his wife and 2 young daughters reside across the Potomac River from the City of Washington, in a residential district in the vicinity of the old home of General Robert E. Lee, Arlington. So, as the caption over the picture heading this article states, Judge and Mrs. Powell are looking forward to and counting the days until May 31, June 1, 2 and 3rd, 1942, will arrive, for on these days there will not only be the delightful days of attending the next Congress of the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution, but there will be in fact and in truth "A Family Reunion in old Williamsburg, Va."