



1783

Cincinnati *Fourteen*



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Father and Son

In December 2009, the Society of the Cincinnati was fortunate to have the opportunity to purchase at auction a pair of miniature portraits of Commodore Alexander Murray, an Original Member, and his son, Magnus Miller Murray. The two portraits are excellent additions to the Society's important and growing collection of portraits of original and noteworthy hereditary members.

The portraits are well executed in watercolor on ivory and are housed in matching oval-shaped coin silver cases under glass covers. Both portraits are unsigned, and each case bears an engraved inscription of the sitter's name and dates of birth and death on the reverse. The portraits were probably painted in the early 19th century, though it is not clear whether they were painted as companions at the same time or framed in matching cases at a later date.

Alexander Murray is dressed in military uniform wearing his Society of the Cincinnati Eagle suspended from his lapel. This portrait appears to be a copy after a miniature portrait of a very similar size in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art painted by an unidentified artist in 1798.

Alexander Murray was born on July 12, 1755, in Chestertown, Maryland, to William Murray and Anne Smith, formerly of Scotland and



Barbados. From very early in life, Murray exhibited great interest and ambition for a career at sea. He commanded his first merchant vessel at the age of nineteen. In January 1776, Murray joined Nathaniel Ramsey's Fifth Company of Col. William Smallwood's Maryland Regiment. Murray was promoted to first lieutenant later that summer and then to captain on December 10, 1776. Murray resigned his commission in the Continental Army on June 10, 1777 and promptly applied for a commission in the Continental Navy, motivated by his desire to once again serve at sea. His application was denied. Over the next several years, Murray served on four American privateer ships, the *General Mercer*, *Saratoga*, *Columbus*, and *Revenge*, and also owned his own ten-gun sloop, the *Bennington*. Both the *Saratoga* and *Revenge* were captured by the British with Murray on board, and he was taken prisoner and later released. On July 20, 1781, Murray was finally commissioned lieutenant on the Continental Navy frigate *Trumbull* under the command of Capt. James Nicholson. The ship was captured off the coast of Delaware by the British just a few weeks later, but the prisoners were quickly exchanged. Murray also held positions on the *Prosperity* and the *Alliance* before resigning his commission in the Continental Navy in October 1784. At the end of the war, Murray settled in Philadelphia and established a successful mercantile business.

Murray was called back into naval service as captain of the *Montezuma* in the United States Navy in 1798 and commanded the *Constellation* in the Caribbean in 1800 and again in 1802. His last sea command was the *Adams* in 1805. During the War of 1812, Murray served as the commanding officer of the Philadelphia Navy Yard, a post he held until his death.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, Murray became a member of the State Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania. He served on the Pennsylvania Society's Standing Committee between 1810 and 1818. Murray had married Mary Miller on June 18, 1782, and together had eleven children, including Magnus Miller Murray, their oldest surviving son, and Alexander Magnus Murray, who died while serving as a midshipman in the United States Navy on July 25, 1822. After a distinguished naval career, the elder Alexander Murray died on October 6, 1821, and was buried at Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia.

Magnus Miller Murray was born in Philadelphia on February 22, 1787, and succeeded his father in membership in the Society of the

Cincinnati in 1822. He attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he received his bachelor's degree in 1802 and his master's degree in 1805. He studied law and was admitted to the Philadelphia bar on January 6, 1806. He continued his law studies in Pittsburgh and was admitted to practice in Allegheny County on November 13, 1808. Magnus Murray married Mary Wilkins, and together they had eight children, including Alexander M. Murray, who later became a rear admiral in the United States Navy. Magnus Murray was a man of broad ranging interests, with pursuits in law, chemistry, mathematics, iron manufacturing, and theater. He was also intimately involved with the city and civic development of Pittsburgh. He worked as a surveyor to supplement his law career and lectured on botany to the Pittsburgh Chemical and Physiological Society. Murray was also captain of a company of light dragoons that welcomed Lafayette to Pittsburgh in 1825 and escorted the general during his historic visit to that city.

Magnus Murray served as mayor of Pittsburgh from 1828 to 1830 and again in 1831. He improved the waterworks of the city and fostered several construction and humanitarian projects. He was a devoted Mason and served as grand master in the western district of Pennsylvania in the 1820s. Magnus Murray died on March 3, 1838, in Pittsburgh, at the age of fifty-one.

These portraits of Alexander Murray and Magnus Miller Murray are the most recent additions to a significant collection of miniature portraits that now numbers thirty-four. The portraits are only the second pair of miniatures depicting a father and son to be added to the museum collections and the only pair of portraits of an original member and his son from the Pennsylvania Society. These works of art and the accomplishments of the men portrayed in them testify to the passage of the Society's spirit and purpose from one generation to the next.

Lindsay Borst
Museum Collections Manager

The Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Society is pleased to report the conclusion of another successful triennium. The Pennsylvania Society continued to support all three aspects of the Immutable Principles by supporting revolutionary era scholarship and preservation of historical landmarks; providing opportunities for its members to renew our bonds of friendship; and continuing the support of its members in need through scholarships.

In the triennium now ending the Pennsylvania Society has had an opportunity to host a number of prominent speakers at both the annual October meeting and the George Washington birthday lunch in February. Among these have been prominent authors including Richard Beeman, author of *Plain Honest Men: The Making of the American Constitution*. The Pennsylvania Society's support for the McNeil Center for Early American Studies has been a prolific source of speakers at our meetings.

The Pennsylvania Society celebrated its 225th anniversary on October 4, 2008. Members were treated to a sumptuous meal at Old City Tavern in Philadelphia. The tavern is the site of the signing of the Pennsylvania Society's Institution on October 3, 1783. Members were regaled by American Historical Theatre's entertaining depiction of a conversation between the our first president, General Arthur St. Clair and first vice president, General Anthony Wayne. The backdrop for the conversation was the celebration of the first anniversary of the founding of the Pennsylvania Society in 1784. After a delectable meal, including the obligatory silent toast to General Washington, members participated in a signing ceremony where they had an opportunity to append their names to a replica of the original Institution. The Pennsylvania Society created a DVD commemorating the occasion and sent a copy to all of its members.

At the October 2008 meeting the Pennsylvania Society elected a new slate of officers for the new triennium. These officers are Harry Lowell Davis, president, Charles Lilly Coltman III, vice president, Thomas Clifton Etter Jr., secretary, Frederick Henry Knight III, treasurer, William Hoyt Olinger, assistant secretary and James O. Pringle, assistant treasurer.

The Pennsylvania Society continues to upgrade and improve its web site capabilities thanks to the tireless efforts of Clifford Butler Lewis. During the triennium the Society introduced a new and exciting feature to the website. This feature enables anyone to research any Original Member

of the Pennsylvania Society. This interactive feature allows a user to access each member's regiment, dates of service, promotions and battles in which they participated. This tool has proven invaluable for both scholars and those interested in learning more about the irrepressible patriots who comprised the original membership of the Pennsylvania Society.

On the weekend of October 23, 2009, the Pennsylvania Society co-sponsored, along with the Landmarks Society of Philadelphia, a two-day commemoration of 200th anniversary of the transfer of Major General Anthony Wayne's remains from Presque Isle, Pennsylvania, where they were originally interred, to Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, where they were placed in a specially constructed tomb in 1809. Author Thomas Fleming spoke at a reception. The subject of his speech was based on a recent article published in *Military History* magazine entitled "Anthony Wayne Hero of Two Wars." Pennsylvania successor member Charles "Peter" Mather III represented the Pennsylvania Society and his propositus, General Wayne, at the graveside services.

The Pennsylvania Society continues to support the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Each year the Pennsylvania Society contributes a significant sum to the McNeil Center to support a dissertation fellowship named "The Society of the Cincinnati Fellowship." This fellowship is designated for a scholar engaged in advanced research on the era of the American Revolution. The Pennsylvania Society also continues its efforts to assist its members and their families in need by awarding \$9,000 annually to Pennsylvania Society family members in order to support their college and graduate educational goals.

In early December 2009 the Pennsylvania Society lost Larry C. Murdoch, one of its most colorful and faithful members, who served on the standing committee from 1961 to 2009, a tenure unequalled in our history. He served as assistant secretary, vice president and, from 1990 to 1993, as president. Larry's quick wit, keen insights and tireless efforts will long be remembered by the members of the Pennsylvania Society, which he served long and well.

William Hoyt Olinger, Assistant Secretary