



GERMANS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (ON BOTH SIDES)

DR. ARTHUR TURFA

Not everyone spoke English then, either!

POPULATION OF 13 COLONIES 1776

- Total 2.5 million people
- 500,000 slaves
- 1,750,000 of British Isles origin
- 250,000 of German origin
- 200,000 Native Americans
- 96% rural
- Largest cities Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Charleston (10,000+ each)
- UK population 8,000,000

WHY DID GERMANS IMMIGRATE?

- Heavy taxation- aftermath of wars
- Required military and/or non-military service
- Primogeniture- eldest son got the farm or
- In the Palatinate, farm divided among sons
- Religious freedom for smaller groups (Mennonites, Amish, Moravians, et al.)
- Free land
- Success stories from earlier immigrants

WHERE GERMANS SETTLED

- Pennsylvania: Germantown (now in Phila.), Reading and Lancaster Counties and to frontier (Franklin was aghast (“swarthy”), then changed his views about Germans)
- 1 / 3 of Pennsylvanians were Germans
- New York: Hudson and Mohawk Valleys
- Virginia: Shenandoah Valley, and along Great Wagon Road
- North Carolina: Piedmont, Salem
- South Carolina: from Charleston to Dutch Fork and elsewhere along the frontier

HOW GERMANS REACTED TO INDEPENDENCE

- Majority supported the Patriots- first paper to publish about the Declaration of Independence was *Der Wöchentliche Pennsylvanischer Staatsbote* on July 5, 1776
- Thousands fought in Patriot militias and the Continental Army
- Few were Loyalists: mainly in the South (NC)
- Many were pacifists or neutral (Mennonites, Amish)
- Moravians officially neutral but aided Patriots

WHY GERMANS WERE PATRIOTS



- ❑ Realization that this was home now
- ❑ Their lives were better than back home
- ❑ And they were better off with lower taxes and representation in government
- ❑ Resented use of Germans as mercenaries by the British

WHY SOME GERMANS STAYED LOYAL

- ❑ House of Hanover was German
- ❑ Crown had given land, grants for churches
- ❑ Georgia being newest colony had Crown support
- ❑ Successful businessmen feared losing wealth

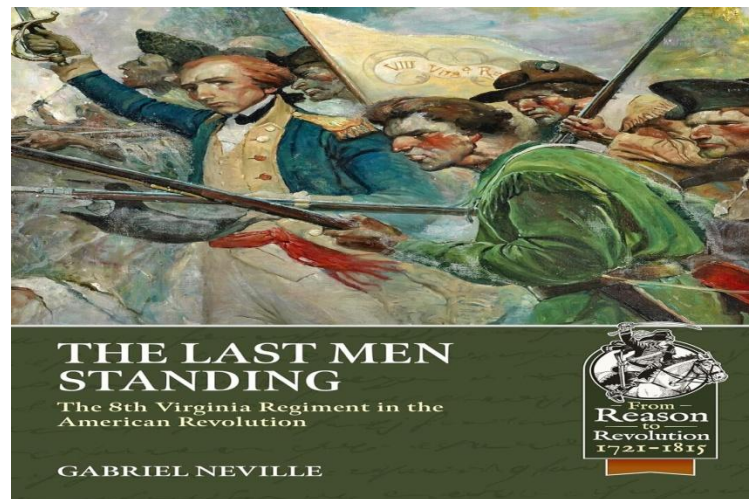
THE GERMAN BATTALION 1776

- (Rifle companies mustered 1775, went to Boston)
- Mustered 1776 from PA and MD, 8 companies, 600 strong (9th added)
- (Fought at/ in Trenton, Assunpink Creek, Princeton, Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, Sullivan's Expedition)
- At Valley Forge- NO desertions
- In with NJ Brigade, disbanded 1781
- Led by Hausseger then d'Arendt



“THE GERMAN REGIMENT” 8th VA

- Diverse unit from 1775 with Germans, Scots-Irish, and English troops, 800 strong
- Led first by COL Peter Muhlenberg
- Fought in Canada, at Sullivan’s Island and Saratoga
- At Valley Forge-due to attrition merged with 4th VA in 1779



THE PENNSYLVANIA LONG RIFLE-used by German-American and others)



Developed by German-
American gunsmiths in PA
Barrel length 36- 48 inches
Total length 60 inches
Effective range: 250-300
yards patchbox in buttstock

JOHN PETER GABRIEL MUHLENBERG

- Pennsylvania -born 1746
- Father Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Lutheran pastor
- Grandfather Conrad Weiser, pioneer and diplomat
- Brothers Frederick Augustus and Gotthilf Henry also pastors
- Educated in Germany, served in British Army 60th of Foot, at the time of French and Indian War
- Nicknamed “Teufel Piet” (“Devil Pete”)



JOHN PETER GABRIEL MUHLENBERG 2

- Ordained as Lutheran 1768, as Anglican in 1772
- Served at Emanuel Lutheran Woodstock VA, member of House of Burgesses owned slaves
- 1776 as COL in the 8th (sermon story apocryphal)
- Defended Ft. Moultrie at Sullivan's Island 28 June 1776
- Went North with the 8th, became BG
- Returned to Virginia, at Yorktown
- Post-War member of US Congress

NICHOLAS HERKIMER/HERCHEIMER

- Born in German Flatts in the Mohawk Valley 1728
- Spoke German, English, and Mohawk
- Fought in French and Indian War
- Brother Johan was a Loyalist; some Patriots distrusted Nicholas.
- Severely wounded in the leg at Oriskany 6 August 1777, Nicholas died after amputation 10 days later.



General Herkimer at the Battle of Oriskany

FRIEDRICH WILHELM VON STEUBEN

- Born 1730 in Magdeburg, Prussia to a military family
- 17 years service in Prussian Army, aide-de-camp to Frederick the Great, abruptly discharged from military academy
- 1769 Duchess of Württemberg gave him title of *Freiherr* (Baron)
- Unemployed in peacetime, offers in Paris to serve Patriots without compensation

FRIEDRICH WILHELM VON STEUBEN 2

- Washington names him temporary Inspector General
- Writes *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*
- Tackles waste and graft
- Endears himself to troops by drilling, especially at Valley Forge 120-man Model company
- He learns English as he goes
- Permanent IG with MG rank, Washington's Chief of Staff

FRIEDRICH WILHELM VON STEUBEN 3

- ❑ Retired with honor, becomes US citizen
- ❑ Died on estate near Rome, NY 1794
- ❑ Never married, suspicions of homosexuality



BARON JOHANN DE KALB



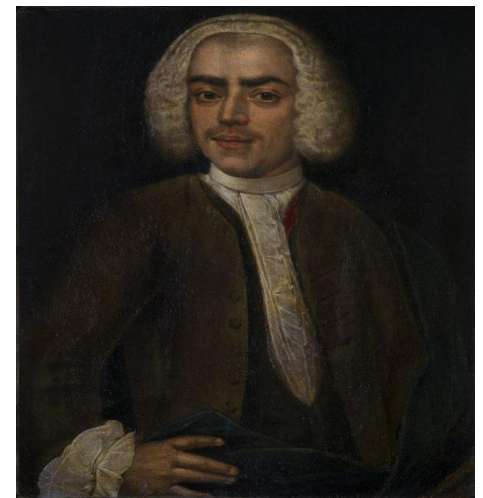
- Born 1721 in Hüttendorf, Germany
- Peasant family, became a waiter
- 1743 earns commission in a German regiment of the French Army
- LTC in Seven Years' War, retired in 1763, made a baron, marries well
- 1768 covert mission to North America for France to see if colonists are happy
- 1777 comes to America with Lafayette, who helps him become MG

BARON DE KALB 2

- ❑ At Valley Forge 1777-1778
- ❑ Commands MD and DE troops, ordered South
- ❑ At Battle of Camden, 16 Aug 1780, horse shot from under him
- ❑ He leads on foot, shot 3 times, bayoneted more
- ❑ GEN Cornwallis has his physician tend to him
- ❑ Dies 19 August, heavily mourned

DR. BODO OTTO, SENIOR SURGEON OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY

- Born 1738 in Germany, trained as surgeon
- Came to Philadelphia in 1755, settled in Reading, PA
- With his son, operated military hospitals
- Crossed the Delaware with Washington, assisted wounded Hessians at Trenton
- Retired from Army at age 70



CHRISTOPHER SEIDER/SNIDER

- First-generation American (1758-1770), "First martyr of American Revolution"
- Servant to wealthy widow
- Fatally wounded by Loyalist Ebenezer Richardson's musket shot in demonstration at his residence 22 Feb 1770
- Sam Adams paid for funeral- over 2,000 attended
- <https://boston1775.blogspot.com/2007/05/phillis-wheatley-writes-about.html>
- Boston Massacre happened 11 days later

CHRISTOPH SEIDERER/SNIDER 2



MICHAEL KALTEISEN

- Born in Württemberg, Germany, in 1729
- Settled in the Dutch Fork after being an indentured servants around 1745
- Wagonmaster, moved to Charleston
- Helped establish St. Johannes Lutheran Church, founded German Friendly Society
- 1775/6 member of Provincial Congresses
- CPT in German Fusiliers defended Charleston
- Later CPT of Marines on frigate USS South Carolina

MICHAEL KALTEISEN 2

- Commanded Ft. Johnson on James Island until death in 1809
- Germans in Saxe-Gotha, Orangeburg and Purrysburg largely were Loyalists or neutral
- Hundreds of Hessians deserted after contact with SC Germans



MARY (MOLLY) LUDWIG HAYS

- Born 1754 in Trenton NJ
- Husband William Hays an artilleryman at the Battle of Monmouth 28 June 1778
- William was wounded, Mary filled in, Washington made her an NCO
- Widowed, married John McCauley, was well-known and beloved in Carlisle, PA and died 1832



HESSIANS (AND FROM ELSEWHERE)

- House of Hanover had ties to Germany
- Treaties signed with various states for auxiliaries
- 30,000+ troops, at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of total British forces
- Fought under own commanders and flags (not as mercenaries)
- 17,000 returned, 5,000 stayed, rest KIA/MIA



HESSIANS 2

- Most active in Northern Theater: NY, Saratoga, Trenton, Princeton, around Philadelphia
- Hessians observed living conditions in America were superior to their own
- Freed slaves joined Hessians, especially in SC. Several hundred went to Germany



CHRISTIAN HUCK, LOYALIST



- Born in Germany 1747 or 1748
- Immigrated to Philadelphia 1772, practiced law, active in real estate
- Became wealthy Anglican, scorned for views
- Joined British Army in NY 1780, his 30-man cavalry unit of Germans-Americans attached to Tarleton
- In May 1780 at Waxhaws, killed in July in York County in “Huck’s Defeat”