

CINCINNATI



FOURTEEN

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**Supreme Court Justice and Mrs. Lewis Franklin Powell, Jr. and le due
d'Anjou et de Cadix
Anderson House October 31,
1987**

ORIGINAL CINCINNATI WHO FIRST FOUGHT AGAINST US IN THE REVOLUTION

Elsewhere in this issue is the remarkable account of Karl Friederich Fuhrer, a Hessian officer who, captured at Trenton, later switched sides and became an American officer. Commissioned as Captain Fiihrer in the Virginia forces, he was an Original Member of the Society.

It is believed that Fuhrer was the only Hessian officer who became a Cincinnatus. Switching sides to the American cause during the war presumably was rare, but just how often did a Cincinnatus result? Pennsylvania had one, Richard Dale, who began in the British Navy, but switched in time to be a Lieutenant with John Paul Jones on the *Bon Homme Richard* in the battle with the *Serapis*.

Are there more Hessians or any others who became Cincinnati after switching sides?

Clifford Lewis, 3rd
History Editor

KARL FRIEDRICH FUHRER

Prisoner, Patriot, Publisher

Kenneth S. Jones: *The Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association*, 1987, Box 99, Pennsauken, NJ 08110

The 1985 Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association, listing the names over 1,000 Hessian soldiers captured at Trenton, was acclaimed by historians, genealogists, columnists and fellow members. Inquiries were received asking about the town of Dumfries, Virginia where Hessian officers were quartered as prisoners after Trenton.

Further research at Dumfries surprisingly uncovered a choice bit of history in the name of the Hessian officer Karl Friedrich Fiihrer. Over the years he and fellow officer Karl Wilhelm Kleinschmidt are mentioned in historical publications as typical examples of Hessian officers who deserted to the American side. The complete history on Fiihrer, known also as Fuehrer/Fierer/Fuerer/Frierer /Fearer/Frier/Fuehr/Fier, until now has not been fully documented. For the purpose of this article all these names are used interchangeably. In most cases the spelling is as recorded in the source material. The German word Fuhrer usually becomes Fuehrer in English, but it was commonly spelled as Fierer in Dumfries and in American military records. Variations in spelling are attributed to clerks at that time spelling German words the way they sounded, paying little attention to correct German.

This is an amazing story of a Hessian officer, serving two opposing forces; first in the German Army, then deserting; classed as a traitor; losing all his rights as a German citizen; gaining favor with General Washington; getting a captain's commission in the Virginia Line from Governor Jefferson; and eventually upon retirement being granted 4,000 acres of land for his services in the Virginia Line. After the war Ftiihrer, with a partner, published the first newspaper in Washington (then George Town). Later he and a partner published a newspaper

in Dumfries, Virginia. His prominence in Masonic Circles, plus being an Original Member in the Society of the Cincinnati, indicate his acceptance by fellow Americans as a true convert from the status of an enemy German officer to that of an American patriot.

During the fifteen months the Hessian officers spent as prisoners in Virginia, as recorded by Fuhrer and Kleinschmidt in written appeals to General Washington and in Wiederholdt's diary, close friendships were developed with the local Americans, including prominent officers of the Continental Army. There is evidence that General Washington looked with favor on these friendships and was probably influenced by them when considering Fuhrer and Kleinschmidt, as captains, to head a German deserter corps recruited to fight on the American side. Fuhrer, although a prisoner, enjoyed social prestige in the town of Dumfries, where General Washington had relatives and where some of his close associates were natives.

Following the war, when he was editor of *The Times, and Patowmack Packet* in 1789, Fierer became master of the first lodge of Masons chartered within the pre- sent District of Columbia, then George Town, Maryland. A recent letter from the Masonic Temple Association says this was known as Lodge No. 9, later designated as "Potomac." Fierer was buried in Dumfries, Virginia, by fellow Masons and members of the Society of the Cincinnati, members of both acting also as executors of his estate.

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THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI PRIZE

The Prize

Under the terms of a gift to the Society of the Cincinnati, provision is made for a triennial prize of \$5,000 to be awarded first in 1989 to the author of a distinguished work on any aspect of American history from the outset of the Revolutionary struggle through the end of the Washington presidency. Submissions are particularly welcome in military, political, diplomatic, and economic history.

The award is to be for a book first published during the period November 1, 1985, to November 1, 1988. The competition is open to all persons whether citizens of the United States or any other country. Announcements of the award will be made in the spring of the year 1989. The prize will be confined to works originally written in English or of which there is a published translation in English. Biography comes within the terms of the prize, but volumes of letters, papers, and other documents by individuals who were involved with or were participants in the American Revolution are not eligible.

Previous winners of the Cincinnati Prize are eligible for an award in a later year.

The Selection Committee consists of five persons, no more than two of whom are connected with the Society of the Cincinnati. Upon the recommendation of the Selection Committee, The Society of the Cincinnati will either make an award or reserves the right not to do so if in the judgment of the Cincinnati Prize Committee there has been no suitable entry for the period.

The Society will administer this prize through its Cincinnati Prize Committee. Works submitted in competition should be sent to the Cincinnati Prize Committee, The Society of the Cincinnati, 2118 Massachusetts Avenue, Northwest,

Washington, D.C. 2008. The address should state that the volumes enclosed are for the Cincinnati Prize Competition, and a letter should accompany them so that acknowledgement may be made. Such works for the 1989 prize should be sent preferably as soon as published, but in no case later than November 1, 1988. Page proof copy may be submitted after November 1, 1988, provided that the work will be published after that date and before December 31. (Page proof copy will not be acceptable for any work which will have a publication date earlier than November 1.) A complete entry consists of five (5) copies of the book, a biography and photograph of the author, and a \$25.00 handling fee made payable to the Society of the Cincinnati/ Cincinnati Prize.

What is the Society of the Cincinnati and What is its Link with the Subject of its Book Prize - the American Revolutionary Period?

The Society of the Cincinnati provides a living link with the American Revolution, also with the Constitutional Convention. The Society was organized May 10, 1783 at Fishkill, New York, by Continental officers, usually with three years service in the war. Of 5,500 officers eligible to join, about 2,150 did so. It was founded before the Treaty of Peace was signed and before the British were out of New York.

The Society's charter or Institution states three purposes for its establishment: (1) to preserve the rights and liberties for which its founders had fought; (2) to promote the national honor and "dignity of the American Empire;" and (3) to reinforce the "cordial affection" among its members by providing aid and assistance to them and their families which were in need. At a time when military pensions were not yet a reality, due to the practical inability of Congress to tax, this last purpose had immediate and continuing importance. The Cincinnati was in fact the first American military beneficial society. It also spearheaded drives in Congress for pensions for all surviving Revolutionary veterans, an end achieved in 1828. All subsequent American military pensions stem from this Society's early initiative.

Returning to the Cincinnati's organization year of 1783; within twelve months State Societies were established in the thirteen original states and in France under the auspices of the General Society of the Cincinnati. Each State Society ran itself and sent representatives to the triennial meetings of the General Society.

Many American leaders who helped create this nation were Original Members of the Cincinnati. George Washington was its President General from 1783 until his death in 1799. Other well known members were General Henry Knox, considered the Society's originator; General Friedrich von Steuben, a war time immigrant who was its first presiding officer; Alexander Hamilton; and General Nathanael Greene. Foreign officers in the American cause who were Cincinnati included Generals Lafayette and Rochambeau, Admiral DeGrasse, all from France, and Colonel Kosciuszko from Poland. There was also Major John Rose, who was in fact an exile from the Czar's Court -Baron Gustavus Heinrich von Wetter- Rosendahl. Vacant after the Baron's death in Russia in 1829, this line was again filled in 1980.

The Cincinnati Society, in spite of its prestigious military origin, aroused bitter opposition by its requirement that membership be hereditary. This provision suggested the aristocratic system of our late British adversary with its titled nobility. Fortunately this feeling subsided, and Cincinnati members took

appropriate parts in the postwar United States government.

Thus in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, twenty-one of the fifty-five delegates were Cincinnati. Of the twenty-one, thirteen were Original Members including Washington, Hamilton, Pinckney and Abraham Baldwin. Eight were Honorary Members including William Livingston, Robert Morris, John Dickinson and Edmund Randolph.

In 1789, two years after the Constitutional Convention, Washington was elected President, choosing not to run again when his second term expired in 1797. Two well known Cincinnati held prominent places in his cabinet, Alexander Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury, and Henry Knox as Secretary of War. There were also Cincinnati in other branches of the government.

Thus it is indeed appropriate that our book prize subject covers the American Revolutionary Period.

The Society's interests today are largely historical, highlighting the lives of its members before, during and after the American Revolution. While many State Societies have records of their own, the General Cincinnati Society has a notable Revolutionary library and museum at its headquarters, Anderson House, in Washington, D.C. These are open to the public.

Today the Cincinnati keeps alive its pioneering purpose of membership aid, the usual form now being educational grants to deserving students in member families. Social Security has practically eliminated our former heavy call for pensions.

The State and French Societies have some 3,000 active members. The Society of the Cincinnati's membership passes by descent and is usually limited to one living member per Revolutionary officer. The same rule applies to descendants of Continental officers who were casualties of the American Revolution.

Judges and Publicity

We are pleased to report that for the Cincinnati book prize we have acceptances from all five judges, all of whom were first choices. By terms of the contest there are three "outside" judges, not members of the Society, and two "inside" judges who are members. All five are distinguished.

The "outside" judges are Dr. William W. Abbot, Editor of *The Papers of George Washington*, Charlottesville, Virginia; Dr. Thad W. Tate, Jr., Director, Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia; Dr. Mary Beth Norton, Professor of American History at Cornell, and particularly notable for her work on women and Loyalists in the American Revolution.

We are equally pleased with our "inside" judges: Dr. Whitfield J. Bell, Jr. (Honorary Member, Pennsylvania), retired Librarian and Executive Officer of the American Philosophical Society, authority on Benjamin Franklin, and on medicine in the Revolutionary era; and Dr. Minor Myers, a member of the Rhode Island Society, and Secretary General. He is well known as the author of our Cincinnati history *Liberty Without Anarchy*. Currently Provost, Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York, he was formerly Professor of Government at Connecticut College, with a year out when holding an American Council on Education Fellowship in Academic Administration at Brown University.

We are also working on publicity. Due to H. Bartholomew Cox, Administrator of the Prize Committee, we have a notice in the magazine of the American Historical Association. Through the courtesy of Dr. Tate at

Williamsburg, the Bulletin of the Institute of Early American History and Culture will carry our notice in the June issue, reaching about 2,500 subscribers. This group is alive with interest in our period.

We hope, of course, that this copy of *Cincinnati Fourteen* will also reach prize entrants.

**Clifford Lewis 3rd, Chairman
*Cincinnati Prize Subcommittee***

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Hobart G. Caywood , an Honorary Member of the Pennsylvania Society and Superintendent of the Independence National Historical Park, delivers the George Rogers Clark Lecture at Anderson House on October 30, 1987. His discussion of the National Park Service's programs in observance of the Constitutional Bicentennial will be published by the Society as part of the Clark Lecture series

THE STATE SOCIETY OF THE CININNATI OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Society supplied a contingent to march in the Grand Federal Parade commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Signing of the U. S. Constitution in Philadelphia on September 17, 1987. We occupied a high point of honor in the line of march, as we had in the two previous Grand Parades in 1787 and 1887. Those marching in the presence of the President of the United States and exposed to national television on that day were: David Erisman Bassert, William Edwin Chapin, II, James O'Hara Denny, III, William Richard Gordon, Clifford Lewis, 3rd, Philippus Miller, V, Lawrence Corlies Murdoch, Jr., Andrew Wagener Porter, Jr., Robert Harris Sproat, Richard Saltonstall Auchincloss Jr., (Delaware Society) and our gallant flag bearer, Lewis Sidney Graham, Jr. Each participant in the long march was awarded a scroll together with an official Constitution Coin.



Pennsylvania Cincinnati marching in Constitution Day Parade, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 17, 1987 - the 200th Anniversary of approval by the Constitutional Convention of our country's present form of government. Marchers (from L. to R., disregarding rows) are: Pennsylvania Vice-President Philippus Miller, V; Andrew Porter; Lawrence Murdoch; Richard Gordon (barely visible); Robert Sproat; President James Denny; Clifford Lewis, 3rd; Secretary David Bassert; William Chapin; Lewis Graham (flag bearer); and Richard Auchincloss (Delaware).

The Pennsylvania Cincinnati and the First City Troop, by marching in this parade, reenacted the part they took 200 years earlier when they and many other organizations marched on July 4, 1788, in the Philadelphia parade celebrating the adoption of the Constitution by the ninth state, New Hampshire, thereby making the Constitution effective.

Our Annual Meeting was held, as usual, at the City Tavern in Philadelphia on October 2, 1987. Elected officers were: Philippus Miller, V, President; Lawrence Corlies Murdoch, Jr., Vice President; David Erisman Bassert, M.D., Secretary; John Cole Tuten, Jr., Treasurer; William Edwin Chapin II, Assistant Secretary; and William Richard Gordon, Assistant Treasurer. The speaker after dinner was Peter J. Parker, Director of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, who spoke eloquently about the year of the Constitution. One new Hereditary Member was elected: Eugene Alexander Brodhead, Jr., filling the unoccupied Right of Captain Daniel Brodhead, Jr., an Original Member.

The Washington's Birthday luncheon was held at the City Tavern on February 15. Our speaker was Brigadier General Nicholas Sellers, a member of the Maryland Society who lives near us and has been a constant attendee of our functions for many years. He entertained us and brought alive the topic: "Colonel Samuel Smith, Original Member, Maryland Society, in Command at Fort Mifflin."

A moment of silence was held at this luncheon in memory of our late beloved, loyal and longtime Secretary, Dr. David Erisman Bassert, who died very suddenly on January 25. His shoes will be very hard to fill. At a brief meeting before the luncheon the Standing Committee appointed Lewis Sidney Graham, Jr., Secretary until the next Annual Meeting of the Society.

Philippus Miller, V
President