

# The MID-ATLANTIC SOCIETY For HISTORIC SWORDSMANSHIP

## A Curriculum for the Dueling Sword November, 2011; Revised January, 2012

### PREFACE:

At MASHS, both the French and Italian systems are explored. Resource material for the French system is derived from a book by 19<sup>th</sup> century fencing master Claude La Marche entitled, The Dueling Sword (translated by Brian House and published by Palladin Press, 2009). Supplemental resource for the French system is from Clovis Deladrier's 1948 book, Modern Fencing (Arco Publishing Company, 1973). The resource material for the Italian system is from the work of Maestro Luigi Barbasetti, as presented in his book, The Art of the Sabre and the Epee (E.P.Dutton, 1936), with supplemental material from Maestro William Gaugler's, The Science of Fencing (Laureate Press, 1977, 2004).

### LESSON 1. THE BASICS

*Goal/Milestone: Understanding the theory of dueling with the epee, and the basic mechanics of its use.*

- Historical context
- The weapons, the differences between French and Italian swords.
- The target areas, the four quadrants.
- The basic guards and hand positions.
  - French: Prime, Seconde, Tierce, Quarte, Quinte, Sixte, Septime, and Octave
  - Italian: Prima, Seconda, Terza, Quarta, 2<sup>nd</sup> in 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in 4<sup>th</sup>
- The fencing measure.
- Footwork; advance, retreat, lunges (both forward and reverse), and the Fleche.

### LESSON 2. OFFENSE

*Goal/Milestone: Learning how to attack with the dueling sword.*

- The Theory of the Attack; Understanding Tempo.
- Invitations, Engagements, Disengagements.
- Simple Direct Attacks: Straight Thrust.
- Indirect Attacks: After the Disengage.

### LESSON 3. COMPOUND ATTACKS

*Goal/Milestone: Learning the use of feints to set up compound attacks.*

- Simple Feints.
- Feints After the Disengagement.
- Feints During the Advance.
- Double Feints.

#### **LESSON 4. ACTIONS AGAINST THE OPPONENT'S BLADE**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning how to attack your opponent's blade in order to open lines for offensive actions against your opponent.*

- The Beat.
- The Press.
- The Glide (Coule).
- The Cutover (Coupe).
- The Expulsion (Froissement).

#### **LESSON 5. DEFENSE**

*Goal/Milestones: Learning how to defend against opponent's attacks.*

- The Parries: French (\* most commonly used parries)
  - Quarte\*: to protect against attacks to the high line inside.
  - Low Quarte (Septime)\*: to protect against attacks to the low line inside.
  - Sixte\*: to protect against attacks to the high line outside.
  - Low Sixte (Octave)\*: to protect against attacks to the low line outside.
  - Tierce: to protect against attacks to the high line outside.
  - Seconde\*: to protect against attacks to the low line outside.
  - Quinte: to protect against attacks to the low line inside.
- The Parries: Italian
  - Prima: to protect against attacks to the low line inside.
  - Seconda: to protect against attacks to low line outside.
  - Terza: to protect against attacks to the high line outside.
  - Quarta: to protect against attacks to the high line inside.
- Parrying with Opposition
- Parrying with the Beat
- Parrying with the Bell Guard

#### **LESSON 6. COUNTERATTACKS**

*Goal/Milestones: Learning what to do after you've successfully parried your opponent's attacks.*

- The Riposte: simple direct, indirect.
- Counter Riposte.
- Actions with First Intentions.
- Second Intentions: Remise, Redoubling.
- The Bind (done as an attack).
- Cross, Envelopment (done as a parry riposte).
- Actions into Tempo upon the Opponent's Attack:
  - Stop Thrusts.
  - Disengagement into Tempo.
  - The Inquartata, Volta.

**LESSON 7. THE SERIOUS ENCOUNTER**

*Goals/Milestones: Understanding the dynamics of bouts and dueling.*

- The Bout and the Duel.
- General Principles:
  - Assessing your opponent.
  - Maintaining your cool, being patient.
  - Excel in point control, and keep point on line.
  - Fencing engaged or disengaged.
  - Measure and timing.
  - Think attack and counterattack, rather than defense.
  - Keep moving, and stay in guard while moving.
- Fencing Against a Left Hander.
- Dealing with Opponents of Differing Height.