



1783

Cincinnati *Fourteen*



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The Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati

The Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati is pleased to accept a generous permanent loan to its collection of portraits and artifacts in the Cincinnati Room at the Hill-Physick House in Philadelphia. The addition was made possible through the generosity of Del Conner, the great-great grandson of Commodore David Conner, whom the portrait depicts.

Commodore Conner was a distinguished honorary member of the Pennsylvania Society who was inducted after his gallant service in the U.S. Navy during both the War of 1812 and the Mexican American War. A native of Harrisonburg, David Conner joined the navy as midshipman in 1809. During the War of 1812 he served aboard the USS *Hornet*, participating in the chase of the HBM *Belvidera*, which was the first action of the war. As captain of the prize brig *Dolphin*, he was captured by the HBM *Hazard* and was briefly detained



Commodore David Conner was made an honorary member of the Pennsylvania Society following his distinguished service in the Mexican American War.

Courtesy of Del Conner.

as a prisoner of war. Upon his exchange, he returned to the *Hornet* and served as third lieutenant during the capture of the HBM *Peacock*. Conner also served as first lieutenant during the capture of the HBM *Penguin*. It was during this engagement where he was seriously wounded.

For these valiant efforts Conner was awarded two medals of valor from Congress. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania also awarded him a sword for his gallantry. The sword was presented to Conner in Independence Hall. This sword and the medals are prominently displayed in the Cincinnati Room at the Hill-Physick House in Pennsylvania, along with a painting depicting the famous engagement of the *Hornet* and the *Penguin*. The portrait of Commodore Conner serves as an important addition to the Pennsylvania Society's collection of artifacts pertaining to Commodore Conner. The portrait was done by John Wesley Jarvis in 1813 and accurately depicts Conner and the naval officer's uniform during that period.

After the War of 1812, Conner served as first lieutenant aboard the USS *Ontario*, under Captain Biddle when the United States took possession of Oregon in 1818. Conner commanded the USS *John Adams* in the Mediterranean in 1834. He was promoted to captain the following year, and in 1841 he was appointed navy commissioner. On November 29, 1843, Conner was promoted to commodore and commander in chief of the Home and West Indian Division. It was this appointment that led to his distinguished service during the Mexican American War. Commodore Conner immediately blockaded the Gulf Coast and gave substantial support to General Zachary Taylor. On March 9, 1847, he landed General Winfield Scott's army of twelve thousand men within site of the city and castle of Vera Cruz. It was this action that led to the surrender of the city and effectively ended the war. As a result of these successes, the Mexican government ceded a large landmass to the United States that includes present-day California, Nevada, New Mexico and Arizona. The Pennsylvania Society made Commodore Conner an honorary member after the resounding victory at Vera Cruz.

Commodore Conner also has a connection to the Hill-Physick House. Conner was the son-in-law of Dr. Philip Syng Physick widely regarded as the father of American surgery. The cooperation between Commodore Conner and General Scott during the Vera Cruz operation was exceptional at the time. It was rare that a naval commander and commander of land forces would cooperate so effectively. Many

historians have noted this remarkable cooperation, but none have heretofore made the connection between these two heroes. During the War of 1812, as a young lieutenant, Scott was severely wounded at the battle of Lundy's Lane near Niagara Falls. It was none other than Dr. Physick that nursed Scott back to health.

The Pennsylvania Society and the Hill-Physick House are pleased to have the opportunity to display the portrait of Commodore Conner. It makes a fine addition to the collection of artifacts related to one of the Mexican American War's distinguished heroes. Visitors to the Philadelphia area are encouraged to visit the Cincinnati Room at the Physick House just blocks away from Independence Hall.

William Hoyt Olinger

Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati

The Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati is anticipating its role in the celebration of the 225th anniversary of the founding of the Society. Following the programs at Mt. Gulian, Delaware has made arrangements for a tour of Winterthur gardens and house. President General and Mrs. Pragoff will host a cocktail party followed by dinner at the Vicmead Hunt Club in Greenville, Delaware. The next day will include a visit to Cooch's Bridge, site of the only land battle fought on Delaware soil, which took place on September 3, 1777. The battle was the first engagement in the campaign to capture Philadelphia. Edward Cooch (Del.), a direct descendant of the original owners of the house, part of which dates from 1760, will give a tour of the site. Luncheon will follow.

Delaware's annual meeting took place on April 5, 2008, at the DuPont Country Club. The election of new officers was held, resulting in Scott Johnson as new president, Lee Sparks IV as vice president, Dr. Paul Switzer as secretary, Herbert Zearfoss as treasurer, David McCormick as assistant secretary and William Swinford as assistant treasurer.

The standing committee has recently reappointed Dr. Samuel Hoff of Delaware State University as its George Washington Distinguished



From left to right: William Hires, Herbert Zearfoss, Keith Peoples, John A. Baird, Lee Sparks and Richard Auchincloss.

Professor. Dr. Hoff will give a brief report on his work in the past year at the meeting. The speaker for the meeting will be Maj. Gen. Douglas Vincent O'Dell, U.S.M.C (Ret.). General O'Dell, an honorary member of the Delaware Society, has served three tours of duty in Afghanistan and two in Iraq since September 11, 2001. He will speak on the nature and challenges of current conflicts and military leadership. The Delaware Society of the Cincinnati welcomes members from other constituent societies to join us at our meetings and at our fall outings, which usually take place the first Saturday of October.

The Delaware Society is sorry to report the unexpected deaths of its secretary, John Eager Bacon, on January 6, 2008, and its treasurer, Herbert Keyser Zearfoss, on April 8, 2008.

James Keith Peoples
President