

**SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION/  
EMPIRE STATE SOCIETY  
RECORDS, 1890-1992**

**SC22749**

**QUANTITY:** 115 Boxes (30 cubic feet)  
**ACCESS:** Records are open to research upon signing an agreement concerning photoduplication and publication of contents  
**ACQUISITION:** Received from the Empire State Society S.A.R., September 18, 2003  
**PROCESSED BY:** Finding aid compiled by Aimee Morgan, Student Assistant, University at Albany, August 2004

**History and Organization Note:**

The Sons of the American Revolution Empire State Society was organized on February 11, 1890 and legally incorporated in early 1895. The Society's official headquarters were maintained in New York City until 1981, when a Certificate of Change of Location shifted them to Schenectady.

The national Sons of the American Revolution (S.A.R.) was officially established as a union of existing state societies on April 20, 1889, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of George Washington's inauguration as the first president. The first of these state societies, the Sons of Revolutionary Sires, began in California in 1875. The Sons of the American Revolution was chartered by an act of Congress on June 6, 1906.

S.A.R. is a "lineage organization" open to men who can prove themselves direct descendants of individuals who provided qualifying service to the United States of America during the Revolutionary War. Revolutionary War participants whose descendants qualify for S.A.R. membership include soldiers, sailors, and other military personnel; signers of the Declaration of Independence; members of a Committee of Safety or Correspondence; and members of any colonial legislature or congress. Potential members must document their connection to their Revolutionary War ancestor or prove that they are close relatives of a previously-accepted S.A.R. member. In addition to proving their lineage, members must be citizens of good repute in the community and personally acceptable to the Society. The original age requirement of 21 years was eventually lowered to 18; later, the Society created a special category of junior membership for individuals under the age of 18. Applicants must be accepted by a state society in order to be members of the national Sons of the American Revolution

The goals of the Empire State Society are the same as those of the national organization. These goals fall under three broad categories: historical, patriotic, and educational. Goals related to history include commemorating and providing memorials for the people and events of the American Revolution, preserving Revolutionary-era records, and supporting research and presentations on the period from 1750-1800. The S.A.R.'s patriotic goals include inspiring the community with the founding principles of the United States, maintaining and extending the institutions of American freedom, carrying out the promises in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution, and honoring veterans.

Its educational goals include sponsoring essay and oration contests for high school students, informing the public about the Revolutionary War, and assisting with genealogical study.

Currently sixteen local chapters of the Empire State Society exist within three regions of New York State – Western, Central, and Metropolitan. Affiliation with a local chapter is optional for individual members; members of the state Society without a local affiliation are referred to as members-at-large.

The Empire State Society is governed by a board of managers, which meets several times each year. Statewide officers include the president, four regional vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer, registrar, chancellor, chaplain, and historian.

### **Scope and Content Note:**

This collection provides evidence of statewide and local S.A.R. activity in New York State. It is organized into seven series: Administrative Records, Financial Records, Correspondence, Membership Records, Ancestor Card Files, Chapter Records, and Awards, Newsletters, and Miscellaneous Files.

The first series, Administrative Records, includes the incorporation papers of the Empire State Society, constitutions and by-laws, yearbooks, and policy and procedure documents. There are extensive files of minutes from board of managers meetings and annual meetings. Also included are copies of the society's annual reports to the national S.A.R. from 1973 through 1981.

The second series, Financial Records, includes treasurer's reports, correspondence, and other treasury documents. There are records of annual dues payments by members, as well as bank records and tax documents.

The third series consists of society correspondence, both incoming and outgoing, produced from 1931 to 1992. Although correspondence appears in many files throughout this collection, this series consists of chronological correspondence files maintained separately. Most outgoing correspondence was produced by society officers.

The fourth series, Membership Records, consists of several subseries. The bulk of the series consists of approved membership applications. Most of these applications are in bound volumes; each volume contains between 100 and 300 applications. The applications are arranged by state membership number, which is a unique number assigned to each member at the time his application was approved. There are also two boxes of bound membership registers. These registers list each member in membership number order, along with data such as mailing address, date of first membership, and date of death or withdrawal from the society. Another subseries is the membership card file. The cards in this collection duplicate information that is found in the membership applications and membership registers; however, since it is organized alphabetically by member's last name, it allows for easy searching for individual members in cases where the state membership number is not known. Other membership files found in this collection include membership rosters, lists of member transfers to and from other state societies, information on

resignations and suspensions, lists of life members and dues-exempt members, and obituaries and death notices of members.

The fifth series is the ancestor card file. Compiled from genealogical information listed on membership applications, this file consists of one card for each Revolutionary War ancestor claimed by a society member. Each card contains basic biographical data, including dates of birth and death, when known. The cards also list the membership numbers of each society member who has traced his lineage to that ancestor. This allows for easy cross-reference to the membership applications, where more complete genealogical information and narrative descriptions of ancestors' war service may be found.

Records of local chapters comprise the sixth series. There are rosters listing members by chapter and folders for many individual chapters, including some which are no longer active. Also included is some information on multi-chapter conferences and meetings held by the Central and Western regions.

The final series contains files on newsletters, awards, and miscellaneous society projects and events. The newsletter files are fairly scant, with few issues of the official S.A.R. newsletter. Awards included in this series are the Patriot Medal, the Good Citizenship Medal, and the ROTC Medal. This series also contains files on the Society's property in the Village of Larchmont, the Odell House project, and the society's registry of Revolutionary War veteran grave sites.

Overall, this collection provides extensive documentation of the organization and administration of the Empire State Society. Information on member lineage and Revolutionary War ancestors also makes it a valuable genealogical resource.

#### **Box and Folder List:**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
		<b>Series I: Administrative Files, 1895-1988</b>
1	1	Certificate of Incorporation, 1895
1	2	Incorporation Documents, 1895-1953
1	3	Certificate of Change of Location, 1981
1	4	Yearbook, 1908-1909
1	5	Yearbook, 1911-1912
1	6	Constitution and Signatures, 1890
1	7	Constitution and By-laws, 1940
1	8	Constitution and By-laws, 1961
1	9	Constitution and By-laws, 1982
1	10	National Charter, Constitution and By-laws, 1967
1	11	National Charter, Constitution and By-laws, 1976
1	12	Constitution, Amendments, 1962
1	13	Constitution, Amendments, 1965
1	14	Constitution, Proposed Amendments, 1963
1	15	Constitution, Proposed Amendments, 1966
1	16	Constitution, Proposed Amendments, 1980

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
1	17	Memorandum on Records and Procedures, 1965
1	18	Manual of Procedure, 1971
1	19	Guidelines and Procedures for State Presidents
1	20	S.A.R. Protocol, 1979
1	21	National Annual Congress Papers, 1942-1963
1	22	National Annual Congress Papers, 1969-1971
1	23	National Trustees' Meeting, Minutes, 1982
1	24	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1933
1	25	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1938
1	26	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1939
1	27	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1940
1	28	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1943
1	29	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1944
1	30	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1945
1	31	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1946
1	32	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1947
1	33	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1948
1	34	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1949
1	35	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1950
1	36	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1951
1	37	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1952
1	38	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1953
1	39	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1954
1	40	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1956
1	41	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1957
2	1	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1958
2	2	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1961
2	3	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1962
2	4	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1963
2	5	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1964
2	6	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1965
2	7	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1966
2	8	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1967
2	9	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1968
2	10	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1969
2	11	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1970
2	12	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1971
2	13	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1972
2	14	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1973
2	15	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1974
2	16	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1975
2	17	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1976
2	18	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1977
2	19	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1978

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
2	20-21	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1979
2	22	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1980
2	23	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1981
2	24	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1982
2	25	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1984
2	26	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1985
2	27	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1986
2	28	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1987
2	29	Board of Managers, Meeting Minutes, 1988
3	1	Board of Managers, Meetings, Order of Business
3	2	Annual Meeting, Minutes, 1897
3	3	Annual Meeting, Minutes, 1924, 1942-1944, 1946
3	4	Annual Meeting, Minutes, 1947-1964
3	5	Annual Meeting, Minutes, 1965-1971
3	6	Annual Meeting, Minutes, 1980-1983
3	7	Annual Report, 1971
3	8	Annual Report, 1972
3	9	Annual Report, 1973
3	10	Annual Report, 1974
3	11	Annual Report, 1975
3	12	Annual Report, 1976
3	13	Annual Report, 1977
3	14	Annual Report, 1978
3	15	Annual Report, 1979
3	16	Annual Report, 1980
3	17	Annual Report, 1981
3	18	Annual Report, 1982
3	19	Annual Report, 1983
3	20	Report of the Vice President, 1969
3	21	Standing Committees, 1979-1980
4	1	Minutes, 1891-1897
5		Minutes, Bound Volumes, 1906-1911
5		Minutes, Bound Volumes, 1912-1917
6		Minutes, Bound Volumes, 1918-1921
6		Minutes, Bound Volumes, 1922-1932
7		Minutes, Bound Volumes, 1932-1945
8		Minutes, Bound Volumes, 1945-1951
8		Minutes, Bound Volumes, 1951-1957
9		Minutes, Bound Volumes, 1956-1962
10		Annual Meeting Notices, Bound Volume, 1908-1945
		<b>Series II: Financial Records, 1915-1987</b>
11	1	Treasurer's Reports, 1915
11	2	Treasurer's Reports, 1940s

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
11	3	Treasurer's Reports, 1950-1961
11	4	Treasurer's Reports, 1972-1973
11	5	Treasurer's Reports, 1974-1980
11	6	Treasury Documents, 1972
11	7	Treasury Documents, 1973
11	8	Treasury Documents, 1974
11	9	Treasury Documents, 1975
11	10	Treasury Documents, 1976
12	1	Treasury Documents, 1978
12	2	Chapter Treasurers, Roster, 1971
12	3	Treasury Correspondence
12	4	Duties of the Treasurer
12	5	Dues, 1975
12	6	Dues, 1976
12	7-9	Dues, 1977
12	10	Dues, 1979
12	11	Dues, 1980
12	12	Dues, Miscellaneous
12	13	Dues, Correspondence
12	14	Dues, Notices
12	15	Dues, Paying Members by Chapter
12	16-17	Petty Cash, Receipts
13	1	Bank Deposits
13	2	Bank Signatures and Account Data
13	3	Cash Receipts and Cash Disbursements, 1956-1957
13	4	Taxes, Federal
13	5	Taxes, New York City
13	6	Taxes, New York State Unemployment
13	7	Tax Exempt Forms
13	8	Tax Exempt Organization Certification Forms
13	9	Certificate of Type of Not-for-Profit Corporation, 1973
13	10	Revised Schedule of Fees, 1972
13	11	Unemployment Benefits, Experience Rating Changes
13	12	Budget Statements, 1984-1987
13	13	Insurance
13	14	Bonds and Capital Investments
13	15	Financial Problems Report, 1958
13	16	Investment Accounts, 1971
13	17	Expense Account 1985-1986
14		Financial Ledger, 1930-1947
		<b>Series III: Correspondence, 1931-1992</b>
15	1	1931
15	2	1933
15	3	1934

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
15	4	1935
15	5	1941
15	6	1944
15	7	1951
15	8	1953
15	9	1954-1961
15	10	1967
15	11	1969
15	12	1970
15	13	1971
15	14	1972
15	15	1973
15	16	1974
15	17	1975
15	18	1976
15	19	1977
15	20-21	1978
15	22	1979
15	23	1980
15	24	1981
15	25	1982
16	1-2	1983
16	3	1984
16	4	1985
16	5	1986
16	6-8	1987
17	1-2	1988
17	3-4	1989
17	5-6	1990
17	7	1992
		<b>Series IV: Membership Records, 1890-1990</b>
18		Applications, Members 1-200
19		Applications, Members 201-400
20		Applications, Members 401-600
21		Applications, Members 601-800
22		Applications, Members 801-1000
23		Applications, Members 1001-1200
24		Applications, Members 1201-1400
25		Applications, Members 1401-1600
26		Applications, Members 1601-1800
27		Applications, Members 1801-2000
28		Applications, Members 2001-2200
29		Applications, Members 2201-2400
30		Applications, Members 2401-2600

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
31		Applications, Members 2601-2800
32		Applications, Members 2801-3000
33		Applications, Members 3001-3200
34		Applications, Members 3201-3400
35		Applications, Members 3401-3600
36		Applications, Members 3601-3800
37		Applications, Members 3801-4000
38		Applications, Members 4001-4200
39		Applications, Members 4201-4400
40		Applications, Members 4401-4600
41		Applications, Members 4601-4800
42		Applications, Members 4801-5000
43		Applications, Members 5001-5200
44		Applications, Members 5201-5400
45		Applications, Members 5401-5700
46		Applications, Members 5701-6000
47		Applications, Members 6001-6300
48		Applications, Members 6301-6600
49		Applications, Members 6601-6800
50		Applications, Members 6801-7000
51		Applications, Members 7001-7200
52		Applications, Members 7201-7400
53		Applications, Members 7401-7600
54		Applications, Members 7601-7800
55		Applications, Members 7801-8000
56		Applications, Members 8001-8200
57		Applications, Members 8201-8400
58		Applications, Members 8401-8600
59		Applications, Members 8601-8800
60		Applications, Members 8801-9000
61		Applications, Members 9001-9200
62		Applications, Members 9201-9400
63		Applications, Members 9401-9600
64		Applications, Members 9601-9800
65		Applications, Members 9801-10000
66		Applications, Members 10001-10100
67		Applications, Members 10101-10200
68		Applications, Members 10201-10400
69		Applications, Members 10401-10600
70		Applications, Members 10601-10800
71		Applications, Members 10801-11000
72		Applications, Members 11001-11100
73		Applications, Members 11101-11200
74		Applications, Members 11201-11300

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
75		Applications, Members 11301-11500
76		Applications, Members 11501-11700
77		Applications, Members 11701-11900
78		Applications, Members 11901-12000
79		Applications, Members 12001-12100 (unbound)
80-81		Supplemental Application Papers
82		Miscellaneous papers removed from applications #11001-11300
83		Miscellaneous Membership Applications
84		Membership Registers, Bound, Members 1-2000
84		Membership Registers, Bound, Members 2001-4000
84		Membership Registers, Bound, Members 4001-6020
85		Membership Registers, Bound, Members 6021-8000
85		Membership Registers, Bound, Members 8001-10000
86		Membership Card File, A-Chap
87		Membership Card File, Char-E
88		Membership Card File, F-Hill
89		Membership Card File, Hillm-Loom
90		Membership Card File, Loop-Pep
91		Membership Card File, Per-Sk
92		Membership Card File, Sm-Warb
93		Membership Card File, Ward-Z
94		Membership Card File, Miscellaneous
95		Membership Card File, Miscellaneous
96	1-2	Membership Approvals and Status Changes, 1960-1961
96	3-4	Membership Approvals and Status Changes, 1961-1962
96	5	Membership Approvals and Status Changes, 1963-1965
96	6-7	Membership Approvals and Status Changes, 1968-1972
97	1	Membership Approvals and Status Changes, 1972-1973
97	2	Membership Approvals and Status Changes, 1973-1976
97	3	Membership Approvals and Status Changes, 1985
97	4	Membership Committee Reports
97	5	Membership Requests, Correspondence
97	6-9	Miscellaneous Transmittal Forms and Approval Forms
97	10-13	Reinstatements
98	1	Reinstatements
98	2	Transfers, In
98	3	Transfers, Out
98	4	Transfers, Within
98	5	Notice of National Approvals to Chapters, 1971-1972
98	6	Supplemental Applications
98	7	Resignations
98	8	Member List
98	9	New Member Lists, 1969-1971
98	10	New Member Lists, 1982-1983

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
98	11	Exempt Members
98	12	Life Members
98	13	Life Members, Roster, 1970
98	14	Member Roster Report, 1970-1971
98	15	Members at Large Rosters
98	16	Suspended Members
98	17	Registrar's Reports
98	18	Membership Committee Report, 1972-1973
98	19	Membership Records, Corrections, 1972-1973
98	20	Address Changes
98	21	Obituaries and Death Notices
98	22	Membership Cards
98	23	Miscellaneous Application Forms
99	1	Membership List, 1981
99	2-7	Supplemental Applications and Related Documents
99	8	Application Worksheets
		<b>Series V: Ancestor Card File</b>
100		A-B
101		C-Di
102		Do-G
103		H-J
104		K-Mo
105		Mu-Ri
106		Ro-S
107		T-Wh
108		Wi-Z
		<b>Series VI: Chapter Records, 1896-1986</b>
109	1	Chapter Rosters, 1971
109	2	Chapter Rosters, 1973
109	3	Chapter Rosters, 1974
109	4	Chapter Rosters, 1978
109	5	Chapter Rosters, 1986
109	6	Chapters, Admiral George Brown Capital District
109	7	Chapters, Binghamton
109	8-9	Chapters, Buffalo
109	10	Chapters, Columbia County
109	11	Chapters, East Hampton (inactive)
109	12	Chapters, Fort Johnstown
109	13	Chapters, French
109	14	Chapters, General Israel Putnam
109	15	Chapters, General William Floyd
109	16	Chapters, Huntington
109	17	Chapters, Jamestown (inactive)
109	18	Chapters, Lemuel Cook (inactive)

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
109	19	Chapters, Long Island
109	20	Chapters, Mohawk Valley
109	21	Chapters, Monroe (inactive)
109	22	Chapters, Newton Battle
109	23	Chapters, New York
109	24	Chapters, Niagara Falls
109	25	Chapters, Olean (inactive)
109	26	Chapters, Oriskany Battle
109	27	Chapters, Oswego County (inactive)
110	1	Chapters, Rochester
110	2	Chapters, Saratoga
110	3	Chapters, Schenectady (inactive)
110	4	Chapters, Staten Island (inactive)
110	5	Chapters, Stone Arabia Battle
110	6	Chapters, Stony Point
110	7	Chapters, Syracuse
110	8	Chapters, Temple Hill (Newburgh) (inactive)
110	9	Chapters, Tompkins County
110	10	Chapters, Van Dyck (inactive)
110	11	Chapters, Watertown
110	12	Chapters, Westchester
110	13	Central New York Chapters, Annual Conference, 1951
110	14	Western New York Chapters, Constitution and By-laws, 1933
110	15	Western New York Chapters, Meetings, 1933
110	16	Western New York Chapters, Annual Conference, 1944, 1947, 1949
110	17	Western New York Chapters, Annual Conference, 1951
110	18	Western New York Chapters, Annual Conference, 1952
110	19	Western New York Chapters, Annual Conference, 1953
110	20	Western New York Chapters, Annual Conference, 1957
110	21	Society/Chapter Relations, Meeting, 1933
111		Gansevoort/Willett Chapter, Formation and Minutes, 1896
111		Western New York Regional Group Chapters, Minutes, 1933-1935
112		Col. Cornelius Van Dyck Chapter, Charter, Constitution, By-laws, Member Roster, 1918
112		Long Island Chapter History, 1937-1958
		<b>Series VII: Newsletters, Awards, Events, and Projects</b>
113	1	Newsletters
113	2	"The Correspondent" newsletter
113	3	News from the President General
113	4	"The Pangburn Letter" newsletter
113	5	S.A.R. Magazine, Changes and Updates
113	6	Basic Documents Committee
113	7	Law Enforcement Committee
113	8	Good Citizenship Bronze Medals

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
113	9	Good Citizenship Gold Medals
113	10-11	Good Citizenship Medal Awards, Blank
113	12	Paul K. Addams Membership Award
113	13	Patriot Medal Forms
113	14	Patriot Medal Awards and Blank Forms
113	15	ROTC Medals
113	16	Acceptance Notification Forms, Blank
113	17	Address Labels
113	18	Advertisers and Mailing Service Correspondence
113	19	Annual Dinner Invitations
113	20	Bill of Rights Commemorative Society
113	21	Census Documents
113	22	Children of the American Revolution
113	23	Commemorative Stamp, U.S. Constitution
113	24	Election Forms
113	25	General Notes / Practice Sheets
113	26	Grave Marker File
113	27-28	Grave Registry, A-J
114	1-2	Grave Registry, K-Z
114	3	Historical Dates
114	4	Hoyt Family Records
114	5	Illinois Society Membership Applications
114	6	Insignia
114	7	Landmarks
114	8	Letterhead Dispute, Correspondence and Documents
114	9	Library Materials, Preservation
114	10	Maps / Directions
114	11	Maps, Historical
114	12-13	Meeting / Event Notices
114	14	Merchandise Catalogs and Mail Solicitations
114	15	Merger Correspondence, S.A.R. and Sons of the Revolution
114	16	Odell House Agreement, Correspondence
114	17	Odell House Report
114	18	Officer and Manager Rosters
114	19	Officer Directory, 1971
114	20	Officer Nominations, 1979-1980
114	21	Oration Contest
114	22	Order Forms, Printed History of National Society
114	23	Personnel Papers
114	24	Press Releases
114	25	Resolutions
114	26	Returned Mail Instructions
114	27	Sample Letterheads, 1969-1981
114	28	Sheet Music

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
114	29	Statements, S.A.R. Members
114	30	Telephone Numbers
114	31	UNESCO Issues
115	1	Book Excerpts
115	2	Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine, Excerpts
115	3	Chapter Declaration Forms, Blank
115	4	Historical Documents, Copies
115	5-8	Larchmont Property Documents
115	9	Daughters of the American Revolution, Membership Applications
115	10	Membership Applications, New Jersey Society
115	11	Membership Kit, National Society
115	12	Membership Kit, Virginia Society
115	13	Newspaper Articles
115	14	Winter Family Documents

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