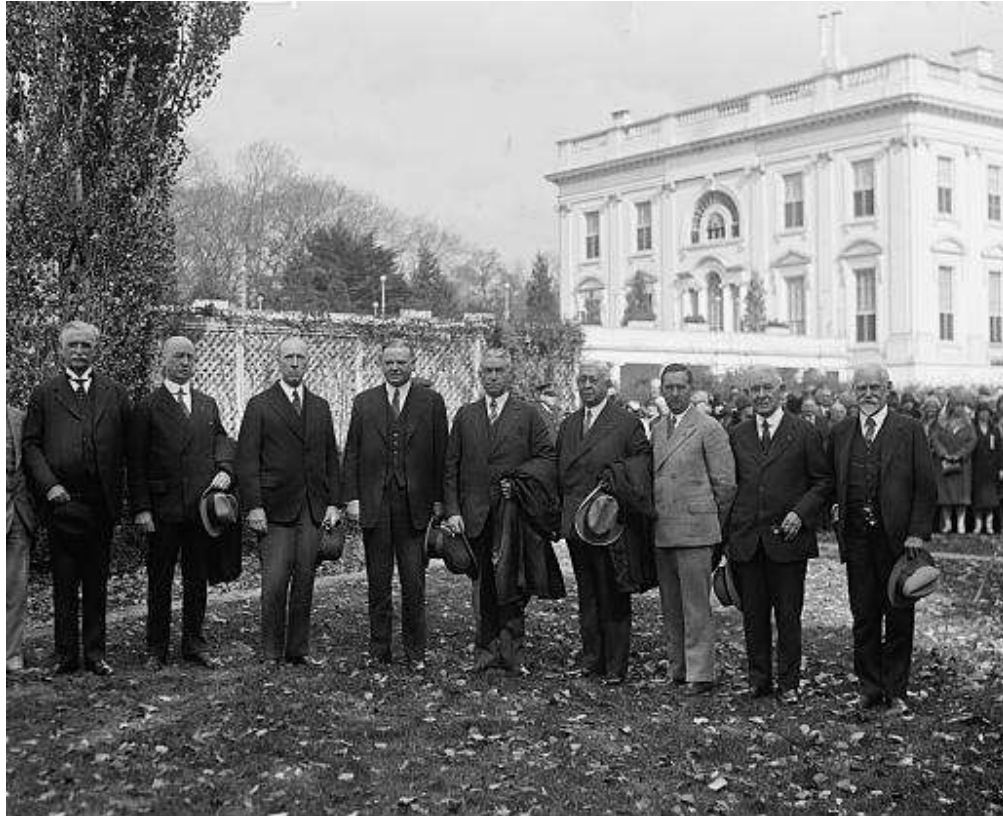


IOWA HISTORY



Courtesy Library of Congress
President Hoover with Sons of American Revolution in 1919

Sons of Revolution Vets in Iowa

When Ira Lepper died in January 1908 a Sioux City newspaper claimed he was the last surviving son of a veteran of the American Revolution in Iowa. His dad had fought under Gen. Horatio Gates. Ira was born in New York; but his family moved to the area that became Iowa in 1829, living in a log cabin during his early years. He was 82 at the time of his death.

Within a day of the announcement of Ira's death, another Iowan stepped forward to claim that he was also a son of a revolutionary soldier. Wesley Johnson Banks lived in Centerville, and he said in addition to his dad's service both his grandfathers and two uncles had fought in the Revolution. He said his granddads, Linn Banks and William Brown, had both fought under Gen. George Washington.

Wesley's dad, William, had enlisted in the army from Virginia at the age of 16. He reached the rank of sergeant by the time the war was over. William died in 1839 in Indiana.

In an interview with a reporter from the *Des Moines Register* Wesley said he was born in 1825 in Kentucky but moved to Indiana as a youngster. He had also served his country in time of

war by enlisting at the age of 19 with an Indiana regiment in the Mexican-American War, also known as the Mexican War. He had served under Col. James Drake.

Wesley had served in California in the Los Angeles area in 1848 and in Monterey, where he received an honorable discharge in March 1849. He said he returned home to Indiana by way of Panama and New Orleans. Soon after that, he moved to Appanoose County in Iowa.

The reporter was “impressed” with Wesley. He wrote that it was “a great pleasure” and “high privilege” to visit with the old veteran. In the reporter’s words, Wesley was “a storehouse of information.”

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