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# OFFICIAL CIRCULAR

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On the 1st of May, 1869, a number of gentlemen in the city of New Orleans formed themselves into an Association in the style of the "Southern Historical Society," with headquarters to hold its seat in that city, and with the design of uniting the societies in the States of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri and Kentucky, and the District of Columbia; but New Orleans was not found a favorable location for the parent society, and therefore, under the call of the said society, a Convention was held at the Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, in Virginia, on the 14th of August, 1873, by which the society was re-organized, with a change of the seat of the parent society to the city of Richmond, Virginia.

The following resolutions were adopted by the said convention:

- Resolved*, 1. That the headquarters of the Southern Historical Society be transferred to Richmond, Virginia.
- 2. That the convention, in order to carry out the purposes proposed by the Executive Committee of the Southern Historical Society, at New Orleans, proceed to re-organize the society, with the object and purposes set forth in the annexed paper, as modified, and to elect officers.
- 3. That this organization be retained on its present basis, and that the officers shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, and Executive Committee, resident in the State of Virginia, and a Vice-President in each of the Southern States.
- 4. That each Vice-President shall be ex-officio president of the auxiliary State society, and is requested to organize the same and the affiliated local societies.
- 5. That the Secretary shall receive a salary to be fixed by the Executive Committee.
- 6. That the society adopt some financial scheme to raise funds to carry out the purposes of the organization and the publication of its historical material.

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7. That the fee of annual membership be three dollars, and of life membership fifty dollars.

8. That the publication of the material collected be made either by means of a magazine, or by occasional volumes of transactions, as may be found most expedient.

9. That the society as soon as re-organized proceed to enroll members and to extend its membership.

10. That in all questions touching the organization of the society, when a division is called for, the vote shall be taken by States, and each State shall be entitled to two votes.

The following is the paper referred to in the second resolution, being the general outline for the original organization of the society, as modified by the convention :

The Southern Historical Society is organized with the following general outline:

A parent society, to hold its seat and its archives in the city of Richmond, Virginia, with affiliated societies to be organized in all the States favorable to the object proposed; these in their turn branching into local organizations in the different townships—forming thus a wide fellowship of closely co-ordinated societies, with a common centre in the parent association in the said city.

The object proposed to be accomplished is the collection, classification, preservation, and final publication, in some form to be hereafter determined, of all the documents and facts bearing upon the eventful history of the past few years, illustrating the nature of the struggle from which the country has just emerged, defining and vindicating the principles which lay beneath it, and marking the stages through which it was conducted to its issue. It is not understood that this association shall be purely sectional, nor that its labors shall be of a partisan character.

Everything which relates to this critical period of our national history, pending the conflict, antecedent or subsequent to it, from the point of view of either, or of both the contestants; everything, in short, which shall vindicate the truth of history is to be industriously collated and filed.

It is doubtless true, that an accepted history can never be written in the midst of the stormy events of which that history is composed, nor by the agents through whose efficiency they were wrought. The strong passions which are evoked in every human conflict disturb the vision and warp the judgment, in the scales of whose criticism the necessary facts are to be weighed—even the relative importance of these facts cannot be measured by those who are in too close proximity. Scope must be afforded for the development of the remote issues before they can be brought under the range of a philosophical apprehension; and the secret thread be discovered, running through all history, upon which its single facts crystalize in the unity of some great Providential plan.



The generations of the disinterested must succeed the generations of the prejudiced before history, properly termed such, can be written. This, precisely, is the work we now attempt, to construct the archives in which shall be collected these memoirs to serve for future history.

It is believed that invaluable documents are scattered over the whole land, in loose sheets, perhaps lying in the portfolios of private gentlemen, and only preserved as souvenirs of their own parts in the historic drama.

Existing in forms so perishable, regarded, it may be, only as so much waste paper, by those into whose hands they must fall, no delay should be suffered in their collection and preservation.

There is doubtless, too, much that is yet unwritten floating only in the memories of the living, which if not speedily rescued will be swallowed in the oblivion of the grave, but which, if reduced to record and collated, would afford the key to many a cypher, in a little while to become unintelligible for want of interpretation.

All this various material, gathered from every section, will need to be industriously classified and arranged, and finally deposited in the central archives of the Society, under the care of appropriate guardians.

To this task of collection we invite the immediate attention and co-operation of our copatriots throughout the South, to facilitate which we propose the organization of State and district associations, that our whole people may be brought in harmony of action in this important matter.

The rapid changes through which the institutions of the country are now passing, and the still more stupendous revolutions in the opinions of men, remind us that we stand to-day upon the outer verge of a great historic cycle, within which a completed past will shortly be enclosed. Another cycle may touch its circumference, but the events it shall embrace will be gathered around another historic centre, and the future historian will pronounce that in stepping from the one to the other he has entered upon another and separate volume of the nation's record.

Let us, who are soon to be in that past to which we properly belong, see there are no gaps in the record.

Thus shall we discharge a duty to the fathers whose principles we inherit; to the children, who will then know whether to honor or to dishonor the sires that begot them; and, above all, to the dead heroes sleeping on the vast battle plains, from the Susquehannah to the Rio Grande, whose epitaph history yet waits to engrave upon their tombs.

The funds raised by initiation fees, assessments, donations and lectures, after defraying the current expenses, will be appropriated to the safe-keeping of the archives, and publication of the transactions.

For the accomplishment of these ends contributions are respectfully solicited from all parties interested in the establishment and prosperity of the Southern Historical Society.

Contributions to the archives and library of the Society are respectfully solicited under the following specific divisions:

1. The histories and historical collections of the individual States from the earliest periods to the present time, including travels, journals and maps.

2. Complete files of the newspapers, periodicals, literary, scientific and medical journals of the Southern States, from the earliest times to the present day, including especially the period of the recent American civil war.

3. Geological, topographical, agricultural, manufacturing and commercial reports, illustrating the statistics, climate, soil, resources, products and commerce of the Southern States.

4. Works, speeches, sermons and discourses relating to the recent conflict and political changes. Congressional and State reports during the recent war.

5. Official reports and descriptions, by officers and privates and newspaper correspondents and eye-witnesses, of campaigns, military operations, battles and sieges.

6. Military maps.

7. Reports upon the munitions, arms and equipments, organization, number and losses of the various branches of the Southern armies—infantry, artillery, cavalry, ordnance and commissary and quartermaster departments.

8. Reports of the Adjutant General of the late C. S. A., and of the Adjutant Generals of the armies, departments, districts and States, showing the resources of the individual States, the available fighting population, the number, organization and losses of the forces called into actual service.

9. Naval operations of the Confederate States.

10. Operations of the Nitre and Mining Bureau.

11. Commercial operations.

12. Foreign relations, diplomatic correspondence, etc.

13. Currency.

14. Medical statistics and medical reports.

15. Names of all officers, soldiers and sailors in the military and naval service of the Confederate States who were killed in battle or died of disease or wounds.

16. Names of all wounded officers, soldiers and sailors. The nature of the wounds should be attached to each name, also the loss of one or more limbs should be carefully noted.

17. Published reports and manuscripts relating to civil prisoners held during the war.

18. All matters, published or unpublished, relating to the treatment, diseases, mortality, and exchange of prisoners of war.

19. The conduct of the hostile armies in the Southern States; private and public losses during the war; treatment of citizens by hostile forces.

20. Southern poetry, ballads, songs, photographs of distinguished Confederates, etc.

The following are the officers of the Southern Historical Society, under the reorganization :

*Parent Society, Richmond, Va.*—Gen. JUBAL A. EARLY, President; Hon. ROBERT M. T. HUNTER, Vice-President; Rev. J. WM. JONES, Secretary and Treasurer.

*Executive Committee.*—Gen. Dabney H. Maury, Chairman; Col. Charles S. Venable, Col. Wm. Preston Johnson, Col. Robert E. Withers, Col. Joseph Mayo, Col. Geo. W. Munford, Lt. Col. Archer Anderson, Maj. Robert Stiles, Geo. L. Christian, Esq.

*Vice-Presidents of States.*—Gen. Isaac R. Trimble, Maryland; Gov. Zebulon B. Vance, North Carolina; Gen. M. C. Butler, South Carolina; Gen. A. H. Colquit, Georgia; Admiral R. Semmes, Alabama; Col. W. Call, Florida; Gen. Wm. T. Martin, Mississippi; Gen. J. B. Hood, Louisiana; Col. T. M. Jack, Texas; Hon. A. H. Garland, Arkansas; Gov. Isham G. Harris, Tennessee; Gen. J. S. Marmaduke, Missouri; Gen. S. B. Buckner, Kentucky; W. W. Corcoran, Esq., District of Columbia.

The secretary elected by the Society (Col. Geo. W. Munford) faithfully carried out his instructions until other public duties constrained him to resign, and the present incumbent was elected.

The legislature of Virginia passed a bill giving the society such quarters in the State capitol as the Governor and Superintendent of Public Buildings might assign them, and we have thus secured an excellent office where our archives are as safe as those of the State. The work of collecting material has steadily progressed, and the degree of success which has attended the effort may be inferred from the following very general summary of *material on hand* made in the last annual report of the Executive Committee :

“In the way of official reports we have a very nearly complete set of all the reports printed by the Confederate departments, embracing messages of the President and Heads of Departments, reports of battles, statutes at large of Congress, acts and resolutions of the Senate and House of Representatives; general orders of the Adjutant-General’s department, and a large collection of reports of the several State governments. We have in MSS. a full set of reports of Longstreet’s corps; all of Ewell’s reports from the opening of the campaign of ’63 to the close of the war; all of the papers of General J. E. B. Stuart; a full set of the papers of General S. D. Lee’s corps, and a large number of most valuable reports of other officers of the different armies of the Confederacy. We have a complete set of the reports of the Committee on the Conduct of the War to the United States Congress, which embraces testimony of the leading Federal generals on nearly every one of their campaigns and battles; and we have also a number of other Federal official reports, and are arranging to get the whole of them. We

are indebted to General A. A. Humphries, Chief of Engineers of the United States army, for a set of beautiful maps illustrating the movements of the armies, and for the courteous promise of adding other maps to those sent. We have in MS. a full sketch of the history of Longstreet's corps, by Gen. E. P. Alexander, and a number of MS. narratives of other commands, campaigns, and movements, written by those whose position and reliability render them very valuable. Dr. J. R. Stevenson has given us documents fully vindicating the Confederate authorities from the charge of cruelty to Federal prisoners. We have a very large collection of pamphlets, published during the war and since, which throw light on our history. We have full bound files of the New York *Herald* and *Tribune* for the years of the war, and also files of several Richmond papers for the same period. General Early has presented us with a bound volume of articles written by himself on various matters pertaining to the war, and the secretaries have earnestly sought to gather and preserve everything which appears in the press and seems of any value.

"We have on our shelves many of the books that have been written about the war, and are arranging to secure all that can be of any possible value to the future historian. In fine, we have already in our archives invaluable material for the history of every part of the war. We have the promise of valuable additions, and we hope soon to have a complete arsenal from which the defender of our cause may draw any desired weapon."

On the 1st of January last we began the publication of MONTHLY PAPERS, which will be made up of selections from our most valuable MSS. and documents, and contain sketches and discussions of the most important questions and events of the late war.

We mail our Papers free of charge to *members of the Society who have paid their fees*, and to other subscribers at \$3 per annum in advance.

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#### How Our Friends Can Help Us.

1. Become members of the Society by sending the Secretary \$50 for a *Life* member's certificate, or \$3 for an *Annual* membership.
2. If you are already an annual member, see that your renewal fees are regularly paid.
3. Talk to your friends about the Society, and endeavor to induce them to become members.
4. Send us, and try to induce others to send us, material for our archives—such as is indicated above.
5. Many may find it convenient to make contributions of money

to enable the Society to carry on its work. If you cannot contribute as much as Mr. Corcoran's liberal donation of \$500 per annum, you may aid us by donations of smaller sums.

6. Aid us in securing in every locality efficient and reliable *canvassers*, to whom we can pay a liberal commission.

7. Send us advertisements for our advertising pages, which we will insert at the following rates:

	12 mos.	6 mos.	3 mos.	1 mo.
1 page.....	\$75	\$40	\$25	\$10
$\frac{1}{2}$ page.....	40	25	15	6
$\frac{1}{4}$ page.....	25	15	8	3

All communications should be addressed to

REV. J. WM. JONES,  
*Secretary Southern Historical Society,*  
 Richmond, Va.

OFFICE So. HIST. SOCIETY,  
 March 20, 1876.

Walter D. D. D. Gen. A. M.

Southern Div. Society

Richmond, Va.





















































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