



1783

# Cincinnati *Fourteen*

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# Eagle TALES

## *Members Share Fond Eagle Memories*

A self-described “Happy Member” tells his Eagle Tale: “Every year when notice of our state Society’s annual meeting would arrive, inviting Hereditary Members to present their Successors, my father would send it to me with the notation: “Maybe Next Year!” Well “Next Year” never came, an omission no doubt facilitated by the choice my father confronted: enjoy a lovely midwestern lake on a summer holiday with his family around him or travel to a far-away state capitol to spend his Fourth of July. Having done it once, many decades ago when my grandfather presented my father, I sympathized with his hesitation but could not resist reminding him on occasion that his own father had exercised greater self-discipline.

That sympathy evaporated when, after his passing and never having been formally presented as his Successor, I had to fill out an excruciating application complete with demands for various documentary evidence proving that I was indeed who I had always thought I was. (Fortunately for me, a kindly officer of our state Society helped me make it up and over the gunnels without undue cross examination as it turned out he was an old friend of my father’s).

But, all was forgiven when—mirabile dictu—I found in my father’s dresser drawer something that he had never before displayed, or even mentioned: a small leather box from “Tiffany (London)” in which was mounted my great grandfather’s Eagle which he apparently acquired when our state Society was reconstituted in the 1880’s. Given the manner in which miscellaneous “debris” is often handled by one’s heirs, I consider it a minor miracle to have been the first to spot this precious item. It now resides in a bank vault. Being far too absent-minded and prone to losing personal effects, I doubt I will ever risk wearing it. I wore my grandfather’s rosette to a charitable event two years ago and never saw it again. For me, it is enough to know that it is safe and available someday to inspire my son and—perhaps “Next Year”—my formal Successor.”



George Turner (S.C.), assistant secretary general, 1787-1790, drew this beautiful watercolor Eagle on the inside cover of a General Society minute book. The Eagle has always captivated the attention of members.

Dr. Preston Russell (Va.), who calls himself the “Man Without an Eagle,” recounts: *I proudly bought my golden eagle when I became a member in 1983. It cost nearly \$200, which seemed like a lot of money. Designed by Pierre-Charles L’Enfant, the medal had added meaning because he was almost killed here at the 1779 Battle of Savannah. I would lovingly tuck it away each year for trips to Anderson House where I could actually wear it, in the spirit of a comical 1930s poem published in The New Yorker:*

*The DAR-lings chatter like starlings, telling their ancestor’s names.  
While grimly aloof, with looks of reproof, sit the Colonial Dames.  
And the Cincinnati, all merry and chatty, dangle their badges  
and pendants.  
But haughty and proud, disdaining the crowd, brood the  
Mayflower Descendants.*

*Over years of being exceedingly merry and chatty, the ribbon became frayed and yellowed, with additional little stains related to wine and other evidence of forgotten frolics with new friends, who became my old friends over a quarter century. Since I tend to be careless—especially after “lost weekends” at Anderson House—I began to pin my eagle inside the breast pocket of my tuxedo. This was very effective until several years ago my wife, Barbara, with her compulsive sense of cleanliness, sent the tuxedo to the cleaners the day after, even though (for a guy) the various little spots here and there from the latest bash seemed invisible (especially by midnight). Not surprisingly, my prized medal vanished and like the man without a country, I am a member without an eagle: Alas.*



Eagles offered for sale outside the Society sometimes produce sticker shock. George Boyd V (N.Y.) is one several members who report being surprised by the prices that get put on Eagles that pass out of member hands into those of dealers: *Sandra and I stayed on a bit after the French triennial. I was wandering around in an antiques mall in the center of Paris when I discovered a paraphernalia shop. There was a Cincinnati Eagle. I said to myself, “Oh, goody, I will get it out of circulation and bring it back into the fold”—that is until I asked the price—\$2,050.00!*

Several members report that they wear Eagles they inherited from their fathers. Clifford Butler Lewis (Pa.) comments: *I own two Eagles—one for the jacket, and one on a neck ribbon, both from my father. I feel he shares my parties when I wear them, especially the neck ribbon one, and that he is close to me when I do that. The Society was a large part of his life, and I am very honored that I can still represent him through his Eagles.*



Some Eagles pass through several generations. Thomas David Pearce, president of the Delaware Society from 1902 to 1907, had a special Eagle made sometime between 1895 and 1907. It passed from him to Francis King Wainwright, then to the latter’s son T.F. Dixon Wainwright, who presented it to his nephew Richard Saltonstall Auchincloss (Del.) when the latter became a member in 1976. Dick Auchincloss notes: *“I am very proud to have it and will pass it on to my son, also named Richard, who recently became a member of the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati.”* This beautifully made Eagle is distinctive, having a ribbon around its neck that appears to be supporting the shield on its breast.



Jack Duane Warren Jr., executive director, is not a member of the Society, but has a confession to make: *At the October 2006 meeting of the General Society, President General Rob Norfleet and I were meeting in my office on the first floor of Anderson House. We each took off our blue blazers and tossed them on a chair, and at the end of the meeting we each absent-mindedly put on the other’s blazer by mistake. I walked out to the Ballroom for lunch a moment later, without the slightest idea I was wearing the Diamond Eagle (the replica, properly called the Hoyt Eagle) on my lapel. I got more than a few odd looks, but it was not until Dr. Ed Woods (N.H.) came up to congratulate me on the promotion that I looked down and realized my mistake—to the laughter of everyone within sight.*



Bryan Scott Johnson, President of the Delaware Society, didn't inherit his Eagle, since he's the first representative of his propositus. He confesses that creative financing was involved in his Eagle purchase: *As a history graduate student attempting to live on my departmental stipend, I often found myself strapped for extra money and even buying groceries at the Amoco station using my credit card. I managed to save the money for my initiation fee from my meager earnings at the South Caroliniana Library but failed to put enough aside for the purchase of an Eagle. After months of waiting, I was finally admitted to hereditary membership in the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati in 1994. Now it was time to purchase an Eagle, but the coffers were empty! As luck would have it, it just happened that the money from my student loan had just been deposited into my student account. With some trepidation, I decided to use my student loan money to purchase my Eagle. Now years later and with some measure of financial security, I look back on my decision and laugh. The loan has since been repaid, and I consider the money (albeit borrowed) to have been extremely well spent!*



## MARYLAND IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

On Thursday, February 26, 108 Society members and staff, professional colleagues, and friends attended an evening reception to open the newest exhibition at Anderson House, *Maryland in the American Revolution*. The lively reception presided over by RAdm. Kleber Sanlin Masterson Jr., vice president general, and Ross Bayley Diffenderffer Jr., president of the Maryland Society, acknowledged the members, lenders, and colleagues who made the exhibition possible. George Sunderland Rich, chairman of the Maryland Society's exhibition committee, was particularly thanked for his valuable guidance to Curator Emily Schulz in locating objects for display and making contacts at related institutions.

*Maryland in the American Revolution* marks the eleventh exhibition in a series focusing on the participation of each of the thirteen colonies and



*Hilt of the small sword awarded by Congress to Samuel Smith, made by C. Liger, Paris, 1785, steel, gold, and silver. Gift of Dr. B. Nolan Carter II, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1999. Photograph by Gregory R. Staley.*



*President John B Codington Jr. welcomes Jon Meacham, managing editor of Newsweek.*

the coming election and the various candidates for president and vice president. After a delicious dinner Mr. Meacham presented a scholarly review of the religious views of our founding fathers and the influence of their views on our nation and its development. Jon Meacham is the year's recipient of the annual history book award for his book: *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation*.

The next meeting of the New Jersey Society is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2009, in Princeton.

*John W. Gareis, MD, Assistant Secretary*

conservation efforts and it was decided that these would be appropriate given the historical significance of these projects. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Saturday evening in members and their guests enjoyed a gala reception and dinner at Anderson House. We had the pleasure of meeting the editor of *Newsweek* magazine, Jon Meacham, who gave us some of his personal insights into



*History Prize Chairman Ross W. Maghan Jr. congratulates Jon Meacham, this year's recipient for his book, American Gospel.*

## *The Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania*

Over the past ten years the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has emerged as perhaps the nation's leading academic consortium for the study of "the histories and cultures of North America in the Atlantic world before 1850." The McNeil Center was founded at Penn in 1978 as the Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies and it was re-named for its benefactor, Robert Lincoln McNeil Jr., in 1998. Today the center "offers pre- and post-doctoral fellowships to encourage use of the Philadelphia area's magnificent manuscript, rare book, and museum collections; conducts a regular seminar series to promote intellectual community among local and visiting faculty and graduate students; and organizes occasional national conferences to foster interdisciplinary research. To disseminate the best new scholarship in the field, it publishes *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, and it sponsors the Early American Studies monograph series published by the University of Pennsylvania Press."

The State Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania is proud to report that it has provided significant financial support for the McNeil Center for fourteen consecutive years, beginning in 1995 and continuing to the present time. The Center has responded by naming one of its dissertation fellowships "The Society of the Cincinnati Fellowship" and designating that fellowship for "research on the era of the American Revolution" (visit the McNeil Center's web site: [www.mceas.org/index.html](http://www.mceas.org/index.html)). It has become something of an annual tradition at the Pennsylvania Society to invite the recipient of The Society of the Cincinnati fellowship to speak to the Society and these young doctoral candidates have amply demonstrated their intellectual talent and academic promise. Several are now established scholars in their respective fields and are teaching and training the next generation of American historians.

The first five recipients of the McNeil Center's "Society of the Cincinnati Fellowship" are now the most advanced in their careers. They include Judith L. Van Buskirk (1996), who is now an associate professor of history at the State University of New York, Cortland; Edward J. Larkin (1997), an assistant professor of English at the University of Delaware; Seth Cotlar (1998), an associate professor of History at Willamette University, in Salem, Oregon; Kariann Akemi Yokota (1999), an assistant professor of American studies and history at Yale University;

and Eric Thomas Slauter (2000), an associate professor of English at the University of Chicago and Director of the Karla Scherer Center for the Study of American Culture. The progress and accomplishments of these young men and women are convincing testimony to the wisdom and long-term rewards of the Pennsylvania Society's investment in the McNeil Center. The Pennsylvania Society hopes that other state societies will also see their way clear to making substantive contributions to the future of American higher education, particularly to the future of the teaching and learning of the values of the American Revolution.

*William Hoyt Olinger*

### *Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati*

In lieu of its annual fall outing, the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati urged its membership to attend the 225th Anniversary Convocation of the General Society of the Cincinnati held in



*Delaware Cincinnati at the 225th Anniversary Convocation (left to right): Joseph Berrien Houseman, Rodman Keenon Swinford, the Reverend Doctor Dixon A. Barr, Bryan Scott Johnson, Henry Sharpe Lynn Jr., and Charles William Swinford Jr.*

Washington, D.C., in September. The 225th Anniversary celebration had begun in May with commemorative ceremonies at Mount Gulian and culminated with the convocation in Washington. The festivities in Washington were enjoyed by the following Delaware Society members: President General George Forrest Pragoff (and Mrs. Pragoff), Mr. James Keith Peoples (and Mrs. Peoples), Mr. Charles William Swinford Jr. (and Mrs. Swinford), the Reverend Doctor Dixon A. Barr (and Mrs. Barr), Mr. Joseph Berrien Houseman (and Mrs. Houseman), Mr. John Erwin Beaumont III (and Mrs. Beaumont), Mr. Christopher Rogers Kloman (and Mrs. Kloman), Mr. Henry Sharpe Lynn Jr., Mr. Rodman Keenon Swinford, and Mr. Bryan Scott Johnson. From the reception given by His Excellency Pierre Vimont, ambassador from the Republic of France, to the wonderful cocktail reception and dinner at Mount Vernon, to the unveiling of Houdon's statue of General George Washington, the members of the Delaware Society were entertained on a grand scale.

*Bryan Scott Johnson, President*

### *Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland*

The Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland has continued its very active schedule this past winter and spring. We are pleased to have our magnificent Charles Willson Peale portrait of Otho Holland Williams (ca. 1782-1784), normally on display in The Society of the Cincinnati library, featured in the current exhibition *George Washington & His Generals* at Mount Vernon. Among Washington's most trusted confidants during the Revolutionary War, General Williams served as the second president of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland after the war, succeeding our first president, General William Smallwood.

On February 21, 2009, the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland convened at the Maryland Club in Baltimore to hold its 226th consecutive annual meeting. The evening was commenced with the annual business meeting, in which, among other matters, thirteen new members (six successor members, six newly represented propositi, and one new honorary member) of the Maryland Society were approved. Those who are informed about such matters believe that the election of these thirteen fine and qualified candidates may be the largest number of new members elected into the Maryland Society in recent times. The