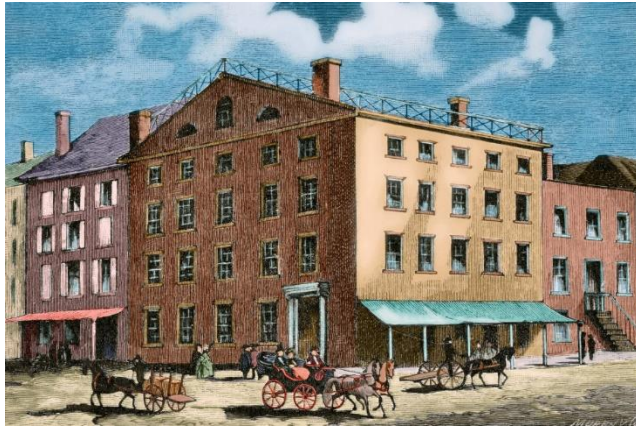


On December 4, 1783, nine days after the last British soldiers left American soil, George Washington invited the officers of the Continental Army to join him in the Long Room of Fraunces Tavern to bid them farewell. The best known account of this emotional parting comes from the *Memoirs of Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge*, written in 1830 and now in the collection of Fraunces Tavern Museum. As Tallmadge recalled,

*“The time now drew near when General Washington intended to leave this part of the country for his beloved retreat at Mt. Vernon. On Tuesday the 4th of December it was made known to the officers then in New York that General Washington intended to commence his journey on that day.*



*At 12 o'clock the officers repaired to Fraunces Tavern in Pearl Street where General Washington had appointed to meet them and to take his final leave of them. We had been assembled but a few moments when his excellency entered the room. His emotions were too strong to be concealed which seemed to be reciprocated by every officer present. After partaking of a slight refreshment in almost breathless silence the General filled his glass with wine and turning to the officers said,*

*‘With a heart full of love and gratitude I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable.’*

*After the officers had taken a glass of wine General Washington said ‘I cannot come to each of you but shall feel obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand.’ General Knox being nearest to him turned to the Commander-in-chief who, suffused in tears, was incapable of utterance but grasped his hand when they embraced each other in silence. In the same affectionate manner every officer in the room marched up and parted with his general in chief. Such a scene of sorrow and weeping I had never before witnessed and fondly hope I may never be called to witness again.”*



As this farewell was done in total silence, so it is today. At every meeting of the General Society and its constituent societies, of which Pennsylvania is one, all members stand and raise a glass, in total silence, to the memory of General Washington.