

OUR CITY...



Our Country: In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be right; but right or wrong, our country.

--Stephen Decatur.

The Life of STEPHEN DECATUR Briefly Told

THE father of Stephen Decatur, also named Stephen, was a native of Newport, Rhode Island, and a captain in the United States navy. Stephen Decatur, Jr., was born at Sinepuxent, Maryland, on January 5, 1779. He entered the American navy as a midshipman in 1798 on board the frigate United States. A year later he was promoted to lieutenant and in that rank saw a little service in the short war with France.

In 1801 Decatur sailed as first lieutenant of the Essex, one of Commodore Dale's squadron, to the Mediterranean. As a result of a duel with a British officer—which resulted fatally for the Englishman—Decatur was sent home for a time. In 1803 he was back in the Mediterranean in command of the Enterprise. He distinguished himself almost immediately.

Conceiving the daring idea of recapturing or destroying the frigate Philadelphia, which had been captured by the pirates and lay in the harbor of Tripoli, on February 21, 1804, he manned a little boat called the Intrepid, with seventy volunteers, and, braving the enemy, he reached the Philadelphia, set it afire and got away, with the loss of only one man.

For this gallant achievement Congress voted Decatur thanks and a sword. He was also promoted to captain.

Following this, Decatur was engaged in all the attacks on Tripoli from 1804 to 1805. In the War of 1812 the ship which he commanded, the United States, captured the British vessel, the Macedonian, after a desperate struggle. In 1813 he was appointed commodore to command a squadron in New York Harbor, which was blockaded by the British. In 1813 he attempted to get to sea to break the blockade with the United States, the Hornet, and the Macedonian, which had been by this time converted into an American ship. A superior British squadron forced Decatur to run into the Thames, and he lay off New London for several months. He sent a challenge to the commander of the blockading squadron to come on and fight, but the challenge was not accepted.

At length, unable to get to sea, two of the ships were dismantled, and Decatur returned to New York, where he took command of a squadron destined for the East Indies. In the frigate President he put to sea on the 14th of January, 1815. The blockading British squadron pursued the ship, and after a desperate running fight forced Decatur to surrender.

Soon afterward Decatur returned to the United States, peace between England and America was declared. But the Barbary pirates were once more giving trouble. Decatur took a command in the Mediterranean.

He arrived before Algiers on June 22, 1815, and immediately demanded a treaty from the Dey. His terms were very brief: no more annual tribute or ransom for prisoners; all enslaved Americans to be released; and no Americans ever again to be held as a slave. The question of tribute was the most difficult to settle. The Dey feared that other European powers would demand the same terms.

"Even a little powder," said the Dey, "might prove satisfactory."

"If," replied Decatur, "you insist upon receiving powder as tribute, you must expect to receive the balls with it."

In forty-eight hours the treaty was negotiated, giving to the United States privileges and immunities never before granted by a Barbary state to a Christian power.

In 1819 a quarrel arose between Commodore James Barron and Decatur. They met at Bladensburg, Maryland, on March 22, 1820. At the first shots Barron was dangerously wounded. Decatur was also hit, and he died the same evening.

THE splendid little city of Decatur, rich and abundant with beauty, good fellowship, loyalty and with over five thousand good citizens can be justly proud to be named after so great a man—a maker of United States history and whose name is immortal.

Commodore Stephen Decatur

FOUNDED in the year 1836 by brave and rugged pioneers, this little town took steps toward great progress. Year after year its population increased with good sturdy citizens who chose this site as their home. Before many years, Adams county was plotted and Decatur chosen as the county seat.

DECATUR took the form of a little city and as the years rolled by marked improvements were quite in evidence. Today, Decatur boasts splendid schools, churches, industries, city owned properties, banks, and many business houses. A fitting tribute to the great men who laid the foundation for this city to progress.

This bank, rendering a banking service to the entire community for the past 45 years is glad to call Decatur its home. It is proud of its good citizens and of the splendid patronage extended to it by its many customers. It is willing and ready at all times to render good sound financial advice to those who care to confide in it.

This bank has chosen as its emblem—and one we are mighty proud of—the replica of the great American hero, Commodore Stephen Decatur. It is our mark of identity and one that is most fitting.

This bank cordially welcomes all the Old Home Week visitors and expresses their wish to everyone for a week of real enjoyment with old friends and relatives.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK