

## HISTORY MINUTE

Presented by Edward Spannus

July 5, 2015



### **"Birthright Americans": Our Revolutionary War Soldiers and Patriots**

Our church historians, notably A.R. Wentz and Henry Eyster Jacobs, have spoken of Lutherans as "Birthright Americans," particularly as refers to Lutherans of the Muhlenberg tradition—those that formed the U.L.C. in 1918, and now part of the ELCA. By "Birthright Americans," Wentz meant that we were not a foreign or an immigrant church that needed to be naturalized after being imported from some European land. The Lutheran Church is as old as the American nation, and older than the Republic.

That is especially fitting for this congregation, as we were founded a decade before the War of Independence. And we were not bystanders during the fight for independence and the founding of the new nation. Many of our members here were part of that fight.

A number of histories—all of which seem to have been written around the same time—say that many of the Germans from Loudoun served in Armand's Legion.

H.M.M. Richards of Pennsylvania, in his 1908 work *The Pennsylvania German in the Revolutionary War 1775-1783*, notes at page 80 that von Ottendorf's Corps, Captain John Paul Schott's Company, and Pulaski's Corps, were eventually merged into Armand's partisan corps. He says, "... it was composed, nearly altogether, of Pennsylvania Germans, from Pennsylvania itself, and from Loudoun County, Virginia."

Briscoe Goodhart's "Early History" of the German Settlement, (1900?) writes:

"The Germans of Loudoun, like those in the other American colonies, were intensely loyal during the Revolutionary War, and did not hesitate to show their faith by their works. Armand's Legion, recruited by authority of Congress during the summer of 1777, was composed

of men who could not speak English, and contained many of the Germans of Loudoun. Many of the Germans of the Shenandoah Valley also belonged to this command ..."

LoudounHistory.org (<http://www.loudounhistory.org/history/lovettsville.htm>) states:

"When the Revolutionary War broke out, there was a divided home front in the Colonies. Where the population was primarily made up of British subjects, all did not support the cause of liberty. Many Englishmen went home, thousands fled to Canada, and others like the Quakers simply withdrew as much as possible and kept quiet. In contrast, there was little division of sympathy in The German Settlement. Almost every man of military age volunteered to fight on the side of the patriots, for they remembered the reasons for their ancestors having left the Rhine River Valley. Most of them served valiantly in Colonel Charles Armand's Legion. Colonel Armand was a French nobleman, who volunteered to help the Colonies in their struggle. He spoke German fluently and was highly respected by his men."

We will probably never have the complete record of those from NJLC who participated in the Revolutionary War either through military service or patriotic service (defined by the DAR as providing other services or provisions to the Continental Army). The records are notoriously incomplete, even more so where German-Americans are concerning, due to problems of language.

Some that we do know, who are buried in the old NJLC cemetery:

**John & Maria Stoutsenberger.** Born in York, Pennsylvania. Enlisted at age 15 for three years in Captain Irish's Company, of Regiment of Artillery Artificers, near Carlisle, Pa. Drummer, Drum Major.

**Johannes Axline.** Military and Patriotic Service (DAR recognition). Served 41 days in 3rd Virginia Regiment, Colonel W.D. Posey. Also provided gunpower to the army.

**Conrad Roller.** Private during the revolutionary war and served a six month tour of duty in the State of Pennsylvania. And after their marriage he was drafted for 18 months and served in South Carolina, and it is believed he was present at the capture of Lord Cornwallis at the Battle of Yorktown.

**Philip Wertz.** Born in 1737 in Germany. Served in the Continental Line according to military marker at gravesite, official records show patriotic service.

**Adam Haushalter.** Listed on an undated muster roll for the Washington County Maryland militia, in Captain Peter Swingle's Company Number 3, Second Battalion. Moved to Loudoun County around 1781.

**Vincel, Adam.** Captain in Virginia Militia, cited in many other veterans' pension applications.

Others, gravesites not known:

**Trittenbach, Conrad.** Virginia Continental Line.

**Lineweaver, Jacob.** Served for three months in the Loudoun County Militia as a substitute for John Axline, under Captain Adam Vincel; moved to Shenandoah County, Virginia.

**Spring, Frederick.** Compher family history says he served in Revolutionary War.

**Brill/Briel, Christopher.** Private in Bucks Company Militia, Nockamixon Company. Moved to Loudoun around 1786, listed at New Jerusalem. Married Anna Margaret Mauer (Mower) sister of Andrew Mower. Also related by marriage to Trittenbach family. Died Guernsey County, Ohio 1814.

**Mower, Andrew.** Pennsylvania Northhampton Volunteers, Captain John Van Etten's company; moved to Loudoun after Revolutionary War, listed in 1787 census for Loudoun County, by 1790 moved to Brunswick, Maryland and in 1797 to Bedford County, Pennsylvania. Some of his children baptized at St. James and New Jerusalem.

**Counts, Adam and Henry.** Patriotic service.

**Hickman, Conrad.** Patriotic service.

**Potterfield/Battenfeld, Adam.** Patriotic service, provided supplies to the Army.

**Shaffer, George.** DAR recognition for patriotic service (provided beef), Trustee/elder of NJLC.

**Shoemaker, George and Daniel.** Patriotic service; church: German Reformed.

**Shoemaker, Jacob and Simon.** Patriotic service; church: German Reformed.

**Slater, Jacob.** DAR recognition for patriotic service, provided beef to Revolutionary War soldiers.

War of 1812, buried in old cemetery:

L 6 David Axline

P 6-7 Michael Everhart

W 17 Peter Compher

BB 3 Ebenezer Grubb