

# AHS Regions – An Organizational History

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## The Beginning

July, 1946, in Shenandoah, Iowa, was not the beginning of plans for a daylily society, only the end of the beginning. There was an independent attempt to found an American Hemerocallis Society much earlier in 1946, possibly even late 1945, based upon letters from Dr. A.B. Stout, Curator of Education and Laboratories at the New York Botanical Garden to Dr. J.B.S. Norton of the University of Maryland, who acted as the registrar of daylilies through the American Amaryllis Society (later The American Plant Life Society).

On January 23, 1946, in a handwritten appendage to a letter to Norton, Stout stated, “I have been urged to help in forming a Daylily Society – but have been able to steer things to the Am. Amaryllis Soc. which does a fair job for a start. They are pretty dumb on many matters – but perhaps will improve.” On April 1, 1946, Stout ends a letter to Norton with this paragraph: “Thanks for your news regarding the progress of the Daylily Society. I had some correspondence several months ago, but have received nothing lately ... I think it would be well to cooperate if the matter has proceeded as far as you indicate. I presume the Society would be dominated largely by commercial interests.”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, Norton's letters to Stout on the subject do not exist, but it is unlikely either is referring to the upcoming gathering in Iowa as nothing suggests that either was involved in Round Robins.

But, indeed such an effort had been initiated by Everett Lilly of Decatur, IL, a commercial grower of iris, peonies, gladiolus, daffodils, and other perennials, including hemerocallis. He began to solicit donations of \$3 to \$5 to help establish a society.<sup>2</sup> His solicitation letter already had endorsements from many famous hybridizers and growers like Ophelia Taylor, Hugh Russell, Elizabeth Nesmith, Ezra Kraus, Elmer Claar, and others. It is only possible to estimate the time-frame of his undated letter by assuming that this was the same request received by Dr. Stout.

Why Lilly's effort failed is not known. It is doubtful that it was due to Stout, who initially appeared against it in January of 1946, yet appeared to be willing to cooperate by April when the effort seemed to be progressing. Perhaps it was simply because that it had not yet come to fruition, thus, became moot by the time that members of Round Robins from around the country gathered at the Henry Field Seed Company in Shenandoah, Iowa, on July 13, 1946. The country did not need two competing hemerocallis organizations.

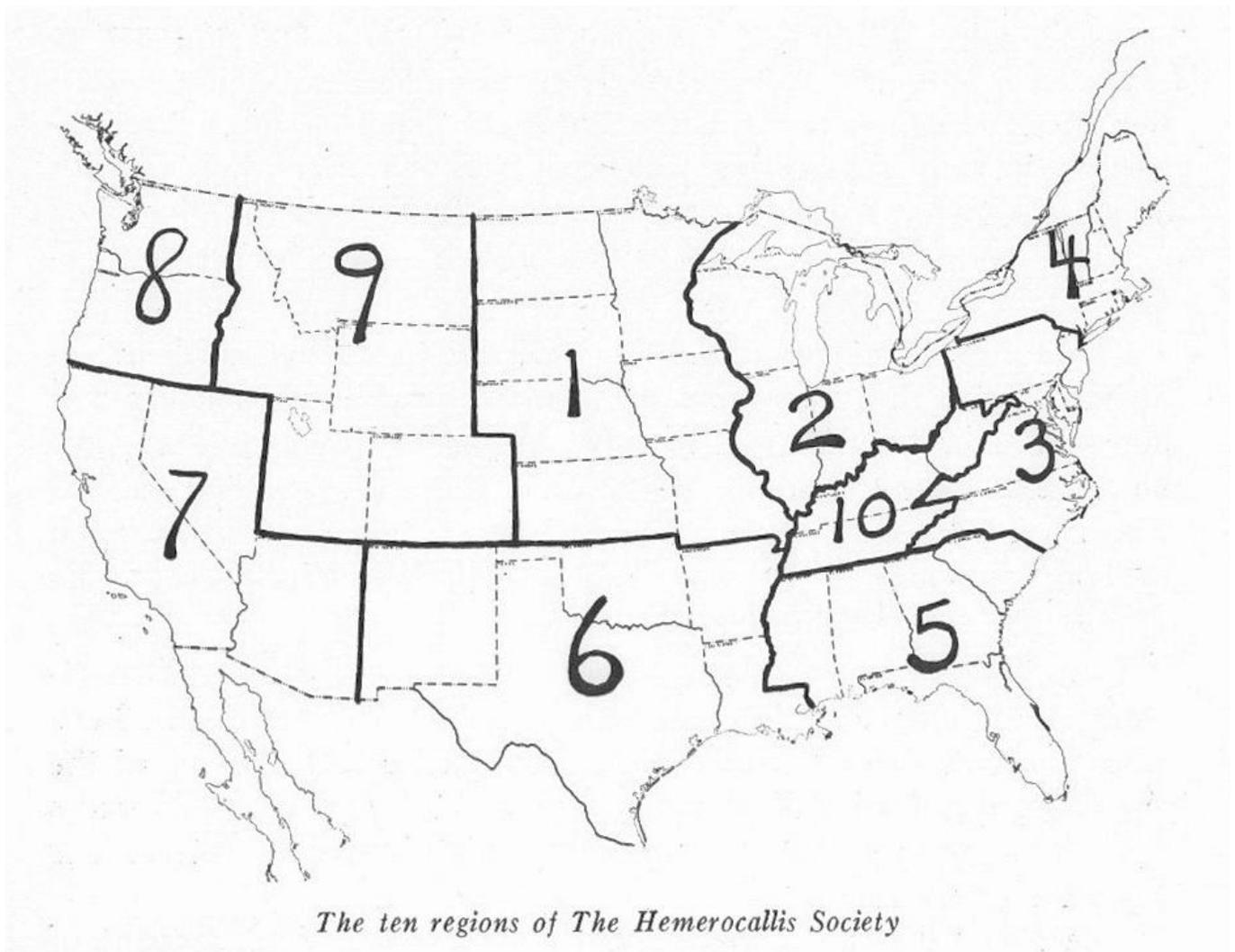
These robin correspondents listened to Helen Field Fischer's '*Garden Club of the Air*,' broadcast from Henry Field's radio station, KFNF. The robins formed prior to WWII, in part due to a column in *Flower Grower* magazine and in part due to a suggestion from Mrs. Fischer, who could not answer all of their questions on the air. For some years prior to the war, the Henry Field Seed Company had also sponsored flower shows and the main impetus for meeting in 1946 appeared to be to resume the shows, which were not devoted totally to hemerocallis, and to give robin members a chance to meet face-to-face. Obviously this was not the group “dominated by commercial interests” to which Stout had referred in his letters. It appears that the decision to form a Midwest Hemerocallis Society was not planned in advance, parallel to Mr. Lilly's, and nothing exists to suggest that they even knew of his efforts. The idea seems to have come about somewhat spontaneously during the flower show, or Round Robin Convention if you will. Officers

were elected at that time and by March of 1947, the first Yearbook had been published by Helen's daughter, Gretchen Harshbarger.<sup>3</sup>

The successful Midwest Hemerocallis Society only existed until the summer of 1948 when it was determined at the annual business meeting that it was no longer localized in the Midwest, but had become national in scope. Thus, the name was changed to The Hemerocallis Society. It was also decided that it was not possible to direct all the activities out of the office of the president and that a division of administrative responsibility was required. The need for regions had risen!

#### **Region Formation – 1948-1949<sup>4</sup>**

The first regional organization was published in March 1949, so the officers may have devised the structure anytime between the July 1948 annual meeting and early 1949. Historical records do not say. States were grouped into ten regions according to area, population, and climatic conditions.



Ignoring Canadian provinces for a moment, the regions which differed the most from those of the present day were regions 1, 3, 5, 6, and 10. Region 1 contained seven states: North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri. Region 3 included North Carolina while excluding West Virginia. The latter was allocated to Region 10 along with Tennessee and Kentucky. Region 5 included the entire Southeast: South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. Finally, Region 6 included Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

### **Regional Changes – 1951**<sup>5</sup>

Additional boundary changes came quickly. In 1951, regions 11 and 12 were formed while others were modified. Region 11 consisted of Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas – the latter two having been pulled from Region 6 and the others from Region 1. Region 3 gained West Virginia from Region 10 and lost North Carolina to Region 5. Region 5 lost both Alabama and Mississippi which moved into Region 10 and Florida spun off to create Region 12.

Further, the board of directors “resolved that all territory in Canada adjacent to the border shall become affiliated with the adjoining and contiguous district at the option of the members in Canada.” Interestingly, none would vote to affiliate until 1995.

### **Incorporation – 1955**<sup>6</sup>

In February, 1955, the society incorporated in Iowa as The American Hemerocallis Society (AHS), and Louisiana spun off from Region 6 to become Region 13. Most interestingly, the adopted constitution specified that there would be fifteen directors, although there were only thirteen regions. Were they thinking ahead, or just making the process of electing directors easier – five per year! The election process in the early days of AHS allowed for election by a national nominating committee that made selections based upon Society needs, thus, some regions had multiple directors, while others had none.

### **Another Region Forms – 1957**<sup>7</sup>

In 1957, Alabama and Mississippi, having been moved from Region 5 to Region 10 in 1951, now spun off to become Region 14.

### **The Last Region – 1960**<sup>8</sup>

In the summer of 1959, members of Region 5 (GA, SC, and NC) met in the garden of Regional Vice President's (RVP) Charlotte Holman, in Timmonsville, SC, and voted that North and South Carolina wished to become a region. In 1960, this was accomplished.

From 1960 to the present, there have been some state and province adjustments, but no new regions.

### **Moving Arkansas – 1970-1971**

In December 1970 the Region 13 RVP Report indicated that the states of Arkansas and Louisiana had polled their members and requested that the Board of Directors consider reassignment of Arkansas to Region 13.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning in 1971, the organization was changed to move Arkansas from Region 11 into Region 13.<sup>10</sup>

## **Alaska and Hawaii – Finally** <sup>11</sup>

Although Alaska and Hawaii gained statehood in 1959, it was not until 1983 that they were made part of Region 8, along with Oregon and Washington. While Alaska made sense geographically, Hawaii seemed a strange fit. Why was it not part of Region 7 where it seemed more climatically compatible. That was to come much later.

## **Region 9 – A Restructuring Proposal** <sup>12</sup>

At the 1995 fall board meeting in Kansas City, MO, Region 9 director Dwaine Kurtz made a proposal for restructuring Region 9 – essentially a proposal to disband it. His rationale was based upon the fact that most regional activities centered around Denver and that neither Montana nor Idaho members were inclined to travel south. Their inclination was to either travel west to Seattle or east to Minnesota. He felt the six members in Wyoming were “not significant enough to dictate region retention nor boundaries.” Lastly, he felt that the future affiliation of Colorado and Utah was a “decision challenge – east for Colorado, west for Utah.” There is no motion recorded that the board tabled this proposal, but no action to reassign states was made either.

## **Canada Starts To Come Aboard**

Remember that resolution way back in 1951! Finally efforts were initiated. A motion in the summer of 1992 asked that Long Range Planning evaluate the desire of Western Canada to become Region 16 with a report due that fall. No report was forthcoming, however.

In 1995, at the summer board meeting in Knoxville, TN, a request was again made that Canada become a separate region. However, since most of the Canadian members at that time were in the western sections, the chair of Administrative Services moved to extend an invitation to British Columbia to join Region 8. This passed and the deadline to hear from Canadian members was October 30. The cover of the regional newsletter of Fall 1995 states that it is “*American Hemerocallis Society's first International Region*”. The RVP's report in that issue stated that the vote was resoundingly to do just that! <sup>13</sup>

At the 1996 summer board meeting in Denver, CO, director Jim Brennan of Region 4 moved that action be taken to incorporate the Canadian Provinces of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Quebec into Region 4, effective upon ratification by a majority of those responding to an official AHS Ballot. This was in keeping with the process outlined in the 1951 motion. By the fall of 1996, this had been accomplished as noted by the cover of the Region 4 newsletter which “Welcomed Canada.” Their RPD wrote that they decided to initiate such a request based on the B.C. effort of 1995. <sup>14</sup>

The fall board meeting of 1997 moved to align Manitoba with Region 1 effective the start of 1998.

## **Hawaii and the Yukon**

In January, 1998, Region 8 grew again in geographical size with the inclusion of Canada's Yukon territory, which had no AHS members, but it lost a few members as Hawaii was reassigned to Region 7 – a more sensible place, climate-wise. <sup>15</sup>

## The Rest of Canada

At the Fall Board Meeting of 1998, the Board approved Region 9 adding the Canadian Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, effective on January 1, 1999.<sup>16</sup>

At the same meeting, the Board approved the Northwest Territories being aligned with Region 8 officially on January 1, 1999, although Region 8 had already listed it on their fall 1998 newsletter.<sup>17</sup> An interesting aside: The Northwest Territories entered the Canadian Confederation in 1870, but the current borders were formed April 1, 1999 when Nunavut split off. While Nunavut is mostly Arctic tundra, the Northwest Territories have a slightly warmer climate and is mostly boreal forest, but with about half the territory north of the tree line. At that time, there was serious discussion of Canada renaming the territories, possibly to an Aboriginal name like “Denenduh,” which meant “our land.” As a prank, some suggested they name it “Bob” and that was supposedly near or at the top of public opinion polls. However, nothing changed.

In the fall of 2001, the cover of the Region 8 newsletter, *The Pacific Daylily*, showed that Nunavut was then part of the region, although no Board motion has yet been found which mentions this fact.<sup>18</sup> In fact, it was not until the winter issue of 2004 that *The Daylily Journal* shows Nunavut on the Society's Regional Officers page.<sup>19</sup> Region 8, while one of the smallest regions in membership would appear, by far, to be the largest in pure land mass, covering the daylily-friendly British Columbia to the pack ice of the Arctic where AHS has no members and probably fewer daylilies among the ice flows. Thus, some of the Canadian Provinces are not directly north of their respective AHS regions as the founders envisioned.

The only AHS region bordering Canada which did not align with a Canadian province is AHS Region 2.

## Region 20

The phrase “Region 20” was once used administratively by Executive Secretary Ellie Launius, and can still be heard in some circles today, to account for International members in the membership database. However, there was never an International Region and none exists today. In the fall of 1995, the board of directors voted to change the term Region 20 to International Members. In the fall of 1999, the Bylaws were changed to establish a new classification of International Memberships. By the summer of 2000, the By-laws were changed to define International members as all who resided outside of the United States and Canada. In the summer of 2007, several doing-business-as (DBA) names were created. One of those DBA names was The International Daylily Society. The international community is served by the AHS International Membership Secretary, originally the Foreign Secretary.

## What's Next

The founders based the initial regional make-up on geographical area, population, and climatic conditions. But, the initial By-laws placed no restrictions in regard to any of those criteria. They did limit the board to fifteen directors, however, which on the surface appears to limit the growth of new regions, unless some have no representation. But, the current AHS By-laws differ in two key ways that affect regions, stating that:

“It is desired that no region comprise less than two and one-half (2.5) percent or more than fifteen (15) percent of the membership unless geographical consideration would make it extremely difficult for the region to operate as a homogeneous unit.” [underlining is the author's]

Further, in regard to representation the current By-laws state:

“The Board of Directors shall consist of at least as many directors as the number of regions designated ...”

For many years there have been some regions near or below the noted lower population percentage and at least one near or above the fifteen percent limit. But, these limits are stated as a “desire,” not a mandate by AHS, and the By-laws do provide the caveat for either the status quo or future change based upon population and geographical homogeneity. Changing boundaries are an AHS tradition as seen by decades of reassignments, and both of these revisions in the By-laws provide flexibility for meeting future needs.



## Bibliography

- <sup>1</sup> – Correspondence between Dr. Stout and Dr. J.B.S. Norton  
(Norton, like Stout, was a member of the American Amaryllis Society (AAS), formed in 1934, later to become The American Plant Life Society. While Stout's 1934 book, *Daylilies*, published the named daylily cultivars up to that year, effectively being the first checklist, *Herbertia*, the publication of the American Amaryllis Society, took on that role from then until a daylily society was formed. Norton, an early registrar within AAS, would become one of the compilers of the first daylily checklist in collaboration between The Hemerocallis Society and The American Plant Life Society in 1949. Other notables from the amaryllis organization would become the backbone of the early scientific movement within the daylily society).
- <sup>2</sup> – Solicitation letter from Everett Lilly, undated (presumed to be late 1945 or early 1946)
- <sup>3</sup> – *Daylilies – A Fifty-Year Affair: The Story of a Society and Its Flower*, Frances Gatlin, editor, 1995
- <sup>4</sup> – *The Hemerocallis Society Newsletter*, March 1949
- <sup>5</sup> – *The Hemerocallis Society Newsletter*, December 1951
- <sup>6</sup> – *American Hemerocallis Society 1955 Yearbook*, Volume 9
- <sup>7</sup> – *The Hemerocallis Journal 1957 Yearbook*, Volume 11
- <sup>8</sup> – *The Hemerocallis Journal 1960 Yearbook*, Volume 11
- <sup>9</sup> – *The Hemerocallis Journal 1970*, Volume 24, Issue 4
- <sup>10</sup> – *The Hemerocallis Journal 1971*, Volume 25, Issue 1
- <sup>11</sup> – *The Daylily Journal*, Spring 1983, Volume 37, Issue 1
- <sup>12</sup> – AHS Agenda Book, Fall 1995
- <sup>13</sup> – *The Pacific Daylily*, Region 8 Newsletter Fall 1995. Volume 9, Issue 4
- <sup>14</sup> – *Daylilies in the GREAT-er Northeast*, Region 4 Newsletter Fall 96/Winter 97
- <sup>15</sup> – *The Daylily Journal*, Spring 1998, Volume 53, Issue 1
- <sup>16</sup> – *The Daylily Journal*, Summer 1999, Volume 54, Issue 2
- <sup>17</sup> – *The Pacific Daylily*, Region 8 Newsletter Fall 1998, Vol. 12, Issue 2
- <sup>18</sup> – *The Pacific Daylily*, Region 8 Newsletter Fall 2001, Vol. 15, Issue 2
- <sup>19</sup> – *The Daylily Journal*, Winter 2004, Vol. 59, Issue 4

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