

**Mrs. Mary E. Mason**  
**4<sup>th</sup> National President**

Mrs. J.S. Mason was elected the National President at the 5<sup>th</sup> National Encampment, held in Minneapolis on August 9-10, 1892.

Mrs. Mason was born Mary Evaline Allen on November 24, 1845, in Brunswick, Ohio. She was the eldest of four children born to Hiram and Lucy Blanchard Allen. When she was two years old, she and her parents moved to Medina Ohio. Her mother died in 1863 and her father remarried in 1869.

She married Joshua Seymour Mason, a printer, on December 31, 1868, and the two moved to Cleveland, Ohio.

Joshua was born in Delta, New York, on May 30, 1844. He enlisted in Co. F, 103<sup>rd</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry in August 1862. During the Atlanta Campaign, he was shot in the right shoulder at Olley's Creek near Kennesaw, Georgia, on June 30, 1864. He was subsequently discharged on October 12<sup>th</sup> and received an invalid pension in November 1864.



Mary and Joshua soon moved back to Medina and had one child, Joshua Ezra (1878-1943).

Joshua, Sr., a prominent merchant in his community, was a member of Medina's H.G. Blake GAR Post 169 and served four terms as post commander. He also "commanded" the 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which was a reunion association. In 1893-94, he served as Department Senior Vice Commander.

Mary was described as a faithful, consistent Christian, a woman of pleasing personality, great natural refinement and culture. Her unselfishness and an earnest desire to be of service made a host of friends in all walks of life.

By 1885, Mary had become very active in the Order of the Eastern Star. She was elected Treasurer of the Grand chapter of Indiana and four years later, was elevated to Grand Matron.

However, Mrs. Mason was constantly reminded of the war's cost to her permanently injured veteran husband and his family. She became a member of the Ladies Aid Society early in its history. In 1887, Medina's LAS #13 was installed in her home. She was a charter member and served as its first chaplain. In 1888, her society sent her as a delegate to the Division Encampment at Sidney, Ohio. There, she was elected to the Division Council and as a delegate to the Second National LAS Encampment, held at Wheeling. She returned to the Ohio Encampment in 1889 with an excellent report. Mary was President of her home Society when she was elected Division President at the 1889 Encampment. In June 1890, at Mansfield, Mary was re-elected the Ohio Division President.

It was clear that the Woman's Relief Corps was still uncomfortable with the term "Auxiliary." Five years earlier, LAS National President Laura Miller had addressed the term as it applied to the LAS in a circular. In September 1890, Mrs. Mason spoke to the 17<sup>th</sup> Ohio Brigade Reunion (of which her husband was commander). She said:

"From the relations we sustain we should here find our friends. I am sorry to say we have enemies; but no excuse can be offered for ours. The Sons of Veterans fraternity is now an established fact. They, therefore, have an auxiliary. All societies have kindred organizations. Should a vast order, numbering 125,000, abstain from the restraining influences of the gentler sex. The Ladies Aid Society may become the barometer which shall indicate the moral position of the Sons of Veterans. But we are always ready to lend a hand to the Relief Corps. They have their hands full, and they cannot divide their interest. We do not desire to interfere with them, but to assist them and when they lay down the mantle to wear it with grace. The existence and growth of one order proves its necessity. We now have 6,900 members. I am grieved because of the resolutions adopted by the Ladies Relief Corps at the Boston assembly. The stand taken reflects no credit upon them. We desire to aid the Relief Corps. But no matter as to our treatment, we will continue to do you part. They need not fear us, we are only a spoke in the great wheel."

At the 1891 National LAS Encampment in Minneapolis, it was noted that there were 4,249 sisters in the Order, a gain of 1,216 over the previous year. There was over \$1,000 in the treasury and an increase from four divisions to nine. Upon being elected National President, Mrs. Mason appointed Mrs. A.P. Davis Chaplain-in-Chief.

By the time of the 6<sup>th</sup> National Encampment, the Order had grown to 8,000 sisters in 250 societies and ten divisions. Mary was presented a handsome Past President's badge at the end of her first term.

Mary had joined the Woman's Relief Corps, presumably to improve relations between the WRC and the LAS. In 1892, Mary was elected Senior Vice President of Medina's Hamlin Woman's Relief Corps.

Mrs. Mason was re-elected at the 6<sup>th</sup> National LAS Encampment, held in Helena, Montana, on August 9-10, 1892. One newspaper reported, "She showed the same sound judgement and remarkable executive ability, which she had previously shown. Keen to perceive, quick to decide, yet cautious withal, prompt to act, and keeping abreast of the times on subjects of the day. Despite her LAS responsibilities, she found time for Church and family. Her gentle Christian character permeated all of the work and her administration."

One of the highlights of the second term was a receiving line at the Capitol rotunda in which Mrs. Mason participated with Mrs. John Logan, Miss Clara Barton, the heads of the WRC and Daughters of Veterans, as well as the wives of many of the heads of state.

In 1893, at the end of her second term, she was presented an elegant five-pointed star with diamond center. She was elected National Treasurer.

Joshua died on May 14, 1898, and Mary filed for a widow's pension that July. Joshua Jr. finished his 3<sup>rd</sup> year at Oberlin College and continued to live with his mother while working as an assistant bank cashier.

Mary died quietly on January 24, 1914, and was buried in Medina's Spring Grove Cemetery.

By PCinC Steve Michaels with research assistance by PDC Kent Peterson

**Sources:**

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