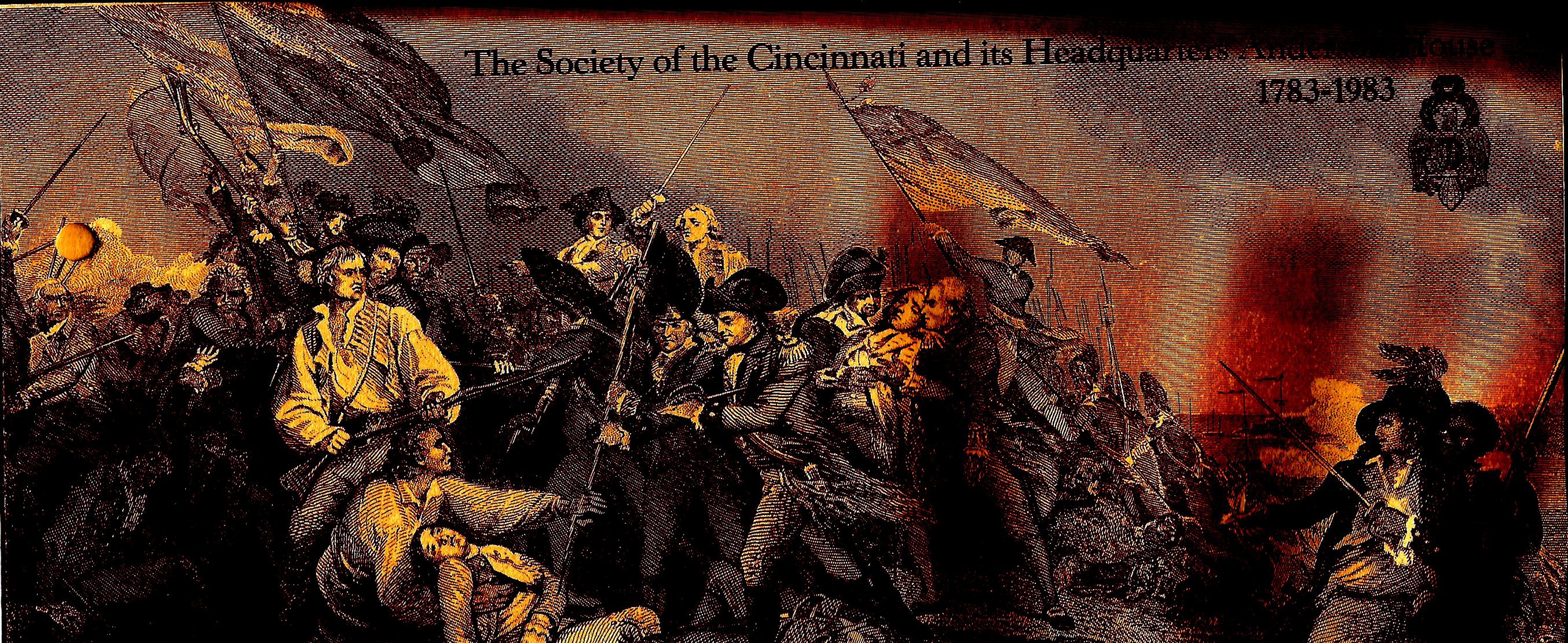


# The Society of the Cincinnati and its Headquarters, Anderson House

1783-1983



# THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI AND ITS HEADQUARTERS ANDERSON HOUSE

## TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### What is the Society of the Cincinnati?

The Society of the Cincinnati is a perpetual body composed of lineal male descendants of commissioned officers who served in the regular (Continental) American Army or Navy during the Revolution, 1775-1783. At present (1982) it has about 2900 members.

#### What does it *do*?

It exists for the following purposes:

- a. To perpetuate, among their descendants, the cordial affection that existed among the founders.
- b. To promote and cherish, between the respective states, that union and national honor so essential to their happiness and future dignity.
- c. To preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature for which the founders fought and bled and without which the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing.
- d. To support educational, cultural and literary activities that promote the purposes of the Society and the ideals of liberty and constitutional government.



#### When and by whom was it established?

In 1783 by a group of officers who had served with Washington through the Revolution. The first proposal for some kind of permanent union among the officers was made on April 15, 1783 by General Henry Knox, Washington's Chief of Artillery, who suggested a fraternal patriotic organization of the officers who are about to be demobilized.

The idea was considered further in May by the officers at the New Windsor Cantonment on the west bank of the Hudson River who developed a charter (called the Institution) for the new Society and sent it for approval to each of the 13 original states. By the end of 1783 each state had adopted it and had formed its own State Society.

#### How is it organized?

Into 14 self-governing State Societies (one of which is in France) united in a General Society whose headquarters is Anderson House. George Washington was chosen first President General and held that office 16 years until his death in 1799. Alexander Hamilton became the second President General for the next five years.

A membership badge was designed for the Society by Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant who later laid out the city of Washington. The colors, blue and white, were chosen for the Society to symbolize the association between America and her Revolutionary ally, France. An engraving of the insignia designed by L'Enfant is reproduced on the front of this brochure.

#### Who was entitled to become an Original Member?

Only those officers who had served a minimum period with the regular (Line) American Army or Navy, or with the French forces under Rochambeau and deGrasse.

Qualifications were:

- a. Service to the end of the war as an officer with a Line (as distin-

guished from a Militia or State) regiment.

- b. Resignation with honor after a minimum of three years of service.
- c. Being rendered supernumerary, or honorably discharged after three years of service.

About 2400 officers joined as Original Members.

### What are present membership requirements?

Every Original Member, as well as other officers who could have become Original Members but for one reason or another did not join the Society, can be represented in the Society today by a descendant. The Society also accepts descendants of officers who were killed in battle or died in service. While rules differ slightly among the various State Societies, generally membership passes to the eldest son according to the rule of primogeniture. Lacking such an individual, a collateral male descendant, if properly qualified, may take up the membership.

### How do the French enter the picture?

A clear-cut victory could not have been achieved in the Revolution without French help, for which the Original Members of the Society were deeply grateful.

An invitation to join the Society was accordingly extended to French

Officers in Rochambeau's army and deGrasse's fleet. Many of these men joined together to form the French Society in 1784 under the patronage of the King, Louis XVI. This Society was destroyed by the French Revolution in 1792 and the subsequent Reign of Terror in which a large number of French Original Members lost their lives. After nearly a century and a half, the French Society was again reconstituted and accepted as the 14th State Society in 1925. It now has more than 200 members.

### Whence comes the name?

Our ancestors were classical scholars, much better versed in Greek and Roman history than we are today. As the army was preparing to disband in 1783, many were struck by the parallels between George Washington, the farmer of Mount Vernon, and the life of the distinguished Roman Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus (born ca. 519 B. C.).

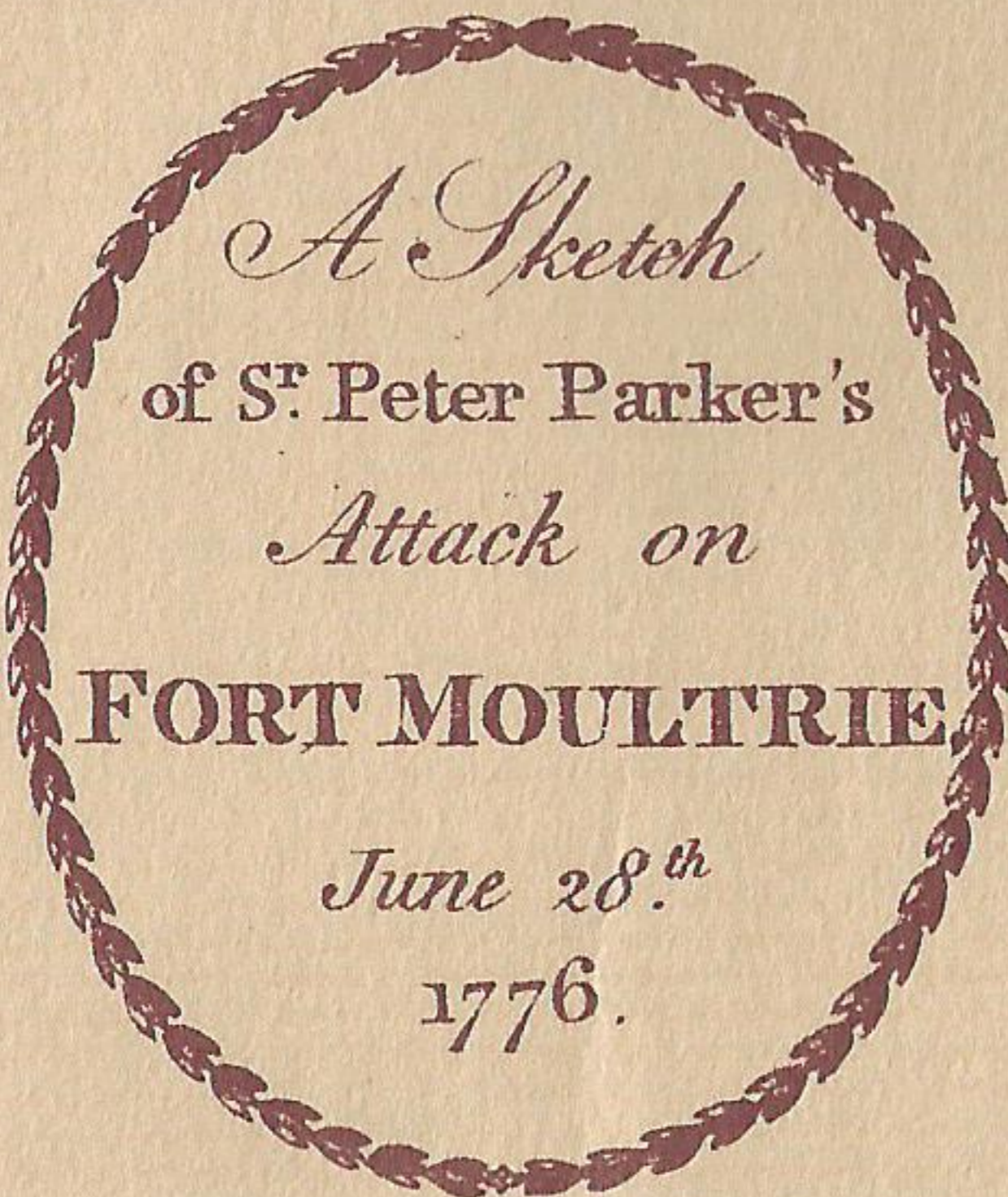
In ancient times, when Rome was governed by Tribunes of the People, war broke out with Rome's enemies, the Aequi and the Volsci, whose armies surrounded Rome's forces and threatened to force capitulation. The Senate resolved to appoint a Dictator, and a delegation was sent to Cincinnatus, who had retired from public



life to his farm. They found him at the plow, dressed as a peasant. Putting on the robes of high office, he returned to the city, routed Rome's enemies, distributed the spoils to his soldiers, and retired to his life as a farmer, refusing all honors and awards.

Later, other troubles broke out, civil commotion disturbed the people, and Cincinnatus was invested a second time as Dictator by the Senate, but, quelling the outbreak, he again returned to his farm.

The Society of the Cincinnati was so called therefore to symbolize the fact that not only Washington but all his officers were about to put aside



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the sword to return to their lives as private citizens of the new Republic.

The medallion of the Society insignia today depicts Cincinnatus meeting the Senators at his plough.

**What connection does Cincinnati, Ohio, have with the Society?**

Cincinnati, in 1790 a small settlement on a bend of the Ohio River, was named after the Society by Major General Arthur St. Clair, an Original Member of the Society from Pennsylvania and first Governor of the Northwest Territory. He was inspired to do this because a large number of other Original Members had settled there with their families at the conclusion of the Revolution. The State of Ohio was later created out of the Northwest Territory in 1803.

**Why is this building called Anderson House?**

The house was completed in 1905, after designs by the firm of Little and Brown, Boston, as a private residence for Mr. and Mrs. Larz Anderson. Mr. Anderson was a career diplomat and United States Ambassador to Japan, 1912-1913. He was a member of the Society for 43 years and always deeply interested in it. After his death Mrs. Anderson gave the house to the Society in 1938 for a permanent headquarters.

**Is Anderson House more than a headquarters?**

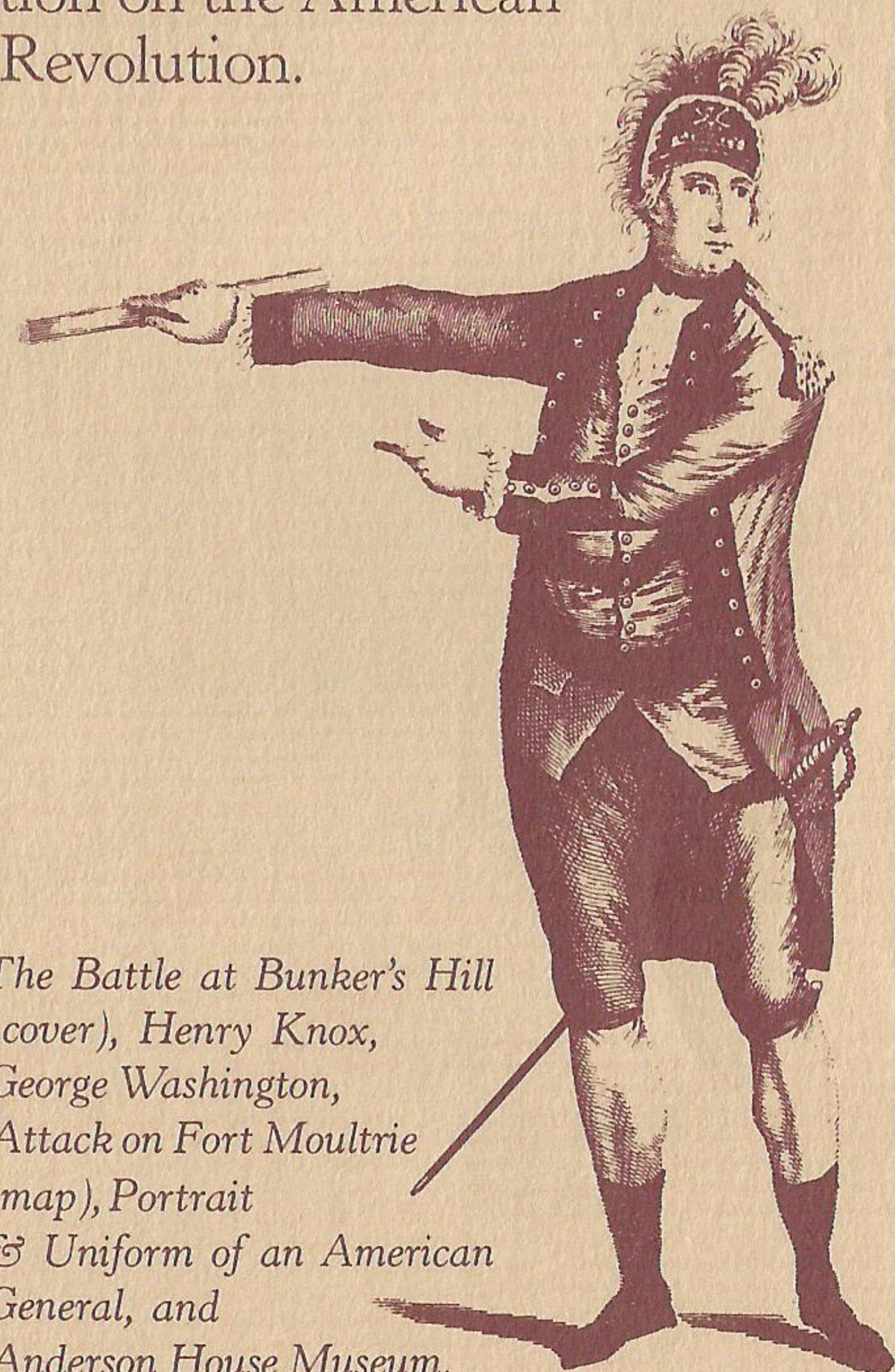
Yes. It is a well-known Washington landmark and one of the few remaining examples of the great town residences of a bygone day. Additionally, it is an Historic House Museum on the National Register of Historic Places and a national museum of relics of the American Revolution. Among the more interesting objects to be seen on the first floor of the house are portraits of founding members of the Society by Gilbert Stuart, George Catlin, Ezra Ames and other early American painters. There are also orderly books, personal letters and manuscripts, as well as medals, swords, glass, silver and china of historic importance.

The second floor is still furnished largely as it was in the years the house was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. An-

derson (1905-1937). In the Drawing Room are 18th Century paintings, including examples of the work of Hoppner, Raeburn and Reynolds. In the glittering French Salon is a forest of "Jade Trees" from China and Japan. Flemish tapestries of the 16th Century, French and Italian religious paintings, and numerous oriental art objects are displayed in the Olmsted Gallery and in the State Dining Room.

The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 4 P.M., and is closed on National Holidays; free.

The Harold Leonard Stuart Memorial Library, open to the public weekdays 10-4, houses a 12,000-volume reference collection on the American Revolution.



*The Battle at Bunker's Hill (cover), Henry Knox, George Washington, Attack on Fort Moultrie (map), Portrait & Uniform of an American General, and Anderson House Museum.*



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