

Mehitable Higginbotham & the D.A.R.

Thankee there, Ms. Nola.

Way back yonder, when I done got asked to join the D.A.R. I done thought it warn't nothing but a bunch of little old ladies getting together a-sippin' tea. They had tea-parties just to show off all that chiner and silver that their maids had done polished.

Well, I figured it wouldn't hurt me none to hop-nob with some of that high society and to rub elbos with the elite of our area, so I practiced holding out my pinkie just so – and I done went.

You coulda bowled me over with a lost ancestor. Warn't nothin like I thought. I really always thought that D. A. R. stood for Darling Addleheaded Richpersons. Well, they wasn't like that at all – they wadn't even OLD – they was some right down younguns there.

This little ole lady they called a Reject done banged her gavel and said the meeting was about to begin and for everbody to sit down.

I had already checked and I hadn't found no snuff cans, so I figured that if'n they didn't dip snuff, they wadn't gonna be servin' any of that intoxicating stuff either.

So, you can see why I was a mite concerned when she done called for the champagne. Lordy, I thought, it ain't tea at all theys a-drinkin at these meetings but that hard stuff, until I found out she had called on the Chaplain and not for champagne.

Well, that Chaplain started the whole shebang off with a prayer thanking the Lord for lettin them get together to do their thing. Right away I knowed that I was gonna like this Society of Ladies.

They commenced to talk about patriotism. I guessed I was about as patriotic as the next guy. I knew the pledge of allegiance. What else did you need to know? But they done talked about the flag of the United States of America and how we should always show respect for what it stands for. They talked about the constitution and love for our country. They talked about conservation. Even talked bout the part that the ladies of the D.A.R. could play in the defense of our country. They talked about the schools the D.A.R. done supported and all them little children gettin book larning – and when they said that American's creed – well, I just stood there a=juggling my tea cup and Lordy, my heart done swool up with so much pride I thought I'd bust!

Then they commenced to talk about them Revoltin Ancesters. You know them is the ancestors that done fought in the Revolution – that's the war we done won from them British fellers. It seemed if'n I wanted to belong to that there organization, I had to prove without a shadder of a doubt that my family went right back to that big war and I had one of them Revoltin' Ancesters. They say that everbody has at least one (ifn' your ancestors didn't come over the ocean on the Titantic.)

My heart was just touched so with all the goings on of that there organization, I knowed I had to get on with it and get my Revolting Ancestor. Well, I finally done it, but it wasn't easy. Sometime when I got more time I'll tell you all about my ancestors that done skipped the country or died and didn't tell nobody– making it harder than a turtle's shell to waltz right back to one of them hero's who done fought for the freedom of our country.

Now when Miss Nola done asked me if I'd speak to this group of members, guests and prospective members on something educational in line with the D.A.R. policies, I thought I might could use my experiences as a county clerk to help someone else prove their relations. I was, you know, a county clerk – way up yonder in Paducah County.

I know for a fact that most of you have written to a courthouse some time or other, looking for your lost ancestor. Well, I have a collection of letters that people have written to the courthouse. So as to help you know how NOT to write to a courthouse, I'm gonna read some of these letters.