

————— ❖ THE SOCIETY OF ❖ —————
THE FRIENDLY SONS OF ST. PATRICK
————— FOR THE RELIEF OF EMIGRANTS FROM IRELAND —————

A look back in History : The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick - Philadelphia
Joseph P. Heenan February 12, 2018

Stephen Moylan and the “United States of America”

Stephen Moylan’s name stands first on the list of original members, and his signature the first attached to the rules. March 17, 1771 he was elected the first President of the Society, and was doubtless one of the most active in its formation.

Stephen Moylan was instrumental in the design of the Society’s Gold Medal, which the members at the time were required to wear at their meetings,

In recent years it has been discovered that Stephen Moylan is the individual first credited with using the term “United States of America”. It is interesting to see the correlation between his influence in the Society’s Gold Medal and his importance placed on the word “Unite”.

Is it possible that the Gold Medal of The Philadelphia Friendly Sons of St. Patrick was the inspiration behind Stephen Moylan coining the phrase “United States of America”?

From the Record Books of The Philadelphia Friendly Sons of St. Patrick

The Gold Medal of the Society to have the following description:

On the right Hibernia—on the left America—in the center Liberty joining the hands of Hibernia and America, represented by the usual figures of a female supported by a Harp for Hibernia,—an Indian with his quiver on his back, and his bow slung, for America, —underneath, Unite. On the reverse, St. Patrick trampling on a snake,—a cross in his hand,—dressed in Pontificalibus,—the motto *Hiar*.

These devices, designed some years before the Revolution, were certainly ominous, if not prophetic. The Goddess of Liberty joining the hands of Hibernia and America, with the superscription Unite, was sufficiently significant, considering that the effect of that union powerfully promoted the subsequent dismemberment of the British Empire, and the establishment of the liberty and independence of America.

The motto *Hiar*, or without the aspirate *Iar*, in the Celtic language, signifies “West,”—and from it came the name of the country *Eire*, Erin, or Ireland; and *Ierna*, aspirated Hibernia. But the word *Hiar* had in it a duplicate and equivocal signification, peculiarly appropriate as the motto of a society, whose object was to “Unite” in fellowship, the sons of the *little* Isle of the “West” with those of the great continent of the “West.”