



## Son of German Immigrant honored in Freedom Rock



Clinton County freedom rock featuring BG Volckmann

Scion of German-born father, William J.C. Volckmann and mother, Hattie May (Dodds), Russell William Volckmann was born in Clinton, Iowa, October 23, 1911. His father was the founder of the Volckmann Furniture and Carpet Company in Clinton. But Russell was nobody special. His parents sent him to the Shattuck Military Academy in Fairbault, Minnesota. Perhaps they hoped the academy could instill in Russell a sense of service and responsibility.

He was accepted into the US Army Academy at West Point, so we suppose his time at Shattuck worked. Considering that threatening a son with military academy was an often used disciplinary tool by parents, we can perhaps imagine the relationship between Russell W. Volckmann and his parents. How can presuppose this? Because Russell had disciplinary problems during his education at West Point where it has been documented that his performance was below average. But he did graduate and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the infantry.

Because of his poor performance, the Army denied his request to get the preferred duty station of the Philippines. He was instead assigned to Fort Snelling, Minnesota [Yawn]. Follow-on assignments at Fort Benning, Georgia and Fort Sam Houston, Texas welcomed Russell, his wife, Nancy, and their young son.

His desire for the Philippines finally came in the summer of 1940. However, with ripples of war stirring the waters around the South Pacific, his wife and son, along with all other military dependents, were sent back to the United States.

Giving no rest to the war-shocked weary, the Japanese attacked the Philippines the day after Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941.

~ Continued on Page 4

### Features in this July/August Newsletter

The Russell William Volckmann Story .....	1, 4
Schuetzen Park Centennial Pictures .....	3
Iowa Freedom Rocks .....	5
The Prinz family from Bredenbek .....	6, 7
Crosses of Distinction .....	8, 9
<i>We momentarily leave Kylie's third great-grandfather in the Franco-Prussian War to see how Kylie and Noah are getting along to fix the downed F-15E aircraft in eastern Ukraine, just miles from Russia.</i>	
The German Fought American Revolution: A Historical Roundtable Performance .....	10 – 15

## Elected Officers

### President

Michael J. Kearney  
563-242-0414  
MikeJKearney@yahoo.com

### First Vice President

Franz Neff  
563-340-7480  
fmneff@speedconnect.com

### Second Vice President

### Recording Secretary

Marcella Siegel  
563-284-6617  
marciejsiegel@gmail.com

### Corresponding Secretary

Janice Danz  
563-381-5206  
vjdanz@aol.com

### Treasurer

Daniel W. Holst  
563-209-3722  
danielwholst@gmail.com

### Immediate Past President

Franz Neff  
563-340-7480  
fmneff@speedconnect.com

## Standing Committees

**Genealogy:** Karen Puck  
**Budget/Finance:** Lois Kundel  
**By-Laws/Parliamentarian:** Lee Muller  
**Librarian:** Elaine Hein  
**Historian:** Elaine Hein  
**Membership:** Janice Dawson  
**Newsletter Editor:** Daniel W. Holst  
**Public Relations/Publicity:**  
Mary Ann Muller  
**Purchasing and Sales:** Janice Dawson  
**Programs:**

## Special Committees

**Endowment Fund:** Dean Rohweder  
**German Membership:** Wolfgang Remppe  
**Parade:** Franz Neff  
**Protocol:** Janice Danz  
**Refreshments:**  
Magda Brodersen and Mary Ann Muller  
**Registrar:** Janice Dawson  
**Translators:** Erna Cielecki, Franz Neff  
**Nominations:**

Layout and editorial contributions by:  
**Fortifying Your Written Word**  
www.danielwholst.com



*ASHHS Headquarters*

The **ASHHS Goal** is preserving and promoting the heritage of Schleswig-Holstein in the USA. We encourage cultural exchange, family research, study of the languages and dialects of Schleswig-Holstein, conferences and other programs pursuant to the above objectives.

The **ASHHS Newsletter** is published bimonthly for its members. Contributions are welcomed. Submitted material remains the property of the submitter until publication. Please cite sources and give others credit where due. Observation of copyright privileges is required. Responsibility for accuracy of printed information lies with the submitter, not with ASHHS, the ASHHS Newsletter, or the Newsletter committee. Corrections will be published if given in writing. The Newsletter committee reserves the right to edit material for space, form, spelling, and grammar.

### Deadlines for Submissions

Dec 15 for Jan/Feb Issue  
Feb 15 for Mar/Apr Issue  
Apr 15 for May/June Issue  
Jun 15 for Jul/Aug Issue  
Aug 15 for Sep/Oct Issue  
Oct 15 for Nov/Dec Issue

The **ASHHS Newsletter** reserves copyright to authors of signed articles. Permission to reprint a signed article published in the ASHHS newsletter should be obtained from the author and acknowledged in print. Unsigned material may be reproduced without permission, provided ASHHS is notified in advance, ASHHS is given credit and the ASHHS volume and issue number are cited.

## ASHHS

121 W. Bryant Street  
P.O. Box 506  
Walcott, Iowa 52773-0506  
ashhs.org  
ashhswalcott@gmail.com  
563-349-1983

**ASHHS Policy** on Publicizing Events and Activities of other Societies and Organizations: As a matter of mutual interest and courtesy, this Newsletter may publish articles and notices about German-American events and activities which are not sponsored or organized by ASHHS or its board of directors. The publishing of such material in the Newsletter shall not in any way imply any ASHHS responsibility for the content, results, success or failure of such activities and events.

### The ASHHS Genealogical Research

**Policy:** ASHHS provides research assistance for its members only. Members who desire this assistance should contact the genealogy director by regular mail or e-mail. The ASHHS genealogy director maintains and utilizes access to a variety of available genealogical resources to assist in all research activities. The genealogy staff will strive to locate information and assist members in their searches. However, if the desired information cannot be located, the genealogy director may provide the member with a list of alternative research sources. Members are expected to pay for any expenses (such as photocopies, printing and postage) associated with a search. The ASHHS genealogy staff will provide 3 hours free research to members, after which there is a minimal fee if further research is desired. The e-mail address of Karen Puck, the ASHHS genealogy director, is [kpuck2015@gmail.com](mailto:kpuck2015@gmail.com).

This newsletter is printed by  
Images In Ink  
821 5th Street  
Durant, Iowa 52747  
ISSN 1045-09960





# Schuetzen Park Sesquicentennial Celebration



Volunteers serving our food: bratwursts and other sandwiches, cole slaw, potato salad, beverage, and, of course, some delicious sesquicentennial cake.



The German festival band ÜberCool entertained us with some modern takes on German music.

Schuetzen Park opened in June 1870 and was the home of the Davenport Schuetzen Verein which operated at this site for nearly half of a century. It hosted Saengerfests, Turnfests and of course Schuetzenfests. Re-opening as a “nature park” in 1995, Schuetzen Park still boasts more than 25 acres of trails (QC Times, 2021)

An ASHHS board member and friends of Schuetzen Park enjoying their food and music under shady trees.

The beautiful scenery of Schuetzen Park and pleasant tunes from ÜberCool serenade those enjoying the park's trails.



**Please keep your membership current.**

Don't miss out on the stories and events coming in 2021 and beyond.

We also want to hear and print your stories of travel, heritage, and life history.

Send submissions to [danielwholst@gmail.com](mailto:danielwholst@gmail.com)



## From the President

By Michael Kearney



Moin!

ASHHS is planning on a picnic at the Durant City Park on August 22. We will all be looking forward to seeing everyone there for this event. At this point the vaccination rate is improved, although not as much as we would all like, but the infections — especially serious ones — seem to be confined only to the unvaccinated so let's all meet and celebrate our ability to get together again.

In accordance with current guidance, masks are not required. However, please feel free to wear one if you feel it is necessary.

We do wish everyone a happy July 4th Independence Day. If you choose to celebrate with fireworks, please be careful and remember drought conditions still exist across the county. Enjoy your holiday celebrations.

Yours truly  
President



## The Russell William Volckmann Story

~ continued from cover page

We can only speculate if Russell had disciplinary problems, but perhaps he did. If so, we should remember that childhood issues, poor academic performance, and such can be indicative of unrealized talents and strength. There are many paths to full personal realization and war is, perhaps, one of most precipitous steps toward that path.

Leadership called following the fall of Bataan in 1942. Volckmann refused surrender, and he led groups of American and Filipino soldiers and civilians to the cordillera in Northern Luzon where they formed an organized resistance against the Japanese.

Leadership is also not a glory hog. Volckmann gives firm credit to the Filipino civilians in making their journey a success. The civilians and their local knowledge were vital when illness struck the group traveling to Northern Luzon.

Leadership also attracts talent. Volckmann grew his guerrilla army from 8000 men to over 18,000 when supplied by the Sixth US Army.

His leadership was instrumental in the Battle Bacsil Ridge, Battle of Bessang Pass, and Battle of Mayoyao Ridge. By the end of war, Volckmann had achieved the well-respected rank of full-bird colonel.

Following the war, he was ordered by General (and future president) Dwight D. Eisenhower to write the US Army's first counterinsurgency doctrine. He finished it just in time for use in the Korea War.

With hostilities heating following North Korea's invasion of South Korea, General MacArthur requested (ordered) that Colonel Volckmann be assigned to Eighth Army Headquarters as executive to the Special Activities Group.

Retiring from the Army at the rank of brigadier general and following a distinguished 27 years of service, he is known as one of the founders of the US Special Forces. Undoubtedly, his unconventional and possibly rebellious stages helped form the unconventional and counterinsurgency tactics necessary for the US Military and its Special Forces.



ASHHS will host a picnic and gathering on August 22, 2021 at the Durant City Park, Durant, Iowa. We will enjoy seeing everyone from noon to 4pm. ASHHS will provide the primary meat dish along with certain drinks to include pop and coffee and ice tea. We ask that everyone bring pot luck side dishes to share and place settings for their families.

We will be so thrilled to be able to see and appreciate our members.

### New Email Address

The ASHHS office now has a new email address. please make note of it. It is: [ashhswalcott@gmail.com](mailto:ashhswalcott@gmail.com)



# Iowa Freedom Rocks



Scott County Freedom Rock



Muscatine County Freedom Rock

Patriotism is Love. Love is Service. And, service is dependent upon our own talents.

Ray "Bubba" Sorensen II from Greenfield, Iowa is an artist who began painting a patriotic mural on a large boulder along Iowa Highway 25 in Western Iowa in 1999. Then he would return every year to repaint a new patriotic mural. In 2013, he began the Freedom Rock Tour where he would paint a similar boulder in each of Iowa's 99 counties. The theme for each county's mural would honor that county's own veterans. Bubba paints without compensation other than donations and income from Freedom Rock merchandise.



Cedar County Freedom Rock



Ida County (Holstein, Iowa) Freedom Rock



# The Prinz family from Bredenebek, Kronsburg-Glinde

By Hans-Werner Hamann

August Friedrich Nicolaus Prinz was born on April 18, 1842 in the forge house at the Manor (Gut) Kronsburg. He was the fourth of seven children of his parents Carl Detlef Christian Prinz (1803 – 1866) and Maria Catharina Dorothea Schuett (1810 – 1868). The youngest daughter Magdalena Catharina Dorothea died as a toddler in the first year of her life on July 17, 1851, all other children emigrated to the USA as adults.



The Prinz family was a blacksmith family, at that time it was common for children to learn and pass on their father's craft. August Prinz's parents came from the Manor Bossee in the village of Brux near Westensee, where their parents Cay Joachim Prinz (1773-1850) and Margaretha Elisabeth Tank (1777-1868) had the forge of the Manor (Gut) Bossee.

August Prinz was the first of the Prinz family to learn another trade; he became a carpenter. At the age of 19 he started as a journeyman carpenter. When we look in his "Wanderbuch" that looks like a passport and permitted him to travel and work, he worked in Switzerland, Bavaria, East Prussia, and Poland in the years between 1861 to 1866. After becoming a master carpenter, he worked for several years at that trade in the area of Schleswig-Holstein. In Tonder, then still in Schleswig, today in Denmark, he met his first wife Catharina Langfeldt in May 1867. They married in Tonder on 20th February 1870 and started their journey from Hamburg to New York on March 2, 1870.

With August Prinz and his wife Katherina, his brother Carl Prinz and wife Maria as well as his sister Anna Elisabeth Catharina Prinz traveled on the ship

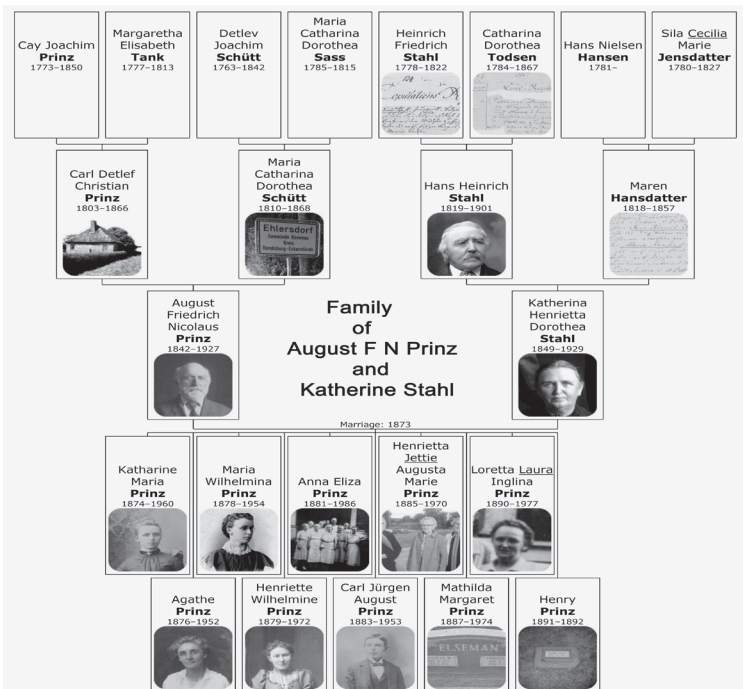
SS Cimbria from Hamburg to New York on March 2, 1870. They arrived in New York March 16, 1870.

August and his wife came first to Council Bluffs, Iowa, on Feb 3, 1871. Their first daughter Juliane Elise Johanna Prinz was born in Council Bluffs. August was hired as a carpenter to build a railroad bridge across the Missouri River. At this work, he met another carpenter, Hinrich Christian Hamann, and they became lifetime friends. The railroad bridge was opened at March 25, 1873.

Their second daughter Maria Elise Prinz was born in Omaha on Jan 28, 1873. The day after, his wife died in Omaha. August Prinz wrote a letter to his mother-in-law in Tonder with this sad news.

The mother-in-law back in Tonder reacted immediately. She knew two young women, Agatha Maria Stahl and her sister Katherina Henriette Stahl, who had just emigrated from Burkal near Tonder to St. Louis. Both women came to America in March 1873. Immediately after receiving the letter from Tonder, Agatha and Katherina Stahl came to Omaha to help domestically. On August 31, 1873, August married Katherina in Omaha and had 10 other children with her.

The other sister, Agatha Maria Stahl, married the carpenter and friend of August Prinz Hinrich Christian Hamann from Gross Koenigsförde near Bredenebek in Omaha on August 30, 1874 in August Prinz's house because there was no church in Omaha.





# The Prinz family from Bredenbek, Kronsburg-Glinde

~ By Hans-Werner Hamann

August Prinz and Hinrich Hamann decided to build a church together. They looked for friends and raised money, and together with many helpers, they built a church at Eleventh and Jackson Streets. Because this church later stood in the way of other projects, it was moved to Twentieth and Mason Streets in 1883 and sold in 1923.

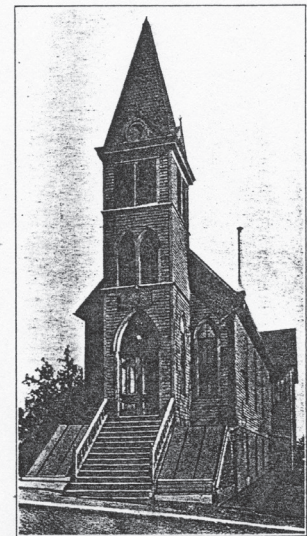
In August 1875 he bought 160 acres of prairie land 15 miles west of Omaha for \$6 per acre, the family lived in a sod house for more than a year. The first permanent house accommodated not only the family also the horses and cows like the farmhouses August

knew from Schleswig-Holstein. August also built a Dutch styled windmill with a wheel 36 feet in diameter and canvas sails to grind feed for the livestock. Later he enlarged the farm and bought an additional 160 acres of prairie land for \$15 per acre.

August Friedrich Nicolaus Prinz died on February 11, 1927, on his farm in Millard, Douglas County, Nebraska. His wife Katherina Henriette Dorothea, née Stahl died two years later, on December 31, 1929. Both left more than 100 descendants. If you have any questions or additions, please write an e-mail to [ha-wehamann@t-online.de](mailto:ha-wehamann@t-online.de)



The First's Old Home  
TWENTIETH AND MASON STREETS



AUGUST PRINZ  
Architect  
HENRY F. HAMANN  
Builder  
Built in 1874 at Eleventh and Jackson Streets; moved in 1883 to Twentieth and Mason Streets; sold in 1923.

## ~ Help Wanted ~

*Do you enjoy genealogy, ancestry and research?*

ASHHS is looking for a volunteer to assist Karen Puck with genealogy.

The volunteer must be computer and internet savvy and have experience with genealogy and ancestry.

Volunteer must be local to Eastern Iowa.

If anyone is interested, please contact me at [danielwholst@gmail.com](mailto:danielwholst@gmail.com).

***An ASHHS Membership  
Makes a Great Gift!***

You will find the application on the back cover.

# Crosses of Distinction

~ By Daniel W. Holst

## Chapter Thirteen "Lights in the Darkness"

Three vehicles driven by Ukrainian operatives turned off the main highway and onto a small access road towards the old and former Soviet airbase at Vysoka Yaruha in eastern Ukraine. The first car carried Master Sergeant Herring, Specialist Morris, and a member of the Air Force Security Forces. The second car carried Senior Airman Kylie Schaffer, her friend and crew chief Noah, and another security officer. The third ferried the equipment necessary to fix the F-15E when a severe in-flight emergency forced it down at this abandoned airfield.

Sparse woods of healthy trees broke apart a fully waxed moon. Other than the three cars, it was the only light in a dark and lonely world. Soon the trees gave way to old, broken, and partially fallen perimeter chain link fences. The cars had to slow down to maneuver around a fallen post or two. They soon approached the former gate. A small, abandoned guard shack stood to their left as they drove slowly past it. Its windows had long since been broken out, pockmarks and other dents along its corrugated steel walls indicate various demolition attempts. Like the current relationship between America and Russia, ghosts of the Cold War refuse to rest, and the guard shack stood empty but not always unoccupied.

The cars slowed, perhaps in compliance to a pre-arranged signal. As they cleared the security shack and slowly entered the base, a black SUV hidden in the shadows blinked its lights. The drivers of these cars expected this and pulled up to the SUV. Ukrainian security officers exited the SUV. Wearing tight black tactical pants and flecktarn camouflaged shirts, they emerged from the shadows and opened the night with powerful military-spec'd handheld lanterns. Pouches of various types of gear, a sheathed knife, and a holstered weapon clung to the web belt around their waists. They illuminated all three cars but approached the first whose window was lowered, "*Imen i misii, bud laska.*"

The Ukrainian driver of the lead car spoke, "I am Agent Evanko of Ukrainian Special Forces. We have come with the Americans to repair their aircraft. We will always speak their English around them." He sternly looked at the man standing outside the car and displayed his badge in the beam of the other's flash-

light. Its shiny surface reflected the light back to the SUV. He said, "understood," and repeated it in Ukrainian, "*zrozumiv.*"

The other man clearly saw the badge and understood the authority of Agent Evanko and snapped his posture tall and tight. "Yes, sir. We are here to guide you to the American aircraft."

The men returned to the SUV, and it pulled out and began to escort the three-car caravan through the dark, mostly abandoned airbase to the runway where the F-15E patiently awaited them.

Their path took them along and around many dilapidated buildings. They were mostly dark, but some had slight shimmers of light. But when the caravan approached with its headlights sweeping across the buildings, many of the lights inside the buildings quickly darkened.

"Who lives in these old buildings," asked Noah to the Ukrainian driver

He responded in a deeply accented voice, "They are mostly refugees, but some criminals and gangs use these buildings for other purposes."

Noah thought for a moment. "Why don't you do something about them?"

The Ukrainian smiled, "How do you think we know who they are? We do act—what is your word—appropriately."

Noah turned his eyes out the window and thought about that answer. Appropriately is ambiguous word with a lot of open territory for a lot of different actions. And not all of them were pleasing to Noah. He thought of the many movies he had seen where government agencies worked in hand with criminal operations and forced refugee dispersal. He wasn't sure if these Ukrainians were to be trusted. Those movies also inferred that heavily accented people were rife with ulterior and nefarious motives. He also knew not to prejudge people. This uncertainty only stoked his fear. He reached over and grasped Kylie's hand. He felt her hand tighten around his.

Pulling onto the runway, the three cars approached the broken aircraft. A modular olive-green tent had been hastily erected next to the runway where the aircraft sat. A mobile satellite antenna stood outside. Light leaked from beneath the tent. The cars pulled off the runway and alongside the tent. The guards, dressed



# Crosses of Distinction

~ Continued from previous page

identical to those in the lead SUV, snapped to attention and saluted when Agent Evanko stepped out. After sharing a few quick words with the guards, Evanko motioned to the other cars that it was safe to exit.

Master Sergeant Herring stepped out and led his team to the tent. Its door flap was unzipped, so he pushed it aside and walked in. Morris, Kylie, and Noah followed. The Air Force Security Forces stayed outside to conduct security and perimeter checks. The pilot, Major Hoover, and his weapon systems officer, Captain dePalmer stood up and enthusiastically shook hands with Herring and each of his team members. Completing their introductions, they all gathered in the back of the tent and called Wing operations on the satellite radio.

Herring talked to their Wing Commander over the radio. "Yes, Sir. We have all arrived safely. Thank you. My specialist and crew chief estimate a 2 – 3-hour repair time."

"Good, I grant you permission to deviate from technical data. You can ignore any faults which would not risk a safe flight home. Crew rest requirements have been waived. Major, the mission is to return the aircraft, crew, and maintenance personnel all home quickly and safely. Sergeant Herring, I trust you and Major Hoover to make the best decisions. Aircraft can be replaced. I want you all back on your way home by daybreak. A KC-46 Pegasus will be in the air to provide refueling. Contact me for contingencies if repair is infeasible. You all have my complete trust. Report back on any status. Wing Commander out."

Major Hoover looked over at Herring. "Master Sergeant Herring, Captain dePalmer and I are available for any task required to get us safely airborne."

"Thank you, sir. Morris, you and Noah get to work on the repairing the oxygen and environmental systems. Kylie, we should have several brooms. We will along with the Major and Captain begin sweeping and clearing the runway of any rocks and other foreign objects. Major, is this acceptable?"

"Absolutely." Both the major and the captain nodded at Herring.

Kylie looked at them quickly accepting this menial but vital task. She thought maybe pilots weren't all that stuck up and prideful if they agreed to help sweep the runway. This teamwork inspired her. She

also smiled. This was going to be fun.

Noah and Morris quickly removed the bay 15 panel, and Morris got to work on the environmental system.

Noah then opened up the door 6R and began to replace the oxygen system. A combined oxygen failure with environmental faults began filling the cockpit and oxygen system with smoke and carbon monoxide. The pilots had no choice, land, become asphyxiated and crash, or eject near the Russia border.

Noah finished replacing the oxygen bottle first then assisted Morris. Just over two hours later, they had completed the repairs.

Herring helped Morris finish up after the repair. Both Noah and Morris indicated they were ready for engine start. Herring informed the Major and the Captain it was time. They called Wing headquarters and informed them. It was about 3 a.m.

Kylie keyed in the current IFF mode 4 code. Noah pulled the ground cord, and indicated engine start by making a V sign with his index and ring finger and curled them in a few times at the pilot.

The pilot started the engines, and Noah was happy to hear that the oxygen and environmental systems were operating within norms. But the pilots soon indicated that they needed Kylie.

Kylie hooked into comms. "Sir?"

"We have an RF No Go fault, chief. We could fly without radar, but we really need it."

"Aye sir, will have a look. Please shut down #1."

The pilot shut down the left engine. Noah confirmed it was safe.

"Sir, please turn off your radar." After receiving confirmation, Kylie opened up door 3L and discovered a loose waveguide. She reattached it and locked it into place. "Sir, waveguide was loose. Please restart radar and test."

Thanks, chief. Radar is now operating normally."

"Copy that, sir." Kylie returned comms to Noah.

He initiated #1 engine restart, finished all startup checks and marshalled the aircraft for launch and watched it ignite to full afterburner and flee upwards and home. He looked at Kylie who proudly looked back. Noah couldn't wait for them to return to base.

The moon still shown bright, but its light began dipping below the horizon.

# The German Fought American Revolution

## A Historical Roundtable Discussion

~ by Daniel W. Holst

In a few days, Americans will celebrate our 245th Independence Day on July 4th. We often center our independence and the war itself around the Declaration of Independence and its oft-quoted passage of rights and liberty. But the war was far-reaching and brought conflict to India, Africa, and Europe. While our alliance with France and their critical assistance to the Continental Army is well documented, the influence of German people is not as well-known, but it was equally critical. Germans were both friend and foe, and we must hear their story, not from any dry historical perspective but from their own living and passionate voices.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet some of the players from our revolutionary period. So, I invited them all here for a roundtable discussion about that tumultuous time. So, gather around and listen to their tales and passions. Each character will remain concealed until they choose to speak. Their bios will appear after this roundtable discussion. Prepare yourselves. Even I don't know who may join this roundtable. Order your final drinks now, for the curtain will rise in a few minutes. And please, tip your servers.

**Scene:** The curtain rises...darkness envelopes a circle of seats...an awe gushes from the crowd...silence guards each character in darkness...an unseen voice begins.

**Playwright:** "Please understand these people are passionate and much anger remains in them. What they speak is the truth of their own views, their own experiences and needs. The truth of the entire situation is more nuanced and complicated than can be presented here.

Hello everyone, we know that gathering you all here was not easy. But we appreciate your cooperation. We only ask for honesty and passion. Who wishes to begin? Remember, the first voice is usually the most courageous."

**Scene:** The click of a spotlight breaks the silence; it illuminates our first player. A feminine form takes shape in our audience's attention.

(Note: we will only display further scenes when necessary, as to not disrupt the roundtable. After all, these are not the most patient of characters. Also a few personal letters might be read; if so, they are presented entirely as written, without edit.)

**Scene:** Sweat seems to glisten down the playwright's face. A woman's voice begins.

**Mercy Otis Warren:** "As I have written, the ministerial creed of King George the third's corruption was simply conquest. Conquest towards his own princely object. True Englishmen, those souls of my fellows here in the colonies, are uncorrupted. My own family arrived on the Mayflower. We will not, nor have we ever considered using the mercenary and barbarous fiends from which German peoples have enslaved themselves under King George's whimsy of power.

Did you know that the barbarous Germans joined the lust of British grenadiers when killing families. Did you not know that the Hessians laughed at the killing and wailing of infants, wives, and daughters?

But they are victims, perhaps with proper offers they can be freed of their barbarous bonds."

**Frederick Muhlenberg:** "My dear, Mercy. Am I not German? Did my parents not emigrate here? Would you reduce the entire German people, even all Hessians, to the actions of a few?"

**Mercy Otis Warren:** "You are ever the politician, Frederick. But you did not fight—"

**Frederick Muhlenberg:** "I fought! I fought in the first Continental Congress. I fought against creating in America a German nation. I fought for America. I fought to not write our laws in German. I fought to not make German an official language. I also fought in the war, but if my short military service doesn't impress you, may I introduce my brother, Peter. He left a new career in Schleswig-Holstein to return to America. And fight."

**John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg:** "I was just a pastor of my church when came the summons of war. I was reading the Ecclesiastes of Solomon. I remembered his wisdom that for every purpose there is a season. And alongside a time for peace, there is a time for war."

**George Washington:** "Is that why you agreed to my request to command the 8th Virginia Regiment?"

**John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg:** "Yes, Mr. President. But I want everyone here to know that I left the Francke Foundations in Halle, Germany for Lübeck, but upon hearing of the upcoming drive towards independence, I left Lübeck and returned to my home state of Pennsylvania."



# The German Fought American Revolution

## A Historical Roundtable Discussion

**George Washington:** "Where you—"

**John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg:** "Please, Mr. President. You are not German, and you already have history's glory. Let us tell our tales. At least my brother, Frederick, convinced Alexander Hamilton to not call you 'High Mightiness', or 'Elected Majesty'."

**Scene:** President George Washington slouches in his seat after his spotlight disappeared. A scowl takes his face. Perhaps he lost one of his ivory and gold dentures. He bends down to look for it.

**John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg:** "Many of my congregants from my church in Woodstock, Virginia joined me in the 8th Regiment, and some of my congregants were born in Germany. And, Mercy, they fought like hell against the British."

I was there. It was the Battle of Yorktown. Cornwallis had dug a lattice of trenches. We dug our own. It wasn't the first time we used trenches, but I hope for the sake of history it will be the last. Digging trenches means living in trenches. Food and drink become indistinguishable from dirt. We dug pits for waste. We slept in mud and rain. Rain overflowed the waste pits. Attacks occurred frequently. The enemy doesn't wait for our readiness. When by the pits and attacked, sometimes the safest fortification is the pit. War isn't pretty. But German, colonist, or Indian, we did everything necessary to rise up and fight for our American victory. Our American independence."

**Scene:** John Peter turns toward the playwright breaking the fourth wall. "Please pardon this soliloquy. Your history revels in bluecoats versus redcoats. We were all covered in dirt, mud, and the other. When our rations became as irrational as war itself, brown is the color we all wore."

**Carl von Donop:** "I know who it was, Mercy, that laughed at the killing of women."

**Leopold Philip de Heister:** "Carl, you shouldn't be here. If it wasn't for your love affair with that Betsy Ross, We Hessians may have won at Trenton."

**Carl von Donop:** "There were many women that I—. Oh, never mind. I paid for my mistakes. I died the victim of my ambition, and of the avarice of my sovereign. Nevertheless, the Hessians were handicapped when they conscripted the dropout, the bankrupted, the idle, and the wandering. They were animals, not soldiers. I treated them as such."

**Unnamed Woman:** "Because nobody ever cared about Hesse. What about us, our independence?"

**Frederick Muhlenberg:** "Who are you, woman?"

**Unnamed Woman:** "I am nothing but a mother. A mother to just one, but here now, the mother to all the German Hessians that fought for Britain against America."

**John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg:** "Be quiet woman. We care not—"

**Wilhelm von Knyphausen:** "Let her speak. Her voice here is important."

**Unnamed Woman:** "Thank you, General. My son often spoke of his respect towards you. Mercy, I lived in Hesse-Cassel. We are not the barbarians you create for your enlightened American narrative. Nor are we simply victims of just another unenlightened tyrant. But if that makes you powerful, then what do I care."

Our only tyrant is poverty. Disregard momentarily our wooded, hilly land with infertile soil and an uncooperative climate. Our own famous textile industry was utterly destroyed by the so-called Thirty Years War. We have never recovered. Our people live in squalor. I have since learned that even our nobles are poorer than your own American freeholders. I sense that Prussian philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt will one day call our city ugly and most unpleasant.

Can one hog feed a hundred children? Could you? No mother would let their children starve, so our men have become our only source of capital. The British may not pay well, but they do pay. It is easy to call barbarian what you choose to not understand, nor help. Germans are a proud, strong people knowledgeable and industrious in many ways as the Muhlenberg brothers have shown. I am glad they found a reason to fight. But is our reason any less? This is my peace."

**Wilhelm von Knyphausen:** "Mercy, Do you remember when the colonies and Hessians fought together with the British against France? But when the colonies gained, Hesse-Cassel diminished. I suppose this audience wants to know why I fought against America. I didn't. I'm happy you have your independence from Britain. I fought for Hesse-Cassel. Did you know that General Lafayette traveled to meet me in Cassel where we were just two men reminiscing about our battles?"

**George Washington:** "He wrote me about you."

**Wilhelm von Knyphausen:** "What did he say?"

# The German Fought American Revolution

## A Historical Roundtable Discussion

**George Washington:** “He enjoyed his meeting with you. He wrote:

*'At Cassel I saw our Hessian friends, and among them old Knyp. I told them they were very fine fellows; they returned thanks and compliments. Ancient foes can meet with pleasure; which, however, I think must be greater on the side that fought a successful cause.'*”

**Scene:** General Wilhelm von Knyphausen takes in a deep breath. He leans his head back and with a gentle stare back in time, he slowly exhales. A slight smile eases onto his face. Contentment governs him.

**Wilhelm von Knyphausen:** “I am glad. Leopold, would you like to add anything.”

**Leopold Philip de Heister:** “Yes. I was an old, crippled veteran long before Britain hired me to lead German forces against the colonists in New York. Mercy, you and I are not that different. I’ve read your many poems, plays, and pamphlets. You have wondrous talent. But why did you write a lot of them anonymously?”

**Mercy Otis Warren:** “It is in me to write. To express myself, even when this patriarchal society would dismiss my writing at best and at worst gag me and take away my voice just for being female. So, I wrote without credit.”

**Leopold Philip de Heister:** “So too, do I fight. I am a soldier. I seek no credit nor historical praise. I hope crippled soldiers are better treated in the future. What would you do without paper? Without a mission, I sit and rot. Staring at an empty wall, I watch the world and other armies march on without me. When given back my purpose, I said yes as quickly as you would write your ideas if ever that talent of yours was taken away but eventually returned.”

**Scene:** There is silence for a few moments. The audience, entranced in the dialogue, remains still and focused upon the players. The spotlight clicks on to someone new. This person is holding some yellowed papers on his lap. Looking at it in fond remembrance.

**Alexander Hamilton:** “I really wanted to see him here. I miss my friend. But having stayed in America and starting a glass factory in New York, he wrote to me offering his service in apology for commanding

the Hessians against us. This letter is from my friend, Frederick Augustus de Zeng. General Knyphausen, I believe you knew him.

**Wilhelm von Knyphausen:** “Yes. He was an honorable man. Captain of a Hessian unit. May I see the letter afterwards?”

**Alexander Hamilton:** “Of course. But first I wish to read a portion or two. He writes:

*'Happy as I feel with most of my Neighbours, to see you appointed Second in command in the Armies of this Country, I can not omit to take the Liberty to address you Sir, upon this so interesting Event, in the full persuasion that the motive for doing it will be my best apologie.'*

...

*'I will without accepting any Emoluments whatever, and with the greatest pleassure & Satisfaction obey any Commands you will please to honor me with, and can I only at last obtain your approbation, which will be that of all well meaning Citizens in general, I shall thinck my self handsomely rewarded. I have the honor to be with great Regard & Consideration My Dear Sir, Your most obedient & most humble Servant.'*”

**Friedrich Wilhelm August Heinrich Ferdinand von Steuben:** “All of this is wonderful. But, let me be clear. Without Germans. Essentially without me, the Continental Army, the American Colonies, the war for independence would have quickly failed, and this great country of America would have barely been a footnote in history.

In 1777, I met the American ambassadors to France, Silas Deane and Benjamin Franklin. They convinced me I could make a fortune in the colonies from my vast experience in the Prussian Army and my distinctive service in the Seven Years War. I became America's mercenary.

I helped turn the Continental Army into a force to be reckoned. I taught them how to drill, execute tactics, and the discipline required for professional soldiers who won battles instead of losing them. I wrote their *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*. I turned their volunteers into an organized, well-drilled army. Their



# The German Fought American Revolution

## A Historical Roundtable Discussion

congress formally appointed me Inspector General with full and formal rank and pay of a major general. The soldiers called me the personification of Mars, the Roman God of War."

**Frederick Muhlenberg:** "Really, Baron von Steuben. Aren't you overselling yourself?"

**John Peter Muhlenberg:** "All barons think too highly of themselves. It is a requirement to received the title, Baron."

**Baron von Steuben:** "I am a Baron, even if I can't be titled in America, yet while I came for the fortune, I stayed for its freedom and vast lands.

Following the war, I gained my American citizenship along with many of the other Germans who fought for and against America. America has a certain lure, and we made our homes here. I applaud all Germans who were part of the war. We needed their ferocity to build our armies. We needed their well-matched opposition to temper our skills. I believe Germans will always be friends to America."

**Scene:** The audience rises and applauds the roundtable. But wait, an uninvited guest has walked onto the stage. Wait. It couldn't be. It is. He stands in the middle of the seated figures. The audience sits.

**Thomas Jefferson:** "I wrote in the Declaration of Independence about King George the third that:

*'He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.'*

I want to apologize to our German friends and foes for over-simplifying and villainizing their role against us. This was solely upon King George and to him must all blame lie. In fact, in the time that America and Great Britain may become allies and friends, let this be relegated to history and no longer inflame our passions."

**Final Scene:** A chorus of "Hear Hear" echoes around the roundtable. Upon a rising illumination, they become silent. Lights fully illuminate all these stoic figures. Then the lights slowly diminish, and the figures and their passions return to history.

## The Players

Mercy Otis Warren (1728–1814)



An American poet, playwright, and pamphleteer. She was the first female historian to write the history of the American Revolution. Her writing advanced the adoption of *The Bill of Rights*. A statue to her stands in Barnstable, Massachusetts.

Frederick Muhlenberg (1750–1801)



The first Speaker of the US House of Representatives. His father, a German immigrant, is considered the founder of the Lutheran Church in North America. His home is now the museum, The Speakers House, in Trappe, Pennsylvania.

John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg (1746–1807)



An American clergyman, Continental Army soldier, and US politician. Several memorials to him spot the Eastern United States to include Washington D.C., Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Shenandoah County Courthouse of Woodstock, VA.

George Washington (1732–1799)



General of the Continental Army and first President of the United States. His legacy is well known, and memorials to him dot the entire US landscape. He did not have wooden teeth, but as noted in the play, his dentures were made from ivory and gold.

# The German Fought American Revolution

## A Historical Roundtable Discussion

Carl Von Donop (1732 – 1777)



A man of duality with dreams of power and glory. He was civil and deferential to his superiors, but treated his men with a short-tempered personality and was quick to discipline them with severe beatings. He died of wounds during the Battle of Red Bank.

Frederick Augustus de Zeng (1756–1838)



A Hessian mercenary and former lieutenant of the landgrave of Hesse-Cassel. Honorably discharged in 1783, he became a naturalized US citizen and purchased an estate at Red Hook, New York. Friends with DeWitt Clinton and Phillip Schuyler.

Wilhelm von Kynphausen (1716–1800)



Born in East Frisia, he was a Prussian Army general officer with 42 years of Prussian service. He was second-in-command of the entire Hessian Army. Fort Hill Park in New York is the site of the former Fort Knyphausen. He returned to Cassel as its governor.

Baron von Steuben (1730–1794)



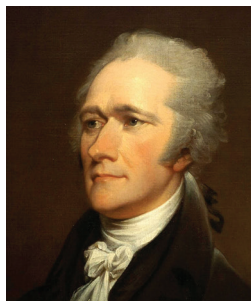
A vain and eccentric man, Baron von Steuben lived a life of mystery and legend. His story is well-worth reading and his contributions to Europe and America are without measure. Memorials, festivals, and cities and ships honor him in name.

Unnamed Woman (Charlotte Amalie)



The play's unnamed woman is not Charlotte Amalie, but let her represent her people. Hesse-Cassel fell hard in the decades after Charlotte married King Christian V. It is not hard to imagine the pain and desolation they endured through war and poverty.

Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804)



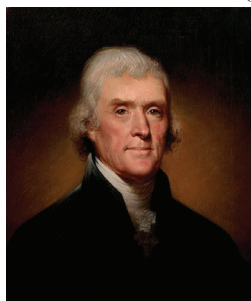
The founder of the US Coast Guard and the *New York Post* newspaper. His story is well-known. He died in a duel with Aaron Burr. A popular figure who preferred kingship instead of a president. Immortalized in the amazing musical *Hamilton*.

Leopold Philip de Heister (1716–1777)



Chosen to lead the Hessian Army for the British against the colonies, he commanded the first contingent of troops landing at Staten Island in 1776. His defeat at Trenton later that year led to his recall. Heister returned to Hesse and died on 19 November 1777.

Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)



The third president of the United States and main author of *The Declaration of Independence*. He pushed for the Louisiana Purchase, the largest tract of fertile land on Earth. He also appointed Lewis and Clark to lead their famous expedition across America.

All the historical references were divined and corroborated by various historical websites, books, peer-reviewed academic articles, and primary sources. A couple may be more legend than fact, but that is something neither we or history can ever know.





# American Schleswig-Holstein Heritage Society Membership Application

Please make checks payable to ASHHS and mail to: ASHHS, P.O. Box 506, Walcott, IA, 52773-0506

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Last  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City/Town State Zip  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail a membership to the above address. This gift membership is from: \_\_\_\_\_

Annually \_\_\_ Five Year \_\_\_ Lifetime \_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_ Gift \_\_\_

Prices effective December 31, 2009.

	Annually	Five Year	Lifetime
Individual	\$24.00	\$115.00	\$650.00
Joint	\$28.00	\$130.00	\$1,000.00
Foreign	\$35.00	\$160.00	\$1,300.00 Newsletter to be mailed outside the U.S.A.

Our membership year is from January 1 through December 31.

New members joining late in the year will have a paid membership through the following year.

**Contact Us:** E-mail address: ashhswaltcott@gmail.com • Website: www.ashhs.org

The ASHHS Office and Library is located at, 121 W. Bryant Street, Walcott, Iowa  
(2nd floor of the Walcott American Legion Building)

*ASHHS is the foremost and only German Heritage Society dedicated exclusively to  
Promoting and Preserving the Heritage of SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN!*

**American/Schleswig-Holstein  
Heritage Society**

P. O. Box 506

Walcott, IA 52773-0506 U.S.A.

*Address Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
DURANT, IA  
PERMIT NO. 9