

CINCINNATI

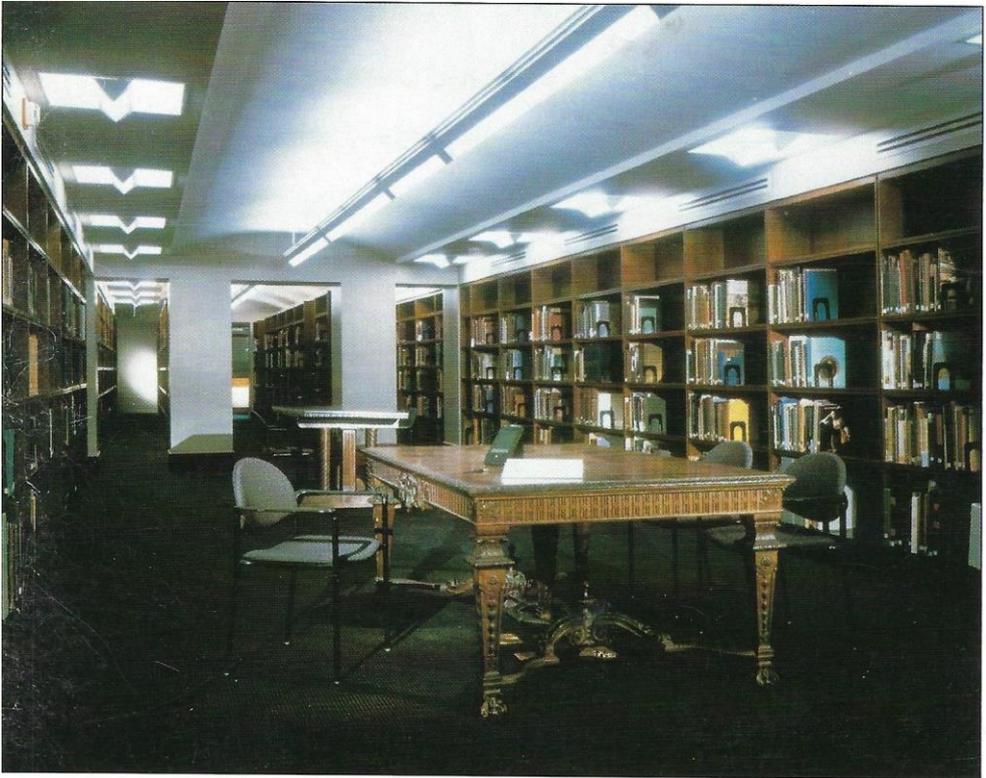


FOURTEEN

Newsletter of the Society of the Cincinnati

May 1997

Volume XXXIII, No. 2



New Rare Books Library Reading Room

ANDERSON HOUSE

REVOLUTIONARY VALOUR AWARDS: THE PRESENTATION SWORDS

VOTED TO CINCINNATI OFFICERS BY THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

During the Revolution, the Continental Congress voted only fifteen swords to be awarded for valor and merit. This was the greatest honor that could be given to an officer; it was, in effect, equivalent to our present Congressional Medal of Honor, which did not come into existence until the Civil War.

Fourteen of these swords went to future members of the Society of the Cincinnati. This is a remarkable record. This article briefly describes the deeds that won these awards.

MAJOR WALTER STEWART

Original Member Pennsylvania Society

Maj. Stewart's sword was one of the earliest awards by Congress, made on November 19, 1776. This was given because he "brought the late intelligence from General Gates, is recommended as a deserving officer and have the rank of Lieutenant Colonel by Brevet."

In 1777, at the Battle of Brandywine, which was almost a disaster for the Americans, Stewart held the key defile at Dilworth until the main body could withdraw. At Germantown, he commanded in the left wing. Finally, he was one of two regimental commanders who saved the day at the Battle of Monmouth. When Gen. Lee fell back before Clinton's counterattack, Washington galloped up to take the field com-

mand. He called on two officers known for their gallantry, Lt. Col. Walter Stewart, commanding a Pennsylvania regiment, and Lt. Col. Nathaniel Ramsay, leading one of the Maryland Line, to block the British at all costs until he could bring up the main body of the Revolutionary Army. "We shall hold them," promised Stewart. They joined the position along a hedgerow already held by Col. Livingston, as related above. These regiments did indeed hold the entire British force but at a terrible cost, being virtually wiped out. Stewart was severely wounded and carried off the field, while Ramsay, also wounded, fell into British hands as a prisoner.

V 33, #2, May 97, P 41

THE STATE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI OF PENNSYLVANIA

A new administration has taken over the leadership of this Society as Bob Sproat was elected President and Lewis Graham Vice President at the last annual meeting. Both have served the Society long and well in a variety of positions.

Clifford B. Lewis, son of Clifford Lewis III, is the new Secretary, which many consider our most difficult job. Tom Etter replaces Clifford B. Lewis as Assistant Secretary. New members of the Standing Committee are Bob Batchelder and Fred Knight, IV, the son of Fred Knight, III, the current Assistant Treasurer. The younger Knight and his brother Mark also are co-chairs of the Membership Committee where Mark will head a special effort to recruit new successor members.

John Tuten, Treasurer, and James Trimble, Chaplain, both were elected to another term.

Bart Cox, the retiring President, remains on the Standing Committee as a voting member. He was a most effective leader, managing, among other things, the microfilming of the Society's archives, the preparation of a book on Pennsylvania original members, and the Anderson House fund drive. We owe you a lot, Bart.

Judy Van Buskirk spoke at the annual meeting on the topic "Gentle men at War: Civility and Conflict in Revolutionary New York." Her talk was so well received that we invited her



back to speak at the Washington's birthday luncheon on a different topic. Ms. Van Buskirk is one of the Dissertation Fellows at the Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies which this Society sponsors each year.

Bob Sproat, newly elected President, and Judy Van Buskirk, speaker at the Pennsylvania Society's Annual Meeting

Plans are falling into place for the Centennial Celebration of the Washington Equestrian Monument at the head of Philadelphia's Parkway. Ceremonies will begin at 11 a.m., May 17, 1997, at the Monument and then move across the street for luncheon at the Art Museum.

Lawrence Corlies Murdock, Jr.

Past President