

History of Major K.M. Van Zandt Chapter #6

Foundation of the K.M. Van Zandt Chapter #6

Our chapter has the TEXAS SAR designation of "Chapter #6" which signifies we were the sixth separate local chapter to be organized within the Texas segment of the Sons of the American Revolution. When did the chapter form? The best information is that the chapter formed sometime in the 1930-1932 timeframe.

The Dallas Morning News, Friday, September 18, 1931, from the Fort Worth Bureau of News reported "Sons of Revolution Plan New Chapter". Sam P. Cochran of Dallas, past president of the Texas Society, Sons of the American Revolution, is expected to attend a banquet to be given at the Woman's Club Friday night when a local chapter of the society is to be organized....Three local chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution will sponsor the dinner....It has been suggested that the contemplated local chapter be named after the late Major K.M. Van Zandt."

Another newspaper article dated April 17, 1932, reads "Fort Worth this week will be represented for the first time at the annual convention of the Texas Society, Sons of the American Revolution. A delegation headed by Elmer Renfro, president of the newly chartered Maj. K.M. Van Zandt Chapter, will go to Corsicana Tuesday - anniversary of the Battle of Lexington - for the one day session. Others expected to attend from here are Sam B. Cantey, S.M. Gaines, Prof. Newton Gaines, R.W. Fender, E.P. Van Zandt, Joe Ingraham, Charles L. Rowan, Drs. Samuel A. and Valin R. Woodward."

The most comprehensive story on the origin of the chapter appears in an undated article for the newsletter THE TEXAS COMPATRIOT, a copy of which appears in the TXSSAR Society History book published in 1980. The book contains a highlight on Sam P. Cochran, who was instrumental in the origin of the K.M. Van Zandt Chapter. The article says: "the chapter had its beginning in 1930 - started by a conversation between the late Sam P. Cochran of Dallas and Dr. Valin R. Woodward, a physician in Fort Worth. At that time, there were only 9 members of the Texas Society, Sons of the American Revolution, residing in Fort Worth. Nothing was done until Woodward again suggested the matter of having a local chapter in Fort Worth at the beginning of 1932 and was finally rewarded for his efforts....a meeting was held in the Directors Room of the Fort Worth National Bank. In the meantime another member, Sam B. Cantey, Jr., was importuned to write a Constitution and the By-Laws, which were adopted at the Organization meeting, which occurred on April 1st, 1932. The following officers were elected at this meeting. Elmer Renfro, President; Sam B. Gaines, Vice President; Robert W. Fender, Registrar; Joe Ingraham, Secretary-Treasurer; Sam B. Cantey, Newton Gaines and Dr. Valin R. Woodward, Directors. Others present at the meeting were Dr. M. Lee Woodward and the late Dr. S.A. Woodward. Not present, but the name of Frank D. Kent, a recent transferred member from the Missouri State Society, was added to the roster of those whose names should appear on the Charter. It was agreed the local chapter would be named in honor of the late Major K.M. Van Zandt, who had distinguished himself as one of Fort Worth's best known citizens for the service he had rendered to Fort Worth for more than 50 years. The chapter gave a dinner at the Woman's

Club on September 17, 1932, for the purpose of receiving the Charter of the Major K.M. Van Zandt Chapter No. 6 of Texas Society, Sons of the American Revolution.

The framed Chapter Charter is maintained by the Chapter Secretary.

What do we know of these men, the early members of our chapter?

Samuel Cantey, a lawyer, was a member of the firm Cantey and Hanger, which is one of the oldest and largest law firms in Fort Worth. The name Frank D. Kent is linked to the Frank Kent automobile dealerships of Fort Worth, even to this day. Chapter member E.P. Van Zandt was a son of the late Major K.M. Van Zandt for whom the chapter was named.

Dr. Valin R. Woodward was also a strong force in the early history of TXSSAR and the K.M. Van Zandt Chapter. Dr. Valin Woodward, Irving, Texas, and his brother Cicero Smith Woodward, Fort Worth, Texas, both medical doctors in the Fort Worth area, saw a need to stimulate interest in the Texas Society, so they created a newspaper, The Texas Compatriot, which was published from 1933 until 1952. This publication became a valuable document in the early history of the TXSSAR organization.

The TXSSAR membership data identifies the first chapters: #1 is Galveston, #2 is Dallas, #3 is shown as inactive but it was the Texarkana Chapter, #4 is San Antonio, and #5 is Paul Carrington Chapter, Houston, with K.M. Van Zandt, Fort Worth at #6.

Over the years, many men have served as president of the K.M. Van Zandt Chapter, beginning in 1932 with Elmer Renfro. A list has been prepared by the chapter of those who can be identified as having served this chapter in the past as president from 1932 up to the present.

While not complete, it does give us a good picture of those who served in this office. From 1932 forward for the next 80 years, we have seen men step forward in the chapter to serve in various capacities, including the office of chapter president. Many of our members can look at that list and probably recognize the name of a past educator, local business person, family friend, or even a relative. I suspect that many of those who previously served as chapter president are related, directly or indirectly, to some of our membership roster of the 21st century.

The National Society
of the
Sons of the American Revolution



Know Ye all men by these Presents
that pursuant to the Constitution and By-Laws of the National
and Texas Societies of the Sons of the American Revolution
the aforesaid State Society has certified the

Major K. M. VanZandt Chapter
as a Chapter of the Texas Society of the Sons of
the American Revolution by resolution of the said State Society passed
on this 1st day of April 1932

Given under the Seal of this Society, this 15th day of December
in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty-two.



Secretary Adrien F. Scamillet

Clara H. Brackbill
President