Braunschweig and Ansbach-Bayreuth Troops at Fort George, Penobscot, during the American Revolutionary War

Anette Ruppel Rodrigues

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Fort George, Penobscot, a British Fortification during the American Revolutionary War was reinforced with German troops. Why Fort George was important to the Crown and who these German troops were to help secure the fort is the focus of this article.

By early summer 1779, the British military authority in Halifax, Nova Scotia, decided it was time to get a foothold on the mid-coast of the District of Maine of the Colony of Massachusetts. By then, Revolutionary War activities had pretty much moved to the southern colonies. There were several reasons why building a British fortification was necessary:

- the tall pines needed for building ships were plentiful in the Maine woods; having a British presence on the coast would discourage American privateers which endangered British ships; and a British fort would provide safety for the Loyalists who had escaped north from the Boston area and beyond.

Several Loyalists, among them Dr. Calef and John Nutting, had already purchased land along the east side of Penobscot Bay and invited Brigadier General Francis McLean from Halifax to survey the land for the location of a fort. Having decided on the location on the highest point of the peninsula, building started soon thereafter.

The local Patriots quickly sent word to Boston about the British undertaking requesting to send the British packing before their fortification could reach defensible proportions. Though an impressive number of ships were quickly accumulated to send north - or as we still say today, Down-East with prevailing winds - the expedition ended in disaster for the Patriots. This ill-fated event, the Penobscot Expedition, is considered to be the greatest American Naval disaster until Pearl Harbor. Because it was such a definitive defeat for the Patriot forces, the Crown assumed that the Penobscot River might become the border to the possibly inevitable United States and British North America.

Looking at the map, it is easy to see how advantageous a foothold on the coast of the Maine District of the Massachusetts Colony would be. Though communication was still mostly done via ships, there was now an opportunity to also communicate with British Canada via the route through the woods. News of this new British Fort George on the Bagaduce Peninsula had reached Governor Frederick Haldimand of the Province of Quebec as a letter dated 4 March 1780 indicated, which was carried by Mr. Lormière through the woods, “To the officer commanding at Penobscot” requesting information.

Figure 1. 1780 Raynal and Bonne Map of New England and the Maritime Provinces.
related to their communication with other British held areas. In the return letter on 3 April 1780, Fort George’s commander General Campbell let Governor Haldemand know that he was in contact with Halifax as well as New York. General Campbell also mentioned that he had wished that the letter carrier and his Party could have been persuaded to assist in taking the rebels in Machias to secure the coast all the way from Penobscot to Nova Scotia (this part of Nova Scotia became New Brunswick in 1784).

Owing to the advantageous location of Fort George, Penobscot, building up the fort was of great importance. A general letter of amnesty was sent out to entice the locals to work for the British in exchange for provisions. Even men as far away as Broad Bay, the only German settlement in the Maine District – later known as Waldoboro, cooperated with the Fort. A document dated Fort George 24 April 1780 indicates that 18 “Dutchman from Broad Bay” worked on “getting Lyme Stone and Loading the Brig Molly Transport and cutting wood.” Among those 18 men is Heinrich Isense, who was among the unfortunate German troops taken prisoner at Bennington in August 1777, who were greatly outnumbered by the patriot forces.

An interesting question arises looking at this document: Did Heinrich Isense sign personally to the right of the list? The signature is in nicely fluid German cursive, whereas his name on the list is written in regular English cursive. Was this German conscripted soldier able to read and write?

French Interest in Fort George

While the Scottish troops and the local loyalists were busy building up Fort George in 1780 in relative peace, the war was far from over. A further indication of the interconnection and importance of Fort George to the British cause is a letter Brigadier General Francis McLean, who by then was commander of the citadel at Halifax, wrote on 16 June 1780 to General Campbell at Fort George. Brigadier General McLean had received a letter in May 1780 from the Hesse-Cassel General von Knyphausen who had observed that a large French fleet may leave Brest soon to possibly attack Halifax, New Foundland or Canada. Or perhaps meet up with General Washington in Rhode Island. Though Fort George may not be an important target, Brigadier General Francis McLean suggested Campbell should nevertheless strengthen it. The ship L’Hermione was most likely among the French ships leaving with that convoy for North American waters. A very detailed map of Fort George was drawn on 17 May 1780 when the L’Hermione was in the ocean in view of Fort George. The map shows the outline of the fort and where the barracks were as well as listing the armaments in detail. Though the drawing is not to scale it does show that the military buildings already took up a great deal of space on the Bagaduce Peninsula.

In the meantime, events involving future German military for Fort George were happening. Captain Heinrich Urban Cleve, who was part of the Convention Troops General Burgoyne had surrendered in October 1777, was exchanged in New York in late 1780 and finally arrived in Braunschweig in April 1781.

In August 1781, Duke Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Wolfenbüttel sent Captain Cleve to London with dispatches for Major General von Riedesel. Cleve tirelessly attempted to get passage from England to Canada. By then it was assumed that von Riedesel had been exchanged and taken Braunschweig Convention troops under his command to Quebec. While in London, Cleve had access to Lord Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, from whom he expected to be provided with passage to Quebec. In his letter to his Duke, Cleve writes that Lord Germain shared with him the rather detailed plans for the British fleet, where all ships were needed in North America to defeat the Ameri-

Figure 2. Waldoboro workers ledger, April 24, 1780.

Figure 3. Enlargement of the signatures from the far-right column of Figure 2. Heinrich Isense’s signature is in old German script. The H, r, s, and e are different than written in all of the other names.
can and French ships, which certainly were attempting to take New York. Could this frank discussion indicate the trust Germain placed in Cleve as an officer of an allied principality? Germain also promised to speak with Lord Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, to ascertain whether a merchant fleet was still leaving for Quebec. In the end, Cleve decided that since there was no certainty of passage for him and sending dispatches was too insecure, he asked his Duke for permission to return to Braunschweig.11

The fleet, which was intended to defeat the American and French forces, which Lord Germain told Captain Cleve about in August 1781, obviously did not prevent the British surrender at Yorktown in October 1781. Today, we look at the surrender at Yorktown as the end of hostilities in North America but continued French interest in Fort George.12

On 27 February 1782, the Commons in London voted to cease hostilities between Great Britain and the Colonies. The letter written from Whitehall to Brigadier General Campbell in Halifax on 15 April 1782 by the Earl of Shelburne, who had succeeded Lord North, indicated that German replacement troops were coming. In the spring of 1782, the German 5th replacement troops numbering in excess of 2,000 were to proceed from Bremerlehe via Northern Scotland to Halifax.13 Among the German troops was the young Hesse-Cassel recruit, Johann Gottfried Seume, who later became a German author. In his autobiography he observed that while they were crossing the ocean for Halifax that “the old ship’s biscuit was French; taken from the French by the English during the Seven Years’ War, was stored in Portsmouth, and is now fed to the Germans in order for them to now in America – God willing – beat to death the French under Rochambeau and Lafayette.”14

The British fear of a French attack on Fort George, Penobscot was not without cause. Volume XX of the Baxter Manuscripts contains a reprint of the letter George Washington wrote to Marquis de Vandreuil on 10 August 1782 where Washington refers to a letter of de Vandreuil to Count de Rochambeau, commander of the French fleet, who had requested help in an attack on Fort George. Washington uses every possible argument to discourage the French from attacking Penobscot. Washington is making the French aware that the closest friendly secure harbor is in Boston. If the French needed to escape there they would have contrary winds, but the British reinforcements from New York would take advantage of the wind in their favor. Washington also makes clear that he cannot support the French with any naval reinforcements. If they should still intend to go through with an attack they would have to ask Massachusetts for help. Washington describes Fort George as, “I am lately informed by good intelligence that the Fort is the most regularly constructed & best finished of any in America, is well situated, and Garrisoned by the 74th Regt, consisting of 800 men.”15

**Figure 4. Plan of Fort George by a spy on the French Ship L’Hermione 17 May 1780. Original at the Bibliotheque Nationale de France; copy in the collection of the Castine Historical Society.**

Braunschweig Troops at Fort George

In the letter of 15 April 1782, the Earl of Shelburne specifically mentioned to Brigadier Campbell “The safety and protection of Penobscot being an object of much importance it is recommended to you in case you should not judge it in a proper state of Defence [sic] to send a part of the Recruits to that place under an approved Officer with fit instructions and due precaution.”16 When this 5th replacement troop transport arrived in Halifax, most were ordered to disembark, except for Captain Heinrich of them, should their Naval Forces become superior to ours in those Seas during the course of the Summer.”12

It appears as if Clinton was referring to the American as well as the French Enemy. The singular noun “Enemy” may refer to just one, but the plural verb, “are,” would indicate more than one. We know in the summer and fall of 1781 the French and American Enemy were busy in the southern theater of war.

End of Hostilities in North America but Continued French Interest in Fort George

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Urban Cleve with his 224 Braunschweig troops, which had been intended to continue on to join his superior, Major General von Riedesel in Quebec. Instead Captain Cleve and his Braunschweig troops were sent to Fort George, Penobscot.\textsuperscript{17}

In the letter of 29 August 1782 to his Duke, Captain Cleve quoted General Campbell:

As for assigning the recruits of the Ducal Braunschweig corps to go to Penobscot, he added there had been weighty reasons the first of which that this transport consisted of just as many men as were needed to be sent there. ... He also believed that I, who have been serving in America for several years would be best suited for this post and that there would be no want of good harmonious cooperation between me and the commanding Major Campbell. He was so kind to add that the comfortable barracks, the quality of the supplies and the reasonable prices of victuals excelled all the other (posts) and that he was very glad to be able to show a Ducal Braunschweig corps a favor.

It seems likely that Capt. Cleve was chosen because of his fluency in English. On 21 August 1782 Capt. Cleve wrote a letter in English to General Campbell while still in Halifax.\textsuperscript{18} Though his English is fluent, the letter contains the occasional German influences, such as not capitalizing the pronoun “I,” spelling ship as “Schip” – closely related to the German “Schiff,” and the occasional German word order. From later letters Cleve had written, we know he had easily socialized with the Scots at Fort George and been a frequent guest of the British officers and their wives. In a letter to Major General von Riedesel, Cleve wrote, “all officers of the garrison here especially the Germans, regretted losing Brig. Gen Campbell. The General as well as his wife had done all in their power to make it pleasant and bearable for the officers in this dismal place.”\textsuperscript{19}

Capt. Cleve had arrived with his detachment at Fort George on 22 September 1782 and realized his men were needed to work on the fort as well as building their own housing since the local inhabitants and the 74th Highlanders needed to work on the Fort. It is quite unlikely that Capt. Cleve ever heard of the complimentary impression George Washing had of the military deterrent of Fort George. Capt. Cleve wrote in the letter to his Duke on 14 October 1782, “For these had to get the fort here, which was as yet in a very incomplete condition, into a good state of defense before winter sets in; all hands would be needed for this task. ... It was unfortunately more than true that the fortifications here were of such quality that in defending them, the most magnificent troops would lose their honor.”\textsuperscript{20}

The muster role of 182 men of Capt. Cleve’s Braunschweig recruits lists their names, ages, height, place of birth, previous military service and their civilian occupation.\textsuperscript{21} In his letter to his Duke, Cleve spells out that “I have 70 men capable of doing all the various types of services and I have already covered twice all the posts here, for which I off., 11 non-commissioned officers and 65 men were needed.”\textsuperscript{22}

Capt. Cleve definitely looked out for his men and the recurring phrase, “the recruits most graciously entrusted to me by Your Serene Highness” does not ring hollow. The recruits who by training are carpenters, masons and cabinetmakers are even receiving extra pay from General Campbell at Capt. Cleve’s insistence and he expected the other workers to receive extra pay too, since they had to do the work in addition to their military drills.

**Ansbach-Bayreuth Troops at Fort George**

The correspondence of the Braunschweig Captain Cleve, which has been printed in the JSHA Journals, gives detailed information about the close working relationship with the Scots at Fort George. The following information rounds out what we know about the Germans at Fort George from fall 1782 to summer 1783 using a variety of Ansbach-Bayreuth sources. The Ansbach-Bayreuth troops had arrived at Fort George on 13 November 1783. The late Robert Carver Brook, who was known as a thorough researcher, listed every one of the troops serving at Fort George from late-1782 to mid-1783.

The Ansbach-Bayreuth troops include the names of all military personnel, of officer servants, of wives with the names of their husbands, and the names of the children born to them with the dates of birth or baptism and the names of the godparents.\textsuperscript{23}

**Ansbach-Bayreuth officers - dates of entry into service and age listed, when known:**

On 1 March 1781, Ernst Friedrich Wilhelm Adolf von Wurmb entered the service of the Margrave of Ansbach-Bayreuth as Captain (Hauptmann). He was then 35 years and 8 months old; no combat experience has been recorded. The same date, Second Lieutenant Ehrenfried Johann Friedrich Ferdinand Busch enters service. Three additional second lieutenants entered service in 1781: 1 April Friedrich Adolf Carl von Eyb (age 20), 1 June Christoph Julius von Massenbach (age 24), 1 November Franz, Graf von Bubna-Littitz. These officers are joined on 1 February 1782 by three more second lieutenants: Albertus Magnus Franck, Johann Caspar Morg and August Wilhelm Neidhardt (age 22, who later became part of nobility and is then known as Neidhardt von Gneisenau). Considering the fact that the total number of Ansbach-Bayreuth troops amounting to 220 jägers, having seven officers leading them seemed rather “top-heavy.” Among the Ansbach-Bayreuth troops was also field chaplain George Christop Elias Erb (age 23), 10 musicians = Waldhorn players = buglers, and 9 wives.

The number of officers to troops among the Braunschweig contingency seem more average. Captain Herrich Urban Cleve was in charge of two lieutenants, Ludwig von Hedemann and Carl von Arnshiedt, two non-commissioned officers, one surgeon, two drummers and 216 recruits and 3 women.\textsuperscript{24}

Letters written by three Ansbach-Bayreuth officers, the biographies about one of the officers, and a late in life letter written by the field chaplain give us a great deal of information about them and about their time at Fort George.
George. The letters written by Captain von Wurmb, 2nd Lieutenant von Massenbach and 2nd Lieutenant Busch are part of the Bancroft Collection at the New York Public Library. Several books written about 2nd Lieutenant Neidhardt von Gneiseau mention his service in North America. A letter the Field Chaplain Georg Christoph Elias Erb wrote to the Bavarian King later in life mentions his time in America.

Captain Ernst Friedrich Wilhelm Adolf von Wurmb left Bremerlehe with the Ansbach-Bayreuth replacement troops for North America on 9 June 1782. In his letter dated 23 October 1782 from Fort Hill near Halifax, Capt. von Wurmb reports to the venerable Premier Minister von Gemmingen, that their journey had taken nine weeks and three days. Instead of being sent to New York, they are now disembarked at Halifax. Two privates had died and 17 are sick and it is hoped that they will receive better nursing while in winter quarters. And three privates had deserted, but two returned. The order to pursue these deserters fell on 2nd Lieutenant Christoph Julius von Massenbach who chased them on horseback for 60 miles through the wilderness all the way to Windsor. Lieutenant von Massenbach described the area in not very flattering terms and is wondering why the British crown even went through the expense of keeping the province of Nova Scotia. The 23 year old Lieutenant von Massenbach was a 1779 graduate of the military academy Hohe Karlsschule in Stuttgart where he received awards for mathematics and drawing. When the troops left in the spring of 1782, the young Lieut. von Massenbach eagerly reported on their journey in letters to his godfather, the Etatminister of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Bayreuth, Karl Friedrich von Gemmingen. The letters were filled with descriptions of the countryside, but also filled with the excitement of being part of the adventure.

While the troops were still waiting in Bremerlehe on German soil, the 10 Waldhorn players gave concerts that were admired by the civilian population as well as the officers belonging to other units. Even Major General William Faucitt made it a point to listen to them from his garden. In this letter of 20 May 1782, when they already spent more than a week in Bremerlehe waiting for the British ships, Lieut. von Massenbach added a comment about the unfriendly behavior of the locals, which interestingly showed a fear of the French. "They would gladly have taken our money, but their important state’s interest and their foolish fear of France did not really permit that we remained with them for long." In the original German he wrote, "Unser Geld hätten sie gerne gehabt, aber ihr wichtiges Staats-Intresse und närrische Furcht vor Frankreich hat es nicht recht erlauben wollen, daß wir lange bei ihnen bleiben sollten." The term “närrische Furcht” can be translated as “foolish fear” but also as the stronger “irrational fear.” In any case, it reminds us of the centuries old animosity between the Germans and French. Perhaps it was not an irrational fear considering the fact that by 1782, Bremerlehe at the mouth of the Weser River into the North Sea, had sheltered thousands of German soldiers waiting for the British ships to take them to America to fight for Britain, which since late 1777 was fighting the French as well as the Americans.

Finally, on 29 May 1782, the British ships had arrived for the Ansbach-Bayreuth and other German troops. An oath to the British king was sworn supervised by Faucitt after which the young Field Chaplain Georg Christoph Elias Erb “gave a beautiful and short speech and everyone shouted Hurrah.”

In his letter written on 18 October 1782 after they had settled in at Halifax, Lieutenant von Massenbach described in detail the ocean voyage and the fragile state of mind of some of the recruits. Von Massenbach himself had thoroughly enjoyed putting himself into the most uncomfortable positions and triumphed over them. He also comments on the fact that he speaks English. Though he writes, “My limited English was of great use to me and our whole ship, where the ship’s captain and his men understood no other words – and I am still needed here as well – when the Hessian Regiment von Seitz, which is stationed here, cannot give us exact information.” When von Massenbach speaks of “my limited English” might that be the same understatement that we hear from many foreigners today? (Americans as a rule today consider themselves reasonably fluent in a foreign language if they can say hello and goodbye and can order a meal.)

In the letter of 18 October 1782 from Halifax Lieutenant von Massenbach writes that he enclosed the ship’s course and a sketch of the Halifax area. Those have not yet been found. They should be of great historic value knowing that the young lieutenant received awards for drawing while at the military academy Hohe Karlsschule. Other remarks in the letter give us insight into his plans for the future. Lieutenant von Massenbach was worried that they might have to return to Germany without having carried out their object, of seeing combat. He also mentioned that he and the Reverend Field Chaplain would very much like “to remain here for a few years - in order to collect knowledge of everything – if we could only travel unhindered – and aside from the gracious permission would also receive additional support.” Lieutenant Christoph Julius von Massenbach did not have the opportunity to see more of America than parts of Nova Scotia and later the surroundings of Fort George Penobscot, but at least Field Chaplain Georg Christoph Elias Erb had seen a little more of North America when he was sent with orders from the Braunschweig Captain Cleve from Fort George, Penobscot to New York in April 1783. Erb reunited with his Ansbach-Bayreuth compatriots in England in early September 1783 to continue on with them to return to Ansbach-Bayreuth.

The field chaplain, Lieutenant von Massenbach, mentioned in his letter he hoped to travel the new world with, was Georg Christoph Elias Erb, who was then 23 years old. In the spring of 1782, Erb had just finished his theological studies in Erlangen with the grade of “excellent.” Perhaps his uncle, Field Chaplain Johann Phillip Erb, had suggested his nephew for the post with the Ansbach-Bayreuth replacement troops. The uncle, Field Chaplain Johann Phillip Erb, had served with Ansbach-Bayreuth troops mostly in the New York area from 7 May 1778 until 16 December 1782. The older field chaplain left a diary describing the responsibilities of a chaplain, which included holding religious services, giving communion, taking confessions, educating soldiers in the faith and counselling the married and unmarried soldiers about unacceptable transgression.
We can assume that the young Georg Christoph Elias Erb, the field chaplain who came to Fort George, Penobscot with the Ansbach-Bayreuth troops may have had similar responsibilities, but we have no written records about them except for the dates of baptism for the children born to the wives of the Ansbach-Bayreuth troops.34 We know the Field Chaplain Erb at Fort George shared living quarters with the Braunschweig Captain Henrich Urban Cleve, who was the most experienced officer among the German troops. After returning to Germany, Erb had not received a lucrative parish as promised for this military service. Later in life, Georg Christoph Elias Erb wrote a letter to the Bavarian King asking for assistance and he described his service in America:

The Field Jäger corps, to which I was assigned was sent by ship now and then to different American provinces, and we had to sail through the most dangerous bays filled with reefs and straits, where recently wrecked ships were still visible. And when we stepped on solid ground, we were responsible to be the outpost in a lonely deserted land, or had to camp out in the elements, which affected my normally very healthy nature. The quickly changing weather in America had a negative influence on my health. Though I endured the hardship with forbearance and an unshakable courage in the hope that I would receive my discharge in America after my English service in the American war had ended, in order to remain in America, a country, which has many appeals for every peaceful and regular citizen and which offers to every thinking and ambitious man a sufficient income.35

In the biographies written about the young Lieutenant Neidhard von Gneisenau, credit for his future success in the Prussian military are based on what he learned during his time in North America. The primary sources, letters he wrote to his father, are assumed to be lost. During his time in North America, von Gneisenau had received insight into how to supply an army away from its home base, and he learned from battle-experienced English as well as German officers he met there how to guide soldiers.36 While still in Halifax and then at Fort George, Penobscot, the young Lieutenant von Gneisenau would have had opportunity to interact with British and German officers. Lieutenant von Massenbach had written in a letter to Minister von Gemmingen on 21 January 1783 that “The English officers have their own mess (ménage) together and we Germans the same. But we have daily and hourly contact with the English officers, this is the way we pass the time as best we can.”37

Did Time in the British Service in North America Influence the Germans’ Future?

Officers of the Braunschweig and Ansbach-Bayreuth troops, regular soldiers, the women and the children and even the servants among them – how did the time they spent in Halifax and mostly at Fort George, Penobscot influence their future?

Unfortunately, Captain von Wurbm of the Ansbach-Bayreuth did not have a future – he died of a wound received by a Scottish Lieutenant in what sounds like an unfortunate brawl. In his letter of 21 January 1783, Lieutenant von Massenbach invited a few days ago to his misfortune the most vile scum of all English officers to be his guest who in his drunkenness wounded him most dangerously. We all hope that his extraordinarily strong nature will help him get up again.”38 This unfortunately did not happen, and Captain von Wurbm died of this wound on 7 February 1783. So far there is no information available about his actual gravesite, and normally no one can be buried in Maine in the winter, because the ground will be frozen solid.

No reason has surfaced yet what caused a fight between Lieutenant Graf von Bubna Lititz and Lieutenant Busch around 20 December 1782. Lieut. von Massenbach describes as follows: “Lieutenant Busch and Count Bubna got into it and wounded each other severely. Bubna died after 14 days – more from his rotten nature than from his wound.”39 It can be assumed that Lieutenant Busch was not at fault, because he was not reprimanded, and actually command of the Ansbach-Bayreuth troops at Fort George was transferred to Lieutenant Busch by Captain von Wurbm two weeks before von Wurbm died.

In his letter of 16 July 1783, to Minister von Gemmingen, Lieutenant Busch sums up the responsibilities he has taken on. He is especially proud to report, “All officers can attest with me that your Serene Highnesses’ troops were most highly praised for their order and propriety of its people and were especially respected.”40

Lieut. Busch also include the following list in his letter:

Of the 235 troops who marched out, meanwhile –
1 Captain died
1 Lieutenant died
4 Privates died
1 Waldhornist (bugler) deserted
11 Privates deserted
1 Quartermaster commanded
1 Surgeon commanded
3 Privates commanded
2 Baggage servants commanded
1 Chaplain granted a furlough
1 Private granted a furlough
1 Private discharged and 2 Privates dismissed
Therefore there are only 205 men left in the detachment, but add to those 1 officer’s servant, 9 women and 6 children.41

Conclusion

The British dream of turning the area between the Penobscot River and the St. Croix River at the border to Nova Scotia into New Ireland never became a reality, though Fort George, Penobscot remained firmly in British hands for more than four years, from summer 1779 to early January 1784.42 Even Capt. Cleve remarked on 8 March 1783 in the letter to his Duke, “this place here together with the district belonging to it will probably soon have to be ceded to the Americans because under the name of Maine or Lincoln it has always belonged to New England.”43
For the time between 1779 and 1783, Fort George, Penobscot had been a safe destination for Loyalists, an important garrison for Scottish troops, and for close to a year the overseas assignment for German troops. There definitely were interactions among all those groups. Some soldiers of the Braunschweig and the Ansbach-Bayreuth died, some deserted and some received permission to stay in North America.

The great majority left for home in mid-July 1783:
- Braunschweig troops on the ship Ariel: 195 men, 5 women and 3 children
- Ansbach-Bayreuth troops on the ship The Brothers: 204 men, 4 servants, 9 women and 6 children.\(^4\)

We know a great deal about the Germans at Fort George, about some of those who deserted\(^45\) and even those who rejoined the German troops at Fort George.\(^46\) This paper only focuses on the importance of Fort George and why the German troops had been there. It would also be of great interest knowing more about how the time at this outpost in the American Revolutionary War influenced the lives of the men and women after they returned home again. So far that remains a mystery, which would be great to solve.

**About the Author**

While Anette Ruppel Rodrigues was preparing for her Master of Arts Degree in Teaching German at the University of Maine in 1996, she was able to work with UMaine’s history professor Richard Judd on the independent studies project, “The Late 18th Century Down East – Could the ‘dreaded Hessians’ have made it to Maine?” She did indeed find evidence that “Hessians” had been in what later became the State of Maine.

To her great fortune, she met in-person or via e-mail many others who generously shared their knowledge. Among them was Robert Carver Brooks, Henry Retzer and Horst Lochner. At Henry Retzer’s suggestion, she contacted the von Massenbach family in Germany. She still meets with them when in Germany and exchanges research. The von Massenbach’s interest in history goes very deep. They publish an excellent booklet on the Hohenzollern dynasty, “Hohenzollern einst und jetzt.” Their relative Lieut. Christoph Julius von Massenbach had written interesting letters while in the British service, including Fort George, Penobscot 1782-1783.

While visiting different Staatsarchive in Germany for her research project for the “Women in the Curriculum Grant” from UMaine in 2005, she came across the extensive correspondence in the collection of the Staatsarchiv Wolfenbüttel of the Braunschweig Capt. Henrich Urban Clewe who was stationed at Fort George, Penobscot. A few years later, to her great surprise, she found out that the correspondence had been published in an English translation in the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association Journals. Realizing the great resource the JSHA is, she has been a member since 2008.

Aside from working with original letters, she also finds other historic materials interesting, like plays of the period. She translated into English the 1783 humorous play “The Hessian Officer in America” written by Johann August Weppen. It has been performed several times in conjunction with Revolutionary War encampments which she helped organize.

Speaking to different organizations about “Hessians” in Maine – either in English or in German when in Germany – is done not only to share information, but also to some extent in the hope of possibly meeting people who have additional information. It is also interesting to try to understand how people in the late 18th Century tried to arrange their life. Researching the life of Loyalists near Fort George and their interaction with the British and German troops led to her article “1779 – 1783: Looking at Fort George through Loyal Eyes.” This can be accessed on the Castine Historical Society website which is at: www.castinehistoricalsociety.org. Select “Collections” – “Learn and Explore.” Scroll to the second article under “Featured Articles.”

**Acknowledgments**

The author wishes to thank editor Sally Bacon and also acknowledge and thank Henry Retzer and many others associated with the JSHA. She would sometimes ask a question, which Henry posted to his group and the answer appeared electronically from experts among them.

Horst Lochner in Germany is also a great resource and known as a determined sleuth especially concerning the Ansbach-Bayreuth troops. Deep gratitude is also owed to the late Robert Carver Brooks who had done so much research related to “Hessians in Maine,” which he generously shared.

**Notes**

1. Robert C. Brooks *The Maine Genealogist*, May 2004, Epilog to “The Artificers and Inhabitants who built Fort George, Penobscot, 1779 – 1780.” Before the British arrived in June 1779, there were five farms on the Majabigwaduce/Bagaduce Peninsula. On 26 April 1783 the tax valuation for the town of Campbell-town, which had grown around Fort George lists 86 dwellings, two groups of “Hutts” and one hospital. Information acquired by Robert Carver Brooks.


7. Copy provided by Robert C. Brooks; original/duplicate at UK/TNA, AO 3/141.

9 The L’Hermione had carried the Marquis de La Fayette to North America, but La Fayette had by then joined Gen. Washington and was not on board off the coast of Maine.


17 The journals Volume 6, Number 4 (2000) and Volume 7, Number 1 (2001) of the JSHA contain the English translated correspondence of Captain Cleve concerning his unsuccessful attempt to join his superior Major General Friedrich von Riedesel, as well as letters Cleve wrote while at Fort George, Penobscot to his Duke in Wolfenbüttel, and letters to and from von Riedesel. The correspondence gives a great deal of insight into life at Fort George and provides the base of future articles.


20 “Letter of Captain Cleve to Duke Carl Wilhelm Ferdinand” In the camp at Fort George Penobscot, October 14, 1782, von Riedesel Papers, Nr. 58, ff. 181-183v., footnote 44 in the JSHA reprint Volume 6, Number 4 (2000).


22 See footnote 20.

23 I am still searching for the original location of the list. Robert C. Brooks lists as reference: [PRO T 38/812, f.161] He may have gleaned those names from the same sources Bruce E. Burgoyne mentions in his paper, “They Also Served,” Heritage Books, Inc., published 1999. Among other women, Burgoyne lists the women who had been at Fort George, Penobscot. His source is listed as “Information taken primarily from an Ansbach-Bayreuth Church Book. There are many primary sources listed in Dr. Erhard Städtler’s book, “Die Ansbach-Bayreuth Truppen im Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg 1777 – 1783.” Among Städtler’s sources is the following, which relates to a church archive: “Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg: Mikrokopien der Militärkirchenbücher der Militärfarrei bei St. Johannis, Ansbach,” Film Nr. 164. Horst Lochner in Bayreuth, Germany is a great resource; he is always willing to provide his research and to follow up on research requests.


28 Letter written by C.J. von Massenbach” March 27, 1782.


30 “Letter written by C.J. von Massenbach” May 29, 1782.

31 “Letter written by C.J. von Massenbach” October 18, 1782.

32 In the Letter written by H.U. Cleve at Fort George, Penobscot to Lieut. Carl Reinking in New York, Cleve mentions the following: “You will receive this letter from my friend, Chaplain Erb of the Margrave of Brandenburg’s Jäger Corps, with whom I lived in this dismal place together in one house,” published in JSHA Journal Vol. 7, No.1 (2001).

33 Horst Lochner transcribed the older Erb’s diary. The original of the diary is located in the church St. Georgen, Bayreuth, Germany.

34 Ernst Friedrich, born/baptized October 3, 1782, Halifax, parents Georg & Anna Maria Chateau; Michael Peter, born/baptized Dec. 17, 1782, Penobscot, parents George & Margaretha Arnold; Anna Regina Elisabeth, born/baptized Dec. 30, 1782, Penobscot, parents George & Elisabeth Rosenhauer; Johann Friedrich, born May 15, 1783, Penobscot, parents Georg Adam & Marion Benz, baptized Sept. 8, 1783; Anna Susanna, born July 15, 1783, Penobscot, parents Conrad & Catharina Margaretha Hassler, baptized Sept 8, 1783.

35 Letter of George Christoph Elias Erb to the Bavarian King, August 19, 1815. Transcription by Horst Lochner, Church Archive Neudrossenfeld, #196, Volume XXV Pfarr Fassion “Angelegenheiten des Pfarrer Erb,” 1815-1819.

37 Von Massenbach Letter 21 January 1783.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.


41 See footnote 40.

42 “Downeast Ancestry,” Vol.7, No.4, December 1983. Robert C. Brooks quoted in his article “Penobscot Loyalists: A Bicentennial Tribute” from a letter Sir Guy Carleton, the British Commander-in-Chief wrote on 28 September 1783 to the “Officer Commanding His Majesty’s Forces at Penobscot:” “You will acquaint the officer commanding the nearest American Post or the nearest civil magistrate of the time you think you will be able to quit that place, in order that a person properly authorized may be sent to whom you will deliver it up, taking care in doing so to conform strictly to the article of the Provisional Treaty between Great Britain & the United States of America.” Robert C. Brooks continues, “historical tradition is that in January 1784, the British grew tired of waiting to surrender the fort to American authority and exploded the powder magazine, burned the storehouses and barracks and boarded their transports to sail away.”

43 “Letter of Captain Cleve to Duke Carl Wilhelm Ferdinand” 8 March 1783.

44 A return of the German troops Embarked onboard His Majesty’s Ships Magician & Lecorne, and likewise Sundry Transport Ships at Halifax – 2nd August 1783, UK/TNA/PRO, ADM 1/1710/5 Captains’ In-Letters “D” 1782-1784, “William Henry Douglas.” This list shows which regiment was transported on which ship and gives numbers of officers, and troops as well as women and children. The last two lines show Brunswick from penobscott [sic] transported on Ariel and Ansbc [sic] on The Brothers.

45 For example, an article written by Merrylyn Sawyer, a descendant of the Braunschweig deserter, Carl Ludwig Sillling, was published in Volume 17 (2014) of “The Hessians: Journal of the JSHA.”

46 In the supplement of a letter to his Duke on January 15, Captain Cleve wrote in detail about the former prisoner of war, Heinrich Andreas Suthoff.” His request is to be allowed to rejoin the Braunschweig Troops at Fort George in order to return home to Germany with them. JSHA Journal Volume 7, Number 1 (2001).