

CINCINNATI FOURTEEN



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CINCINNATI FOURTEEN



by Clifford Butler Lewis

THE RULE OF 1854

Revisited

All Hereditary and Successor Members of the Pennsylvania Society represent Original Members. This distinction is the result of the Pennsylvania Society's position on the Rule of 1854—the resolution of the 1854 Triennial allowing for the admission of hereditary representatives of otherwise qualified officers who never joined the Society. The Pennsylvania Society rejected the Rule of 1854. Last spring, Charles L. Coltman, president of the State Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania, asked me to research the history of the Rule of 1854 as it relates to the Pennsylvania Society.

Like most members of the Pennsylvania Society and many others, I believed that the Pennsylvania Society had deliberately rejected the Rule of 1854 because its members preferred to uphold the traditions of the Society and maintain the restrictive membership standard defined in the Institution, which limited hereditary membership to male descendants of officers who joined the Society in its first years.

I delved into the minute books of the Pennsylvania Society, fully expecting research to confirm this belief. The first hint that what so many of us believed was wrong was the discovery that in 1851 the Pennsylvania Society had approved the first version of what became the Rule 1854. To say that this came as a surprise to is an understatement. I had butterflies in my stomach.

My world steadied a bit as I read on. I found that most state societies had not approved this first version of the Rule of 1854, or had done nothing about it. The Pennsylvania Society, I reasoned, may have accepted the membership policy reforms in 1851, but had obviously reconsidered the matter and rejected them in 1854. But as I read the minutes of the Pennsylvania Society for May 18, 1854, it was clear to me that this, too, was wrong. The Pennsylvania Society had once again approved the reformed admissions policy Society members have since called the Rule of 1854. I was dumbfounded.

What had happened later to change their minds? There was obviously a story to recover, played out so many years ago and forgotten by succeeding generations. I dug further. Here is what I found.

Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Mifflin, an Original Member and second vice president general, ordered the Pennsylvania Society's charter be enrolled on July 11, 1792. The charter is still in force, along with provisions restricting the membership of the Pennsylvania Society. Pennsylvania Society Archives.

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I believed that the
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Secretary General Alexander Washington Johnston, who was also a president of the Pennsylvania Society, was a leader of the effort to reform admissions practices in the 1850s. Society of the Cincinnati.

By 1851—just sixty-eight years after the Revolutionary War, the Society of the Cincinnati faced extinction. Only a few of the founding members survived. The French Society had vanished in the 1790s, a victim of the French Revolution. Seven of the state societies had dissolved. Membership in the six remaining state societies was dwindling.

With the Society’s survival at stake, five of the six remaining constituent societies met in New York City on May 7, 1851, to consider changes that would revive the declining membership. Representatives from the state societies of Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania were present. South Carolina was not represented. President General Henry Alexander Scammel Dearborn of the Massachusetts Society was absent. In his place,

Vice President General Hamilton Fish of the New York Society presided over the meeting.

Fish directed a “Committee of Succession and Admission of Members” to consider ideas and formulate recommendations for ensuring the Society’s survival. Members of the committee favored slightly different approaches to the problem, which became clear when the committee reported to the delegates. One of the Pennsylvania delegates, John Markland, moved that the delegates form a Committee of the Whole to resolve the issues and devise a solution.

The delegates hammered out a proposal acceptable to all sides. The delegates felt that a financial hardship was a major factor in many officers’ decisions not to join the Society when it was formed, and that this should not prevent their being represented by their descendants. The resolution presented by the Committee of the Whole provided that, for the first time, descendants of eligible officers who had not joined the Society would be eligible for membership. Any “officer of the Army of the Revolution who is or was a member, or who had a right to become a member,” the proposal provided, “shall in all cases be deemed and taken as the propositus from whom succession shall be derived.”

The new rule, called “An Ordinance Relative to the Succession and Admission of Members,” also provided for the admission of all male descendants of qualified officers, opening the door to multiple Hereditary Members in the right of a single Propositus. “Hereafter,” the proposal specified, “all male descendants of officers of the Revolutionary Army may be admitted to membership by any of the State Societies.”

By 1851, membership was dwindling. Something had to be done to save the Society.

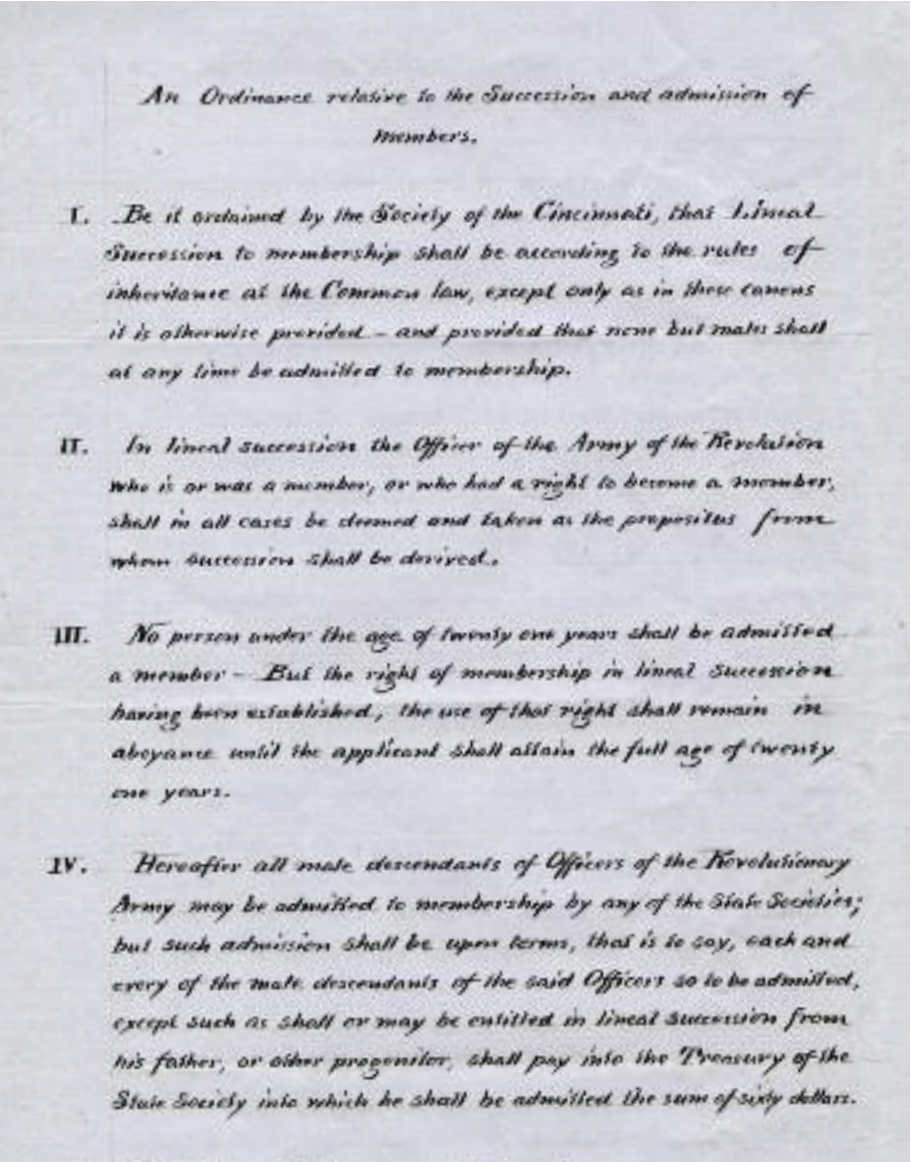
All the delegates, including the five from Pennsylvania, voted to approve the ordinance. Before it could go into effect, the ordinance embodying these fundamental changes to the Society specified that it had to be ratified by all six of the remaining state societies.

The Pennsylvania Society acted with energy, ratifying the ordinance less than eight weeks later at its annual meeting in Philadelphia on July 4, 1851. With Pennsylvania Society President Alexander Washington Johnston—who was also the secretary general—presiding, the members of the Pennsylvania Society voted unanimously to ratify the ordinance. Pennsylvania Society members were clearly in favor of reform.

Progress then stalled. In his capacity as secretary general, Johnston addressed a circular letter to the six state societies in June 1852. He reported that the Pennsylvania Society had accepted the new rules, but that the Massachusetts and South

Carolina and Maryland societies had referred the matter to committees and taken no further action. The New York Society had voted to accept the new rules only if the other state societies did so. The New Jersey Society had not responded to his inquiries and Johnston did not know what, if anything, had been done there.

No further progress was made before the next Triennial Meeting convened in Baltimore on May



The proposed “Ordinance” of 1851 would have allowed multiple Hereditary Members in the right of a single Propositus as well as the admission of descendants of officers who did not join the Society. Society of the Cincinnati Archives.

The Pennsylvania Society delegates to the Baltimore Triennial voted to approve the Rule of 1854.

17, 1854—the first Triennial Meeting ever attended by all the General Officers and delegates of all the existing societies. The delegates learned that the proposed ordinance had failed to receive unanimous assent of the six state societies. Vice President General Hamilton Fish of New York (elected president general at this meeting), presiding once more, appointed a new committee to make a new recommendation.

The committee reported the next day, recommending the adoption of a new resolution facilitating the admission of men descended from qualified officers who had not joined the Society. The new resolution omitted the provision of the proposed ordinance of 1851 providing for the admission of multiple hereditary members on a single line. This provision had apparently met objections in some of the state societies. The new resolution also required the unanimous approval of the six state societies to be operative. The text of the new resolution reads:

Resolved, That each State Society shall have the full right and power to regulate the admission of members, both as to the qualifications of the members and the terms of admission: Provided, that admission be confined to the male descendants of original members, or of those who are now members, (including collateral branches, as contemplated by the original Constitution); or to the male descendants of such officers of the army or navy as may have been entitled to admission, but who failed to avail themselves thereof within the time limited by the Constitution; or to the male descendants of such officer of the army or navy of the Revolution as may have resigned with honor or left the service with reputation; or to the male collateral relatives of any officer who died in service without leaving issue.

Resolved, That the male descendants of those who were members of the State Societies which have been dissolved, may be admitted into existing Societies, upon such terms as those Societies think proper to prescribe.

Resolved, That the foregoing resolutions be proposed to the several State Societies, and their assent be requested thereto; and upon such assent being given by each of the remaining Societies, the Secretary General shall issue notice thereof to each Society, and thereupon the said resolutions shall become operative, and each State Society shall be at liberty to act upon the power given thereby.

All the delegates, including those from the Pennsylvania Society, approved this resolution, and it was ratified a few weeks later at the Pennsylvania Society annual meeting, held in Philadelphia on July 4 (Alexander Washington Johnston presiding). The Pennsylvania Society was once more in the forefront of the movement to reform the Society's membership policies.

Once more the initiative passed to the other five constituent societies, which were called upon to ratify the proposed membership policies. This time the leaders of the reform effort were not disposed to wait until 1857 to determine if the proposals had secured the necessary unanimous support of the state societies. The future of the Society was at stake—a fact underscored by the death of Robert Burnet, Jr., of the New York Society, the last surviving Original Member, in November 1854. In early 1855, Thomas McEuen of the Pennsylvania Society addressed a circular letter to the six state societies, announcing that a special General Meeting would convene in Trenton, New Jersey, in May 1856, to address the status of the proposed admissions policies.

Philadelphia July 10th 1855.
Thomas McEuen Esq
Assistant Secretary General
Dear Sir
I have the honour to
transmit you the following copy of a Resolution passed
at the annual meeting of the State Society of the Cincinnati
of Pennsylvania held July 4th ult, the Seventy
ninth anniversary of American Independence
"On motion Resolved That this Society with
draw their assent to the Resolution adopted by the
General Society at their meeting in Baltimore on the
17th day of May 1854 which was adopted by this Society
on the 4th day of July 1854, and that the Secretary be
directed to notify the Secretary General and the Secre-
taries of the several State Societies of the same."
I remain
Very respectfully
Your Obedient Servant
Harry L. Sproat
Secretary of the State Society of
The Cincinnati of Penn^a

Pennsylvania Society Secretary Harry L. Sproat wrote to Assistant Secretary General Thomas McEuen, another Pennsylvania Society member, to inform the General Society of Pennsylvania's decision not to adopt the Rule of 1854. Society of the Cincinnati Archives.

McEuen’s letter was read in the Pennsylvania Society standing committee on April 25, 1855.

By that point, however, the leaders of the Pennsylvania Society—including members who had supported the reform of the Society’s membership policies—had found a reason to reconsider their ratification of the proposed new rules. The standing committee appointed a special committee, consisting of James Glentworth, John W. Markland and Harris L. Sproat, to review the proposed policies and make a recommendation to the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Society.

On July 4, 1855, the Pennsylvania Society standing committee convened in a special meeting, before the annual meeting of the Society scheduled for later that day. At that meeting, presided over by Vice President John Latimer, the three-man committee presented its report concerning the proposed admissions policy. Speaking for the group, James Glentworth reported that the proposed new rules conflicted with the Pennsylvania Society’s charter of incorporation, and therefore the committee could not recommend their adoption.

Underlying this recommendation was a concern that departing from the terms of the charter would jeopardize the status of the Pennsylvania Society as a charitable corporation. The corporate status of the Pennsylvania Society had been certified by the supreme court of Pennsylvania on January 3, 1792, and the Society’s charter had been enrolled by order of Governor Thomas Mifflin on July 11, 1792. The text of this charter was simply the text of the Institution of the Society, to which the Pennsylvania Society had added a statement that, “having associated for the charitable purposes in the foregoing instrument in writing contained,” it desired to secure “the powers and immunities of a corporation,” with

the understanding that the assets of the corporation would not exceed five hundred pounds. This limitation had been increased to 3,000 dollars by an act of the Pennsylvania legislature in 1833.

The Pennsylvania Society might, of course, have sought a new charter incorporating the new membership rules, but the legal and political circumstances of the 1850s made the prospects for securing a new

or amended special charter maintaining its charitable status seem rather remote. During the first half of the nineteenth century,

Pennsylvania granted nearly 2,000 special charters, mostly to transportation companies. Since each charter had to be tailored to the needs and circumstances of the chartered corporation they were time-consuming and cumbersome for state governments to issue. By the 1840s, general incorporation laws had begun to replace special charters, thus allowing any enterprise to receive a generic charter. Special charters, such as the one the Pennsylvania Society might have requested, were regarded with increasing suspicion, as a tool of elitism and privilege. The likelihood of securing a new or amended charter was further complicated by the political turmoil of the moment, as the Whig Party—with which most of the leaders of the Pennsylvania Society were associated—was dissolving under the pressure of the growing political controversy that would lead to the Civil War.

The Pennsylvania Society’s annual meeting convened later that day and unanimously

In 1855, Pennsylvania members learned that the proposed rules conflicted with their charter of incorporation.

adopted a resolution to withdraw support for the reformed rules of members. A report of this action was then formally transmitted to the General Society.

The General Society had a problem. A few years earlier, the Pennsylvania Society had stood alone in favor of reform, but now the Pennsylvania Society stood alone in opposition—reluctant opposition—to the new admissions policies proposed in 1854. Unanimous consent to the reforms as agreed to in 1854 could not be secured. Without unanimous consent, the new policies would not go into practice.

The special meeting held in Trenton on May 21, 1856, needed to resolve this impasse in order to ensure the future of the Society. The state societies of Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and South Carolina were represented. The New York Society was not. Vice President General Charles Stewart Davies of the Massachusetts Society presided.

After discussion, the delegates agreed to set aside the provision of the 1854 resolution requiring the unanimous approval of the state societies. Mr. Tilghman of the Maryland Society moved the adoption of the following resolution:

“whereas the Meeting is satisfied that a large Majority of the State Societies desire the adoption of said Resolution and deem it more consistent with the Principles of the General Society, that the State Societies should be permitted to exercise their judgments, within the limits named in said Resolution, than that either the majority or the minority of the Said Societies should control the actions of the others, therefore

Resolved, that the Resolution adopted at the last triennial Meeting requiring the assent of the several State Societies to the Resolution, in relation to the

admission of members as the condition on which said Resolution shall become effective, be and the same is hereby repealed.”

The motion was seconded by Mr. Elmer of the New Jersey Society. The resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote of the delegates, including the delegates from the Pennsylvania Society. The vote reflected the position of the Pennsylvania Society—that reform was necessary for the survival of the Society of the Cincinnati, and that the admission of descendants of otherwise qualified Continental officers who did not join the Society was the right thing to do, even if the Pennsylvania Society’s charter of incorporation prevented the Pennsylvania Society from doing it.

Thus was born the Rule of 1854, established by five of the six extant societies. It accomplished its goal, by launching a period of growth for the Society that has continued with scarcely an interruption for almost 160 years. Membership in the Society of the Cincinnati reached 4,000 in early 2013. The majority of those members were admitted under the Rule of 1854. Not one is a member of the Pennsylvania Society.

Thirty years after the Pennsylvania Society reluctantly declined to adopt the Rule of 1854, the drama seems to have been entirely forgotten. By the middle of the 1880s, the Pennsylvania Society had dwindled to just thirty-six Hereditary Members, while other constituent societies were growing. A new membership committee, consisting of Robert Coltman, who served as chairman, Francis W. Caldwell and George W. Biddle, was charged with developing proposals for reviving the membership.

On January 27, 1886, Coltman’s committee recommended to the standing committee that the Pennsylvania Society allow descendants of officers who had failed to join in their lifetime to



In 1886, Robert Coltman (center), as chairman of a Pennsylvania Society committee, urged the admission of descendants of all qualified officers. He is seen here in China, surrounded by his family. Courtesy of Charles Lilly Coltman III.

apply for membership. Unlike their predecessors in the 1850s, who had attributed the failure of some qualified officers to become Original Members to financial hardship, the Coltman committee contended that “officers who might have availed themselves of the original privilege did not do so whether from ignorance or for misapprehension of the true object of the Society.” Their descendants, the committee concluded, should not be excluded from membership because these officers had misunderstood the Society’s purposes.

The committee recommended that “the descendants of all officers of the Pennsylvania Line of the Army or Navy of the Revolution, may be entitled to admission into this Society upon due application, upon the following conditions: Such applicant shall furnish satisfactory evidence of the right of membership of his ancestor, of pedigree, and of good character, and moral worth.”

The members of the Pennsylvania Society

considered this recommendation at the annual meeting of July 4, 1886 (William Armstrong Irvine, presiding) and voted to adopt it. The admissions practices of the Pennsylvania Society were thus brought into conformity with those of the Society of the Cincinnati as a whole, without reference to the Rule of 1854. On August 8, 1888, the Pennsylvania Society admitted to membership a representative of Lt. Col. Clement Biddle, who had not joined in his lifetime.

This moment of conformity did not last for long. Clement Biddle’s representative proved to be the first and only member admitted under the Pennsylvania Society’s amended rules. At a special meeting of the standing committee on July 4, 1890, Assistant Treasurer William McPherson Horner, reported that the membership resolution of 1886 was invalid because it was inconsistent with the Society’s state charter. Why this problem had been forgotten and what prompted the officers to realize that the old impediment to effective reform remained is not clear, but at the annual meeting later that day, presided over by William Wayne, the resolution of 1886 was repealed. The sole Hereditary Member admitted under the terms of the resolution was reclassified as a member for life with no right of succession.

This decision came at a time when the Society of the Cincinnati was entering a period of dramatic growth. The dormant Rhode Island Society had been reconstituted in 1877 and readmitted to the fellowship of the Society in 1881. The rest of the dormant state societies were readmitted by 1904. All of them embraced the Rule of 1854 and joined the descendants of Original Members and qualified Continental officers who never joined the Society to build robust state societies. The Pennsylvania Society remained relatively small,

The real reason for the Pennsylvania Society’s decision was forgotten.

considering the number of Pennsylvanians who had served as Continental officers.

In time, the reason for the Pennsylvania Society’s decision not to adopt the Rule of 1854 was forgotten, even by its own members. For some of those members, the Pennsylvania Society’s strict adherence to the membership principles articulated by the Institution became a point of pride—a testament to the importance of tradition in the Pennsylvania Society and the exclusive nature of its membership—the most exclusive membership in a lineage organization famed for its exclusivity. None of them—perhaps I should say none of us—realized that Pennsylvanians had led the reform effort that led to the Rule of 1854, or that our ancestors’ decision to reject the Rule of 1854 had been a reluctant one.

I reported my findings to the Standing Committee at our meeting in September 2012. The committee members agreed that my research had definitively documented that the Pennsylvania Society had not rejected the Rule of 1854 on principle, as legend held, but instead had endorsed it, and had only declined to adopt it because doing so seemed to pose an unacceptable risk to the Society’s corporate charter. Having reached this conclusion, the standing committee voted unanimously in September 2012 to recommend to the members

of the Pennsylvania Society that they adopt the Rule of 1854. At their annual meeting on October 5, 2012, presided over by Charles L. Coltman—great-great grandson of Robert Coltman, whose committee urged us to take this step in 1886—the members of the Pennsylvania Society voted unanimously to join the other constituent societies by adopting the Rule of 1854.

Before our Society implements the Rule of 1854, we will secure appropriate revision of our 221-year-old corporate charter. Fortunately what seemed impossible in the 1850s is now fairly routine, and should be accomplished within a few months. While we move toward that goal, the Pennsylvania Society will work to ensure that this change does not compromise the interests of other constituent societies, several of which have welcomed members descended from Pennsylvania Continental officers who were not Original Members of the Pennsylvania Society. President Coltman has appointed a committee to respond to concerns and establish processes that are satisfactory to everyone. With such important details still to be worked out, final adoption of the Rule of 1854 is not expected until the annual meeting in October 2013.

Clifford Butler Lewis is the great-great-great-great-great grandson of Col. Lewis Nicola, Continental Corps of Invalids, Original Member. He has served as secretary and president of the State Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania, and is now the chairman of the education committee of the Society of the Cincinnati.

New Jersey Society President Kelly Stewart (second from right) welcomes (left to right) New Jersey Society members Marco Grassi, George McNeely, Michael Denton, Garry Wilbor, and Leslie Hutchinson.



The Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Jersey

The New Jersey Society of the Cincinnati gathered at the Cosmos Club on Friday, October 5, to begin its fall meeting, which was attended by twenty-five members and their guests. President Kelly Stewart convened the business meeting on Saturday morning with a warm welcome to three new members attending for the first time: Michael Denton, Leslie Hutchinson, and Marco Grassi. President Stewart emphasized that following the upcoming Triennial in Princeton, our focus will turn to two other projects: the publication of a new book concerning the history of our society and the renovation of the New Jersey Suite at Anderson

House. The New Jersey Society admitted three new members, Robert Randall Fleming, John Lawrence Bruch and Gregory Andrew Wynn.

Professor John E. Ferling, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of West Georgia and the winner of the New Jersey Society’s History Prize was unable to attend the evening banquet due to a family illness. In lieu of a speaker, our president revived the tradition of offering a series of toasts during the Saturday evening banquet at Anderson House. Past President Ross Maghan gave a toast to the “General Society,” and recalled that when he joined the Society over forty years ago, many of our members were World War II veterans, and it was sad that they are now almost totally gone from our midst. Past President John

Codington gave a toast to the “New Jersey Society.” President Kelly Stewart gave a toast to the “President of the United States.” The ranking military officer present, Captain William Fleming, gave a toast to “Our Men and Women in Uniform.” Michael Clark Denton gave a moving toast to “America the Land of Opportunity.” Guy Dean gave a toast to “Marie Clark and the Triennial Planning Committee.” Finally, Geoff Gamble gave a toast to “Our Ladies.”

The New Jersey Society of the Cincinnati is

extremely proud that two of its most dedicated members will be nominated to serve as General Officers for the upcoming triennium. John Christopher Harvey will be nominated to serve as treasurer general, and James Bradley Burke to serve as assistant secretary general. The members of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Jersey look forward to seeing many of our One Society of Friends in Princeton for what promises to be a grand Triennial.

*Paul Douglas Huling
Assistant Secretary*

The Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Society is moving to ease its 230-year-old policy on membership by adopting the Rule of 1854, allowing descendants of *all* eligible Pennsylvania officers to join the Society. An estimated 180 Pennsylvania officers of the Continental Line—slightly more than one-third of the eligible officers who served—did not join the Society, so their descendants have not been eligible to join the Pennsylvania Society. Over the years, Pennsylvania has given approximately 54 of these officer lines to other states that have adopted the Rule of 1854 (see the article by Cliff Lewis, “The Rule of 1854 Revisited,” in this issue).

Development of the Society of the Cincinnati’s first interactive computer game about the Revolutionary War is now more than halfway to its \$75,000 fundraising goal. To encourage wider participation in the innovative initiative, the Pennsylvania Society is providing a \$25,000 challenge gift to attract the remaining funds needed.

Enthusiasm for the project within the Pennsylvania Society is so high that two members have each pledged \$10,000 toward the project, bringing the total raised to \$45,000 of the \$75,000 cost of creating a 15-minute online computer game. Pennsylvania’s \$25,000 challenge gift will match \$1 for every \$2 contributed by other constituent societies or individuals. State members



The Pennsylvania Society welcomed Michael Quinn, president of the Museum of the American Revolution, as the guest speaker at its annual George Washington’s Birthday luncheon in Philadelphia. The new museum is to be built a short distance from Independence Hall.

voted unanimously to create the challenge gift at their annual meeting in Philadelphia on October 5.

“We were given a mission. We were given a responsibility by our ancestors to promote awareness of the American Revolution,” explained Pennsylvania Society President Chuck Coltman. “This nation needs to understand what our ancestors did to secure our freedom.”

The education initiative has been led by Pennsylvania Society Treasurer (and education committee chairman) Jim Pringle, who has been consulting over the past year with the developers of iCivics, a web-based project founded in 2008 by retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor. iCivics (www.icivics.org) has a series of computer games designed to teach students from elementary to high school about the U.S. government, the Constitution and the workings of American democracy. An estimated 20,000 teachers nationwide currently use iCivics as an adjunct to regular classroom lessons. In 2011, more than 700,000 students and teachers from all fifty states signed on to iCivics, playing a

total of 1.7 million of its educational games.

Pringle has been working on the project with Executive Director Jack Warren and Education Director Eleesha Tucker at the General Society. Ms. Tucker has worked out issues of retaining rights to content that the Society will contribute to the history-based game to be developed jointly with iCivics, which is eager to add historical content to its curriculum. Jack Warren has developed the historical content for a game with the working title “Revolutionary Choices,” in which players are confronted with real dilemmas faced by revolutionary leaders and are rewarded for making wise choices—choices that advance liberty, strengthen the union or help achieve victory in our War for Independence. Students will be faced, Jack says, with problems that don’t always have easy or obvious solutions—much like the problems faced by men like George Washington, John Hancock and Patrick Henry.

The game will be mounted on the General Society’s website and on the iCivics website. Jim Pringle expects the computer game to draw students to the

General Society’s website as a way to introduce them to lectures, maps, and other historical material about the War for Independence.

For the Pennsylvania Society, the \$25,000 challenge is the single largest allocation for any purpose since it funded construction of the memorial to George Washington in Eakins Oval, in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, in 1897. It is the first major gift for education in the society’s modern history. And it is the first time the Pennsylvania Society has cooperated with the General Society on a major project other than the exhibition on *Pennsylvania in the American Revolution*.

The education initiative acts on the second strategy in the Pennsylvania Society’s newly adopted Strategic Vision: to “promote educational programs to improve understanding of the Revolutionary War and its heroes.” President Coltman said he was gratified that the members approved the initiative by a unanimous vote at the October 5 annual meeting.

Randolph Smith



Paul Kent Switzer, Scott Johnson and Keith Peoples at the University and Whist Club in Wilmington, the former home of Dr. James Tilton, first president of the Delaware Society.

Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati

The annual meeting of the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati was held on April 6 at the University and Whist Club in Wilmington. The club was once the home and medical office of Dr. James Tilton, who served as the president of the Delaware Society from 1783-1794.

In addition to the members and their wives, the Delaware Society welcomed as our guest the secretary general, Ross Gamble Perry. We also welcomed our newest hereditary member, Charles Holmes Darrell, who as coincidence would have it, is the great-great-great-great-great grandnephew of Dr. Tilton, who served as a surgeon and hospital physician in Colonel John Haslet’s Delaware Regiment of State Troops in Continental service and Colonel David Hall’s Delaware Regiment, Continental line.

The following gentlemen were elected as officers of the Delaware Society for the period 2013-2014: Lee Sparks IV was elected president, Paul Kent Switzer III was elected vice president, James

Keith Peoples was elected secretary, Charles William Swinford, Jr., was elected treasurer, Bryan Scott Johnson was elected assistant secretary, and Donnell Middleton Smith, Jr., was elected assistant treasurer.

Following the annual meeting, members and their guests were treated to a wonderful luncheon and a very interesting talk by Capt. Nathaniel Charles Fick, U.S.M.C. (Ret.), an Honorary Member of the Delaware Society, about his tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq and his best-selling book, *One Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine Officer*. Additionally, George Forrest Pragoff, past president general and past president of the Delaware Society, presented Miss Grace Gong, a seventh grader at the Independence School in Newark, Delaware, with a check for \$500 as the winner of the inaugural Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati Essay Contest for her essay, *Delaware: How a Small State Played a Large Part in Obtaining Its Nation’s Freedom*.

Bryan Scott Johnson
Assistant Secretary and Registrar