



1783

THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

Headquarters and Museum - Anderson House
2118 Massachusetts Avenue, Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20008
(202)785-2040

December 16, 1985

Mr. S. Williamson
Beechmount, Conyngham Lane
Bridge Nr. Canterbury Kent CTI 4JX
England

Dear Mr. Williamson:

Please excuse the omission of your first name, but we had difficulty reading some of the words in your letter.

Regarding your request, we are not equipped to conduct genealogical research as the only records we have are those pertaining to our members.

We are enclosing a copy of baron de Montesquieu's military history and hope it will be of assistance.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Sandra Prucher
Assistant to the Secretary General

enclosure



1783

THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

Headquarters and Museum - Anderson House
2118 Massachusetts Avenue, Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20008
(202)785-2040

GENERAL RULES OF ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

The Society of the Cincinnati is composed of thirteen State Societies, one in each of the Continental States, and a Society in France. Generally, an applicant is expected to join the Society in the State from which his progenitor served as an officer in the American Revolution. The rules of admission to membership in the State Societies, though all based upon the original Institution of the Society, vary somewhat in their requirements, and each State Society has the right to judge on the qualifications of an applicant. Therefore, the general rules given are only preliminary to more definite information from the State Society concerned as to membership requirements.

When the Society was instituted eligibility to it was generally confined to those officers of the Continental Army and Navy who came within any of the following provisions:

- (a) Served to the end of the war.
- (b) Resigned with honor after three years' service as an officer.
- (c) Were "deranged" in one of the several resolutions of Congress. The term "deranged" connoted being rendered supernumerary. In the absence of sufficient replacements it was from time to time necessary to consolidate regiments, thereby rendering some of the officers supernumerary, so that they left the service. Many of such officers had subsequent service in the Militia or even other Continental organizations.
- (d) An officer who had been killed in battle or died in service may be represented in the Society.

In 1854, it being recognized that many of the Revolutionary officers might have joined the Society and did not do so for one reason or another, the following resolution was adopted (applicable to all State Societies except Pennsylvania):

Resolved, That the General Society will not object to the admission of members by the State Societies of the lineal descendants of officers of any grade, commissioned or warrant officers, who have served three years in the war of the Revolution and have been honorably discharged.

Only one descendant may represent an Original Member or an officer eligible under the Rule of 1854. The prior right to a membership is given to the eldest son in a direct line of descent from an officer, and if there are no sons the right may come down through a maternal line. If to all knowledge the direct line of descent is extinguished, the collateral line, that is descent from a brother or sister of an officer, is considered. When there has been a long lapse of membership some State Societies require only proof of descent within any of such lines without the necessity of showing that there are no others closer to the Continental officer under the rules of primogeniture. There is also provision in some of the State Societies for a waiver by a descendant of his right to a membership in favor of the next in line of succession to the membership.

Anyone seeking exact information regarding membership should send the name of the officer of the Revolution from whom he has descended, directly or collaterally, together with his relationship to this officer and the State from which such officer served, to the Secretary General, Society of the Cincinnati, 2118 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. The applicant will then be directed to the Secretary of the pertinent State Society.