

*Maryland in the  
American Revolution*



An Exhibition by  
The Society of the Cincinnati

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Anderson House  
Washington, D.C.  
February 27 – September 5, 2009

This catalogue has been produced in conjunction with the exhibition *Maryland in the American Revolution* on display from February 27 to September 5, 2009, at Anderson House, the headquarters, library, and museum of The Society of the Cincinnati in Washington, D.C. The exhibition is the eleventh in a series focusing on the contributions to the American Revolution made by the original thirteen states and France.

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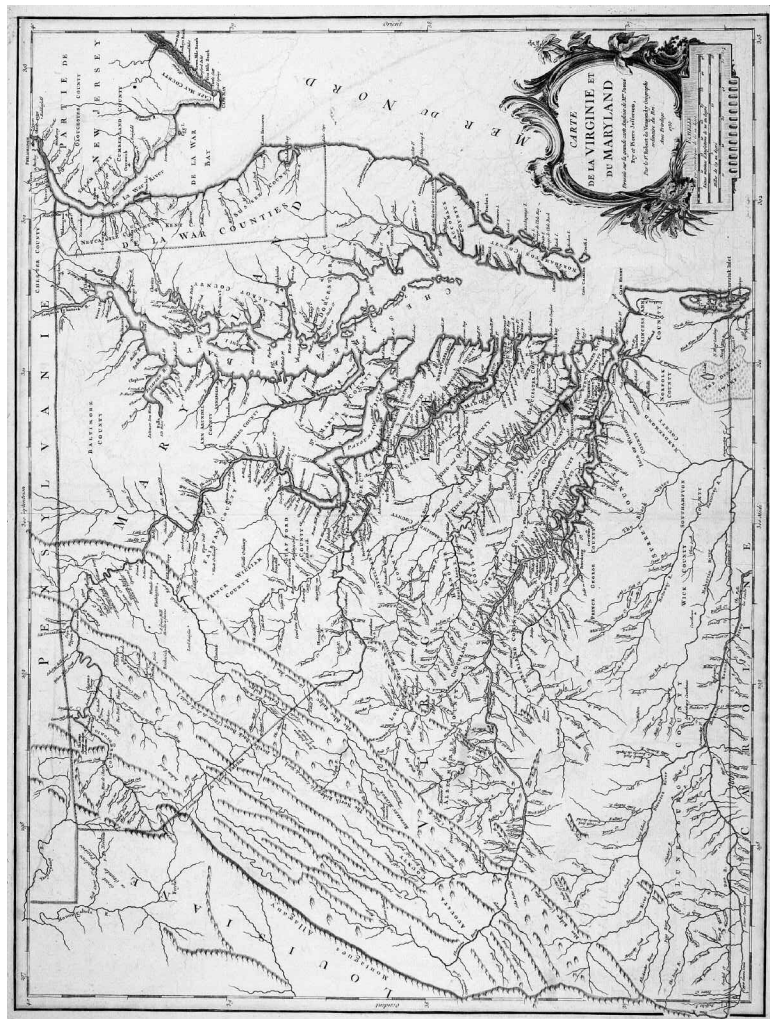
Text by Emily L. Schulz.

Cover illustration: Small swords awarded to Tench Tilghman and Samuel Smith, 1785. See pages 30-32.

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We do most Solemnly pledge  
ourselves to Each Other  
& to our Country, and Engage  
ourselves by Every Thing held  
Sacred among Mankind to  
perform the Same at the Risque  
of our Lives and fortunes.

— Bush River Declaration  
by the Committee of Observation,  
Harford County, Maryland  
March 22, 1775



Carte de la Virginie et du Maryland engraved by Gilles Robert de Vaugondy (French, 1688-1766). [Paris], 1755. The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection.

## INTRODUCTION

Maryland — “a middle temperature” between the northern and southern American colonies — charted a course from English colony to American state that culminated in the Revolutionary War.<sup>1</sup> Established in the 1630s on land granted by King Charles I to Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, Maryland was founded with both religious freedom and economic prosperity in mind. Throughout its colonial history, Maryland’s colonists maintained unsteady relationships with the Lords Baltimore, proprietary owners of the colony, as well as the crown. A 1689 revolt against the Catholic rulers — led by wealthy Protestant colonists who felt shut out of local politics — temporarily ousted the proprietary government, which was replaced by royal rule. Thirty years later, with the proprietors reinstated, the growing merchant class that filled the lower house of the colonial assembly began a campaign against proprietary privilege and taxation that continued to the American Revolution.

Great Britain’s imperial policies that followed its victory in the French and Indian War inspired some Marylanders to argue for the rights of American colonists. Maryland lawyer Daniel Dulany’s pamphlet opposing the Stamp Act in 1765 drew significant support for the patriot cause, as did resolutions passed by the assembly and articles published in the *Maryland Gazette*. By the early 1770s, the founding of local arms of the Sons of Liberty and Maryland’s participation in the Continental Congress drew the colony further into the brewing conflict with Great Britain. While all but the most radical of Marylanders still considered themselves loyal citizens of the crown, politician Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer warned of the ramifications of a deeper conflict, “for should the Sword be once drawn, no one can say when it will be sheathed.”<sup>2</sup>

## WAR COMES TO MARYLAND

**T**rade was the central issue for many Maryland politicians and citizens as they navigated the increasingly tense colonial crisis of the 1760s and early 1770s. The colony's thriving merchants bristled at the suggestion of an American non-importation agreement — a boycott of taxed British goods — while its farmers relished the thought of eliminating competition in the face of falling wheat and tobacco prices. Maryland's delegates to the Continental Congress, which met for the first time in September 1774 in Philadelphia, gained a reputation for moderation and were frequently called upon to find common ground between New England's desperate calls for relief and the economic needs of the middle and southern colonies.

In October 1774, as British ships blockaded Boston and Congress called for boycotts of British goods, Maryland radicals took their own dramatic step against the mother country. They set fire to the *Peggy Stewart*, a ship recently arrived in Annapolis harbor carrying two thousand pounds of tea, in protest of British taxes on tea and other goods. By the end of the year, Maryland's first militia unit raised during the crisis, the Baltimore Independent Cadets, was formed. Although many Marylanders shared the radicals' objections to British imperial policies, most of the colony's residents yearned for a measured reconciliation with the crown.

The outbreak of hostilities at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, in April 1775 disrupted Maryland's moderate path. The month before, the Harford County Committee of Observation — a group originally established to enforce Congress' non-importation agreement — approved resolves, known as the Bush River Declaration, urging American independence. The Maryland convention issued a proclamation in July declaring itself the "Association of Freemen of Maryland" and calling for preparations for the colony's defense. Yet, as John Adams recalled, "neither the State of Maryland nor [any] of their Delegates were very early in their conviction of the necessity of Independence."<sup>3</sup> In 1776, in the midst of the

divided convention's debates over independence, colonial governor Robert Eden quietly departed, leaving Maryland to its revolutionary devices. The convention finally authorized the colony's eight delegates to Congress to vote in favor of independence in late June. Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee's resolution passed in Congress on July 2, 1776, and was publicly proclaimed two days later.

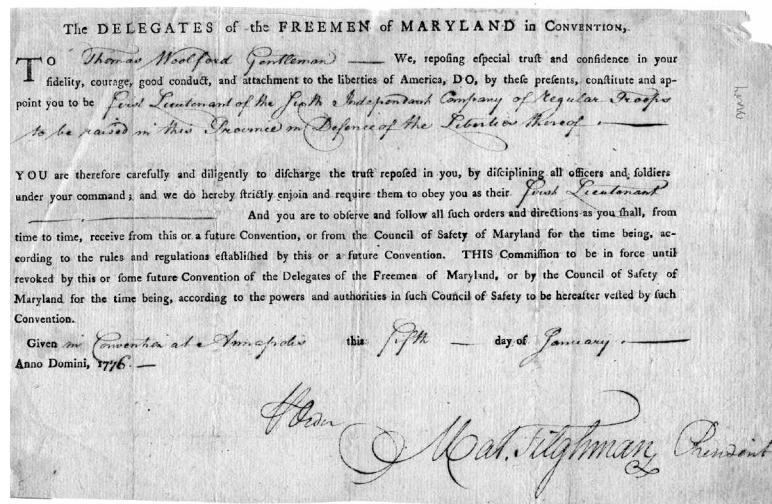
### ***Carte de la Virginie et du Maryland* engraved by Gilles Robert de Vaugondy (French, 1688–1766). [Paris], 1755.**

(See illustration on page iv.)

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

**A**s the imperial crisis with Great Britain began, Maryland's population surpassed two hundred thousand people — including approximately eighty thousand slaves — making it the fifth most populous American colony. Its settlers had only recently begun straying from the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers, leaving vast tracts of land still unsettled in the colony's interior.

Engraved after Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson's seminal 1751 map of Virginia and Maryland, the French edition omits North Carolina from view and focuses more closely on Maryland. Fry and Jefferson's map, in its numerous versions, remained the authoritative depiction of the region into the 1790s.



### Commission of Thomas Woolford as first lieutenant, January 5, 1776.

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

Militia units began to organize in the early summer of 1775 to defend the colony's counties against a rumored British invasion. Authorized by the Maryland convention, these independent regiments were later absorbed into the state's Continental line. Thomas Woolford, commissioned a first lieutenant in the "Sixth Independent Company of regular Troops to be raised in this Province in Defence of the Liberties thereof" in January 1776, later rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Maryland line. He served in the army for seven years, despite having been wounded and taken prisoner at the Battle of Camden, South Carolina, in 1780.

### Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer to William Smallwood, August 24, 1776.

On loan from the Michael J. Sullivan Collection

As president of the Maryland Council of Safety, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer oversaw the state's military preparations for war, from recruiting soldiers to procuring equipment and supplies. Several days before William Smallwood's regiment marched into battle at Long Island, New York, Jenifer writes to his friend about appointments to the Flying Camp, a unit of militia men from several states intended to be a highly mobile source of reserves for the Continental Army. Jenifer also gossips with Smallwood about a Maryland militia general resigning "in a fit of the Sullens on the Council of Safety preferring" another officer's "judgment to his."

### Carte de la baie De Chesapeake et de la Partie navigable des Rivières ... engraved after Anthony Smith. [Paris], 1778.

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

The Chesapeake Bay provided Marylanders with abundant supplies of food and building materials and opportunities for commerce. In the eighteenth century, Baltimore and Annapolis grew around the activities of merchants, which attracted investors, customs houses, and craftsmen to Maryland. To aid navigation through the Chesapeake, Anthony Smith, a pilot and merchant from St. Mary's County, drew a map of the bay's inlets and rivers in 1776, complete with sailing directions and information on the Gulf Stream. The French navy used the 1778 version of Smith's chart, prepared for the atlas *Neptune Americo-Septentrional Contenant les Côtes*, during the Revolutionary War.

**Flintlock pistol. Made in Germany, ca. 1775–1783.  
Walnut and brass.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of John S. du Mont, New York State Society of the Cincinnati, 1994

Maryland obtained weapons for its troops through firms like Halbach & Sons of Baltimore, which imported as well as manufactured firearms during the Revolutionary War. Many of the firm's guns are not marked, but feature hallmarks such as a simple, convex side plate and a barrel shaped in a half round, half octagonal form. One of the firm's most popular arms was a flintlock pistol used primarily by cavalry troops.



**James Campbell to William Smallwood, February 28, 1777.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Library Acquisitions Fund purchase, 1999

Early in the war, state vessels and privateers patrolled the Chesapeake Bay and nearby waterways to rid the region of British boats and barges that harassed shipping and threatened residents onshore. Writing from his ship, the *Enterprise*, at Hooper's Strait on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Capt. James Campbell reports to William Smallwood on his efforts to scout for British ships.

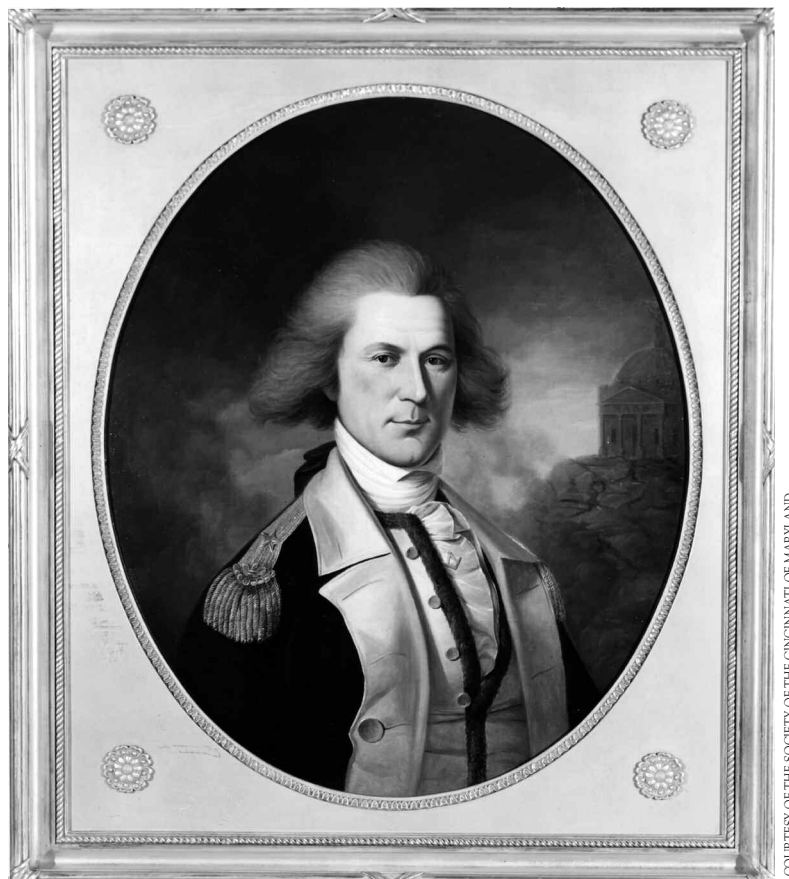
Campbell was also charged with apprehending loyalists, who lived on the Eastern Shore in large numbers and had mounted a small rebellion. He informs the general that he manned a "small sloop ... with Twenty men well Arm'd with orders to Ransack all the Islands from this to the Tangiers, and apprehend those ment'd in your letters."

**James McHenry to Mrs. Smith, July 1, 1781.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

Maryland's citizens sacrificed to support the Continental troops wherever they were stationed throughout the war. Congress relied on the so-called "bread basket of the Revolution" for livestock, hay, flour, and corn, as well as wagons, blankets, and clothing. In 1781, while the Maryland line campaigned in the Carolinas, ladies at home sent the troops shirts and linen. "It is difficult to say, where there is so much to praise on both sides, which we should most admire," McHenry writes, "the little army that behaves so gallantly, or the ladies who send it so essential relief."

James McHenry, an Irish-born doctor who settled in Baltimore on the eve of the war, zealously committed himself to the revolutionary cause. He first joined the American army in 1776 as a surgeon in the Flying Camp. After two years as a prisoner, having been captured at Fort Washington, New York, McHenry joined George Washington's staff in 1778 as one of his secretaries. In the South, he served the marquis de Lafayette as an aide-de-camp and major in the Continental Army. McHenry, for whom Fort McHenry in Baltimore was named, served his former commander in chief again in the 1790s as secretary of war during Washington's second term as president.



Otho Holland Williams by Charles Willson Peale (American, 1741–1827), oil on canvas, ca. 1782–1784. Collection of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland.

## CITIZENS BECOME SOLDIERS

Many of the men who led Maryland's forces against the formidable British army during the Revolutionary War did not have prior military training. They were merchants, tobacco planters, lawyers, and farmers. Even the Continental Army's most senior commanders — including George Washington, Nathanael Greene, and Henry Knox — were primarily self-taught, learning the art of war and the duties of a soldier from European military manuals. Through general orders and circulated reading lists, American officers emphasized to their men the importance of studying to become effective soldiers, in addition to gaining practical experience on the field.

The Maryland Continental line was widely regarded as one of the best trained, well disciplined units of the American army, and one of its most studious leaders was Prince George's County native Otho Holland Williams. He stressed discipline, good conduct, and proper technique to his Maryland troops. When Williams was given increasing responsibility in the southern army late in the war, the Marylander confided in a friend that he wished he could decline his additional duties to focus on his own regiment, for he considered its discipline and military achievements to be the soundest basis for his own reputation as a competent commander.<sup>4</sup>

**“From Vegetius” by Otho Holland Williams, 18th century.**

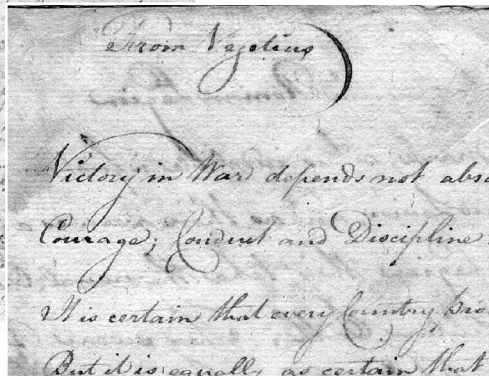
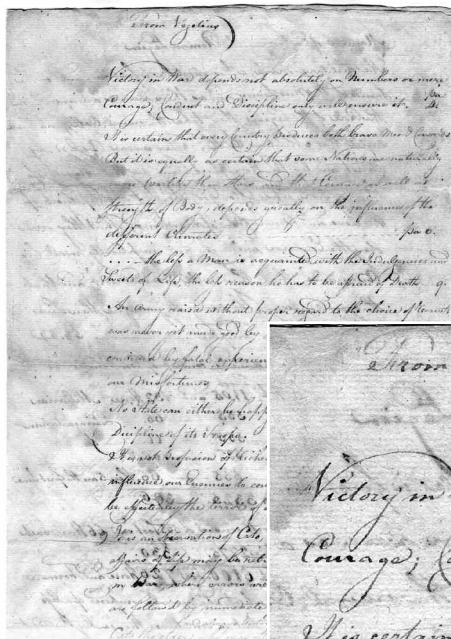
The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

**Military Instructions of Vegetius, in Five Books by Flavius Vegetius Renatus. London: Printed ... by W. Griffin, 1767.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

On the eve of the Revolution, both American and British officers looked to the Roman scholar Vegetius (4th century) for instructions on strategy and tactics. British lieutenant John Clarke had translated the original Latin text of Vegetius’ work, which also addressed siege and naval warfare, for the eighteenth-century English edition. Otho Holland Williams took notes on Vegetius’

tome, beginning with the assertion that “Victory in War depends not absolutely on Numbers or mere Courage; Conduct and Discipline only will ensure it.”



**Pocket balance scale owned by Otho Holland Williams, late 18th century. Iron, brass, steel, lead, and fabric.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Richard Neville White, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1984

Just months after the outbreak of hostilities in Massachusetts in 1775, Otho Holland Williams set aside his mercantile business and joined the Frederick City rifle corps. He immediately marched with his unit to Boston. The Marylander was captured by the British in 1776 and spent one year in a New York City prison. After his exchange, Williams and the rest of the Maryland Continentals headed to the Carolinas for the southern campaigns. He likely carried a pocket balance scale — used for measuring medicine, metals, and other substances by weight — during his Revolutionary War service, which continued until the war’s end in 1783.

## THE MARYLAND CONTINENTAL LINE IN THE NORTH

To assemble a national force capable of facing the British, Congress created the Continental Army in June 1775 and charged the colonies — soon to become American states — with raising regiments to fill its ranks. Congress immediately ordered Maryland, along with Virginia and Pennsylvania, to organize companies of riflemen — which would become the first units of the Maryland Continental line. Over the next eight years, the Maryland line served primarily under the direction of Gen. William Smallwood, a French and Indian War veteran and politician who excelled at recruiting troops. At its height, the Maryland line counted seven regiments and nearly three thousand men among its ranks.

Maryland's Continentals served with George Washington's main army in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey for most of the war's first four years. After the Siege of Boston forced the British to abandon that city in March 1776, the enemy planned to attack New York. Washington began reinforcing the city over the summer and ordered Smallwood's Maryland brigade to New York in July. That fall, approximately nine hundred Maryland soldiers participated in the campaign for New York City that engulfed Long Island, Harlem Heights, and White Plains. Depleted by expiring enlistments at the end of 1776, the Maryland line played only a small role in Washington's storied counteroffensive at Trenton and Princeton.

The rejuvenated Maryland regiments rejoined the Continental Army in New Jersey in the spring of 1777 and distinguished themselves that fall in battles around Philadelphia. Despite praise for their gallant service, the Americans were repeatedly defeated by the British and were forced to abandon Philadelphia. While the main part of Washington's army settled into winter quarters at Valley Forge, the Maryland line spent the winter in Wilmington, Delaware — a strategic assignment to prevent British units

from extending their reach into the countryside. Washington's campaigns in 1778 and 1779 resulted in important victories at Monmouth Court House, New Jersey, and Stony Point, New York, and sent the British retreating to New York City.

***A Topographical Map of the Northn. Part of New York Island, Exhibiting the Plan of Fort Washington, now Fort Knyphausen ... drawn by Claude Joseph Sauthier (French, 1736–1802). London: William Faden, 1777.***

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

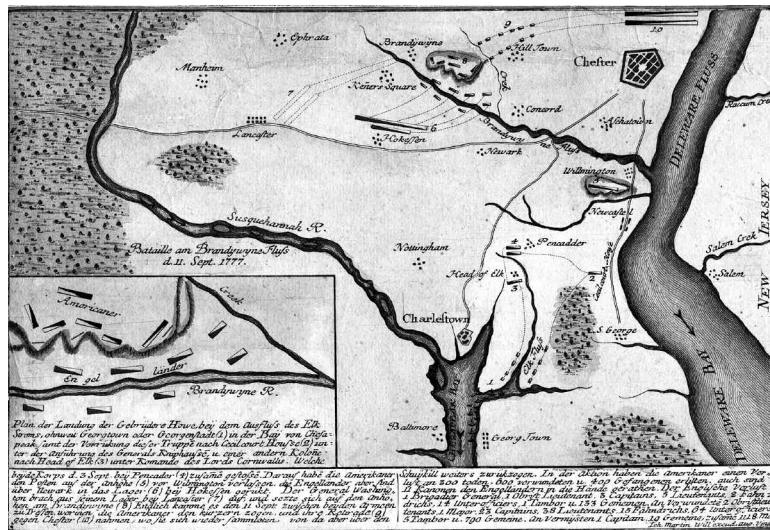
After months of retreating across New York City in 1776, American troops made a last stand at Fort Washington, which guarded the entrance to the Hudson River from the northern edge of Manhattan. The outnumbered garrison that defended the fort included Col. Moses Rawlings' regiment of several hundred Maryland soldiers. The British took the fort in November — renaming it for Hessian general Wilhelm von Knyphausen — and captured three thousand American troops.

The Battle of Fort Washington was documented for British audiences in a map published less than four months later. Drawn by French cartographer Claude Joseph Sauthier, the map locates the American forts Washington and Lee on either side of the Hudson, the British and Hessian soldiers' routes to the fort, and the positions of enemy ships. It also provides comments on the “exceedingly High and Steep” terrain between Fort Washington and the river and the “Very High and Broken Lands” to the east.

**Bataille am Brandywyne Fluss d. Sept. 1777 engraved by Johann Martin Will (German, 1727–1806). [Augsburg, ca. 1777–1778].**

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

Some of the fiercest fighting of the war occurred in the fall of 1777, as British forces closed in on the American capital of Philadelphia. At Brandywine Creek south of the city, Washington's troops encountered the British army, which had sailed from New York to the Chesapeake. The lines of weary and confused Continentals gave way after several hours, ceding victory to the British on September 11. Though the Maryland troops showed the same disorganization on the field as most of their compatriots, Col. Samuel Smith and Lt. Thomas Cromwell distinguished themselves attempting to rally their men. Within one year of the battle, a German atlas was published containing ten maps and views of Revolutionary War events, including the Battle of Brandywine.



**Broadsword owned by Nicholas Ruxton Moore. Made in Scotland, ca. 1750–1780. Steel and ivory.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Maj. Ruxton Moore Ridgely, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1959

**Nicholas Ruxton Moore (1756–1816) by an unidentified artist, late 18th–early 19th century. Oil on wood.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Maj. Ruxton Moore Ridgely, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1958

For nearly three years at the beginning of the war, Nicholas Ruxton Moore fought with the Maryland Continental line against the British, developing significant skill as a cavalry officer. After resigning his commission at the end of 1778, Moore returned to the battlefield in 1781 leading the state's militia cavalry. He carried a Scottish broadsword, with its typical basket hilt, throughout his Revolutionary War service. In his will, Moore passed his treasured sword to his son Smith H. Moore "to be used when the service of his Country demands it."<sup>5</sup> Captain Moore, who was born near Baltimore, served in the Maryland House of Delegates (1801–1802) and U.S. House of Representatives (1803–1811).



[illegible]

“A Return of the Present State of the first Maryland Brigade ...,” September 9, 1778.

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence  
Fergusson Collection

George Washington moved the main Continental Army into headquarters along the Hudson River north of New York City following their dramatic victory at Monmouth Court House in the summer of 1778. Several months later, William Smallwood took stock of the strength of four of the Maryland brigade's regiments. In his own hand, he records nearly 1,500 officers and rank and file troops that were present and fit for duty. The return was likely prepared for Nathanael Greene, quartermaster general of the army responsible for supplying the troops. "On the approach of Winter," Smallwood also accounts for the uniforms and blankets needed by the brigade, noting that his men "have none but Summer Cloathing."

*Comitia Americana* medal, John Stewart at Stony Point.  
Cast after Nicolas-Marie Gatteaux (French, 1751–1832),  
20th century. Bronze.

The Society of the Cincinnati

Maj. John Stewart, a native of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, earned a silver medal awarded by Congress for his role in the surprise night attack on the British-held fort at Stony Point, New York, just ten miles from West Point. Led by the daring general Anthony Wayne, the modest American force, which included Maryland Continentals amongst the Pennsylvania and Delaware lines, seized the garrison using only swords and bayonets. Stewart's medal recalls the valor of the fight, depicting the major mounting the British fortifications with his sword raised. Twenty-six years old at Stony Point, Stewart continued to serve in the Maryland line until his death in 1782. The original silver medal, produced in Paris in 1789 under the direction of Thomas Jefferson, was presented to Stewart's father.

Pocket balance scale owned by Moses Rawlings, late 18th century. Iron, brass, and silk.

The Society of the Cincinnati, Museum Acquisitions Fund purchase,  
2008

To protect the western frontier and provide space for enemy prisoners, the Continental Army called into service several French and Indian War forts, including Fort Frederick in Maryland and Fort Pitt in Pennsylvania. From 1777 to 1779, Col. Moses Rawlings, a native of Anne Arundel County, commanded Maryland troops at these two western forts. His pocket balance scale, complete with a full set of weights in the original japanned iron case, likely accompanied him to the frontier outposts. Frustrated by being passed over for promotions, Rawlings resigned his commission in 1779.

**Edward de Courcy (ca. 1759–1827) by an unidentified artist, late 18th–early 19th century. Oil on canvas.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Bequest of Henry Coleman de Courcy May, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1958

The finely embroidered waistcoat and powdered hair featured in a portrait of Edward de Courcy painted by an unidentified artist reveal his family's exceptional wealth and prominence. Despite his privileged upbringing in Queen Anne's County, Maryland, de Courcy joined the Seventh Independent Company raised in 1776. He was captured at the Battle of Long Island that August and languished for two years in a British prison. Perhaps wary of military service after his captivity, de Courcy entered Maryland politics as a delegate to the Lower House in the 1780s and resumed his life as a planter following the war.



## **LT. COL. TENCH TILGHMAN (1744–1786)**

Tench Tilghman, seldom heralded for his service during the American Revolution, made essential contributions to the administration of the Continental Army. While a student at the College of Philadelphia (now University of Pennsylvania) and a Pennsylvania merchant before the war, he adopted an early stance against Great Britain's trade restrictions and other imperial policies. Tilghman's first foray into military service took place in the late summer of 1775 when he accompanied commissioners to New York to persuade the Iroquois Confederacy to remain neutral in the war. Shortly before the Declaration of Independence was written in 1776, he joined a Philadelphia militia company and, before the year was over, became a captain in the Pennsylvania battalion of the Flying Camp attached to the Continental Army.

The Marylander's most extraordinary opportunity came in August 1776, when his family connections secured for him a position as a volunteer aide-de-camp on George Washington's staff. Tilghman remained with Washington through nearly the entire war, distributing the commander in chief's orders and penning his correspondence. His long and faithful service, much of which he did without pay, earned him the honor of carrying to the Continental Congress the Articles of Capitulation of British general Charles Cornwallis after the Siege of Yorktown in 1781. At the war's end, Tilghman resumed his mercantile pursuits in Baltimore for a brief three years before his death at the age of forty-two. He was an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland.

**Buttons, 18th century. Gold.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Bequest of Harrison Tilghman, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1965

**Shoe buckles. Made in England, ca. 1770. Steel.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Judith Goldsborough Oates and Mary G. Wilson, 1971

**Knee buckles. Made in England or France, ca. 1770. Steel, silver, gold, and paste.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Judith Goldsborough Oates and Mary G. Wilson, 1971

The Tilghman family of Talbot County was among the colony's wealthiest and well-connected on the eve of the war. Trench Tilghman's uncle Matthew became Maryland's governor during the Revolution. Success in the mercantile business in Philadelphia, which he entered with his uncle Trench Francis Jr., allowed him to acquire luxury goods from Europe that signaled his wealth and status. The pairs of buttons, shoe buckles, and knee buckles that he wore reflect fashion trends in England and France that few American colonists could afford.

**Journal by Trench Tilghman, August 5–September 3, 1775.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Bequest of Harrison Tilghman, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1965

One of Trench Tilghman's first contributions to the American cause was a journey to Albany, New York, as the secretary of four commissioners appointed by Congress to negotiate with the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy for their neutrality during the war. Most Iroquois nations had strong ties with the British and, if they were to join the fight, hostile Indian warriors on the American frontiers would gravely threaten the rebellion. In his private

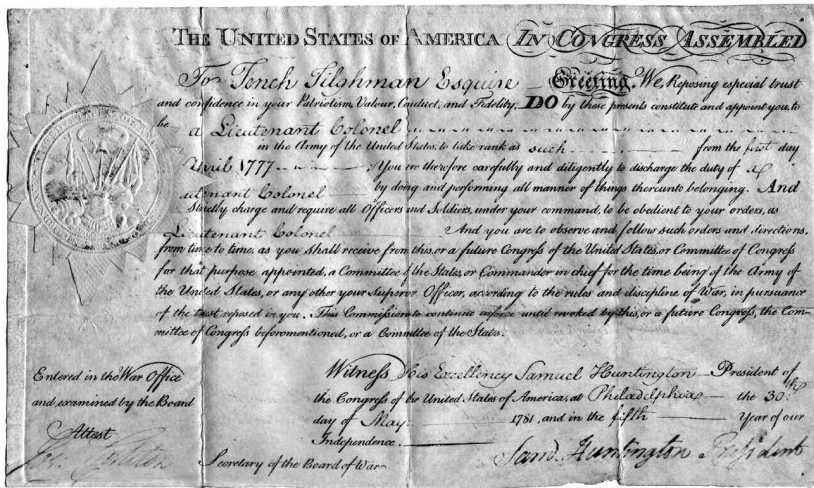
journal, Tilghman's vivid and lengthy descriptions of his surroundings and the rituals of conferences with the Iroquois provide a rare glimpse into Anglo-Iroquois politics during the Revolutionary War — even if Tilghman did not understand the significance of all that he witnessed.

The entry for August 14 describes a typical conference in which Tilghman found the Iroquois "Men all seated in a Circle" awaiting the Americans' arrival. After the commissioners presented the Iroquois with "some Drink & Tobacco" and discussions commenced, Tilghman concludes that "the Behaviour of these poor Savages at a public Meeting ought to put us civilized people to the Blush. The most profound Silence is observed ... When any one Speaks, all the rest are attentive."

**Trench Tilghman to Stephen Moylan, April 29, 1778.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Evelyn Lansdale Wildman and Clare Lansdale Johnston, 1977

While serving as a volunteer aide-de-camp to George Washington at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777–1778, Trench Tilghman was charged with coordinating a massive effort to locate supplies for the Continental Army. That spring, Tilghman was frustrated in securing weapons and horses for the cavalry and expresses his grievances to Col. Stephen Moylan, commander of a Pennsylvania cavalry regiment: "I am as much at a loss as you can possibly be how to procure Arms for the Cavalry ... I long ago urged Congress the necessity of importing a large quantity of Horse accoutrements from France, but whether the order was never given, or whether they have miscarried in the passage, I do not know."



### Commission of Tench Tilghman as lieutenant colonel, May 30, 1781.

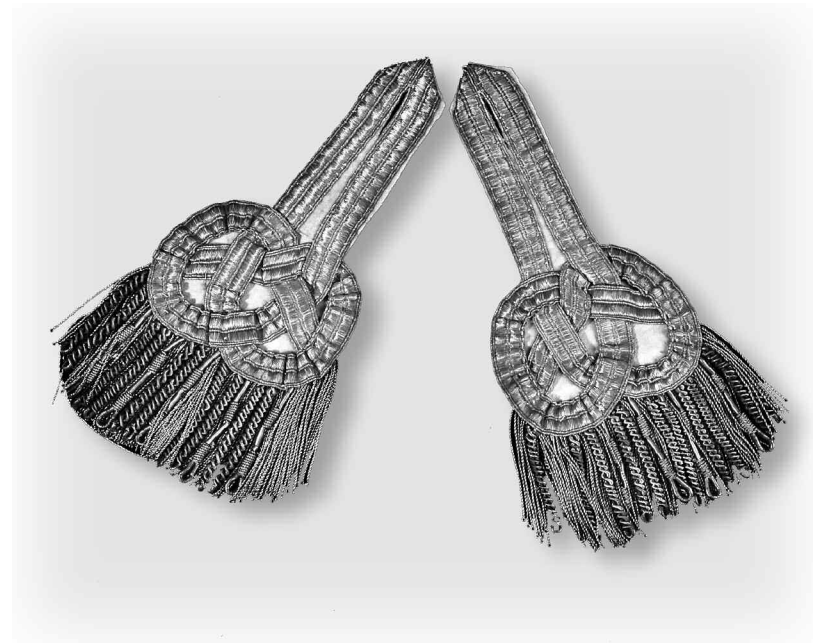
The Society of the Cincinnati, Bequest of Harrison Tilghman, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1965

Tench Tilghman received his first commission from the Continental Congress nearly five years after he joined the American army. Signed by Samuel Huntington, president of Congress, Tilghman's May 1781 commission gave him the high rank of lieutenant colonel. The commander in chief himself had recommended Tilghman for the appointment: "He has been a zealous Servant and slave to the public, and a faithful assistant to me for near five years, great part of which time he has refused to receive pay."<sup>6</sup>

### Epaulets. Made in America, ca. 1776–1780. Gold and fabric.

The Society of the Cincinnati, Bequest of Harrison Tilghman, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1965

As a member of George Washington's staff, Tench Tilghman wore a Continental army buff-and-blue uniform. The pair of gold epaulets that Tilghman wore on the shoulders of his coat combine utility and beauty in their slim profile yet elegant knot design.



## THE MARYLAND CONTINENTAL LINE IN THE SOUTH

**T**he main theater of war shifted at the end of 1779, when 8,500 British troops under Henry Clinton sailed from New York City to capture Charleston and begin subduing the South. In April 1780, with both South Carolina and Georgia in British hands, George Washington wrote, “the Southern States it is to be apprehended may require much support.”<sup>7</sup> He ordered the two thousand men of the Maryland Continental line south to join the army under Gen. Horatio Gates, the hero of Saratoga and commander of the Southern Department. They arrived in North Carolina in late July, only to march another one hundred miles to Camden, South Carolina, where Gates pitched his first battle in the South. Camden was a disaster for the Americans, who were routed by British general Charles Cornwallis’ troops. The Maryland line — which lost one of its leaders, Bavarian general Johann de Kalb, to wounds he sustained in the battle — suffered so many casualties that it was effectively destroyed.

Gen. Nathanael Greene, who promptly replaced Gates after Camden, oversaw a massive reorganization of the southern army. The Maryland line was reformed into five regiments under the command of Maj. Gen. William Smallwood and Mordecai Gist and Otho Holland Williams, both brigadier generals. Its soldiers participated in most of the battles of Greene’s southern campaigns, intended to dislodge the British from the region. Maryland Continentals continued to combat the British in the South, even after Cornwallis’s surrender at Yorktown in October 1781.

The Maryland Continental regiments earned praise for their bravery and good conduct for every battle they fought in the South. Henry Knox’s sentiments written to Smallwood from New Jersey following the dark hour of Camden are among the most compelling: “The affair of Camden will not be more remarkable for its adverse circumstances than for the firm gallantry of the Maryland Line. The veterans of the army here admire their conduct and ardently wished to have been in such

numbers, side by side with their old companions, as to have enabled them to have gained a victory which their bravery so richly merited.”<sup>8</sup> The Maryland line’s renowned gallantry inspired one of the state’s nicknames, the “Old Line State.”



**William Truman Stoddert (1759–1793) by Charles Willson Peale (American, 1741–1827), ca. 1778.**  
**Watercolor on ivory, rose gold, copper, hair, and glass.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Williams Swift Martin, 1984

**T**he uniform of the Maryland Continental line infantry soldier consisted of a blue coat with red facings and silver buttons, along with a white waistcoat and breeches. Charles Willson Peale’s miniature portrait of William Truman Stoddert, a first lieutenant in the Fifth Maryland Regiment in 1778, displays this uniform, complete with a red cape and round black hat with a black feather. The reverse side of the gilt copper case reveals woven hair and Stoddert’s initials, signs of the intimate keepsake that a miniature portrait often was.

Born into a prominent and well-connected Maryland family, Stoddert left Philadelphia College (now the University of Pennsylvania) in 1776 to enlist in the Continental Army at the age of seventeen. He served as brigade major to his uncle, William Smallwood, early in the war before serving with the Maryland line in the South. The Quaker chronicler of Continental officers' social lives, Sally Wister, describes Stoddert in 1777: "He cannot be extoll'd for the graces of person, but for those of the mind he may justly be celebrated; he is large in his person, manly, and an engaging countenance and address."

**"Muster Roll of the late Seventh Maryland Regiment ...,  
October–November 1780.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence  
Fergusson Collection

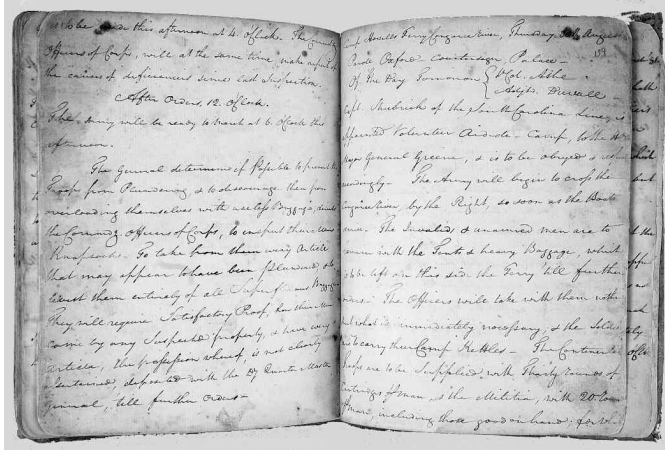
In the reorganization of the Maryland line that took place following the disastrous American defeat at Camden, Otho Holland Williams took command of the surviving Maryland and Delaware troops at Hillsborough, North Carolina, in mid-September 1780. Among his first concerns was to grasp the strength of the Maryland units. The muster roll for Capt. Richard Anderson's Fourth Company of the First Maryland Battalion lists the names of 101 soldiers by rank, with additional information on terms of service and casualties.

***Comitia Americana* medal, John Eager Howard at the  
Cowpens. Struck after Benjamin Duvivier, (French,  
1728–1819), 1881 and 20th century. Electrototype.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Captain and Mrs. William Jeffries  
Chewning, Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia, 1963

In late 1780 and early 1781, Virginia general Daniel Morgan led nearly one thousand soldiers, including more than three hundred Maryland and Delaware Continentals, through western South Carolina — a campaign meant to distract the British from Nathanael Greene's main southern army in the east. British lieutenant colonel Banastre Tarleton caught up with Morgan's troops at the Cowpens, a large pasture near the North Carolina border, in mid-January. Morgan's knowledge of strategy and his enemy's major weakness — impatient arrogance in the face of supposedly inferior American troops — quickly won the day.

For his crucial role in the victory, Congress awarded a silver medal to Lt. Col. John Eager Howard, a native of Baltimore who commanded the Maryland and Delaware men at Cowpens. The medal was struck in 1789 as part of the *Comitia Americana* (American Congress) series produced in Paris. The medal's obverse depicts Howard on horseback, pursuing an enemy soldier carrying a flag, while the angel Fame flies overhead. The Latin inscription on the reverse credits Howard with "rushing suddenly on the wavering lines of the enemy." After the war, Howard became an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland and served as its president from 1804 until his death in 1827.



### Orderly book of the Maryland Brigade, April 5–September 4, 1781.

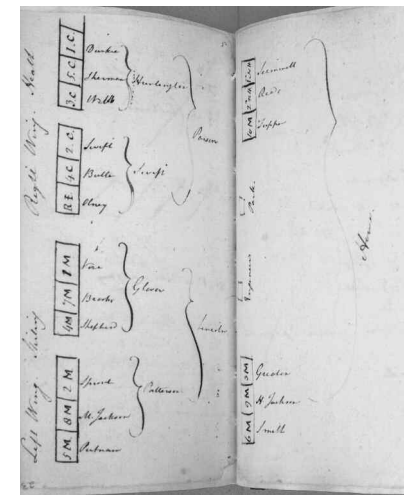
The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence  
Fergusson Collection

**K**ept by William Lamar, an officer of the First Maryland Regiment, the orderly book of the Maryland Brigade for the spring and summer of 1781 records the orders issued for the brigade and the entire southern army. Among day-to-day instructions and announcements are also accounts of the unit's movements and the results of engagements at Hobkirk's Hill and Ninety-Six. The book ends four days before the last major battle in South Carolina at Eutaw Springs, sixty miles northwest of Charleston, and details some of the army's preparations. The entry for August 28 directs soldiers to clean their weapons "in the neatest manner" and, two days later, the orders mandate that the "Officers will take nothing with them but what is immediately necessary." After the American victory, which Otho Holland Williams declared "one of the bloodiest battles ever fought in America," he reported that "the Maryland Brigade behaved so well that the General passed on them the highest encomiums in the field."<sup>10</sup>

### Journal by Tench Tilghman, September 22–October 18, 1781.

The Society of the Cincinnati, Bequest of Harrison Tilghman, Society  
of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1965

**N**athanael Greene's southern campaigns forced a decisive battle at Yorktown, Virginia, where the British army under Charles Cornwallis was encamped in September 1781. Tench Tilghman documents the events surrounding the allied Siege of Yorktown in his bound manuscript journal, remarkable for its exact yet narrative descriptions. His account begins with the arrival of French ships in the James River, covers the harried and dangerous work of the teams constructing siege lines and artillery batteries, and culminates in the final assaults that compelled Cornwallis to surrender. The journal also contains a list of the French regiments and their officers present at Yorktown and a plan of the army's attack. The entry for October 17 relates that, "In the morning Ld. Cornwallis sent out a letter requesting that 24 Hours might be granted to Commissioners to settle terms of Capitulation for the surrender of the posts of York and Gloster." Two days later, George Washington accepted Cornwallis's surrender and dispatched Tilghman to carry the news to Congress in Philadelphia.



## AWARDS FOR VALOR

Over the course of the war, the Continental Congress voted to award elegant presentation swords to ten heroes of the Revolution — one of the highest honors bestowed upon American citizens in the eighteenth century. At the war's end, Congress finally gathered the funds to obtain swords in France. The Paris sword retailer Liger, experienced in crafting swords for the French court, produced the patriotically adorned arms in 1785. The next year, David Humphreys, former aide-de-camp to George Washington, returned to America with these awards for valor, which Henry Knox, secretary of war, was responsible for distributing.

The primarily gold and silver swords bear decorations, specified in part by Congress, that cover the hilt, blued steel blade, and scabbard mountings. On either side of the grip are the coat of arms of the United States and a cartouche inscribed to the officer. Liger's name appears prominently on the blade. Groupings of war instruments, trophies, and classical figures brand these military officers as among the earliest heroes of their country.

**Small sword and scabbard awarded to Tench Tilghman. Made by C. Liger, Paris, 1785. Steel, gold, silver, wood, and leather.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Bequest of Harrison Tilghman, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1965

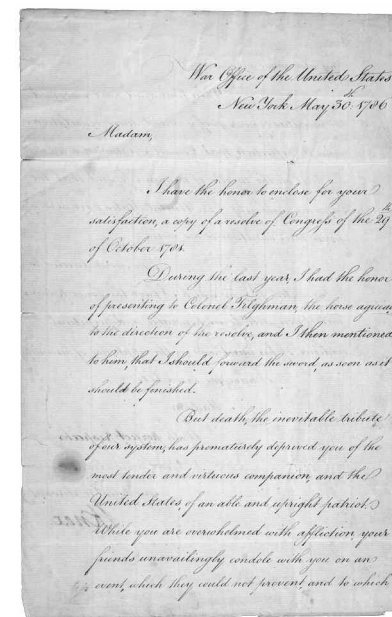


## Henry Knox to Mrs. Tench Tilghman, May 30, 1786.

The Society of the Cincinnati, Bequest of Harrison Tilghman, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1965

Less than six months after he received his first Continental commission in 1781, Congress' delegates again honored Tench Tilghman by awarding him a sword, as well as a horse, "in testimony of their high opinion of his merit and ability." George Washington had lobbied the president of Congress for the resolution, wishing that Tilghman's merits would be acknowledged. The inscription on Tilghman's sword confirms the honor: "Congress to Col. Tilghman, Oct. 29, 1781."

Henry Knox wrote to Tilghman in December 1785, informing him that the swords were expected to arrive from France shortly. But the Marylander did not live to see his award presented. Tilghman died in Baltimore one month before Knox sent the sword to his widow, Anna Marie. Writing from the War Department's headquarters in New York City on May 30, 1786, Knox consoles Mrs. Tilghman: "death, the inevitable tribute of our system, has prematurely deprived you of the most tender and virtuous companion, and the United States, of an able and upright patriot. ... Colonel Tilghman acted well his part on the theatre of human life." The secretary concludes that the sword "will be an honorable and perpetual evidence of his merit and of the applause of his country."





**Small sword awarded to Samuel Smith.  
Made by C. Liger, Paris, 1785. Steel, gold, and silver.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Dr. B. Nolan Carter II, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1999

Congress awarded a presentation sword to Lt. Col. Samuel Smith in honor of his and his men's "gallant defence of Fort Mifflin, on the river Delaware" in October 1777.<sup>11</sup> Fort Mifflin, situated on Mud Island just south of Philadelphia, prevented supply ships from reaching the British army, which had been garrisoned in Philadelphia since capturing the city in late September 1777. The six-week British siege of the fort, which eventually forced Smith's troops to abandon post, was not yet over when Congress passed its resolution. The date of the resolution is inscribed on the sword's hilt: "Congress to Col. Smith, Nov. 4, 1777."

Smith, whose family moved to Baltimore from Pennsylvania when he was seven years old, joined the Revolutionary War in January 1776 as a major under William Smallwood in the Maryland line. He resigned his commission in 1779. After the war, Smith excelled as a merchant and long-serving United States congressman (1793–1832). He also became an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, serving as its president from 1828 until his death in 1839.

## FROM WAR TO PEACE

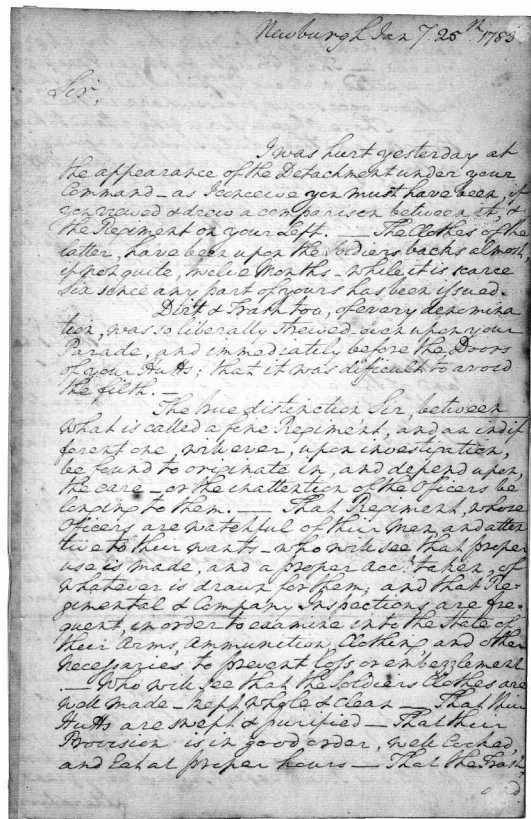
After the allied victory at Yorktown in October 1781, the Maryland Continental line returned to Nathanael Greene's army in the South. Their orders were to retake the last remaining British strongholds in the region at Wilmington, North Carolina; Charleston; and Savannah. Among the last engagements of the war was a skirmish between a Maryland company and British soldiers on James Island in Georgia in November 1782. The same month, British and American diplomats negotiated preliminary articles of peace.

By the fall of 1782, almost thirteen thousand Continental soldiers had settled into their winter camps along the Hudson River in New York, primarily at George Washington's headquarters in Newburgh, New York. News of a formal cessation of hostilities reached the main army in April 1783. With the end of the Revolutionary War seemingly in sight, the process of disbanding the Maryland line began. On June 5, Washington ordered Thomas Lansdale, major in command of the few Maryland troops at Newburgh, to send the last of his men home.

### **Commission of Thomas Lansdale as major, November 5, 1782.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Evelyn Lansdale Wildman and Clare Lansdale Johnston, 1977

George Washington and the Continental Congress remained concerned with maintaining the Continental Army even after their victory at Yorktown. In early November 1782, Congress issued a commission to Thomas Lansdale as major in the Maryland line. The rank testifies to his long and faithful service, having joined the Flying Camp in July 1776 and served continuously until the disbanding of the Continental Army in November 1783.



George Washington to Thomas Lansdale, January 25, 1783.

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Evelyn Lansdale Wildman and Clare Lansdale Johnston, 1977

George Washington to Thomas Lansdale, February 7, 1783.

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Evelyn Lansdale Wildman and Clare Lansdale Johnston, 1977

While encamped in winter quarters on the Hudson River, George Washington expected his officers to maintain order and discipline among their men. In late January 1783, the commander in chief encountered

a substandard Maryland regiment under the command of Maj. Thomas Lansdale: "I was hurt yesterday at the appearance of the Detachment under your Command ... Dirt & Trash too, of every denomination, was so liberally strewed even upon your Parade, and immediately before the Doors of your Huts; that it was difficult to avoid the filth." To correct these shortfalls, the general recommends "in pointed terms to your Officers the necessity, and advantage of making themselves perfect masters of the Printed 'Regulations for the Order & Discipline of the Troops of the United States,' which had been written by the Prussian drillmaster Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben following Valley Forge. Washington concludes with the concession that "some allowance is to be made for the rawness of the Corps," but expects "to see a very great alteration in the Police of the Corps, and appearance of the Men, before the next inspection."

Nearly two weeks later, Washington writes again to Lansdale: "It gave me very sensible pleasure to observe at the Review yesterday the very great alteration for the better in the appearance of the Maryland Detachment ... I anticipate the day when this Detachment will rival if not surpass in excellence the oldest & best Troops in the American Service."

Pocket watch owned by Thomas Lansdale. Made by M. I. Tobias, Liverpool, and Thomas Wallis, London, 1791. Gold, silver, porcelain, and paint.

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of George H. Johnston, 1981

After the war, Thomas Lansdale returned to his sizeable tobacco plantation and mercantile business in Prince George's County and became an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland. He bequeathed his pocket watch to his son, William Moylan Lansdale, who succeeded Thomas as a Society member in 1814.

## Plat of a section of Washington County, Maryland, ca. 1789.

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Harry Wright Newman,  
Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1983

The Maryland legislature had ordered in 1777 that fifty acres of land should be granted to each soldier who serves in the army for three years and one hundred acres of land should be given to each recruiting officer who enlists at least twenty men. After the war, the governor commissioned a survey of the western part of the state to be marked off in fifty-acre lots. The resulting manuscript plats locate the numbered lots intended for Maryland's Revolutionary War soldiers. Many lots bear names that reflect the veterans' hopes for the new country, such as "Peace and Plenty" and "Potts Adventure." They were most likely located west of Fort Cumberland in Washington County, Maryland, in accordance with an act passed in 1781 designating that area as bounty land territory.

## THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI OF MARYLAND

While the main part of the Continental Army awaited a formal end to the war in camp along the Hudson River, a small group of George Washington's senior officers led the formation of a veterans' organization to live on past the dissolution of the army. On May 13, 1783, The Society of the Cincinnati was born, named after the ancient Roman citizen-soldier Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus. The Society's "Immutable Principles," drafted by Massachusetts general Henry Knox, directed its members to promote the achievement of American independence, preserve the union of states that resulted, and maintain the bonds of friendship forged in war. Washington became the Society's first president general, leading his officers from war to peace.

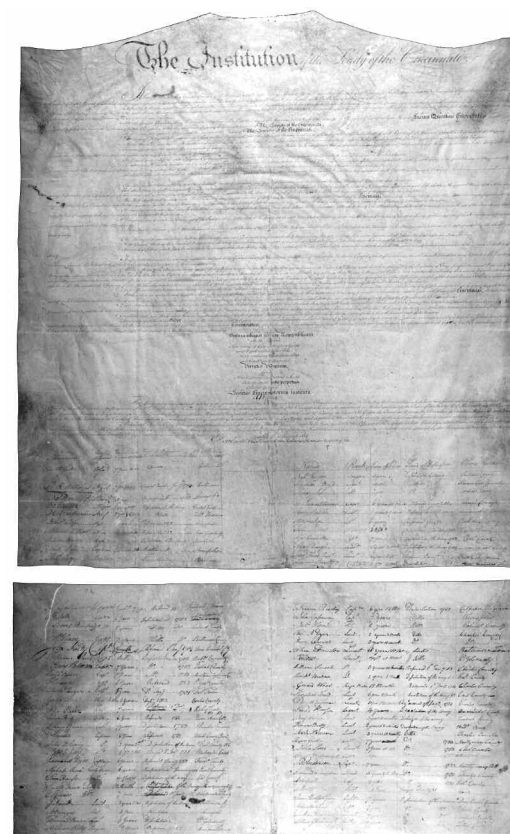
Prussian drillmaster Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben and Massachusetts general William Heath were charged with communicating news of the Society's founding to the senior officers of each state's Continental line and encouraging them to form a state branch of the Society. Veterans of the Maryland line assembled in Annapolis on November 21, 1783, to found the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland. The following day, the group elected William Smallwood, president; Mordecai Gist, vice president; Nathaniel Ramsay, treasurer; and John Eccleston, assistant treasurer. They also selected Governor William Paca as an honorary member. Otho Holland Williams, who became the General Society's first assistant secretary general, captured the spirit of the founders of the Maryland Society by offering thanks for "the fortunate and glorious conclusion of an unequal, precarious and bloody War and to return with Joy to their Country and possess the invaluable rights of Citizens, in peace and natural Independence."<sup>12</sup>

**William Smallwood to George Washington, November 29, 1783.**

The Society of the Cincinnati Archives

Six months after the Society's founding in New York, officers of the Maryland Continental line gathered at William Mann's tavern in Annapolis to form their state's branch. "I have now the Honor of embracing the earliest opportunity ... of transmitting the Proceedings of the Society of the Cincinnati of this State," William Smallwood writes to George Washington, providing the first official news of the establishment of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland.

It took several attempts to organize the Maryland line for their founding meeting. The first assembly of officers in July had such low attendance — which Smallwood attributes to "the remote and distressed situation of the Officers, and the Expences which might accrue upon drawing them to a Point on that single Object" — that the general postponed the meeting until the fall, when the veterans could also address the General Assembly on bounty lands still owed to them by the state. A second meeting in Annapolis on November 20 was adjourned without taking any action because Smallwood and Gen. Mordecai Gist, the second highest-ranking Maryland officer, were not present. Finally, the following day, sixty-six men testified "their hearty and entire approbation of the Principles" of the Society, "cheerfully concurring in the Establishment of the said Order."<sup>13</sup>



**Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, ca. 1783–1784. Ink on parchment.**

On loan from the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland

Original members of the Maryland Society began signing their names to the original copy of the Society's Institution, or founding document, at a meeting held on November 22, 1783. At some point in the following year, the original Institution was severely damaged and this replacement copy was made. Its 2 pieces of parchment bear the signatures of 108 men — including William Smallwood, Mordecai Gist, Otho Holland Williams, and

the artist James Peale — as well as their rank, length of service, and place of residence.

The Maryland Society directed that a third copy of the Institution be made and signed at its meeting on October 17, 1785, to reflect the revisions to the original charter that were put forth at the first meeting of the General Society in May 1784. Threatened by widespread criticism that the Society intended to create an American aristocracy and secret conspiracy, the 1784 meeting drafted an amended Institution that abolished the hereditary principle of membership and required the state governments to charter each branch of the Society. Final approval of the revisions rested with the constituent societies, few of which took action. The Maryland Society was one of only a few constituent societies to approve the amended Institution and may have been the only one to prepare a copy of it for signatures. Despite these steps, the Maryland Cincinnati still hoped that “the Original Institution of the Society be adhered to as nearly as possible.”<sup>14</sup> In deference to George Washington’s support for the revisions, the Society waited until the year after his death to abandon the amended Institution.

### **Uriah Forrest to the president of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, November 1, 1783.**

On loan from the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland

Dozens of veteran officers of the Maryland line, dispersed across the state and nation, sought membership in the new society by letter. Uriah Forrest, a former lieutenant colonel in the Maryland line who had lost a leg at the Battle of Germantown, was one of the farthest-flung officers, owning a successful mercantile business with an office in London. There he learned of the Society’s founding: “I cannot express my feelings on reading today, for the first Time, the constitution of the Society of the Cincinnati ... though, separated by an Ocean of 3000 Miles, and a slave to Business; there is not one among you, who feel more Affection, for that brave handful, who

persevered to the last, than I do.” Forrest, a native of St. Mary’s County, was approved for membership in the Maryland Society in July 1784. Settling at Rosedale, the Washington, D.C., home he built after returning to America, Forrest served in the Continental Congress (1787) and U.S. House of Representatives (1793–1794).



**Society of the Cincinnati Eagle of Tench Tilghman. Made by Duval and Francastel, Paris, 1784. Gold, enamel, silk, and metal.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Gift of Harrison Tilghman, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1953

Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a Revolutionary War veteran and original member of the Society who is perhaps better known for his plan of the city of Washington, D.C.,



right trumpets their victory. The Eagle of the Society radiates above the scene.

The first Society diplomas were printed on parchment in Philadelphia using a copper plate made from L'Enfant's design in Paris in 1784. The Society's president general, George Washington, and secretary general, Henry Knox, signed each blank diploma before sending batches to the constituent societies for distribution. This diploma attests to the membership of Archibald McCalester, a first lieutenant in the Maryland Continental line.

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Andrew White, *An Account of the Colony of the Lord Baron of Baltimore, 1633*, in *Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633–1684* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Richard J. Cox, "From Feudalism to Freedom: Maryland in the American Revolution," *Maryland Heritage: Five Baltimore Institutions Celebrate the American Bicentennial*, ed. John B. Boles (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1976), 139.

<sup>3</sup> John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, September 24, 1821, *Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams*, ed. Lester J. Cappon (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 577.

<sup>4</sup> Otho Holland Williams to John Stull, September 23, 1780, Otho Holland Williams Papers, Maryland Historical Society.

<sup>5</sup> Will of Nicholas Ruxton Moore, April 10, 1815.

<sup>6</sup> George Washington to John Sullivan, May 11, 1781, *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 22:71.

<sup>7</sup> Washington to the President of Congress, April 2, 1780, *Writings*, 18:197.

<sup>8</sup> Henry Knox to William Smallwood, October 23, 1780, Gilder Lehrman Collection, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

<sup>9</sup> Sally Wister, *Sally Wister's Journal: A True Narrative being a Quaker maiden's account of her experiences with officers of the Continental Army, 1777–1778*, ed. Albert Cook Myers (Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach, 1902), 84–85.

<sup>10</sup> Otho Holland Williams to Elie Williams, September 11, 1781, Williams Papers.

<sup>11</sup> *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), 9:862.

<sup>12</sup> "Proceedings of the Maryland State Society of the Cincinnati," November 22, 1783, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland Archives.

<sup>13</sup> "Proceedings," November 21, 1783, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland Archives.

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## THE ROBERT CHARLES LAWRENCE FERGUSSON COLLECTION

Established in 1988, the Fergusson Collection honors the memory of Lt. Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson (1943–1967), a member of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia who died of wounds sustained in combat in Vietnam. Lieutenant Fergusson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Purple Heart. The growing collection that bears his name includes rare books, broadsides, manuscripts, maps, works of art, and artifacts pertaining to the military history of the American Revolution and the art of war in the eighteenth century.

