

Formation History of South Carolina's Federation

In the beginning..... (1) back in **1883**, the U.S. Congress established the Federal Civil Service with the "Pendleton Act." In **1920**, the Civil Service Retirement Act was passed by Congress to provide a maximum retirement annuity of **\$720 per year!** Then in **1921** the National Association of Retired Civil Employees, (NARCE), renamed the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) in 1971, which was finally changed to the current, **National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association** in 2005, was organized by 14 federal workers to seek improved retirement benefits. As the years progressed to **1926**, Congress increased annuities to a maximum of **\$1,000 per year**. During WWII, in **1942**, Congress established age and years-of-service requirements allowing employees with 30 years of service to retire at the age of **55**. As the years progressed, from **1943 to 1961**, retirement eligibility requirements and benefits were liberalized, and Congress approved periodic increases in annuities. Meanwhile, in **1959**, Congress enacted **FEHBP** to provide health insurance for federal workers and their families. And then, in **1962**, Automatic cost-of-living adjustments (**COLA**), based on the Consumer Price Index went into effect.

(2) It wasn't until **1952**, when Columbia formed Chapter 87 and North Charleston began Chapter 72, followed soon after by Greenville Chapter 121 and Spartanburg Chapter 560, both being chartered in **1955**, that NARFE was established here in South Carolina. In **1960**, those few chapters, together with nine or more North Carolina NARFE Chapters, comprised the "**Carolinas Federation of Chapters**".

Mr. E.R. Thayer of Spartanburg Chapter 560 was the 1st Vice President of the Carolinas Federation. James Chester Thomas, of Greenville Chapter 121 and Glenn L. Fuller of the Spartanburg Chapter 560, were on the Legislative Committee of the Carolinas Federation.

It seemed that North Carolina had more NARFE Chapters and could out-vote the South Carolina NARFE Chapters and, as such, a few of the South Carolinian's didn't like that. So Mr. Thomas and other South Carolina NARFE leaders sought to unite the South Carolina Chapters in the formation of a separate Federation.

By **1963**, largely through the single-handed efforts of Mr. Thomas, NARFE Chapters were organized at Anderson, Greenwood and Newberry, thus giving South Carolina more than enough Chapters to constitute its' own Federation. After some informal sessions, and consultation with all Sout Carolina Chapter officers and Carolinas Federation officials, Mr. Thomas wrote the South Carolina Chapters, as follows, on **April 3, 1964**, "*I am pleased to announce that the final organizational meeting of the new South Carolina Federation of NARFE Chapters will be held at the Jefferson Hotel, Columbia, S.C., at 10:00 AM, April 23, 1964. Mr. Nichols, National Vice President, is being sent to the meeting and will bring us a message from the National office in Washington, D.C.*"

Delegates of the seven South Carolina NARFE Chapters met **April 23, 1964**, elected Mr. John Chester Thomas as Temporary Chairman; voted to withdraw from the Carolinas Federation; and to form the South Carolina Federation of NARFE Chapters. Under the guidance of Mr. Nichols, a petition was prepared, a full slate of officers was elected, and installed, with Mr. James Chester

Thomas as the first South Carolina Federation President, and the new **South Carolina Federation of NARFE Chapters** was born.

This is the first installment of what is hoped to be a continuing series of historical events that relate to each NARFE Chapter, located in the South Carolina Federation. Ideally, I envision promoting each Chapter's history, including any interesting notations, pertinent to NARFE members, from its' inception to the present, in future newsletters. Perhaps in this manner each of us will share a sense of "belonging" to a family, with "roots" and not just to an organization. I have made an email appeal to all NARFE Chapter members to please forward their Chapter's chronological history to my attention. It could be submitted simply as fragmented notations and not necessarily in the form of an essay. Whatever one considers newsworthy is welcomed; including dates and names of elected officers, outstanding members, NARFE notables and any Chapter accomplishments, including the explanation of an alternate Chapter namesake. These could be submitted, as attachments, and sent to: paddona@scnarfe.org. Please note in the description that it is: **NARFE Chapter XXX History**

Footnote: With deference to Genesis1, (1) early history: thanks to NARFE Chapter 1373, Marion, KY. (2) Federation history and NARFE notes: thanks to Chapter 560 - McLemore Roberts, SCFED Historian 1976-1985 and Chapter 121 – Bob Muller, SCFED Newsletter editor