



CHRONICLE OF THE AZTEC CLUB OF 1847

Military Society of the Mexican War

Spring, 1997

Our 150TH Year

Editor: Rick Breithaupt

Greetings

As we enter our sesquicentennial year, the Aztec Club of 1847 is a vibrant, growing organization. It is larger than the society was at the time of its founding. A steady growth in attendance at annual meetings, and the success of our spring meetings inaugurated just a few years ago, confirm a renewed vitality and interest. We are involved in community activities and sponsorship of worthy projects associated with the Mexican War, a recent example being the funding of artwork for the National Park Service's Palo Alto battlefield book.

Added to this flurry of activity is the mounting anticipation and interest in our sesquicentennial celebration. Beginning with a return to our rebirth in Philadelphia this spring, as the year unfolds you will see the release of our first bullion blazer emblem, production of a handsome bronze medal, similar to that issued at the 50th and 75th anniversaries, and the publication of our *Sesquicentennial Register* chock full with details about the Club and its heritage.

The Aztec Club has long been blessed with dedicated and committed leadership. Never has that been more apparent than today, when that leadership is put to the fullest of tests. I commend to you our fine officers and Executive Committee. I am proud to serve among them.

As we look to October, I can assure you that the Annual Meeting will be very special. The original building housing the Aztec Club has been found and to our delight it has been recently restored to its original state. Currently, negotiations are underway to tour the building, and possibly even stage our dinner there, where many of our ancestors dined 150 years ago. Perhaps where young officers like Grant, Lee, Beauregard and Longstreet had a meal or drink together, not able to foresee what the future would hold for each of them. I hope you will plan on being there on October 11, to honor the memory of the soldiers who fought bravely, to help commemorate and celebrate the founding of a great organization — the Aztec Club of 1847.

Richard H. Breithaupt, Jr., President

SPRING MEETING

May 10-11, 1997

The Aztec Club will hold its Spring Meeting in historic Philadelphia, where several meetings in the decades following the Civil War proved critical to the Club's successful metamorphosis from a military society into the hereditary one that exists to this day. It was in 1867 that Philadelphian Gen. Robert Patterson, a hero of the Mexican War, assumed the Presidency of the Club and guided it through the critical period which, under different circumstances, could well have resulted in its decline and extinction as occurred with many other societies of the day, including the Society of the Army of Santiago de Cuba (1898), Naval and Military Order of the Spanish American War (1899), Military Order of Moro Campaigns (1905) and Military Order of the Dragon (1917). Each of them failed because they did not look to the future. The Aztec Club's resurgence in Philadelphia was highlighted by the meeting of 1881, attended by no less than 21 officers of the rank of General then members of the Club, including: Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Joseph E. Johnston, Richard C. Drum, Horatio G. Gibson and Robert E. Patterson. Electees to membership at this historic meeting were ten officers of General rank including: James Longstreet, L. Pike Graham, Charles H. Crane, Henry J. Hunt, Joseph H. Potter and Gustavus A. De Russy.

A fine program for members and guests has been organized with the able assistance of former President William L. Hires. Activities will commence on Friday evening, at 7 p.m., with dinner at the Merion Cricket Club in nearby Haverford, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1865, the Merion Cricket Club has a long and distinguished history. Cricket, the game of English gentlemen, was the cause and the origin of the Club although lawn tennis and golf gradually supplanted it as the Club's chief activity. Merion squash racquets players have been among the nation's best for many years. In addition, the Club has a wide range of other family-oriented athletic and social programs within its fine facilities. At noon on Saturday, May 11, we will meet for a tour and lunch at Andalusia, since 1811 home to one of America's most venerable families, the Biddles. Generations of Biddles have refined, preserved and restored their 115-acre estate nestled against the Delaware River thirteen miles north of Philadelphia.



Katherine and Charles Biddle at Andalusia in 1960

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Long-time Aztec Club member Charles Biddle and his wife, Katherine, made their home at Andalusia for more than 55 years, beginning in 1923. Capt. (Bvt. Maj. and Col.) Charles J. Biddle was an original member of the Aztec Club who, from 1868-1872, served as its Secretary. The family's association with the Club has continued in an unbroken line ever since, down to James Biddle, the current resident at Andalusia, who has graciously offered to open the estate to his personal tour. Mr. Biddle, perhaps inspired by his own heritage, has long been an active curator and preservationist, having served as a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Following the tour of Andalusia, at approximately 1:45 pm, we will venture across the estate to the grounds of the *State in Schuylkill*, America's oldest club, founded in 1732. Today, it remains one of the most exclusive and private clubs, not open to the public. Moved to its present site at Andalusia in 1944, it now occupies the grounds formerly the estate of Charles R. King, grandson of Rufus King, Minister to England under Washington and Adams. King purchased the land from the Biddles in 1848. Two of *State in Schuylkill's* original historic buildings, the *Castle* and the *Kitchen*, moved to this site, will be toured along with the *State House*, the main building and museum.

"Citizens" and apprentices of the *State in Schuylkill* will greet us as we tour the *State House*, containing many museum-quality artifacts; the *Fish House*, in which dined such notables as George Washington, John Adams, Lafayette and John J. Pershing; and the *Kitchen*, every cook's dream. Our tour has been arranged through the courtesy of *State in Schuylkill* Governor G. Morris Dorrance, Jr.

The Aztec Club's formal program ends with the tour at the *State in Schuylkill*, thereby providing time Saturday afternoon and the balance of the weekend for members and guests to tour nearby sites of individual interest. A full dinner menu will be available at the Marion Cricket Club. Members and guests will be on the honor system and asked to remit their tallied share to the Aztec Club at the end of the evening. A boxed lunch will be provided at Andalusia.

A limited number of rooms have been reserved at the Doubletree Hotel, Broad and Locust Streets, Philadelphia at the rate of \$114 + 13% tax per night for Thursday through Saturday nights. (Reservations 800-222-TREE). For the Philadelphia meeting itself, send your check in the amount of \$50.00 per person to the Treasurer. **Hotel and meeting reservations must be made not later than Wednesday, April 16, 1997.** Directions and particulars as to meeting times and places will be sent to all persons making a reservation.

STATE IN SCHUYLKILL

The Oldest Club in America

In the year 1732, a few months after the birth of George Washington and a few months before construction began on the provincial State House (later to become known as Independence Hall), a group of Philadelphia sportsmen "instituted" a club for the purpose of fishing and hunting. The ancient sport of fishing and the preparation and consumption of vast quantities of food — as well as long, florid toasts and speeches — seem to have been the main focus of this ancient social club. It is said that the only gaps in time in Gen. Washington's meticulous war-time diaries are for those days he spent at the what some call the *Fish House*. The Club's *Fish House Punch* was served at the first meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati, in New York in 1783.



The Castle, or Fish House

The founders of the *Colony of Schuylkill*, or *Schuylkill Fishing Company*, numbering just twenty, were either then or later prominent in Philadelphia's business and civic life. Many of the early members were Quakers. When its organization took on formal shape, it was an emulation of Pennsylvania's provincial government. Thomas Stretch was named the Club's first Governor. Today, the *State in Schuylkill* is composed of 22 *citizens* and 10 *apprentices*.

With much mock formality and discipline, the *Schuylkill Fishing Company* pursued its piscatorial and fowling interests, upon the success of which depended their meals. Fish or game not caught or killed by its members was not allowed to be served. The annual election of officers, at which Governor Stretch was regularly returned, took place in early October. Something of the flavor of the Colony's procedures may be sensed in a proclamation issued by Governor Stretch on September 29, 1744, "the twelfth year of my Government". Evidently in an effort to encourage his colonists to provide game for the year's final meeting on October 4, he called to their attention:

"Whereas great quantities of rabbits, squirrels, pheasants, partridges, and others of the game kind have presumed to infest the coasts and territories of the Schuylkill in a wild, bold and ungovernable manner; these are therefore to authorize and require you, or any of you, to make diligent search for said rabbits, squirrels, partridges and others of the game kind, in all suspected places where they may be found, and bring the respective bodies of so many as you shall find, before the Justices, etc., at a general court to be held on Thursday, the fourth day of October next, there to be proceeded against, as by the said court shall be adjudged; and for your or any of your so doing, this shall be your sufficient warrant."

Ed. Note: Thomas Stretch is the fifth great-grandfather of the Editor.

1996 ANNUAL MEETING

The 149th Annual Meeting of the Aztec Club of 1847 was held on Saturday, October 12, 1996 at the City Tavern Club in Georgetown, Washington, D. C. A highlight of the meeting was the election of five new members and the discussion of plans for the sesquicentennial meeting to be held on October 11, 1997 in Mexico City.

Other business included the election of officers for the coming year and acceptance of the idea of developing a blazer patch.

Following a sumptuous meal, the assembled members and guests heard a presentation by Dr. Jeffrey Mauck, Ph.D. who spoke about the Mexican War exploits of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. Retiring as Secretary after 17 years of service was former President Nicholas D. Ward. Mr. Ward was recognized for his long and distinguished service with the presentation of an original bronze medallion struck in 1922 by A. Bacqueville (France) by order of the Club in commemoration of its 75th Anniversary. A second medal for distinguished service was presented to Past President Thomas J. Turpin.



Members of the Club assembled after the Annual Meeting



*Nicholas D. Ward
receiving presentation for distinguished service*



Thomas J. Turpin receiving presentation for distinguished service

New Members Elected

Elected between October, 1996 and February, 1997 are:

Mr. Merrick Browne, by right of descent from Maj. George Douglas Ramsey, Chief of Ordnance, USA.

Mr. Patrick Joseph Griffin, III, by right of descent from Maj. Samuel Davis Marshall, 3d Regt., IL Foot Vols.

Dr. David Garrison Harkrider, Ph.D., by right of descent from 2d Lt. Flemming Hodges Garrison, Joseph Smith's Co., TX Vols.

Mr. John Russell Hoover, Jr., by right of descent from 1st Lt. Francis S. K. Russell, U. S. Mounted Rifles.

Mr. Worthington Peter Pearre, by right of descent from Capt. William George Williams, Topographic Engineers, USA.

Mr. Andrew Richard Sullivan, by right of descent from Maj. James H. Fitzhugh, 1st VA Infantry.



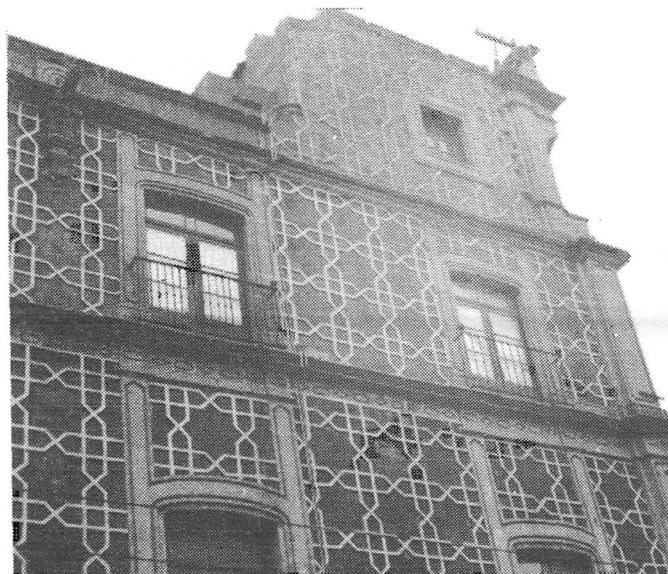
INSTITUTED MAY 1ST, 1732

BOCA NEGRA ESTATE FOUND

Sesquicentennial Plans Take Shape

At the February, 1997 Executive Committee Meeting, President Richard Breithaupt, Jr. announced he had located the historic building that was once the estate of Senór Boca Negra, Mexico's one-time Minister to the United States. The home, built in the 1700's as a palace for the viceroy of Spain, was the site of the original Aztec Club during the Mexican War.

The magnificent building has recently been restored by the family that has owned it for the past fifty years. Negotiations are underway to arrange for a tour of the building, or possibly even staging our 150th Anniversary Annual Meeting and dinner inside. In any event, the meeting will be held in Mexico City on October 11, 1997. Other activities, including a wreath laying ceremony are planned. You won't want to miss this once in a lifetime event! Watch for details about itinerary and hotel.



*Boca Negra Estate
Site of the original Aztec Club*

The Executive Committee has authorized the production of custom, hand-crafted bronze medals similar to those issued at the 50th and 75th anniversaries. Watch for details this summer!

The *Sesquicentennial Register of the Aztec Club of 1847* is currently in preparation. Plans call for its release in time for the October meeting. Included in this hard bound work will be: a detailed history of the Aztec Club; biographies of the early officers of the Club; numerous photographs, many never before published, from the Aztec Club archives; a collection of related historical writings; a Roll of Members, listing all members since the Club's founding; a Roll of Ancestors, detailing all soldiers represented and their service; and other useful information.

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<i>Secretary</i>	Hon. William W. Huss, Jr. 800 West First Street #708 Los Angeles, CA 90012 H-213-489-1710
<i>Treasurer</i>	Cdr. C. Lansdowne Hunt, USN (Ret.) 9101 MacMahon Drive Burke, VA 22015-1621 H-703-503-3110
<i>Registrar</i>	Capt. Thomas J. Turpin, USN (Ret.) 6804 McLean Province Circle Falls Church, VA 22043 H-703-241-7007
<i>Captain of the Color Guard</i>	Mr. Victor L. Crawford, Jr. 8812 62nd Street Berwyn Heights, MD 20740-2344 H-301-220-0568

1997 OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Mr. Richard H. Breithaupt, Jr.
<i>Vice President</i>	Mr. Hardwick S. Johnson
<i>Secretary</i>	Hon. William W. Huss, Jr.
<i>Treasurer</i>	Cdr. C. Lansdowne Hunt, USN (Ret.)
<i>Registrar</i>	Capt. Thomas J. Turpin, USN (Ret.)

Members of the Executive Committee

Hon. Raymond L. Drake
Hon. Alexander R. Early, III
Mr. David Lee Whelchel, Jr.

Council

(Living Past Presidents)

Mr. Frederick T. Drum Hunt
Capt. Roy Campbell Smith, III, USNR (Ret.)
Col. William Leland Hires, USA PAARNG (Ret.)
Capt. Samuel Cooper Dawson, USNR (Ret.)
Maj. Stirling Stokely Wilson, (Ret.)
Nicholas Donnell Ward, Esq.
Cdr. John Conway Hunt, USNR (Ret.)
Joseph Wright Stanley, Esq.
Capt. Thomas J. Turpin, USN (Ret.)
Cdr. C. Lansdowne Hunt, USN (Ret.)
Hon. Richard Bender Abell

<i>Captain of the Color Guard</i>	Mr. Victor L. Crawford, Jr.
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