

CINCINNATI FOURTEEN



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Honoring Service and Sacrifice at Valley Forge

Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati

Honoring the many officers of the Pennsylvania Continental Line who endured the Valley Forge encampment, the Pennsylvania Society has paid to rebuild one of the officer's huts as part of an initiative to enhance the park's visitor

experience. The log cabin is now under roof and will soon be furnished with period furniture.

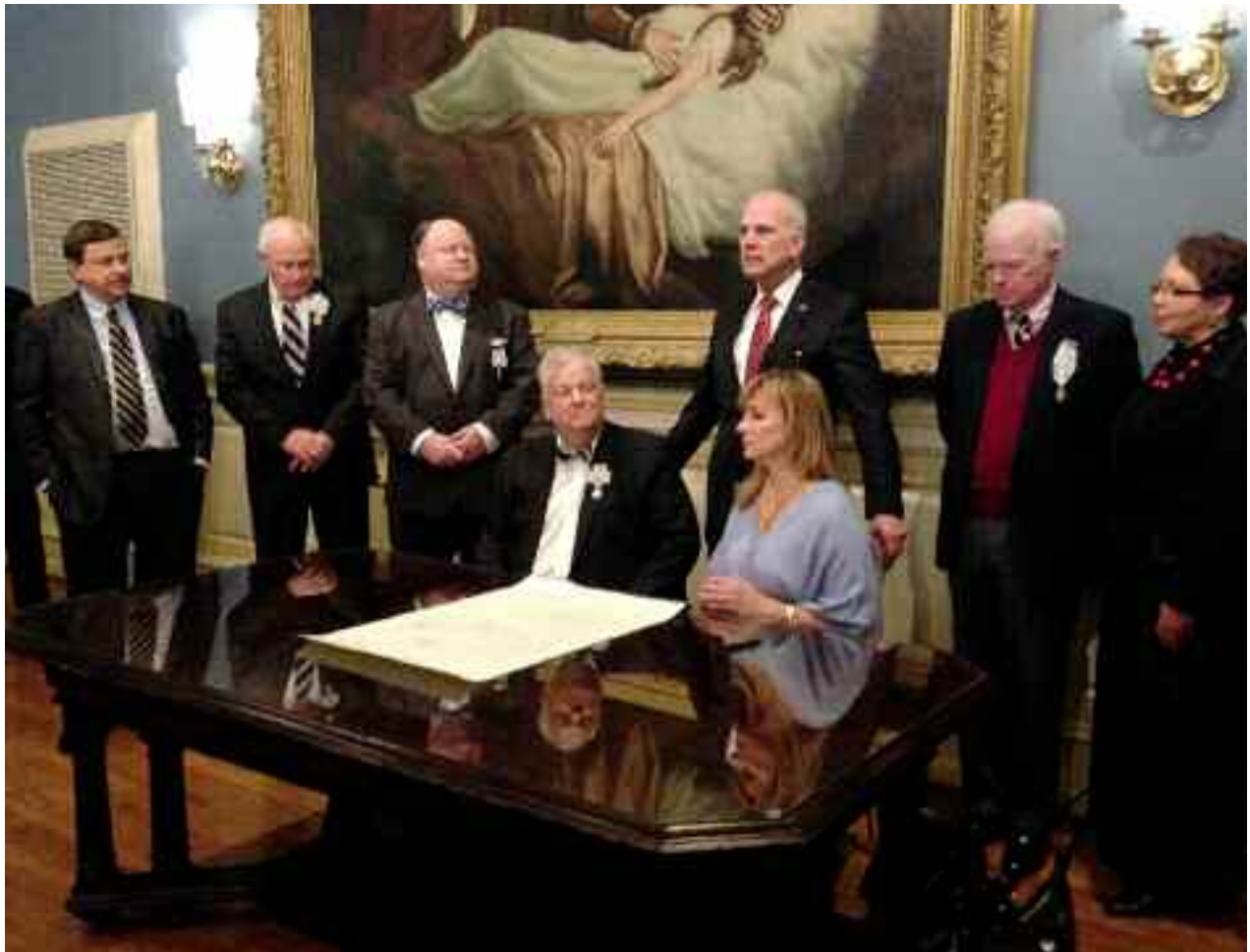
The hut-building effort was spearheaded by our member Ray Wess and past state president Chuck Coltman, who together contributed \$25,000 to finance the

construction of the officer's hut. The Pennsylvania Society is contributing an additional \$25,000 for furniture and electronic storyboards to tell visitors about how the Continental Army survived the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge.

The officer's hut is one of four

A representative of the Friends of Valley Forge (far left) joined Dave Bassert, Cliff Lewis, President Tom Etter, and Lewis Graham in examining the newly reconstructed officer's hut sponsored by the Pennsylvania Society.





Representatives of the Society joined directors of the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia earlier this year to sign a formal agreement expressing our intention to work together to promote the memory of the American Revolution.

new replica cabins added to Valley Forge that are the first new construction at the 3,500-acre park since becoming a National Park in 1976. Five others were built before 1976. The cluster of nine cabins will help visitors imagine the encampment. As many as 2,000 cabins were built to house the army at Valley Forge. Nearby, the Park Service is

reconstructing the Muhlenberg Brigade redoubt on its original site. The reconstructed redoubt will represent the many fortifications constructed to protect the army during its winter at Valley Forge.

“Our main objective is to improve the visitor experience so visitors have a better idea of what life was like at the

encampment and what it meant,” said Don R. Naimoli, president of the Friends of Valley Forge Park, which is financing and coordinating the improvements with the National Park Service. Valley Forge is a passion for Naimoli, who grew up in South Philadelphia and immersed himself in the early history of the nation.

“I honestly believe that understanding the founding of our country is critical,” Naimoli said. “And Valley Forge is a microcosm of the American Revolution. Everything that happened during the six months at Valley Forge made all the difference in the outcome of the Revolutionary War. That to me is worth saving.”

Wess shares Naimoli’s passion for preserving and presenting the story of Valley Forge’s important role in the war. Wess notes that it was during the encampment that George Washington was affirmed as the commander of the Continental Army, Nathanael Greene improved the army’s supply system, the marquis de Lafayette delivered French support for the American cause, and Prussian army officer Baron Friedrich von Steuben turned a group of volunteer soldiers into a disciplined army. “When you draw a timeline of the American Revolution from 1775-1783, the real pivot point was Valley Forge,” Wess said. “It was the event that turned volunteers into an army.”

Wess’ research found that seventy-eight percent of the Pennsylvania officers who took the oath of allegiance at Valley Forge became original members of the Society of the Cincinnati. “Our original members were

brothers in arms at Valley Forge and we want to pay tribute and memorialize them,” he said. That group includes Wess’ own ancestor, Capt. James McLean, who took the oath of allegiance on February 3, 1778. “The officers stood behind Washington. That was the seed of the brotherhood that led to the creation of the Society of the Cincinnati.”

Wess, who also is a member of the Friends of Valley Forge, brought the idea of financing the construction of the officer’s hut to the Pennsylvania Society several years ago as a way to honor the Pennsylvania officers. “We will be able to show people that our ancestors were here at Valley Forge,” Wess told the Society’s leaders.

His passion for the project resonated with past president Coltman. “With so many original Pennsylvania members present at the encampment at Valley Forge, it is appropriate that these men are visually remembered for their deeds and sacrifices at that historic event by their descendants today,” Coltman said.

“The Pennsylvania Society also recognizes that with the construction of the Museum of the American Revolution, Philadelphia will now take its rightful place as the center of

remembrance of the founding of our country. Enhancement of the visitor experience at Valley Forge will complement the museum’s leadership in this effort,” Coltman added.

The Pennsylvania Society and the General Society recognize the potential of the new Museum of the American Revolution to encourage popular appreciation and understanding of the Revolutionary War and the sacrifices of our ancestors. At the Pennsylvania Society luncheon on February 15, representatives of the Society and of the Museum of the American Revolution signed a memorandum of understanding establishing a long-term partnership for creating special exhibitions and other cooperative programs. President General Ross Perry, Vice President General Jonathan Woods, Secretary General Pless Lunger, Treasurer General John Harvey, and Executive Director Jack Warren joined the Pennsylvania Society and members of the museum board and museum president Michael Quinn for the signing ceremony.

Randolph Smith