



The
Memorable Life
of
Matthaeus Noeding

The very first of the
Nading Family Line
in America

by Roger Baxter

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NOTE: This text is currently being developed as a video documentary by Roger Baxter and so, at least in some places, may read a little odd since it is designed to be supplemented by various illustrations and diagrams to help the viewer's understanding of the story. This text is being made available online as a PDF booklet so that other family members and other interested individuals may become more aware of our ancestor and the historical events surrounding his memorable life.

The Memorable Life of Matthaeus Noeding

This is the story of the life and times of the very first person in the Nading Family line in America. His personal story ends right here in God's Acre in the Moravian settlement of Salem – now Winston Salem – North Carolina.

But the significance of his life has continued to grow for over 200 years since this stone was first placed here on his grave because people like me, and scores of others of his descendants, carry on his line and his faith in God.

His life is one of the foundation stones of our lives. And our lives can be enriched by our knowing the story of his memorable life.

So let's travel back to where Matthaeus was born ... and back in time to the period just before the American Revolutionary War ... to Christmas Eve in 1756. Looking around the world we find the major European states – Portugal, Spain, France, Great Britain – having each been unified under a strong king and racing against each other trying to colonize the "newly discovered" parts of the world under their flags.

Then let's focus in on the heart of the European continent ... to the area then known as The Holy Roman Empire. The people there weren't Romans: They were from the Germanic tribes – the Vandals, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Huns, and other smaller groups – which had invaded the area during medieval times as the original Roman Empire fell apart.

Unlike the European powers of that day, this area was broken into more than 30 loosely associated small German states whose people felt little national consciousness. Instead their political loyalty was directed to their little local principality such as Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Moravia, Hesse-Kassel, or one of the many others. They were German only in speech and culture.

In 1756 George II, the King of England, was from the House of Hanover in Germany as was his wife, Queen Catherina. His father, George I, before him, having been born, raised, and lived in

Hanover until he was made King of England, couldn't even understand or speak English.

If we travel from Hanover in the northern plains of Germany southward into the central hill country about 100 miles we find the province of Hesse-Kassel. There in the hill country alongside a pretty river is the quaint little town of Bergheim with ancient military fortifications, a church, and charming houses surrounded by farmland.

And there in Bergheim on that Christmas Eve of 1756 a baby boy was born. His parents named him Matthaues Noeding. His father was 23 year old Johannes Noeding. And his mother was 21 year old Katrine Mueller. His grandfather, George Noeding, had died at the age of 25 the year Johannas was born in 1733. But his widowed paternal grandmother, Gretchen Opitz lived to see her grandson turn 3 years old, dying in 1760 at the age of 49. His great-grandparents were Herman Noeding and Anna Schuld.

Matthaues' parents were of the Reformed (or protestant) religion (started when Martin Luther nailed up his 95 thesis in 1517 about 200 miles to the west in Wittenberg). Years later Matthaues recalled that they dearly loved him as a young boy, their only child, and took good care of him, and encouraged him to be diligent in the church and at school.

Even in his later years Matthaues recalled the faithful instruction of his dear school teachers. And he, also, remembered his Confirmation and admittance to the Holy Communion as a boy there in Bergheim.

Young Matthaues' mother died in 1768 when he was just 11 years old. And then his father died 3 years later when he was 14. With all of his parents and grandparents gone, to support himself Matthaues was bound as an apprentice to a flax weaver to learn his profession – a skilled craft that would help provide for him later in his life. There he stayed for about 5 years.

It was during these years that the British government sought to increase the taxes on its American colonies to help pay for its wars against the French in both the colonial frontier as well as in Europe. Their method was entitled "The Stamp Act" and called for tax stamps to be purchased and put on many of the goods being imported into the colonies. One in particular was tea, the

popular liquid drink.

In Boston this resulted in the colonists hiding their identities by disguising themselves as Indians and dumping tea off the ships into the harbor.

In North Carolina the outraged colonial citizens didn't resort to a disguise. When the sloop of war *Diligence* arrived in the harbor at the New Bern, the North Carolina colonial capital, carrying the tax stamp paper the local citizens "terrified the captain" so much that he made no attempt to land his cargo. Then the citizens boldly marched openly in a torchlight procession right up to the Royal Governor William Tryon's house and demanded that he produce James Houston, the man who had been appointed to enforce the Stamp Act. When the Governor refused the citizens threatened to burn the house down with both of them inside of it.

Tryon elected to save himself and sent Houston out into the crowd. They marched Houston by torch light to the public Market House. There they forced him to take an oath swearing to not attempt to execute his office of "Stamp Master of North Carolina." Then the people all gave three cheers and went quietly home.

A few days later Tryon tried to placate the people by hosting a barbeque. When the people arrived at the Governor's feast they rushed the tables and dumped out his barrels of beer and threw the barbequed ox into the river untasted. Governor Tryon and his men fled the scene.

The citizens in the American colonies were not going to stand idly by while their government raised their taxes. Now respective of their animosity, the Royal Governor was afraid to convene the colonial legislature. The next year the hated Stamp Act was repealed by the British Parliament.

In April of 1775 the battles of Lexington and Concord began the fighting of the American Revolutionary War when an organized Massachusetts militia (called the "Minutemen") defended colonial munitions and forced British regulars to retreat back to Boston. Mother England was stunned.

As the year 1776 dawned the British American colonies were at war against the rule of 38 year old King George III, the first of the King Georges to have been raised in England. The English King

was blessed with a strong economy at home in England with a fully employed workforce which made it difficult to recruit young men to join the British army to put down the American uprising. All through the previous winter negotiations had taken place between the King's emissaries and several German princes to supply a substantial number of well trained troops to serve in America.

So like his father before him, George III relied on his relatives ruling the various provinces back in Germany to strengthen his forces with an extra 30,000 soldiers.

1,152 came from Prince Frederick Augustus of Anhalt-Zerbst,

2,553 came from Margrave Karl Alexander of Ansbach-Bayreuth,

5,723 came from Duke Charles I of Brunswick-Lÿneburg,

1,225 came from Prince Frederick of Waldeck, and

2,422 from Count William of Hesse-Hanau.

The brother-in-law of George III, Prince Frederick II, the Landgrave (or Count) of Hesse-Kassel ruled a population of over 300,000 in Hesse-Kassel and he agreed to provide the largest contingent of troops – about 1 out of every 4 able bodied men of military age in the population of that state:

16,992 came from Hesse-Kassel.

Altogether a total of 30,067 German men were sent to serve as soldiers in America between 1776 and 1782 forming approximately one-quarter of the British forces. Since nearly two-thirds of these German soldiers came from the province of Hesse, once they arrived in America they were commonly known as the "Hessian" soldiers. And each unit was known by its commander's name.

As in most armies of the eighteenth century, the men were mainly conscripts, debtors, or the victims of impressment; some were also petty criminals. Pay was low; some soldiers apparently received nothing but their daily food. The officer corps usually consisted of career officers who had served in earlier European wars. The

revenues realized from the men's service went back to the German royalty. Nevertheless, some Hessian units were respected for their discipline and excellent military skills.

The document that arranged for all of these men to serve with the British army was a treaty signed on January 15th, 1776, between King George III of England and his brother-in-law, Prince Frederick II, the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel. It was quite comprehensive. The treaty provided for:

A "body of twelve thousand men, of the troops of Hesse, which is to be employed in his Britannic Majesty's service ... the whole provided with general and other necessary officers. This corps shall be compleatly equipped and provided with tents, and all accountments of which it may stand in need; in a word shall be put upon the best footing possible, and none shall be admitted into it but men fit for service, and acknowledged for such by His Britannic Majesty's commissary."

The first battalions "shall be in a condition to pass in review before his Britannic Majesty's commissary on the fourteenth of February, and shall begin to march on the day following the fifteenth of February, for the place of embarkation. The rest shall be ready in four weeks after, if possible and march in like manner. This body of troops shall not be separated, unless reasons of war require it, but shall remain under the orders of the general to whom his most Serene Highness has entrusted the command."

"Toward defraying the expense in which the most Serene Landgrave shall be engaged, for the arming and putting in condition the said corps of twelve thousand men, his Majesty the King of Great Britain promises to pay to his most Serene Highness, for each foot soldier thirty crowns banco levy money ... The sum of one hundred and eighty thousand crowns banco valued as in the following article, shall be paid on account of this levy money on the tenth of February, and the residue shall be paid when the second division of this corps shall begin their march."

"his Britannic Majesty choosing rather not to engage himself for any longer time than he shall have occasion for these troops, consents instead thereof that the subsidy shall be double from the day of the signature of this treaty to its expiration, that is to say, that it shall amount for this body of twelve thousand men to the sum of four hundred and fifty thousand crowns banco per annum, the crown reckoned at

fifty three sols of Holland, or at four shilling and nine pence three farthings English money, and that the subsidy shall continue upon this foot during all the time that this body of troops shall remain in British pay. His Britannic Majesty engages also to give notice to the most Serene Landgrave of its termination twelve months or a whole year before it shall take place, which notice shall not even be given before this body of troops is returned, and actually is arrived in the dominions of the said prince, namely in Hesse, properly so called. His Majesty shall continue equally to this corps the pay and other emoluments for the remainder of the month in which it shall re-pass the frontiers of Hesse, and his most Serene Highness reserves to himself on his side the liberty of recalling his troops at the end of four years, if they are not sent back before, or to agree with his Britannic Majesty at the end to that time for another term."

"If it should happen unfortunately that any regiment or company of the said corps should be ruined or destroyed either by accidents on the sea or otherwise, in the whole or in part, or that the pieces of artillery or other effects with them shall be provided, should be taken by the enemy, or lost on the sea, His Majesty the King of Great Britain shall cause to be paid the expenses of the necessary recruits, as well as the price of the said field pieces and effects, in order forthwith to reinstate the artillery or the said regiments and companies, and the said recruits shall be ... always preserved and sent back in as good state as it was delivered in, the recruits annually necessary shall be sent to the English Commissary, disciplined and completely equipped, at the place of embarkation, at such time as his Britannic Majesty shall appoint."

"In Europe his Majesty shall make use of this body of troops by land wherever he shall judge proper, but North America is the only country of the other parts of the globe where this body of troops shall be employed. They shall not serve on the sea, and they shall enjoy, in all things, without any restriction what soever, the same pay and emoluments as are enjoyed by the English troops."

"The sick of the Hessian corps shall remain under the care of their physicians, surgeons, and other persons appointed for that purpose, under the orders of the general commanding the corps of that nation, and everything shall be allowed them, that his Majesty allows to his own troops."

"All the Hessians deserters shall be faithfully given up wherever they shall be discovered in the places dependent on

his Britannic Majesty, and above all as far as it is possible, no person whatever of that nation shall be permitted to establish himself in America, without the consent of his sovereign."

"All the transports of the troops, as well for the men as for the effects, shall be at the expense of this Britannic Majesty, and none belonging to the said corps shall pay any postage of letters, in consideration of the distance of the places."

This treaty signed on January 15th, 1776, just three weeks after Matthaues Noeding's nineteenth birthday, resulted in the young flax weaver's apprentice being "recruited" into the Hessian army. Recruitment procedures were standardized and harsh. They said: "The recruit must be disarmed and searched carefully. If while on a march he is under suspicion of running away, the buttons of his trousers or his suspenders are to be cut, so that he must carry his trousers. If he has made an attempt to escape, he must be put in irons or thumbscrews must be applied. If the parents of the kidnapped son complain, the father will be sent to the iron mines and the mother to jail."

Desertions among the Hessians were relatively high, so tough rules were created to discourage it. When a certain alarm was sounded, signifying the escape of a recruit, "the parish must instantly rise and occupy roads, paths, and bridges until the fugitive was caught. Should he escape, the place must furnish a substitute as tall as the deserter."

Matthaues Noeding was thus forced to become a grenadier – a specialized soldier chosen from the strongest and largest soldiers for the throwing of grenades and assault operations – under the command of Colonel Rall.

As a grenadier Matthaues wore a high mitre-shaped brass or white metal cap, with scrolls and heraldic emblems on front. The cap had a white metal plate and crown. He carried a rose pink bag with white lace and a pink pompom with a pink shoulder strap. His uniform had lots of white lace: 6 rows on the lapels, 2 rows below the lapels, and 2 rows on the sleeve above the cuff. In service, he carried the mitre cap on one side and used a forage hat or Feldmetz. His uniform was a medium blue wool coat with pink lining, collar, cuffs, and lapels, white buttons, and was long and had turned-back skirts; his white wool vest or waistcoat was long and belted; and his wool breeches were tight and fitted into black

wool gaiters with brass buttons. The breeches and vest was different from other units or corps, and his lapels, cuffs, and collars, as well as the facings and trim, were distinguishing colors. His grenadier uniform was distinctive and colorful but definitely not suited for field duty, especially when it involved, as it did in America, long marches in rough terrain and under a hot sun, and maneuvering and fighting in woods and fenced-in fields. Hessian soldiers had their long 'rattenschwanz' or rat tail hair that was about 1 foot long and wrapped up in black cloth.

As a grenadier Mattheaus Noeding, was the elite of the infantry. For one, a grenadier was taller than other soldiers, and generally was considered more intelligent. His musket was a heavy flintlock firearm. He was also fitted out with short-sword and bayonet. He was trained to use the bayonet on the end of his musket – being bayoneted seemed to have a more fearful effect on the Americans. His cartouche box and powder pouch were attached to his belt slung from the left shoulder to the right hip, and the firearms, to slings crossing the belt.

As they were leaving their home town Prince Frederick II inspected the regiments and reviewed them as they marched in the presence of a large crowd, which cheered them heartily. He and his grenadier comrades marched through Bremen past great numbers of spectators. The battalions then marched onto the port of Bremerhaven. There after the final review, Mattheaus embarked at the beginning of April 15, 1776, with the first Hessian Division. It was more than a week before the loading of the troops on the transport ships was completed.

The quarters aboard ship for the Hessian soldiers were very crowded. It was not uncommon for some of the soldiers to bring their wives along with them. The soldiers were each provided a small mattress, a pillow and a woolen coverlet, and every sixth man was given a wooden spoon and a tin cup.

Their food consisted of peas and bacon on Sundays, four pounds for six men; soup, butter and cheese on Mondays; four pounds of meat, three pounds of meal, one-half pound of raisins, and one-half pound of suet, for pudding. This was repeated on Wednesdays and the rest of the week. Every sixth man received daily four small cans of beer and a cupful of rum, often increased by an exchange for bread and cheese.

On the 17th of April, 1776, the fleet of 44 vessels set sail from Bremerhaven. A few days later they reached Portsmouth, England. Sitting in the harbor there were the British troops being sent to America already on other vessels. The British troops gave Matthaues and the other German soldiers a hearty shout of welcome.

Eleven days later on Sunday, April 28th, a worship service was held on board ship. In accordance with the general German respectfulness of their Christian beliefs, every soldier had a prayer book in his knapsack. The Hessian men and officers were in the habit of daily devotional exercises.

Meanwhile, back in the colonies, General George Washington commanded the American siege that eventually forced the British to evacuate Boston in March of 1776. After that the American Continental Army left Boston and moved south to take a defensive position in New York anticipating a British landing there. General Washington hoped to keep the British from occupying New York because the force which occupied New York would be centrally located and therefore able to keep New England cut off from the south.

On Monday, May 6th, the British fleet of 150 ships finally set sail with 12,500 Hessians. The transports were accompanied by British frigates. The voyage was long, tedious, stormy and uncomfortable. Because they were not yet used to sailing, many found the motion almost unbearable. Afterward one said, "This much is certain ... each of us who has survived this trip won't repeat it for many thousands, nor will any one who half knows the discomforts dream of taking a trip to America. For one is not merely in constant danger of one's life, but is always ill because of poor food on board. This latter consists daily of old hard bread or Zwieback, stale water stinking like a barnyard puddle, pork preserved with saltpeter, musty peas, and a bit of smelly butter. Even one who has laid in a good stock of provisions is not exempt, because he has to use the water and ship's biscuit."

Another writer reported: "The air on the fishing coasts of Newfoundland is so cold that I was freezing in the middle of June with a fur coat on. This comes from the fog which covers the banks and the whole coast of North America fifteen German miles out from land year in year out."

The next month, while the British ships were still crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Second Continental Congress on Thursday, July 4th, 1776, officially severing American ties to Great Britain.

On the high seas the Hessians were beset by more than just the stormy seas. One troopship bumped into an accompanying warship in the rough and stormy seas. One of the Hessians on board reported: "Our ship got a tremendous jolt, whereby two ropes which helped hold the mainmast broke. ... We went to bed, but half an hour later the seamen waked us again by a terrific shouting. We jumped from our berths and tried to see what was up. Before we were out of our cabins we heard the ship creaking and then got such a severe shock that we all fell down. Now we thought it was all up with us." But this time another ship had just struck their anchor which stuck out quite a bit, but had caused no damage to their own ship although breaking part of the other ship's upperdeck.

Hessian reports of the weather on board ship include these: "The 8th we had favorable but very strong almost stormy winds which was very unpleasant for us. ... The 9th the wind grew more violent and The 10th extremely stormy. From both sides the waves dashed over the ship, clear to the crows-nest. This storm, to our great discomfort, continued till the 12th, about 1 P.M. – two days. Delighted that it had stopped, not having shut an eye for the two days, we went to bed as soon as it grew dark. But alas! At 2:30 A.M. There began once more a great shouting which we knew boded no good. We heard splinters and thought we were lost. To know our fate as quickly as possible, we ran on deck. There we saw that the upper part of the deck, the after sails, and the four mast ropes, which were at least as thick as your arm, were missing. But as it was night and even the captain ... was just going to inspect it, we could learn no more and had to remain in terrible suspense till daybreak. Then we heard ... [that] the commodore, as the sailors call him, said that if the [other] ship had hit us one and a half feet lower, our side would have been crushed in."

Life on a troopship crossing the Atlantic ocean included more than just terror – it included both life and death. One afternoon one of the Hessian recruits died and was immediately thrown overboard in the usual manner, laced in a linen hammock with a sandbag at his feet. On another day they wife of one of the jaeger's gave birth to a child on board ship.

Some days were actually reported as pleasant. It was: "From the 13th to the 25th, we sailed without special happening. The 16th, we had absolute calm for the first time. On the morning of the 20th, we first saw a great drove of porpoises which had a head like a pig, but behind looked like fish and were twice as long as a man." One morning they sighted a strange ship. It flew a French flag. The accompanying warship visited it.

"One day at a given signal and by command of the warship all our vessels had to sail due south ... where on the afternoon ... we saw terribly heavy clouds. Our commodore said these were land, and he was right. An hour later the spot looked like a cliff whose peak reached the clouds." The men on the ships had not seen land for more than 3 months – from May 6th until August 11th – when Nova Scotia was sighted, and the ships turned to the south.

A few days later another violent storm began. "Once more we thought the waves would swallow us up. The ship seemed to rise to the sky, then down into the abyss. Whoever appeared on deck was drenched," it was reported. Two days later, another of the Hessian recruits died. Only twelve men were lost on the passage, but many were sick with scorbutic diseases from the lack of fresh food.

Finally, fifteen weeks after setting sail, on Saturday, August 17th, the British fleet reached Sandy Hook at the entrance to New York harbor. The men were delighted and there was a general shout of joy! One wrote back home saying, "I must admit that in my whole life I never saw so beautiful a land, to judge by appearances, as we saw on both sides on entering the harbor – on the left New Jersey and on the right York Island."

The ships first anchored at Sandy Hook. Then they entered New York harbor inside of Sandy-hook and cast anchor again near Hendriks Point. A Hessian on board wrote: "All you could see was a fleet of over four hundred and fifty ships in the harbor and then a multitude of boats which patrol the enemy's coast, so that they may not set fire to the fleet or any deserters get through. Imagine," he wrote, "the finest kind of a harbor with room for a thousand ships, all these ships ready at hand, all filled with men, and all around a hostile and a friendly camp, in the most glorious region, with the finest weather, and all these men ready for a task upon which hung the whole welfare of England – that mighty, proud land – and destined for an enterprise which claimed the

attention of the whole world.”

The first order given to the newly arriving troops was to remove all silver from their uniforms, just as the British had already done. This was to lessen the risk of the American riflemen, whose unerring aim was greatly feared, finding them as an easily seen target.

A week after their ships reached New York harbor the 22,000 Hessians and British troops landed on Long Island at 10 A.M. on the 24th of August and moved through New Utrecht to Flatbush. They camped in the open their first night on American soil. The next day after everything was brought from the ships, the recruits were placed at an old church ... spending the night on the tombstones.

The following day the Hessian recruits were assigned quarters by lot. Some got so-called rebel houses, which were empty with the former occupants having fled or been forced out by the British. One who wrote back home said, “In general living here is bad. Not everything we need is always to be had, and if it is to be had, is immensely dear. Indeed, never in my life have I heard of such high prices.” And he gave examples of items like a loaf of bread, butter, various meats, a pair of boots, linen, wool cloth, etc., with prices 5 times those at his home town.

Hessians forces in the Revolution included jaeger, hussars, three artillery companies, and four battalions of grenadiers. Most of the infantry were chasseurs (sharpshooters), musketeers, and fusiliers.

The Hessian letters back home described the area as “a very beautiful, pleasant, and level land, and New York, though the part toward the sea has been burned, is one of the prettiest, pleasantest harbor towns I have ever seen. For the houses are not only built fine and regular in English style, most of them like palaces, but they are all papered and most expensively furnished.”

He then placed his German view upon the situation there, saying “For that reason it is too bad that this land, which is also very fertile, is inhabited by such people, who from luxury and sensuous pleasure didn't know what to do and so owe their fall to naught but their pride.” And he compared that to how a German might see it, continuing, “Every one at home who takes [the Americans] part and thinks they had good cause for rebellion

ought in punishment to spend some time among them and learn how things are here (where the lowest man here can, if he will only do something, live like the richest among us) and he would soon sing a different tune and agree with me that not necessity but wickedness and pleasure was the cause of the rebellion."

The Hessians thought the people in New York to be haughty. One writer complained, "The womenfolk, who are almost all good looking, whether wives of cobblers, tailors, or day-laborers, go about every day in chintz, muslin, and silk trains." And being used to ordering local peasants to fulfill his every whim, he complained how the soldiers were required to treat the local citizens, "The worst thing about it is," he wrote, "that the King's express command [is] the troops must treat these folk most handsomely – though at heart they are all rebels – and cannot demand even a grain of salt ... without paying for it."

Another Hessian was somewhat more sympathetic with the Americans, but still thought they had gone too far, wrote home saying: "The [Americans'] good, quite too good manner of living was the reason that these people grew haughty, but without intrigue from England and even from London the disorder would never have grown so bad. The more I regard this land, the fine grass, the luxuriant grain and hemp, and the beautiful orchards, the more I envy the formerly happy inhabitants of this excellent land, the sorrier I am for the unfortunates who must now suffer with the rest through the intrigues and personal envy of their fellow countrymen and others. Everywhere I went there were barns crammed full of the farmer's wealth, but seldom or never did I find a house with the inhabitants in it where war and the wantonness of the English had not ruined everything." And he concluded with: "You know the Huguenot wars in France: what Religion was there, Liberty is here, simply fanaticism, and the effects are the same."

With so many Hessian troops spread out across the area, not everyone's experience was the same. Another writer reported back home with more favorable comments saying, "The inhabitants are mostly Dutch by extraction so the German language is fairly current. Colonel Donop's house belongs to a man named Koch from Hanau. [Colonel Donop was the senior officer over Colonel Rall, Matthaues' commander.] I see various blacks here who are just as free as the whites. On the whole things here are just as at home; the same sort of shrubs and trees, only the leaves are larger

and the trees thicker because the soil is richer.”

During those first weeks in America there was some tension between the British and Hessian troops. The English often cast proud, insulting looks at the Germans. In one case a drunken English soldier said to a second lieutenant of the Jaeger, “Damn you, Frenchy. You take our pay!” The Hessian replied coldly and boldly, “I am a German and you are a [scumbag].” Both drew their swords on the spot and the Englishman received such slashes that he died of his wounds. But not only was the brave German pardoned by the English general, but strict orders were published that the English would treat the Germans as brothers.

In another case two English officers came to a house which already housed a more senior Hessian officer. Persuasion and threats would not make the English leave, so finally the Hessian drew his sword and showed them the door.

The commander of the British Expeditionary Force, Sir William Howe, turned his focus to New York after surrendering Boston to George Washington on June 25th, 1776. He had been waiting impatiently for the Hessian reinforcements coming from Germany who had now arrived. Matthaues' commanding officer, Colonel Rall, requested two weeks time to get back his troops "land legs," but Howe refused to allow the time before starting offensive operations.

So five days after first setting foot on American soil nineteen year old Hessian Grenadier Matthaues Noeding and his fellow soldiers were right in the middle of the first major battle of the Revolutionary War following the Declaration of Independence. After enduring 2 days of heavy rain in the Battle of Long Island, on August 27th, Washington's 10,000 American soldiers were badly defeated by the larger British and Hessian force. The Americans were pushed into the confines of Brooklyn Heights losing about 1,400 against the British and Hessian loss of 375.

One Hessian letter back home telling of this battle said, “We stayed there five days and fought with the rebels. It was a fine village before these incendiaries burned the greater part of it.”

Another Hessian letter writer said: “The slaughter was terrible, but more on the part of the English, into whose lines our men drove the rebels like sheep. O friend, that was a terrible sight

when I went the next day among the dead who covered the battlefield, most of them in tatters and shot to pieces. Many of them were Germans, and that cut me doubly to the heart."

Young Matthaesus is likely to have felt much like another young man involved in this first battle. It was the first time he had ever found it his duty to destroy his fellowman. He could hardly bring his mind to be willing to attempt to take the life of another human being like himself. But someone else shooting to kill you and your friends can change how one thinks.

A rich spiritual life helped balance the horrors of war and the other deficiencies of the soldiers' lives. Prayers by the troops were an important part of the camp routine. Following the reading of the daily orders and roll call prayers were offered. On Sunday at 11:00 the musicians marched forward and stacked their drums, one row on top of the other to create a pulpit for the minister. The sermon was listened to with great interest as the preacher delivered his message of hope and courage.

The Lutheran background of the Hessians left them amazed by the behavior of the Quakers in America. One described them as having "no baptism and no clergy. They go to church and wait to see if the Holy Ghost comes and inspires some one to say something; if, as often happens, it does not come, they go home silently, for they never sing."

Colonel Rall's Regiment participated in several skirmishes of these early battles. The following weeks were spent in a "cat-and-mouse" game as both sides maneuvered for positional advantage.

As time went on the Hessians learned to stammer a little English. This helped them get around among the locals.

Letter writing was common, as free postage was provided as a part of the treaty providing Hessian service and most of the Hessians were well schooled. All they needed was a piece of paper, a pen and ink, and a few quiet moments. There was no need for envelopes, a completed letter was simply folded with the writing inside and then sealed with a blob of hot wax. The delivery address was written on the outside of the folded letter. Much of what we know about the lives of the Hessian soldiers comes from such letters written to fellow soldiers as well as to friends and family, and even to newspapers, back home in

Germany.

However mail delivery was neither fast nor sure. In one case a reply reads: "Your letter of September 3rd I received with pleasure on December 18th." But the soldiers were always happy to get letters with news from home. One letter written home by an officer addresses their concern about whether the soldiers had enough to eat saying: "To comfort our friends back home I must admit the truth that to date such want has been by no means significant and that we have more than enough beef, pork, and mutton ... also hens, capons, geese, duck, partridge, and hare. Nor have we lacked white cabbage, turnips, beets, turnip-rooted cabbage, or good dried peas and beans; to be sure we have to forego red cabbage, cauliflower, lentils, and certain other vegetables, venison and wild pig ... Add the fact that now and then we have had many a good fish, that from wheat flour and good butter many a pleasant pastry can be made, and that you can eat young bear, beaver-tails, caribou, and elk roast, and with such dishes at least give your table the appearance of luxuriousness."

The officer's letter continues: "Do not think that our privates are at any great disadvantage compared with the officers. Both must take their ration for which two and a half pence is deducted from their pay daily. In praise of our general-in-chief I must say that through his concern especially the German soldier gets for this deduction daily two and a half pounds of beef, and one and a half pounds of wheat flour, an allowance which even the healthiest stomach will hardly digest each day. If a soldier gets but one pound of meat and one pound of bread or flour, he gets excellent English peas and very good Irish butter and rice. The King must add at least four or five pence a day, probably even more, to the sum deducted for this ration. ... With the advantages enumerated above, it has been easy enough for the soldiers to make an arrangement with the people where they were quartered, whereby they got a share of the latter's fowl, vegetables, and other meats, to the advantage of both parties. In general our men have been well situated in their quarters this winter. In no house were there more than two, at most three men; they lived in healthy rooms with good straw beds at any rate."

Another letter writer described the area saying, "You see here neat, little houses with garden, meadows, and fruit trees in plenty. ... The market-village New York ferry has houses built contiguous, and artisans and arts still flourish there. ... The whole island is like

a painted landscape. You can hardly go an English mile in these two counties without finding houses."

On the Sunday the 15th of September, British troops from Long Island crossed the East River on flatboats amid the thundering roar of five battleships. As usual the Hessian Jaeger, like Matthaueus, formed the advance guard and routed the American force at Kip's Bay. Washington then moved his troops to northwestern Manhattan. A small force of British and Hessians were involved in a skirmish at Harlem Heights where the Americans held their position.

Afterwards one Hessian wrote of the next events: "Just as we started to move into quarters [for the night], the rebels made another fuss and we had to turn out. I had the right wing of the outposts; we marched toward Kingsbridge, ... close to the East River, which is lined with the finest houses. I had the pleasure of taking possession of all these houses, along with a hostile battery where I found five cannon; the rebels all fled. All the houses were filled with furniture, rustic luxuries and valuables; all the people had fled and had left their slaves behind. But the next day one family head after the other returned, and tears of joy rolled down the cheeks of these formerly happy people when they found their houses, crops, cattle, and all their furniture again, and I told them I had merely taken possession in their interest and turned it over to them." He continued, "The flattering things the good people said to me, which I did not deserve, because I merely acted according to orders."

British General Howe then shifted his men northward to Pell's Point and fought a battle on October 18th at Pelham, New York. During that night with fog so dense a man could not be discerned at 6 yards American soldiers posted there delayed the British and Hessian advance and allowed Washington's safe withdrawal with the main American troops from Manhattan to White Plains, New Jersey, across the mile wide river with a rapid current. The American fishermen from Marblehead, Massachusetts, who had expertly manned the boats all through the night, had saved the entire American army.

The next morning as the sun finally began to cut through the heavy fog, the British discovered that the American trenches were empty. Advancing to the ferry crossing they saw the very last ferry carrying the Americans to the other side. They fired at the

boat and even brought up cannon to fire, but to no avail.

General Washington decided to make a stand at White Plains. On October 26th, Howe launched an attack. Although this battle resulted in some fierce fighting, Rall's Regiment, which included Matthaues, suffered only one soldier killed and the Regimental Adjutant Lieutenant Friedrich von Munchhausen wounded in the left arm. These "easy" victories led to a general underestimation of the fighting ability of the Americans.

The Americans occupied Fort Washington on the northern end of Manhattan. The fort was on high ground, heavily fortified and manned by 2,500 Americans. On October 27th the British attacked Fort Washington from both land and river sides, but the attack was driven off with considerable loss to the British and Hessians.

The British and Hessians having failed to trap Washington's main force, attacked General Washington's army on Monday, October 28th, at White Plains. While the assault by the British and Hessian left column was taking place, Colonel Donop hurried around the right wing with Matthaues' Hessian grenadier brigade to support the mounting attack, and tried to keep in alignment as much as possible.

Toward six o'clock in the evening, Washington's army gave way on all sides. But the British and Hessians could not pursue the Americans because of the extremely difficult terrain, thus Washington took up a new position in the mountains about an hour's march away. Since the Hessians had climbed over nothing but hills, cliffs, and stone walls the whole day, constantly dragging their muskets over all obstacles, it was impossible for them to go on because of their exhaustion. The losses were nearly equal on both sides. Hessian Captain Ewald of the jaeger company counted about one thousand dead.

On November 6th the Hessian Grenadiers in the 3rd column formed the rear guard to protect against rebel skirmishes and harassment.

Washington's army retired behind the Croton River in Westchester County. Washington then with part of his army crossed the Hudson River and moved into northeastern New Jersey on the 9th and 10th of November.

William Demont, Adjutant of Colonel Robert Magaw's 5th Pennsylvania Regiment, had deserted on November 2nd and brought with him the plans of Fort Washington and showed British General Earl Hugh Percy a weak point in the fortifications. The fort was not as impregnable as first thought. With this intelligence, General Howe decided to attack there once again.

On the 16th and 17th the British and Hessian force marched 22 miles to New York (City) via Kings Bridge to Fort Washington, New York. The fort was attacked from multiple sides. A Hessian force of some 3,000 men attacked from the South. Heading up Matthaues' regiment, Colonel Rall, personally led the final assault. Johann Reuber, a 5' 1" private in Rall's Regiment, recalled the Colonel calling out to his men: "All that are my grenadiers, march forward." With Rall at the head of the charge, Matthaues' group captured their objective. But the Hessians paid a terrible price for the victory: 58 killed and 272 wounded, three-fourths of the casualties suffered by the British in the attack. Matthaues' Regiment lost 177 of his fellow soldiers. But in taking Fort Washington 2,800 Americans were captured.

Two days later the Hessian Grenadiers marched to Philipsburg on the Hudson River.

The other half of the American army had been left on the New York side of the Hudson River under the command of General Charles Lee, a former British officer. Washington ordered Lee to bring his troops across to New Jersey as well. But Lee thought himself a better choice for commander-in-chief than Washington and therefore didn't obey the orders. As a result Lee was captured by the British and that left Washington without enough troops to mount a strong defense. So Washington was forced to begin a retreat across New Jersey. (Unfortunately, General Lee was soon to be released to fight once again as we will see later in our story.)

A British and Hessian detachment under Lord Cornwallis, crossed the Hudson to attack Fort Lee on the 20th of November. The British and Hessians crossed the Hudson River in flatboats landing in a district called Tenafly (New Jersey), then to New Bridge and on to Fort Lee, on the opposite side of the Hudson River from Fort Washington. On the 20th of November they found the fort abandoned and it was taken over by the British and Hessians.

Washington's American forces were in retreat towards the relative safety of Philadelphia. The British army pursued, encountering numerous skirmishes and delaying tactics on the part of the Americans. Rall's and von Donop's Hessian Regiments were in the vanguard – those positioned at the very front of their formation, the most dangerous place. General Howe put Colonel von Donop in command of the posts along the Delaware River. Donop moved his personal command to Bordentown where he assigned one battalion to occupy the town and the rest were billeted along the country roads of New Jersey.

Beginning on November 21st the British and Hessian army moved out across New Jersey setting up semi-permanent camps for the winter along the way: from Bergen Point to Tappan, on to New Bridge and Hackensack, and on to Newark, Elizabethtown, and Woodbridge. Some of the Hessian Grenadiers occupied Rahway on the night of the 30th of November.

As the Hessian soldiers traveled about the countryside, they wrote letters back home describing the land. One letter says, "As for products here: they are almost the same as with us at home for the climate is almost the same, only much warmer. Garden vegetables, too, are quite like ours, only there are less kinds. The trees, however, are somewhat different, for there are kinds here like sassafras, shell-almond, etc., which I have not seen at home."

"Of animals and especially cattle-breeding, concerning which I know most," he continued, "I find no other difference than that the horses are smaller and lighter, but on the other hand far fleetier. The oxen and cows are almost half as heavy again and proportionately larger. The birds, except the swallows, are however, quite different from ours and twice as pretty. There are no sparrows or moles here at all."

By the first week of December a large part of the British army were arrayed along the Raritan River opposite New Brunswick. At this point the Continental Congress abandoned Philadelphia fearing the British approach.

Meanwhile General Washington directed Colonel Richard Humpton to gather all the boats along the Delaware River. He requested that the boats be in good order with their oars and poles accompanying them. Plus he specifically requested that the Durham boats to be among them. (The Durham boats were large –

40 feet long, 8 feet wide – and capable of hauling 17 tons of iron ore on the Delaware River.) The river was swept for 75 miles to secure all vessels. The boats were awaiting Washington's army in Trenton, New Jersey.

On December 6th of 1776 the Hessian Grenadiers as part of the armies right column marched up the Raritan River to Van Veghten Bridge and camped along the road that night.

Then on December 7th and 8th Washington's army used the boats they had gathered and crossed the Delaware River into Pennsylvania from Trenton. The Americans were deployed to guard the river for a 25 mile stretch. All the boats they had gathered remained with Washington's army, making it impossible for the British to follow.

On the 8th the British army marched southwest toward Trenton. To the north of Trenton was Colonel Donop (Colonel Rall's superior officer) and the Hessian Grenadier Brigade. The next day Colonel Donop and 300 Grenadiers (with Matthaues likely among them) reconnoitered – explored the area for military intelligence – southward to Burlington (downstream from Trenton on the Delaware River) where there was a ferry crossing leading to Philadelphia.

British General Howe had already successfully pushed the American forces out of New York and halfway across New Jersey. He was feeling confident of victory and announced on December 13th that his campaigning season was over and that he intended to winter in New York. British General Cornwallis intended to return to England for the winter, and, like Howe, he departed from the troops.

Donop wanted to absorb Colonel Johann Rall's brigade into his own garrison to fortify Trenton, but Sir William Howe persuaded him to let Rall hold command on his own in Trenton.

The next day, December 14th, Colonel Johann Rall (known as “the Hessian Lion”) and his Grenadiers, including Matthaues Noeding, occupied Trenton, New Jersey. Trenton was a town with about 100 houses and two main streets.

Colonel Rall's regiment was left in Trenton as one of a loosely connected string of outposts which was to guard the king's

subjects in New Jersey and keep watch against an American raid. Donop, who despised Rall, was reluctant to give command of Trenton to him. 1500 troops were stationed at this location while the bulk of the British army wintered in New York.

Rall grew up surrounded by military life as the son of Captain Joachim Rall. He was born about 1726 in Hesse-Kassel, Germany. He became a cadet in his father's regiment and was made a Warrant Officer on July 25th, 1741. Four years later he was promoted to Second Lieutenant, Captain on May 10th, 1753, then promoted to Major on May 7th, 1760, under the command of Major General Bischhausen. In January, 1763, he was transferred to the garrison at Stein, where he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel. On April 22, 1771, he took command as Colonel of an infantry regiment. Unlike the British army of the era, Hessian officers were promoted on a merit basis, and not by purchase or birth right.

Rall was a seasoned warrior. He had fought in the War of Austrian Succession. He fought in the Seven Years War (known in America as the French and Indian War). From September 1771 until August 1772 he fought for Russia's Catherine the Great in the fourth Russo-Turkish war. With thirty-six years of active military service Johann Rall was in every sense of the word a professional soldier.

Colonel Rall was highly respected by the men he commanded. Lieutenant Jakob Piel wrote in his diary about Rall saying: "... considered as a private individual, he merited the highest respect. He was generous, magnanimous, hospitable, and polite to everyone; never groveling before his superiors, but indulgent with his subordinates. To his servants he was more a friend than master. He was an exceptional friend of music and a pleasant companion."

However Rall *was* outspoken with his superiors, most of whom lacked his combat experience, which he often brought to their attention. Colonel Carl von Donop, his immediate superior, treated Rall with contempt. Captain Johann Ewald of the Jaegers, who rose to the rank of Lieutenant General, noted in his diary that "when it came to fighting, the [others] were not fit to carry Rall's sword."

Colonel William Faucitt, the British commissioner and

plenipotentiary – a diplomat in a foreign country invested with the full power of independent action on behalf of his government – to the various German States arranged for the employment of the Hessian Army. He had become familiar with Colonel Rall and described him as "... one of the best officers of his rank in the Landgrave's Army."

In short, Rall was a 50-year old soldier with a great deal of battle experience. Yet, in spite of his experience, some of the Hessians at Trenton were not fond of their commander. They believed that he was too nice, and was not ruthless enough to be a successful military commander. His officers complained saying, "His love of life was too great."

Contrary to the image most historians give regarding the garrison at Trenton, New Jersey, in December 1776, it was anything but a peaceful winter encampment.

Major General of New Jersey Militia, Philemon Dickinson, evacuated his home town of Trenton and moved up river to Hunterdon. When the Hessians arrived he organized local resistance. He and his Hunterdon men harassed the Hessians at every opportunity. Patrol after patrol was ambushed with casualties.

Rall had lost control of the New Jersey countryside. He sent heavily escorted dispatches to British headquarters advising his men were exhausted and desperately in need of reinforcements.

Trenton had no walls or fortifications, which was common with American settlements. Some of the Hessian officers advised Rall to fortify the town, and two of the engineers advised that a redoubt – temporary entrenched defenses – be constructed at the upper end of town, and that fortifications should be built along the river. The engineers went as far as to draw up plans, but Rall disagreed with them. Colonel von Donop made the same suggestions, to which Rall replied: "I have not made any redoubts or any kind of fortifications because I have the enemy in all directions." Rall was probably all too aware that his men were worn out from the nightly attacks, and building redoubts would fatigue them more. When Rall was once again urged to fortify the town, he replied by saying "Let them come! ... We will go at them with the bayonet."

Rall said that Trenton was "undefensible" and asked that British

troops establish a garrison in Maidenhead, which was closer to Trenton and would help keep the roads open from Americans. His request was declined. As the Americans began to disrupt the Hessian supply lines, the officers started to share Rall's fears. One wrote "We have not slept one night in peace since we came to this place."

Across the Delaware was American Brigadier General James Ewing of Pennsylvania with five regiments assigned to keep the British on the New Jersey side. Ewing was a veteran of the French and Indian Wars and a strong leader. He had 600 men and thirty-odd pieces of artillery. He also controlled all the boats on the Delaware River near and around Trenton. Patrols sent to the riverfront by Rall often found themselves being shelled by the American artillery.

Early in the pre-dawn hours of December 17th, Ewing sent a detachment of 30 men across the Delaware and attacked a Hessian outpost. Rall immediately sent reinforcements. At sunrise Ewing sent an even stronger party across the river attacking the outpost again, inflicting more casualties on Rall's men.

On the 21st Ewing raided Trenton Ferry Landing, driving the outpost back to Trenton. Then the Americans burned the houses at the landing denying Rall's men there shelter from the winter weather.

Because of the frequency of the raids, Rall ordered his entire command to sleep under arms, and be prepared for an attack. Each morning Colonel Rall personally led a strong detachment, including artillery, to the Delaware and in two columns marched up and down the river in hopes of encountering the raiders.

Von Donop forwarded Colonel Rall's request for additional men to British area commander Major General James Grant. Grant had utter contempt for the Americans and wrote back: "Tell the Colonel [Rall] that he is safe. I will undertake to keep peace in Jersey with a corporal's guard."

On the west side of the Delaware River, General George Washington *was* in serious trouble. The majority of his army's enlistments would be up on January 1st, the army's morale was extremely low, and many Americans had lost faith in the cause. A counter-stroke – a victory – was needed. In spite of severe

weather, Trenton appeared to be the best target.

As Christmas approached, Loyalists went to Trenton with reports that the Americans were planning something. Even some American deserters told the Hessians that rations were being prepared to cross the river. Rall publicly dismissed all of this talk as nonsense, but privately in letters to his superiors, he expressed that he was worried of an imminent attack.

In response to another plea from Hessian Colonel Rall, British General Grant wrote: "I am sorry to hear your brigade has been fatigued or alarmed. You may be assured that the rebel army in Pennsylvania which has been joined by Lee's Corps, Gale's and Arnold's, does not exceed eight thousand men, who have neither shoes nor stockings, are in fact almost naked, starving for cold, without blankets, and very ill-supplied with provisions. On this side of the Delaware they have not three hundred men. These are scattered about in small parties under the command of subaltern officers, none of them above the rank of captain, and their principal object is to pick up some of our light dragoons."

By Christmas Eve, 1776, parts of the British and Hessian units had their winter posts scattered all across northern New Jersey: at Amboy (Perth?), Elizabethtown, Bergen, Powles Hook, Princeton, Bordentown, Pennington, Burlington, Maidenhead, and Trenton. The Hessian Battalions including the Von Minnigerode, Von Linsing Battalions and Hessian Jaegers were at Bordentown. Colonel Rall and his Grenadiers were in Trenton. Not only is it Christmas Eve, it was Matthaueus Noeding's twentieth birthday!

While many other religious groups would continue to see the celebration of Christmas as a pagan holiday as recently as 1855, the custom of erecting a Christmas tree can be traced to 16th century Germany. In the Cathedral of Strasbourg in 1539, the church record mentions the erection of a Christmas tree. In that period, the craftsman guilds started erecting Christmas trees in front of their guildhalls. A Bremen guild chronicle of 1570 reports how a small fir was decorated with apples, nuts, dates, pretzels and paper flowers, and erected in the guild-house, for the benefit of the guild members' children, who collected the dainties on Christmas day. Another early reference comes from Basel, where the tailor apprentices carried around town a tree decorated with apples and cheese in 1597. In some accounts, Martin Luther is credited with adding lights and decoration to fir branches

traditionally hung from ceilings. During the 1600's the custom entered German family homes. By the early 1700's the custom had become common in towns of the northern Protestant areas of Germany, such as Hesse-Kassel. The use of wax candles to light the tree became common in the later 1700's. Traditionally, German Christmas trees were usually brought in and decorated on Christmas Eve, and then removed the day after twelfth night (the 6th of January, Epiphany).

The town of Windsor Locks, Connecticut, claims that a Hessian soldier put up a Christmas tree in America in the next year while he was imprisoned at the Noden-Reed House. And so it is very likely that to celebrate his birthday and begin their Christmas celebrations, Matthaeus Noeding and his fellow Hessian Grenadiers there in Trenton, New Jersey, brought into their winter quarters a Christmas tree and decorated it with various things they could find or make and lit it with wax candles on that Christmas Eve night of 1776.

All the while Colonel Rall continued his security measures at Trenton. Early in the evening of Christmas Day, Rall was playing checkers with Stacy Potts, the owner of the house where he made his headquarters. He heard musket fire from the northwest. He mounted his horse and rode to the sound of the gun fire. He found the Americans, probably General Ewing's men, had surprised the outpost on the edge of town and inflicted six casualties, and then disappeared into the surrounding woods. Rall took care of the wounded and had the outpost reinforced.

As the sun was setting on Christmas Day a severe snow storm struck Trenton. The duty officer, Major Friedrich von Dechow, taking advantage of the bad weather, canceled the next morning's pre-dawn patrol to sweep the area for signs of the Americans. On the outskirts of the town, Lieutenant Andreas von Wiederholdt ordered his 24 man guard detail to take shelter inside a nearby copper shop.

Right after dark while these orders were being issued, George Washington and about 2,400 veteran troops and 18 cannon were crossing the Delaware, again guided by the Marblehead, Massachusetts, fishermen. Washington would cross the Delaware River at McKonkey's Ferry, some 9 miles above Trenton, and surprise the Hessians from the north.

Unfortunately, the winter storm intensified as soon as the crossings started with a freezing cold wind out of the northeast. Two other crossings were in Washington's plans: Brigadier General James Ewing with 1,000 militia were to cross at the Trenton Ferry to block a retreat to the south and prevent any escape of the Hessians. And Colonel John Cadwalader leading another 2,000 men, mostly militia, were to cross the river at Bordentown to attack the garrison there as a diversion to prevent Von Donop from supporting Trenton. Both of these crossings failed due to the severe weather that night.

Some of the American soldiers had only rags for shoes. And some were even barefoot. But they were ready to suffer any hardship, or even die, rather than give up their liberty.

The ice filled river and winter snow storm delayed Washington's advance. The Marblehead, Massachusetts, fishermen had to force their boats between floating ice in the water while snow blew into their faces.

All the troops were across the river by 3 A.M., on December 26th. But then the snow turned to a biting sleet that cut the faces of the men as they labored another hour to get their artillery across the ice jammed river.

Finally Washington's army was ready to march at 4 A.M., four hours behind schedule and dashing all hopes of using the cover of darkness to camouflage their movement.

At the Bear Tavern in Birmingham, about 4 miles from their crossing, Washington's force split into two columns. Major General Nathanael Greene, along with Washington, led one column onto the Pennington Road to attack the Hessian garrison from the north. Major General John Sullivan led the second column and continued on the river road so it could attack the Hessian garrison from the west.

By 6:00 A.M., the American troops were miserable. Sullivan sent word that the men's muskets would not fire due to being exposed to the storm all night. Washington sent word back for the men to use their bayonets instead.

By broad daylight Washington found a man chopping wood beside the snow covered road they were traveling. He asked the

man, "Where is the Hessian picket?" (meaning the outermost Hessian guards). The man pointed to the Howard house a little further down the road.

Just at that moment, about 7:30 that morning, little after sunrise, Hessian Lieutenant Wiederholdt stepped outside the copper shop and observed a large number of troops advancing toward his position on the Pennington Road toward Trenton. He called out his twenty-four man guard, and waited until the Americans were within range, then fired a musket volley at them, but it whizzed over their heads. Being vastly outnumbered, the Hessians quickly dropped back onto their main company position, some 400 yards closer to the town.

About 3 minutes after this engagement, the advance guard of the second American column under General Sullivan flushed and routed a 50-man Hessian outpost stationed on the river road, about one-half mile from Trenton. Moving quickly and driving in the pickets, both columns moved in on Trenton.

Drums began to beat. Bugles began to sound. Men were running to and fro. Hessian officers were waving their swords. Hessian artillerymen began harnessing their horses. There was a great commotion throughout the town of Trenton that morning as Washington ordered his troops to advance.

Well-attested tradition says that Colonel Rall and his troops were, as Washington supposed they would be, yet under the influence of a night's carousal after the Christmas holiday. On the morning of the battle, Rall was at the house of Abraham Hunt, who traded with friend and foe. He had invited Colonel Rall and others to a Christmas supper at his house. Cards were introduced, and play continued throughout the night, accompanied with wine-drinking. A negro servant was kept as a sort of porter and warden at the door.

Just at dawn, a messenger came in haste with a note to Colonel Rall, sent by a Tory on the Pennington road, who had discovered the approach of the Americans. The negro refused admittance to the messenger, saying, "The gemmen can't be disturbed." The bearer knew the importance of the note, and, handing it to the negro, ordered him to carry it immediately to Colonel Rall. Excited by wine, and about to "deal," the colonel thrust the note into his pocket. Rall did not look at the message, but continued his

amusement. Soon afterward, the roll of the American drums fell upon his ear. The rattle of musketry, the rumble of heavy gun-carriages, and the tramp of horses aroused his apprehensions, and by the time he could fly to his quarters and mount his horse, the Americans were driving his soldiers before them like chaff.

The sound of musketry and artillery alarmed the garrison and their alarms were sounded. All three Hessian regiments turned out in their assigned positions. A few minutes into the battle Colonel Rall rode up to Lieutenant Wiederholdt and asked for a report. Wiederholdt told the Colonel "... the enemy was strong, that they were not only above the town but were already around it on both the left and the right." He further reported that he had seen four or five battalions.

Wiederholdt's report was not entirely correct, Washington had not, as yet, blocked the southern route. Had Rall not believed he was completely surrounded, he would have adopted different tactics, saving much of his brigade. Many of the civilians, camp followers, and about 500 grenadiers, including Matthaues Noeding, managed to escape via the southern route.

But thinking that he was surrounded, Colonel Rall used traditional Hessian military doctrine and ordered a counterattack. Riding his horse up to his troops Rall shouted (in German), "My brave soldiers, advance!" But his counterattack failed. The Hessians were frightened and confused: the Americans were firing at them from fences and hedges and from behind houses. And the Hessians were falling fast.

The Americans, at the insistence of Henry Knox, had brought eighteen pieces of artillery with them, which proved to be a deciding factor. The Americans positioned 6 cannons, commanded by Captains Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Forrest, on a rise that guarded the two main routes out of town, King Street and Queen Street. The Hessians tried to bring 4 cannons into action, but the American fire kept them silent. Hamilton's men charged down the streets after the Hessian guns. The Hessians, who quickly responded to the cry of war, were hampered severely by the cannon barrage from the strategically placed American artillery.

Rall's nearest reinforcements were out of their assigned position. Von Donop was at Burlington, having moved south in response to

the group of New Jersey militiamen raiding towards him a few days earlier. After scattering the rebels, von Donop had chosen not to return to Bordentown (just 8 miles away from Trenton) as he was supposed to be, but instead took up quarters in Mount Holly (24 miles away from Trenton) reportedly with a young widow. That extra distance left Rall's forces at Trenton vulnerable without any nearby support.

Total chaos now reigned. The Hessians regrouped and once again launched a counter-attack, only to be repelled again. Their artillery were overrun and made useless as Lieutenant William Washington, cousin to George Washington, and Lieutenant James Monroe captured the artillery pieces. Both were wounded as they did this – the two of them were fully half the reported battle casualties on the American side. Monroe's wound was the most serious, but a local doctor kept him from bleeding to death and Monroe later became the fifth President of the United States. However, two other Americans froze to death in the crossing.

Major General Sullivan and his column had driven the separated Knyphausen regiment (Matthaeus' group) back through the southern end of Trenton. About 600 of the Hessians, most of whom had been stationed on the south side of the creek were able to flee to the south across Assunpink Creek, where Ewing's troops were supposed to have been located, and escaped by retreating to Bordentown. Colonel Rall ordered the Hessian regiments of Lossberg and Rall, to an apple orchard at the southeast corner of town. From here they would regroup and attempt to retreat along the road north into Princeton.

Within moments of issuing this order, Colonel Johann Rall was mortally wounded while on his horse and fell off. The 2 regiments obeyed the previous order and began their march to Princeton. The Hessians had wet guns from the storm, and had a hard time firing them. When the Hessians arrived back in Trenton's streets, the American troops, joined by some civilians from the town, continued firing at them from buildings and from behind trees and fences, causing even more confusion.

At the same time, the American cannons broke up any attempted Hessian formations and the Hessian resistance faltered. The Hessian officers kept trying to rally their men, but the Americans kept shooting down the Hessian officers one by one ... and kept on advancing. The Hessians retreated back to the apple orchard and

tried to escape across the Assunpink Creek. But this time they found the bridge blocked and the fords upstream covered by the Americans. Two of the horses pulling their artillery were shot which slowed their movements. They were soon surrounded by the fast moving Americans and left with no choice but to make a hasty retreat back to the orchard once again. Shortly thereafter, the three Hessian Regiments surrendered.

During the hour long battle, Colonel Rall had been struck twice in the side by musket balls, and was taken into a nearby church. Later he was transferred to his headquarters, Stacy Potts' house. Just before leaving Trenton, American Generals Washington and Greene visited the dying Hessian commander at his quarters. His one request was for humane treatment of his troops. He died there later that night.

Meanwhile, the remaining troops from the von Knyphausen unit had moved south after misunderstanding orders, but they were slowed down when they tried to haul their cannon through boggy ground. They soon found themselves surrounded by Sullivan's men and many were forced to surrender.

The Hessian prisoners of war signed a statement of neutrality reading:

"We, the Subscribers, Hessian Officers, made Prisoners of War by the American Army, under Command of his Excellency, General Washington, at Trenton, on the 26th inst., being allowed Our Liberty, under such Restrictions as to place as may be from time to time appointed, do give Our parole of Honour, that we will remain at the place, and within the limits appointed for us by his Excellency the General, the Honorable Congress, Council of Safety, or Commissary of Prisoners of War, Peaceably behaving ourselves, and by no way Send or give Intelligence to the British or Hessian Army, or speak or do anything disrespectful or Injurious to the American States while we remain Prisoners of War.

"We will also restrain our Servants and Attendants who are allowed to remain with us, as far as in our power, to the same Conditions.

"Newtown, December 30th, 1776."

One report of Hessian prisoners of war being transferred to a inland prison camp described them as “poor, dirty, emaciated men.” Adding that with them were “great numbers of women who seemed to be the beasts of burden, having a bushel basket on their back [with] pots and kettles, various sorts of furniture, children peeping through gridirons and other utensils, some very young infants who were born on the road, the women barefoot, clothed in dirty rags” and having their “baggage wagons drawn by poor half-starved horses.”

Back home in Hesse-Kassel it was reported that of 8,000 Hessian soldiers at Trenton, only 800 had escaped, and the whole of Germany was stirred up by the news. But it was a false report, the actual Hessian losses were 106 killed or wounded and 918 captured out of a force of 1,400 at Trenton.

Captain Ewald of the Hessian Jaeger's summed up the Battle of Trenton best. He wrote in his diary: "Thus had the times changed! The Americans had constantly run before us. Four weeks ago we expected to end the war with the capture of Philadelphia, and now we had to render Washington the honor of thinking about our defense. Due to this affair at Trenton, such a fright came over the army that if Washington had used this opportunity we would have flown to our ships and let him have all of America. Since we had thus far underestimated our enemy, from this unhappy day onward we saw everything through the magnifying glass."

History has held that Colonel Rall and many in his command were drunk from excessive celebrating on Christmas. But most importantly, his defeat was the result of his and his British commanders' underestimations of the military genius of George Washington.

In addition to firepower, American rebels used propaganda against Hessians. They enticed Hessians to desert and join the large German-American population. One letter promised 50 acres (20 hectares) of land to every deserter.

After the Hessian defeat at Trenton, General Leslie ordered Colonel von Donop and his troops at Mount Holly, along with Matthaues and the other Hessians who had escaped from Trenton, to immediately march to Princeton. They arrived on December 28th. General Howe ordered General Cornwallis to Princeton forcing Cornwallis to cancel his plans to return home to London.

After the battle at Trenton, Matthaues Noeding, along with others who were left of the decimated von Rall regiment were transferred to the Grenadier Regiment of von Woellwarth.

Colonel Donop with the Hessian grenadiers, the Jaegers and light infantry regrouped at Maidenhead, New Jersey. On orders from British General Howe, Lord Cornwallis arrived on January 2nd, 1777, with the British army and took command of the 8,000 British and Hessian troops there. He was determined to advance his superior forces against the American troops and put an end to this campaign.

At sunrise the army set out towards Trenton leaving Colonel Mawhood in Princeton as a rear guard. The Grenadier Battalion Von Minnigerode along with with the remnants of a decimated Hessian unit took position upon a height in this area, where a road from Allentown ran into one from Trenton. Washington and his army stood behind the Assunpink Creek at Trenton.

It had rained heavily the previous night making the road extremely muddy and difficult to travel. Troop movement was slow. As the British approached Trenton, they were purposely delayed by American forces under Colonel Edward Hand and his Pennsylvania riflemen, who harassed the British with gunfire that forced Cornwallis to deploy his men into a line of battle for two hours.

Cornwallis' troops were led to the Assunpink Creek where the American forces were awaiting them. The second battle of Trenton ensued. Bloody attack after bloody attack was made as the Hessians and British soldiers tried to take the bridge at the creek. The Americans currently commanded the high ground, yet if they weakened, they would be trapped between the Assunpink Creek and the Delaware River. Horrific fighting marked the day and soldiers noted that the bridge turned red with the intermingling of blood and the British coats. As darkness came, Cornwallis called a cease fire for the night, claiming they would, "bag the old fox in the morning."

During the night, Washington realized his troops could not hold the line at Assunpink Creek forever. He wrapped the wheels of his cannon with cloth to muffle their sound, told the local militia to keep the whole army's campfires burning, and the sentry patrols to march their accustomed rounds until near daylight, then those

who fed the flames and the patrols were directed to retreat hastily to the main body. Meanwhile Washington and the rest of his troops slipped away in a circuitous march toward Princeton 10 miles away. The roads that had been muddy all day and caused much delay for the British had now frozen solid and created a perfect escape route for Washington.

Ironically among the soldiers in the thick of the battles on this day and the next on the American side were nine companies (or roughly 1000 to 1500 soldiers) of German speaking colonists from Maryland and Pennsylvania under the command of General Anthony Wayne (whom we will meet again later).

The next morning at daybreak the British and Hessians discovered that Washington had departed Trenton. Then hearing heavy cannon fire to their rear the British and Hessians turned and quick marched back towards Princeton.

In the meantime, Washington's men on their way to Princeton along the Quakerbridge Road, stumbled upon Colonel Mawhood's British troops leaving downtown Princeton to go to Cornwallis' aid in Trenton. In the early morning mist the British mistook the Americans for Hessians and then for a small party of Americans they assumed must be fleeing from Cornwallis. Realizing his error Mawhood attempted to position his force in an orchard and a fierce fight developed around the orchard of Thomas Clarke against the Americans that had already occupied it.

Seeing reinforcements coming up the British fell back to the support of their artillery. Then with the artillery's discharges of grape shot they dispersed the advancing Americans.

General Washington rode up and attempted to rally the survivors of the two brigades, but without success until support arrived from Sullivan's division. Then the Americans renewed the attack on Mawhood's hard pressed troops.

The two guns that had accompanied the first Americans had not retreated and were still in action. Even though assailed by overwhelming numbers Mawhood ordered his British soldiers to charge and they broke through with the bayonet and managed to fight their way down the road towards Maidenhead.

Some of the other British troops fell back in the other direction, towards Princeton. Most of these two regiments hurried away north towards New Brunswick, but a number of soldiers took refuge in Nassau Hall at Princeton University (known then as the College of New Jersey).

In the college buildings at Princeton (which, with the Presbyterian church, had been used for barracks by the Hessians) there remained a portion of a regiment. Washington drew up some cannon within a short distance of these buildings, and commenced firing upon them. The first ball, it is said, entered the prayer hall, a room used as a chapel, and passed through the head of a portrait of George the Second, suspended in a large frame upon the wall. After a few discharges, Captain James Moore, of the Princeton militia, with a few others of equal daring, burst open a door of Nassau Hall, and demanded the surrender of the troops within. They instantly complied, and surrendered to Captain Alexander Hamilton. 194 were made prisoners including several invalids.

Washington pursued Mawhood down the Trenton road until he found himself confronted by the returning troops of Cornwallis's main force. Washington turned and marched hurriedly for Princeton. Cornwallis's advance was swift and the Americans were forced to march on from Princeton without securing the extensive supplies the British had stored in the town. The American army marched up the New Brunswick road, but turned off to Morristown.

When Cornwallis finally arrived they found the entire field of action from Maidenhead to Princeton and vicinity covered with corpses. Washington had achieved another success. The British continued on through Princeton to New Brunswick, which was then their only position left in New Jersey.

Frederick the Great of Prussia said "the achievements of Washington and his little band of compatriots between the 25th of December and the 4th of January, a space of ten days, were the most brilliant of any recorded in the annals of military achievements."

About the 4th of January, Quartermaster Sergeant Mueller was dispatched from the Hessian headquarters in northern New Jersey with "necessaries" for the Hessian prisoners of war being held in the Philadelphia area by the Americans. He returned about a

month later reporting "the men were imprisoned in Lancaster, but ... the officers had been conveyed 300 miles further, as far as the extreme frontiers of Virginia." Altogether the report listed 1,044 Hessian men and 22 women as prisoners.

Although the main armies on both sides went into winter quarters, the New Jersey militia continued the fight throughout the winter months. They harassed the British and Hessian troops at every turn and denied them peace as they kept watch each night. From the middle of February until June of 1777 there was a great deal of movement and skirmishing, patrol action and fighting between Americans and the British-Hessian forces in the areas of Bound Brook, Princeton, Rahway, Westfield, Quibbletown, and Amboy.

On June 13th the British-Hessian forces left New Brunswick and marched to the Millstone (Milestone) River. They deployed on the high ground around the village of Hillsborough. The three Hessian grenadier battalions took their positions in the battle line.

The next day the British and Hessians pitched camp in a square formation between Millstone and Middlebush. Washington sent out several detachments to constantly harass the encamped troops.

On the 23rd of June the British and Hessians set out towards Amboy, and deployed near Bonhamtown.

Then on the 25th the Hessian grenadiers, like Matthaueus, attacked with bayonets and drove the Americans back. The grenadiers greatly distinguished themselves, taking from the Americans three Hessian cannons that had been captured from them at Trenton in December.

The summer heat began to take its toll as the British and Hessians in their heavy woolen uniforms withdrew in two columns to Rahway, then on back to it's former encampment at Amboy. On just one day twenty men died on the march from heat exhaustion.

On the night of June 28th and morning of the 29th the greater part of the British and Hessian army crossed Prince's Bay to Staten Island. By the end of June 1777 the entire army had come full circle and once again took up camp there in the safety of New York Harbor.

Beginning on the 4th of July 1777 – less than a year since they arrived in America – General Howe's 15,000 British and Hessian troops embarked from Staten Island on a fleet of 260 ships to attack Philadelphia, the capitol of the revolutionaries. This approach from the south via the Chesapeake Bay, rather than from the north overland across New Jersey, would avoid the problems they had experienced around Trenton the year before.

The British and Hessian forces landed at the head of the Chesapeake on August 25 at Head of Elk in Maryland and began their 40 mile march to capture Philadelphia.

On the morning of September 9th Washington placed his troops along the Brandywine River to guard the main fords along the British and Hessian troops route to Philadelphia. He placed detachments of troops at Pyle's Ford, the southernmost possible crossing of the river. And he placed more troops at Wistar's Ford, the northernmost crossing of the river before it forked. By doing this Washington hoped to force a fight where he had chosen – the high ground in the area of Chadds Ford, about half way along the road from the Chesapeake to Philadelphia.

The day of the battle, September 11, 1777, began with a heavy fog which blanketed the area, providing cover for the approaching British troops. The Hessians were sent ahead on the road leading straight toward Washington's forces at Chadds Ford. Washington was confidently prepared for them.

But Matthaues and his fellow Hessians were just a diversionary force, the majority of the British army under Howe's direction marched a 17 mile detour first to the north of Wistar's Ford to cross the river at a ford unknown to Washington and then turned south toward the flank of the American forces.

Hearing conflicting reports of whether Howe had divided his forces, in the morning fog Washington persisted in the mistaken belief that the British were sending their entire force against his line at Chadds Ford. Meanwhile, the British had gained a strategic position near Birmingham Friends Meeting House.

By mid-afternoon when the British appeared on the American right flank, the fog had cleared, the sun was blazing and the heat was sweltering. Washington realized that he had been outmaneuvered. He ordered his army to take the high ground

around Birmingham Friends Meeting House as a last defense. But in the confusion caused by the surprise, the Americans were unable to successfully defend their position. Two more of the Hessian artillery pieces captured at Trenton were re-captured by the British during the battle. The Patriots fought valiantly, but they had been outwitted on the rolling hills along the Brandywine River.

The Marquis de Lafayette, a wealthy 21 year old French aristocrat, had just arrived in America 3 months before to assist the cause of freedom. He was wounded by a shot in the leg during the battle at Brandywine and thus secured his status as a war hero. And even though he was not previously recognized by Washington as a commanding officer, Lafayette's organization of the orderly retreat of American forces off the field even after he was wounded prompted Washington to give him the command of a division 2 months later when his wound was healed.

Nightfall finally brought an end to the battle at Brandywine. The defeated Americans retreated to Chester. The bulk of the army arrived by midnight with the remainder trickling in from the battlefield until dawn. Meanwhile General Howe's exhausted men, including Matthaues, camped on the battlefield and the surrounding countryside including the farmyards of Benjamin Ring and Gideon Gilpin.

During the next several days, General Howe and his Army moved closer to Philadelphia with little opposition from Washington. The two armies maneuvered in hopes of finding the other at a disadvantage, but no decisive military actions were taken during the next two weeks. Congress abandoned Philadelphia and moved first to Lancaster and then to York to escape before the British takeover.

The impending loss of Philadelphia hurt the revolutionary morale. Washington's force dropped from a high of nearly 15,000 prior to the battle to only 6,000 as discouraged citizen soldiers returned to their homes. On September 26th a column of British soldiers marched into the revolutionary capital unopposed. The Hessians set up an outpost at Germantown, a little hamlet of sturdy stone houses just 5 miles northwest of Philadelphia.

Washington decided to attack while the British army was divided between occupying Philadelphia and the Germantown outpost.

His plan was for multiple separate attacks to be launched simultaneously precisely at 5 A.M. with charged bayonets and without firing.

General Washington's complex plan included 4 attack groups: (1) A strong column under Major General Nathanael Greene to attack the right wing of the British army comprising Grant's British and Donop's Hessian troops including the young, but now battle hardened, Matthaues Noeding. (2) The second column which Washington commanded (with Stirling and Sullivan under him) to advance down the main Philadelphia road and launch an assault on the British center. At the same time forces of militia were to attack each wing of the British force comprised of: (3) on the right the Queen's Rangers, and (4) on the left near the Schuylkill River, Hessian Jaegers and British Light Infantry. Washington's intention was to surprise the whole British army in much the way the Hessians had been surprised at Trenton.

The American columns started along their respective approach roads 16 miles to the north at dusk on the evening of October 3rd 1777. As the attack was to occur before dawn, the soldiers were instructed to put a piece of white paper on their hat to identify friend from foe. However, dawn found the American forces well short of their start line for the attack and there the second column encountered British pickets on guard at Mount Airy on the far north end of town which fired their guns to warn of the attack. The Americans had lost the element of surprise.

The fourth American column of militia under Armstrong had managed to reach the British camp. These troops halted near the mouth of Wissahickon Creek, firing a few rounds from their cannon at Knyphausen's camp of Hessians before withdrawing. The three remaining columns continued their advance.

British General Howe rode forward. His view was impeded by a thickening fog that clouded the field for the rest of the day. Initially Howe thought the advanced force on Mount Airy was being attacked by small foraging or skirmishing parties.

The Mount Airy outpost was supported by six companies of troops and it took a substantial part of Sullivan's division to finally overwhelm the British pickets and drive them back into Germantown. But upon reaching town the British pickets found themselves surrounded by the Americans. Now cut off from the

main British and Hessian force, British Colonel Musgrave got his 120 men to fortify themselves inside the stone house of Chief Justice Benjamin Chew, called Cliveden.

The central American advance was halted while furious attacks were launched against the house aided by an artillery barrage. General William Maxwell's brigade, which had been held in the reserve of the American forces, was brought forward to storm Cliveden. Meanwhile Brigadier General Knox, who was Washington's artillery commander, positioned 4 three pounder cannons out of musket range and fired shots against the mansion. However, the thick walls of Cliveden withstood the bombardments. Infantry assaults launched against the mansion were cut down, causing heavy casualties. The few Americans who managed to get inside were shot or bayoneted. It was becoming clear that Cliveden was not going to be taken easily.

General Stephen headed the other main attack under Greene's First column. Hearing the firing at Cliveden, he ignored his orders to continue along the lane to attack the British right wing, and, instead, swung sharply to his right and made for the Chew House. His brigade joined the attack on the house which was assailed for a full hour by the infantry and guns of several American brigades.

After some delay Sullivan and Wayne had continued past the Chew House and begun their attack against the Hessian and British center lines.

Meanwhile, the rest of General Nathanael Greene's first column on Lime Kiln Road finally reached Germantown. Its vanguard engaged the British pickets at Luken's Mill and drove them off after a savage skirmish. Adding to the heavy fog that already obscured the Americans' view of the enemy was the smoke from cannons and muskets. Unable to see what was going on in front of them, Greene's column was thrown into disarray and confusion.

In the fog and smoke General Stephen's wayward brigade collided with the rest of American General Wayne's brigade and mistook them for the redcoats. The two American brigades opened heavy fire on each other, became badly disorganized, and fled. The withdrawal of Wayne's brigade left Conway's left flank unsupported

In the north, an American column led by McDougall came under

attack by the Tory Loyalist troops of the Queen's Rangers and the Guards of the British reserve. After a savage battle between the two, McDougall's brigade was forced to retreat, suffering heavy losses.

Still convinced, however, that they could win, the Colonial 9th Virginian troops of Greene's column launched a savage attack on the British and Hessian line as planned, managing to break through and capturing a number of prisoners. However, they were soon surrounded by two British brigades who launched a devastating counter-charge, led by General Cornwallis. Cut off completely, the 9th Virginian Regiment, itself, was forced to surrender. Greene, upon learning the main army under Sullivan had been defeated and had withdrawn, realized that he stood alone against the whole British and Hessian force, so he withdrew as well.

Smallwood, leading the third column around the far north to attack the British right flank from the rear, became so delayed that they never got into action and turned back.

With his main attacks on the British and Hessian camp repulsed with heavy casualties, Washington ordered Armstrong and Smallwood's men to withdraw (not knowing they were already out of action). Maxwell's brigade, *still* having failed to capture the Benjamin Chew house, Cliveden, was forced to fall back. Part of the British army rushed forward and routed the retreating Americans. As the American army retreated its condition deteriorated and Washington was forced to withdraw some sixteen miles, harried by the British light dragoons for nine of those miles.

Even though October 4th, 1777, was a defeat for the Americans, a month later on November 15, the thirteen sovereign American states took a major step toward unity and signed the Articles of Confederation wherein they were first called "The United States of America."

On November 26th Hessian reinforcements arrived from Germany, per the original agreement to supply troops to replace those lost in earlier battles. In the next few weeks the combined battalion of remnants of original battalions was divided into new battalions of 250 or more men each. Then in mid December newly promoted Lieutenant General von Knyphausen was placed in

military command of the town of Philadelphia where his men, including Matthaëus Noeding, were placed in winter quarters. And on the 1st of January 1778 all the Hessians were issued new uniforms with shining new helmets.

In March a prisoner exchange was attempted. The Americans were offered 3000 rebel prisoners at Philadelphia and New York in exchange for 1000 Hessian and British soldiers. But no agreement was reached. Finally, on April 20th twelve imprisoned Hessian officers were paroled and arrived in Philadelphia in exchange for American General Lee (who we met earlier when he was captured and will hear more about later).

A Hessian letter to friends back home described the scene there: "Among a hundred people, not merely in Philadelphia, but also in the whole neighborhood, not one has a healthy color; the unwholesome air and bad water cause this. ... One reason is perhaps that no food here has the same strength as with us at home. The milk is not half as rich, the bread gives little strength. You can note a distinct difference in the quality of the victuals which are brought to market in the Jerseys and those brought to Philadelphia from Pennsylvania."

"If you care to know where I live," he continues, "turn to *Barnaby's Travels*, page 90, [which reads] 'From here the whole road to the city was filled with country-houses, parks, and fruitful orchards.' In these villas, parks, and orchards the honorable Hessian Corps has its winter quarters; and I go tomorrow for a [game of] piquet to the place on the Schuylkill, where *Barnaby* was ferried across: I think this sketch is as clear as many an engineer can draw."

We find out just how much time the Hessians took to explore the town they were quartered in another letter where he wrote: "Philadelphia is a very pretty city in its way. There was not a house here ninety-four years ago and now there are 2500 to 3000; with the fire-insurance company alone 1,993 are listed. The streets, which intersect at right angles, and the uniformity of the houses, which are all of two stories (a very few of three), give a pleasant appearance. When we had been in the city but four weeks and the ships arrived from New York, everything became as lively, even livelier than in peace-times."

The letter continues, "Lately in Second Street I found a

tobacconist, who had out a sign in English and German; the English read: 'Tobacco to be sold so good as the best imported,' which means in America – to speak plainly – 'Tobacco for sale, equal to the best English goods.' ... But," he went on, "they know nothing here of other [fine] work in ivory, steel, iron, plaster, bone, embroidery, silk, gold, and silver: the Englishman sends all that, and what he sends is welcome. And with all that the most unbearable conceit is characteristic of the American, and especially of the Philadelphian, who thinks there is no more beautiful, wealthy, and prosperous land on earth than their state which is hardly in the bud."

Having told his friends back home that not many artisans and artists were to be found in America, he went on to explain why: "Wages are too high and do not repay the costs, hence the merchant buying in England can sell things cheaper. But that wages are high is also natural. Journeymen and laborers are hard to get here, because each one can support himself more comfortably, easily, and agreeably by farming. For if he works three hours a day in the field, he has twenty-one hours left to sleep, yawn, breakfast, take a walk, gossip, and gape at the moon: this happy existence he cannot have in the workshop. Figure out for yourself the future epoch of American civilization. For as long as there is still land enough the farmers will not become artists."

In May of 1778, 48 year old General Sir Henry Clinton replaced Howe as Commander-in-Chief for North America. He assumed command in Philadelphia.

Another letter home from Philadelphia written on May 7th says: "The end still seems far off. For the rest, we are still sitting here quietly awaiting whatever is to come. ... As far as I can see, it suits me here very well. My host is an arch-rebel, an apothecary from Nurnberg. He swears I ought to stay in Philadelphia, and proves to a hair that the King is a tyrant. The city is beautiful, the country pleasant, and the people very stout-hearted – for money."

One month later on the 18th of June the new British Commanding General Clinton ordered the evacuation of Philadelphia. He sent 3000 soldiers by ship to protect Florida. Then Clinton and his remaining 11,000 troops with their artillery and supplies, plus a thousand loyalists from Philadelphia, left town traveling overland across New Jersey for New York.

Even though the army had sent all their baggage that could be dispensed with by ship to New York several weeks in advance, altogether the group comprised a baggage train 12 miles long traveling the 95 miles across New Jersey to New York. The rear guard, made up of Hessians under von Knyphausen, left Philadelphia early on the morning of the 20th beginning their march across New Jersey.

They made slow progress. As the British advanced, the Americans made it painful for them. They started burning bridges, muddying wells and cutting trees across roads. As they marched the men deserted in great numbers. During the march from Philadelphia Clinton's army lost around 550 men by desertion, of whom 450 were from the Hessian regiments. But Matthaeus Noeding was not among them, he marched unwaveringly on.

The first week of travel across New Jersey convinced Clinton that his army with its train was too big and difficult to handle to make the journey by land. Plus it was reported that General Gates' American army was moving down from the Hudson River valley to block the British move to New York. So Clinton decided to divert to the coast and take ship. At Allentown the British and Hessian forces branched off the main route to head north east towards the coast.

American Major General Charles Lee, who we noted was gotten back in a prisoner exchange for 12 Hessian officers earlier, advised Washington to await developments as he didn't want to commit the army against the British regulars. In spite of Lee's arguments, Washington thought the British were vulnerable to attack as they spread out across New Jersey with their long baggage train.

Washington was still undecided as to whether he should risk an attack on the British column while it was on the march. He held a meeting of his command staff, the Council of War, and attempted to find some resolution in that matter. The council, however, was quite divided on the issue. The only unifying theme was that none of Washington's generals advised in favor of a general action. Brigadier General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, the boldest of the staff, and Major General Marquis de Lafayette, the youngest of the staff, urged for a partial attack on the British column while it was strung out on the road. General Lee was still cautious and advised only guerrilla action to harass the British column. On June 26, 1778, Washington sided with the more bold approach of a direct attack

with his full force.

General Washington marched east out of his winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, into New Jersey seeking to intercept the slow moving British column. Clinton suspected that Washington would attack him in strength and ordered Knyphausen to begin his march up the Middletown road to the north at 4 A.M. on the 28th of June 1778.

As General Washington hurried his army forward, he offered General Lee the command of an advanced force of some 4,000 troops to attack the marching British Army and cut it in half. Initially Lee refused the appointment, lacking confidence in the success of the plan. But when the force was increased in size to 5,000 men and given to the Marquis de Lafayette, Lee changed his mind and insisted on the command. Lee's task was to attack and stop the British until Washington could bring up the main strength of the American army along the Monmouth Road.

The weather was unsettled, with high daytime temperatures over 100°F giving way to heavy rainstorms. Both sides lost hundreds of men to heat stroke, losing almost as many to the heat as to the enemy.

Lee gave imprecise orders to his commanders and permitted them to commit their troops as they saw fit. Skirmishes with parties of British troops took place as Lee's force moved tentatively forward towards the Middletown Road. Confused fighting broke out with Clinton's rearguard, the Hessians including Matthaues' regiment. Finally Lee ordered his troops to retreat back towards the main American army. As he withdrew down the road, Clinton launched his troops in pursuit.

General Washington, bringing the main American army along the Monmouth road, encountered, not the rear of the British column, but Lee's regiments, retreating in considerable disorder with the British and Hessian army advancing behind them.

Memorably, this is the one occasion Washington is said to have sworn. He deployed a string of oaths directed at Lee, to the admiration of those listening, before ordering Lee to the rear. Washington then galloped forward and began the task of rallying Lee's disordered troops.

Washington ordered General Wayne with the last of Lee's regiments, to form to the north of the road and hold the British advance. These regiments resisted strongly but were driven back. Even so, their stand gave Washington the time to form the rest of the American army, with artillery on Comb's Hill to the south of the road hitting the attacking British all along their line from the side.

Fierce fighting took place as the British attempted to drive back the American line. In the thick of the battle was "Molly Pitcher," a German born housewife who came to battle with her husband, an American gunner officer. Her real name was Maria Ludwig Hays. 24 year old "Molly" accompanied her husband, William Hays, from battlefield to battlefield. She cooked for the soldiers, nursed the sick and wounded, and carried water to the firing line in a large pitcher – thus her nickname of "Molly Pitcher." The water was not for drinking, but for swabbing the cannons. During this battle at Monmouth "Molly" took over the firing of her husband's cannon when the crew became casualties. She sprang forward, grasped the rammer and started to load the gun. The soldiers around her revived at the sight of her. They gave three cheers for "Molly Pitcher" and redoubled their efforts against the British and Hessian forces. After the battle, General George Washington issued her a warrant as a non-commissioned officer, and she was thereafter known by the nickname "Sergeant Molly."

This battle at Monmouth was the largest one-day battle of the war when measured in terms of participants – totaling about 26,000 men ... and at least one woman! (By the way, both "Molly" and her husband lived for many more years together.)

As the evening wore on the British troops fell back and returned to their journey north, leaving the Americans on the field. Clinton continued the march to the coast. On July 1st the British army reached the safety of Sandy Hook where it was embarked and carried by the Royal Navy to New York. By the time they boarded the ships, 31 men had deserted Knyphausen's regiment. But trustworthy and dependable Matthaeus Noeding was still at his duty post.

Meanwhile Major General Charles Lee, feeling demeaned by Washington's scolding, demanded and received a trial by court martial for his performance at the battle. The Court Martial was held at the Village Inn located in the center of nearby

Englishtown. He was convicted and sentenced to one year's suspension from duty. Fortescue, the historian of the British Army, was convinced that Lee's conduct arose from treacherous motives.

Lee still couldn't keep his mouth shut and made some negative comments regarding Washington. John Laurens of South Carolina (who we will meet again later in our story) was serving as Washington's Aid-de-Camp and French translator. When he heard Lee's comments disparaging Washington, Laurens challenged Lee to a duel. The duel ended with Lee wounded, but not critically.

Lee is a strange and interesting character. He first arrived in America as a British army captain in 1755 assigned to the American frontier of Ohio. Lee continued to serve as a British officer during the French and Indian War. During that time he was the subject of an assassination attempt by members of his own regiment. After that war he left the British Army and joined the Polish Army, apparently rising to the rank of General. Later when again unable to obtain senior rank in the British Army, Lee returned to America and joined the American Army, achieving his ambition of senior command. Whether it was Lee's flawed character that caused his command failings at Monmouth, or deliberate treachery, is left for you to decide.

On the 6th of July, 1778, the embarked British and Hessian troops arrived at New York in the evening, where the army was distributed on Staten, York and Long Islands. And Matthaeus Noeding found himself, and his fellow Hessian soldiers, back in New York for the third time.

France allied themselves with the revolutionaries that same month (July of 1778) and declared war on Great Britain. This provided the Americans with much needed supplies and additional European arms. 5000 French troops to support the American cause were expected to arrive in Philadelphia soon.

In the heat of the summer of 1778 a lull in the fighting settled over the entire region that lasted to the end of the year with the majority of the British and Hessian forces occupying New York. On July 19th a prisoner exchange took place. The Knyphausen Regiment received 10 non-commissioned officers, 3 drummers, and 116 men. The 2 Hessian battalions were reformed into the original Regiments.

The official records show that on August 6th and again on August 16th additional prisoner exchanges took place bringing in 2 more non-commissioned officers and 33 men. And on the 20th the Regiment received 2 men from a reinforcement ship from Hesse.

But not every official report entry was an addition to their forces. Knyphausen reported that an "Ensign Fuehrer of the v. Knyphausen Regiment deserted the 7th of this month." There were many reasons for those soldiers to desert and stay in America. One reason might be the fear of a long and dreadful sea voyage on crowded little sailing ships. But the most important reasons were the opportunity for a better life and freedom from oppression, and the promise of free land from the American government. Many had already established good contacts with the local population and found companionship – especially among the 10% of the American population that was already of German descent.

Not much was happening. On the 21st of September the von Knyphausen Hessian Regiment (with others) went to Valentin's Hill for forage. The didn't return until the 10th of October. On the 27th 9 non-commissioned officers and 87 men were returned from being prisoners of war.

As fall of 1778 gave way to winter on November 9th and 10th the Hessians under Knyphausen were assigned a position on the North River, 6 miles from New York, at John's House, where huts were built for their winter quarters.

Tarrytown, New York, was part of the "Neutral Ground," an area of Westchester County lying between the British lines to the south and the American lines to the north. Without the protection of either army, the people there were subjected to fierce raids by both sides. British warships which cruised up and down the Hudson River were often peppered by shots from the shore, while American sloops carrying troops and supplies dodged these mighty men-of-war.

Tarrytown is, also, the location of Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The von Knyphausen Regiment of Hessians, which included Matthaeus Noeding, was stationed nearby this winter. On January 28th, 1779, the von Knyphausen Regiment was patrolling Tarrytown. The Hessian cavalry surprised a troop of rebels and engaged in a small skirmish.

In *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* when Ichabod Crane leaves a party at the Van Tassel home on an autumn night, he is pursued by the Headless Horseman. This Headless Horseman is supposedly the ghost of a Hessian trooper who had his head shot off by a stray cannonball during a nameless battle of the American Revolutionary War, and who "rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head."

The third year of the American Revolutionary War, 1778, was coming to a close. The British had been pushed out of Boston, were unable to mount a successful drive from Canada, and had failed in their efforts to take and hold the middle colonies. But earlier in the year, in April, a group of 500 Tories (local British Loyalists) had successfully moved through South Carolina and Georgia, destroying property and killing American rebels. So, influenced by the belief that a large number of Loyalists in the Southern Colonies would aid them, the British decided to focus the war on the southern states and crush the American rebellion there.

In November 1778 Clinton had ordered British forces north from from St. Augustine, Florida. And now he organized an expedition of British and Hessian troops to move south from British-controlled New York. This included Matthaues Noeding's Grenadier Regiment von Rall which was then under the command of von Wollwarth.

The voyage was most disagreeable to the Hessian soldiers on board. Sea travel in mid winter is not easy. The 3500 soldiers (plus any of their wives and others who accompanied them) along with all their needed equipment and supplies were embarked on November 6th and two days later sailed from New York to Staten Island. There the fleet assembled: 46 to 50 ships including a warship with 44 guns, 2 frigates with 24 guns each, a row Galley, and several other armed sloops. The von Wollwarth regiment, including Matthaues, was on 3 ships. Anchor was finally weighed at 1 o'clock on the afternoon of the 12th with good wind and weather. They anchored again at 5 o'clock at Sandyhook lighthouse. The next 4 days were so stormy as they lay at anchor there, that two ships collided and had to be cut apart. Several Scottish soldiers on board these ships were drowned. With this and other minor damage to other ships, they all sailed back to Staten Island for repairs – that is all except for those who lost their anchors and were blown out to sea. Now the men on board had to

wait for the repairs to be completed.

On November 27th, 3 weeks from their first false start, everything was in order again. They were joined by 6 more ships. Again they spent the first night riding at anchor at Sandyhook. Then they sailed south. The wind was good.

December 1st was fine and unusually warm weather. Then towards evening a very strong wind arose and for 3 days there were more and more violent storms growing so loud that the soldiers on board could neither see nor hear one another. Nothing could be tied down tight enough; their trunks and suitcases were hurled back and forth. And every couple of minutes they would be nearly thrown from their beds. This went on for 2 weeks with storms so violent that sleeping, eating, or even drinking was nearly impossible.

One of them wrote: "You had to hold on to the bed-frames as firmly as possible. At the same time the weather was wet, and the further south we got, so unbearably warm that we had to open all the windows and strip off our clothes. The sea was composed of terrific mountains and valleys; the foam looked all the time as if snow were floating about, and the waves quarreled with each other as to which should break over the ship first. Even the sailors said they had never experienced the like. ... Through it all we were generally well and in good spirits; for at times there were ridiculous scenes when you watched the motions of the women and soldiers."

Every day of the storms more and more of their ships were lost from sight. And much time was spent trying to regroup the fleet.

Finally on the 16th of December the lead was cast in water that looked muddier than sea water, and they measured just 40 fathoms. They were approaching land. But then another storm the next day blew much of the fleet off course towards land which could be seen from the mast-heads. They were off the Carolina coast near Charleston. Signal smoke rose along the coast line as their ships were spotted. It took until evening to get the fleet rejoined once again ... with just 38 of the nearly 50 ships with which they had started.

For the next several days the weather was good and very warm. A Hessian letter writer told his family back home, "Today we

bought a hog of our good captain for six guineas; it weighed one hundred and twenty pounds; we had some real Hessian sausage made and regaled ourselves with the sausage soup."

Matthaeus and the other Hessians saw land once again on the 21st, but they were still off the Carolinas. Finally on the 23rd of December 1778 this combination of troops reached the vicinity of Georgia and cast anchor far out at sea in 11 fathoms of water at 5 P.M. The next morning they sailed toward the Savannah River. Shortly after noon they saw the lighthouse on Tybee Island and cast anchor again. At last they were able to feel safe from storms, but they were reminded of their mission by the enemy's signals, once again, showing up along the coastline.

Matthaeus Noeding turned 22 years old aboard a British troop ship anchored in the mouth of the Savannah River. What little there was of a Christmas celebration that year was held on board ship.

Over the next 2 days various ships joined them which had become separated from the fleet during the storms. The Hessian letter writer told his readers: "We learned that one of the ships driven to sea at Sandyhook had entered the St. Johns River in Florida, but had lost all its masts by storms. Two horse-ships, which were driven off the course by the second storm and which every one thought had either been sunk or captured by the rebels, are said to have arrived near St. Augustin."

On December 28th the order was given to disembark, so they sailed up the Savannah River toward the city. Because of the ebbing tide they cast anchor about 6 miles from town. The next day Matthaeus and the other troops transferred to flatboats and were taken upstream and landed not far from Savannah.

This British invasion force of 2,500 men was under the command of Lt. Colonel Archibald Campbell. Together the Hessian, English, and Scottish troops marched on Savannah. The American forces in Georgia under General Robert Howe included both local militia and Continental soldiers.

On December 29, 1778, the British, Scot, and Hessian force marched from their landing spot south of the town towards Savannah itself. The American front line, consisting of only 650 Patriot militia, were posted on the heights and in houses

overlooking the river. After getting out of the boat in which he rode, a captain of the Scots was killed immediately upon stepping foot on the ground.

"They did not resist long, however," the Hessian letter tells us. Even so, it continues, "Our loss was twenty dead and wounded, two of them from von Wollwarth's regiment; the rebels lost eighty killed and wounded and four hundred captured." Even though the fighting had not lasted long that day, Matthaues and his fellow soldiers found themselves right in the thick of it, once again.

The militia had fled as the British and Hessians advanced. Many of the Patriots did not even bother to fire a shot. Without the militia to bolster their strength, the remaining Continentals could do little. They retreated in an orderly manner, leaving the small community of Savannah to the British.

The letter writer continues, "We captured twelve cannon, considerable stores, also several ships, among them a French ship of 22 guns." Some of the Hessians stayed on the French ship. Then on "The 31st," he writes, "we went to the city and occupied Advocate Farley's house where we found a fine library."

The Hessian letter writer described the scene about town saying: "Savannah, aged forty years, lies 32° North and has about 600 houses, mostly lightly built. Of the inhabitants hardly any were to be seen. ... Most of them ran away with the rebels and generally buried their things or took them into the country. The finest furnishings, comptoirs, tables and chairs of mahogany were smashed and lay around on the streets: it was a pity to see! It is regularly laid-out; incidentally, a rifle-shot from the city lies a fine barrack-building which the rebels erected; in this the Hessian regiments are now lying. ... The sand is so deep that walking in it is just like walking through fresh fallen snow a foot deep. It is now so warm here [in January] that we need no fire, and in summer, ... the inhabitants say, ... it is so warm that they boil eggs in the sand, yes, can often roast meat in it. Not a hill is to be seen, still less a plain: there is nothing here except thick forests. ... Rattlesnakes and other harmful beasts are very disagreeable. ... The many marshes and stagnant waters bring many diseases, especially fevers. ... The inhabitants rarely get [old] here, they have [the] fever [so often]. ... Many Germans live around here, but they grow older; I have found some 74 to 80 years old. This gives us some consolation."

After waiting for the arrival of English General Augustin Prevost with his 4 battalions from St. Augustin 190 miles to the south, the combined British and Hessian force moved inland and early in January took Augusta at the fall line on the Savannah River. Henry Clinton bragged that he had captured and completely controlled the first of America's 13 states, and leaving his forces under the command of General Prevost, Clinton returned to New York.

British intelligence reported that Charleston was quite unprepared for an attack by land. The ferries of the Ashley were not fortified, and only some weak defenses guarded the peninsula above the town. And being informed that the main Continental army under General Lincoln was far up the river near Augusta, British General Prevost determined to attempt the capture of Charleston.

Even before the attempt was made, our Hessian letter writer said, "It is to be expected that we shall not get [to Charleston], as was said when we left New York: Heaven grant it, much as I like to see new places; Madame H--- gives no good account of it. Still, it is healthier than here; it is more hilly and lies nearer the sea."

In January 1779 out of the marshes came "250 mounted men," that the Hessian letter describes as "peasants who had assembled in this province and Carolina and taken the King's part, and therefore were pursued by the rebels and driven into the wilderness: finally they retired to an island and to a swampy place where the rebels could not get at them. Here they had to nourish themselves 6 days with roots and herbs until General Prevost rescued them. They all wore red bands on their hats, which indicate friend of the King; they looked ragged, and wore shoes of undressed hides, and each had a flintlock [rifle] in front of him on his horse. They will be trained to be regular soldiers here and get green riding-vests with black collars and trimmings."

Leaving General Campbell with a few British troops at Savannah, Prevost turned his sights on the city of Charleston. With 2000 British and Hessian troops they hardly met any resistance along their way as they pushed 100 miles along the road nearest the coast toward Charleston. But always just ahead of Matthaues and his fellow soldiers was American General Moultrie with about 200 Charleston militia retreating back towards their homes.

Meanwhile American General Lincoln, thinking the move toward

Charleston was a trick to draw him out of Georgia, sent just 300 of his troops under Colonel Harris to re-enforce Moultrie. And Governor Rutledge, of South Carolina, collected a militia of 600 men from around Orangeburg to help protect Charleston. Finally realizing his mistake, Lincoln, too, began rushing his force of 600 towards Charleston.

About halfway to Charleston Prevost halted for three days at Pocatigo because of conflicting intelligence. This delay was fatal to his success, for it allowed the people of Charleston time to prepare for an attack.

Learning of the invasion force advancing toward them aroused all the energies of the civil and military authorities in Charleston. Night and day the people labored building entrenchments across the peninsula from the Ashley River to the Cooper River, under the general direction of the Chevalier De Cambray, an accomplished French engineer. All the houses in the suburbs were burned, and within a few days a complete line of fortifications with abatis – a field fortification obstacle formed of the branches of trees laid in a row with the sharpened tops directed outwards towards the enemy – was raised across the peninsula. Several cannons were mounted atop these fortifications.

On the evening of the 9th of May 1779, Prevost encamped on the south side of the Ashley River. On that and the following day, Moultrie, Rutledge, and Harris arrived with their respective forces. Moultrie immediately took command of all the Continental troops, while Rutledge claimed the control of the militia. This dual command produced some confusion.

Brigadier General Count Casimir Pulaski was the area's Continental dragoon commander. He had been stationed to the north at Haddrell's Point with his legion. On the 10th of May they crossed the Cooper River and joined the other American forces already in Charleston. Altogether they had 3,180 soldiers to defend the city under the command of their three separate leaders.

On May 11, a 900-man British advance guard crossed the Ashley River above the town and moved south along the Charleston peninsula. Count Pulaski, planned an ambush. At noon Pulaski advanced his dragoons until he encountered the British cavalry. The British charged Pulaski's legion. Pulaski rode back towards his intended ambush site, but his fellow Patriots were not in the

proper position. So when the British rode into the ambush site and attacked the Patriots, they handily drove the Patriots back into the woods. American Brigadier General William Moultrie sent a screening force out to protect Charleston, but the British pushed through it as well.

Prevost left his main army and heavy baggage on the south side of the Ashley River, and approaching within cannon shot of the lines, demanded the surrender of the town. Charleston's townspeople proposed a deal with Prevost: if the British forces would immediately leave the area and leave the town alone for the duration of the war, the town would promise to pledge their neutrality and abide by the terms of the eventual winner of the Revolutionary War.

Prevost demanded that the Continentals inside Charleston surrender to him. Aware of the approach of Lincoln's reinforcements, the Americans desired procrastination, and asked time to deliberate. But the military leaders did not want to surrender, so Pulaski and Moultrie refused this offer and the negotiation broke down.

That night Governor John Rutledge, one of the co-commanders inside Charleston, sent Maj. Benjamin Huger and a small force out to repair a gap in the abatis. Rutledge did not inform General Moultrie, his co-commander, about the repair party being sent outside of the defensive lines.

Moultrie's Continental army garrison had lit tar barrels in front of their lines to prevent a surprise, and by their light Huger and his men were discovered, and believed to be a party of the enemy. Immediately a fire of cannons, muskets, and rifles ran along almost the whole line, and poor Huger and twelve of his men were slain.

After that incident Moultrie was given overall command of Charleston. The townspeople were scared by Moultrie's artillery fire. They thought that the cannonade during the night meant that they were going to be exposed to an all-out British assault. Because of this, Moultrie was asked to reconsider Prevost's original surrender offer.

On May 12, at 3:00 A.M., Prevost received the new message. It was rejected, and all anxiously awaited the dawn, expecting a terrible

assault. However, during the night Prevost was informed that Lincoln with 4000 men was pressing on toward Charleston. He feared that his force of 3,360, hardly sufficient to attack the town with hopes of success, would be annihilated if placed between the two forces. He prudently withdrew, and, perceiving his pathway of approach intercepted by Lincoln, he sought to return to Savannah by way of the islands along the coast. Prevost withdrew his forces southward across James Island and then onto Johns Island.

This island is separated from the mainland by a narrow inlet, which is called Stono River. Over this, at a narrow place, there was a ferry, where the British and Hessians built a defensive bridgehead with 3 strong redoubts circled by abatis at Stono Ferry, and garrisoned them with 800 men, under Colonel Maitland.

When Lincoln arrived with 1500 men, he set up his camp outside Charleston on the mainland just across from John's Island. There they continued for a month, Prevost fearing to move forward, and Lincoln not feeling quite strong enough to pass over and attack him.

Captain Wilmot, a brave young American officer, who commanded a company detailed for the purpose of covering John's Island, impatient of inaction, often crossed the river to harass British foraging parties on the island. Throughout that month of June several Hessian soldiers were reported to have deserted camp on Johns Island with full arms and equipment.

Around this time one Hessian, knowing that the French were now on the American side, wrote back home saying, "We are now in a sad and extremely precarious position. Our only pleasure consists in hearing news from Germany. ... We have believed nothing more certain than that we should be captured. And even though, thank Heaven, we have been saved from this situation, it is so sorry-looking around us, as far a fresh vegetables and meat are concerned, that we shall hardly have anything here in a fortnight, since we are now having to live on nothing but salt meat, dried peas, and rice. We wish heartily, then, to be released from this Island and to see Germany again. In the last engagement here we Hessians lost one hundred and five men in killed, wounded, and prisoners." Matthaeus Noeding and his fellow Hessians were in a dangerous position and life was getting worse by the day.

In June 1779 Spain declared war on Great Britain.

Finally, an attempt to dislodge the British was made. The British and Hessian garrison at Stono Ferry was attacked on the morning of the 20th of June by about 1200 of Lincoln's troops. The contest was severe. For an hour and twenty minutes the battle was waged with skill and valor.

Matthaeus Noeding's Grenadier Regiment was right in the thick of it. Matthaeus was not injured, but blood and death were all around him. Three Officers, Major Endemann, First Lieutenant Wiedemann, and First Lieutenant Von Griesheim, 4 Junior Officers, 1 Drummer, and 37 Privates, who took part in the attack at Stono Ferry on the 20th were wounded.

During the attack at Stono Ferry several other Hessians were reported to have gone over to the enemy with complete arms and equipment or were taken as prisoners. As British reinforcements for Maitland appeared, the Americans perceived it to be necessary to retreat. When they fell back, the whole British garrison suddenly charged out after them, but the American light troops covered the retreat so successfully, that all of the wounded patriots were brought back with them.

During the battle one Hessian company's drummer, born in Leipzig in Saxony, 28 year old 5 ft. 1 inch tall Freidrich Dipplt, deserted with full equipment. He left his drum by a tree in the forest where it was later found by the English Forces.

Three days afterward, Provost ordered the evacuation of the post at Stono Ferry as he began a retreat from island to island back toward Savannah and St. Augustine leaving South Carolina to the Revolutionary forces.

It was at this time as their position in South Carolina was being evacuated, on the 25th of June, 1779, that 22 year old Private Matthaeus Noeding, having endured much peril, privation, and hardship, ended his military career. It was officially reported in the Monthly Roll submitted from The High Princely Hessian Grenadier Regiment under his Excellency, the Lord General Von Trumbach, Grenadier for June, 1779, that Private Matthaeus Noeding of the von Rall Regiment, Company 3, from Bergheim, Hesse-Kassel, had "deserted on Johns Island with full arms and equipment during bridge march."

Rather than being a deserter, as reported by his Hessian officer, Matthaues was captured by the American forces and taken as a prisoner, according to his own account. As a prisoner he was forced to do service on an American ship for four weeks, about the amount of time to be sure all of the British and Hessian troops had left the Charleston area, after which he was released.

In general the American army treated their Hessian prisoners with respect. The Hessians had been essentially rented out by their ruler for cash and compelled to fight for a cause which did not interest them in the least, but they had no choice. So when captured they considered their duty was done and did not need very close watching. Sometimes prisoners of war were permitted to keep their own garden, raise poultry for themselves, and, in one place, even built a country theater where they "gave two performances a week."

But being a young German on his own in a foreign land where most people spoke English was not an easy life either. For the first time in his young life 23 year old Matthaues Noeding had to find someone, somewhere who would allow him to earn a living for himself.

Matthaues found himself in the busy port city of Charleston. Its cobblestone paved streets held entertainments like the Dock Street Theater, imposing public buildings like the Old Exchange and Customs Building with its Provost Dungeon, inspiring edifices like St. Michael's Episcopal Church with a 186 foot steeple with its four sided clock topped with a 7-1/2 foot weather vane, as well as temptations like the little pink pub and bordello at 17 Chalmers Street.

To make matters worse, about six months later, beginning in December of 1779, British Generals Clinton and Cornwallis brought a fleet of 90 troopships and 14 warships with more than 8,500 soldiers and 5,000 sailors to once again attack Charleston. This time Clinton's plan was to take the city by siege with his own supplies brought by ships sailing up the rivers. British and Hessian forces completely surrounded the city and finally forced its surrender on May 12th, 1780. All of these events made the entire Charleston area a terrible place for a German speaking former Hessian soldier to stay.

Fortunately while in the Charleston area Matthaues managed to

learn of a German speaking Moravian settlement located in central North Carolina called Wachovia and its principle town called Salem. In fact, Traugott Bagge, the Moravian brother who ran the Salem store (who was among the second group of Moravians from Europe arriving in the Wachovia town of Bethabara back in 1768) had long been trading partners with John Laurens of South Carolina. Laurens had many years before made a trip to Wachovia to encourage the Moravians to funnel their trade through Charleston, rather than through North Carolina's port cities.

Bagge had been making regular trips all during the Revolutionary War years down the Yadkin and Catawba River valleys to Charleston to trade deer skins, tobacco, and other products from Salem for supplies such as window panes, sugar, coffee, tea, lime, and other items he sold in the Salem store. On one occasion Bagge had to rely upon his friends in Charleston to get permission to pass through the military checkpoint at the edge of Charleston and return to Salem with his goods.

The Yadkin/Pee Dee River was navigable for 172 miles from Georgetown, South Carolina to the fall line at Cheraw (just 12 miles from the North Carolina line). Ely Kershaw had several trade boats making that run by 1770 which eased the trip and shipment of goods to and from Charleston.

Learning of the German community at Salem Matthaeus decided to go there. More than a year after Matthaeus was released and 4 months after the siege of Charleston resulted in the complete surrender of an America army of 5000 and the town to British General Clinton, Matthaeus had made his way northward up the nearly 300 miles to the Friedberg area on the southern edge of Wachovia (the Moravian settlement area) arriving there in September of 1780.

The Moravians were a group of Christians originating in ancient Bohemia and Moravia (areas that are now part of the Czech Republic). John Hus (born in 1369) led the Czech reformation against many practices of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, was accused of heresy, and was burned at the stake on July 6th, 1415. His followers organized the Moravian Church 60 years before Martin Luther began his reformation movement. By 1517 they had over 400 parishes and 200,000 members with 2 printing presses producing a hymnal and a Bible in their own language.

Bitter persecution over the next century only caused the Moravian Church to grow and spread to Poland. One of their leaders in the 1600's, Bishop John Amos Comenius, who became renowned for his progressive views on education, lived most of his life in exile in England and Holland.

A renewal of strength in the 1700's was generated when some Moravian families fled persecution in Bohemia and Moravia and found safety under the patronage of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, a pietist nobleman in Saxony, in 1722. They built the community of Herrnhut on his estate which became a haven for many more Moravian refugees. With Zinzendorf's encouragement they began to send missionaries to the "new world" of America.

In 1735 the German speaking Moravians attempted a settlement in Georgia, but they moved to Pennsylvania in 1741. There they purchased 5000 acres and established their communities of Bethlehem and Nazareth as frontier centers for the spread of the gospel – particularly to the native Americans.

Then in 1753 the Moravians purchased ... on credit ... 98,985 acres in the unsettled frontier area of North Carolina from Lord Granville which they called Wachau, after the Austrian estate of Count Zinzendorf.

On October 8th, 1753, twelve unmarried men from the Single Brothers House at Christians Spring, Pennsylvania, each specially chosen for their craft skills left Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to start a new Moravian settlement in Wachovia. A doctor, a mason, a miller, a weaver, a tailor, a shoemaker, a potter, a blacksmith, a gunsmith, a merchant, and a distiller, as well as farmers were among their number. The one thing missing was a hunter, and they suffered for lack of meat for the next year because of it.

Three others went with them to assist them on their trip and would then return. They traveled south in a Conestoga type wagon built especially for them – 16 feet long and 4 feet wide with 4 foot wheels in the rear and 3-1/2 foot wheels in the front. It was pulled by 6 horses and was loaded with tools and supplies. The men walked along side the wagon as they traveled.

Problems started on their first day of travel when they discovered that the special wagon had a major problem going down the road: its wheels were set wider than the track on the road causing it to

mire in the unpacked earth along the road. So they had to unload the wagon and have a blacksmith narrow the wagon by 3 inches. Then they spent the night re-loading the wagon by moonlight so that they could leave early the next morning.

The next day their heavy wagon and team broke through a bridge over a mill race. The following day a large tree fell across the horses as they passed, but caused no injuries. And the next day the Susquehanna River was too low for the ferry at Harrisburg and so they had to ford the mile wide river. Four days later they forded the Potomac, again with the river too low for the ferry to operate.

A week later they had crossed the Shenandoah. And in another week they reached Staunton, Virginia. From that point the road turned from bad to disaster. The rugged road ran up one steep hill where they had to push from behind and then down another steep incline where they had to pull on ropes from behind to slow its decent. Then they repeated that process over and over again.

Then it started raining ... and the roads became muddy. Now they had to unload half of the wagon before the horses could pull the heavy wagon uphill ... and then carry the remaining goods uphill on their backs. On the steep decline to the James River they had to lock the brakes and tie a tree to drag behind the wagon as well as pull back on their ropes ... and still they slid down the muddy hill too fast for comfort.

Three weeks into their trip it turned cold. By the time they reached Big Buffalo Lick (Roanoke) there was snow. The road became little more than a trail and they had to cut trees along the road to get their wide wagon through. With the road steep and slippery and a cold, heavy rain continuing to fall, they were only able to cover 8 miles per day. But no one complained, they were on a mission.

On November 7th they topped a hill and saw Pilot Mountain off in the distance; they knew that their destination was not much farther from the peak they could see off in the distance. On the 11th they met a man from North Carolina passing through Martinsville, Virginia, on his way north who told them that they were expected to arrive soon by people living near their property (probably learning this from William Haltham of the Town Fork settlement who had assisted in the survey of Wachovia earlier that year). Even though they had sighted North Carolina from the hill

top, with road and weather conditions as they were, it took another full week to finally reach the North Carolina border.

Arriving at the Dan River at 2 o'clock in the morning they decided to wait until daylight to cross. But the rains during the night forced them to wait 2 days before they could attempt to ford its rain swollen waters. While they waited, one of their leaders took a canoe across and walked 11 miles to the home of Mr. Altom (William Haltham) – one of the men who had helped Rev. Sprangenberg survey the Moravian property the year before – at Town Fork settlement, just north of Wachovia. When they finally forded the Dan the wagon could not be pulled out of the water and up the steep bank until it was unloaded and ropes attached to its axles.

Other settlers in the area welcomed their new neighbors with gifts of food. One family offered them a wagon load of pumpkins – they took all they could carry on two horses. Henry Banner, owner of the plantation north of Wachovia, gave them two bushels of turnips.

After staying overnight at Town Fork (modern Germanton, North Carolina), they completed their journey by cutting a new road the last 2-1/2 miles to the site of Bethabara where Hans Wagner had built a new log cabin, which he vacated when he learned the Moravians owned the property. (He moved on to build a mill not far away at the Donnaha Ford on the Yadkin River.)

The name Yadkin, or Yattkin, is a Siouan Indian word meaning “big tree” or “place of big trees.” At the time the Moravians first came to Wachovia there are many references to the “big trees” to be found there. The Indians who lived in this area were primarily farmers growing corn, beans, pumpkins, and potatoes.

Arriving in their new land of Wachovia a little past noon on Saturday, November 17th 40 days after leaving Bethlehem, the Moravians rested the following day, gave thanks, and had their first Love Feast in their new lands ... with *corn* bread.

Then starting work on Monday morning they began building the town of Bethabara. On Christmas they held a Love Feast by a manger scene displaying a “Christ Child.” Through their devoted efforts, just two years later in 1755, Bethabara had a meeting house, a 2 story Single Brothers House, a palisade for security

from hostile Indians, a mill, a smithy, a cooperage, a brick kiln, a pottery, a tannery, a tailor shop, a wash house, and 6 individual houses.

While the Moravians at Bethabara were never molested by the Indians in the area, many other settlers were frightened, injured, or even killed by them. With a thousand or more German, Irish, and Scottish people arriving on the western Carolina frontier each year, the Indians were finding themselves being pushed out.

Several times over the years the English had signed treaties with the Indians, usually greatly in favor of the white settlers. In 1730 a treaty between the Cherokees and England allowed "the Cherokee Indians the privilege of living where they please and ... forbid the English from building houses or planting corn near any Indian Town for fear that your young people should kill the cattle and young lambs and so quarrel with the English and hurt them." In return for their cooperation in this the Indians were to get "two other pieces of white cloth to be dyed blue."

The leaders of the Catawba Indians sought the aid of the English government in keeping alcoholic beverages away from the Indian tribesmen so that they could live together peacefully. In 1754 "King Haglar and Sundry of His Headsmen and His Warriors" wrote to the English King saying, "Brothers here is One thing You Yourselfs are to Blame very much in, That is You Rot Your grain in Tubs, out of which you take and make Strong Spirits You sell it to our young men and give it them, many times; they get very Drunk with it this is the Very Cause that they oftentimes Commit those Crimes that is offensive to You and us and all through the Effect of that Drink." Their entreaty continued, "I heartily wish You would do something to prevent Your People from Daring to Sell or give them any of that Strong Drink."

Again in 1756 the Catawba Indian Chief tried to get the English King to stop the whites from selling (or giving) strong drink to Indians which caused them to misbehave towards the whites. He petitioned the Governor saying, "As my people and the White people are Brethren ... I desire a stop may be put to the selling strong liquors by the White people especially near the Indian Nation. If the White people make strong drink let them sell it to one another or drink it in their own Families. This will avoid a great deal of mischief which otherwise will happen from my people getting drunk and quarreling with the White people.

Should any of my people do any mischief to the White people ... our way is to put them under ground and all [my warriors] will be ready to do that for those who shall deserve it."

The Indians saw the Moravians as friendly neighbors. In 1759 over 150 Indians visited the 4 year old Bethabara settlement, and more than 500 the next year. Bethabara was known by the Indians as "the Dutch fort where there are good people and much bread." This mutual respect served the Moravians well as they sought to be Christian missionaries among the Indians with considerable success.

As more and more Moravian settlers moved to the area in 1759, 3 miles to the north at Black Walnut Bottom they built the "new town" of Bethania for 16 families. The Bethabara area to it's south is still known today, 250 years later, as "old town."

The Moravian towns thrived and grew. They were filled with industry and trade with other settlers and frontiersmen in the area. By 1761 the Moravians, with help from John Laurens, had established regular trade with the port town of Charleston, South Carolina.

The early 1760's was a period of Indian hostility especially in the area to the north and west of Wachovia. The Cherokees killed William Fish and his son, 2 men at a bridge over the creek, and 2 others at Town Fork, the area just north of Bethania. The Indians burned several houses in the area just west of the Yadkin River, and even attacked Fort Dobbs.

Fort Dobbs was on the west side of the Yadkin River downstream from the Shallow Ford crossing. There we find an English settlement established about 6 years prior to the Moravians' arrival. Among the families there was the Squire Boone family.

Squire Boone was born in Devonshire, England, and in 1713 moved to Bucks Creek in the Oley Valley near the Moravians in Pennsylvania. In 1750 he moved his family to Bear Creek on the west side of the Yadkin River 12 miles south of the Shallow Ford. His sons were Israel, John, Jonathan, Squire, Jr., Daniel, and George.

Shortly after the Moravians arrived at Bethabara in 1754, Daniel Boone went there to get his sick brother, Issac, who was being

treated by the Moravian doctor. Moravian ministers later visited the homes of Jonathan Boone and John Boone.

It was at Fort Dobbs, one of six government built forts in the frontier area to provide the settlers safety in times of danger, that Daniel Boone served as an Indian hunter. He was one of a company of 50 Rangers kept employed by the state to traverse the countryside 40 to 50 miles around the forts to search for hostile Indians. The Rangers were mounted, armed with rifles and muskets, and clad in hunting shirts and buckskin leggings. They only visited the forts about once per month to get supplies.

On one of the Rangers' trips to Bethabara Daniel Boone helped search for a group of Indians who had killed 2 settlers. Daniel Boone's home was at the fork of the two Yadkin Rivers (in present day Davie County). On August 14th of 1756 he married Rebecca Bryan (daughter of Joseph Bryan, who was the son of Morgan Bryan the very first settler in this area).

A determined campaign in 1761 against the Cherokee Indians destroyed 15 Indian towns.

In 1766, at the insistence of the Moravian leaders in Europe and Pennsylvania, the Moravians in North Carolina started work on their long planned primary industrial and administrative center for Wachovia, the town of Salem, 6 miles to the south of Bethabara. To encourage families to move from Bethabara to Salem they were given individual houses with five years of free rent. In addition to these incentives families from Moravian communities in Pennsylvania had their moving expenses paid.

As Salem steadily grew in size and influence over the next few years, Bethabara declined. In fact, Salem's solidly built houses of timber and brick clustered around a common square with large public buildings looked more like a middle European town than a back-country North Carolina town. Salem even required local businesses to place signs outside their establishment to identify what type of service or product could be found there.

By 1779 the Moravians had 92 miles of roads which they maintained just in Wachovia with sign posts giving the mileage to various points from each intersection as well as markers on trees along each route. Being located on major trading routes going in all directions, Salem rapidly became the largest town and

commercial center of northwestern North Carolina.

One road ran east to the Abbotts Creek Settlement (High Point) and then on to Cross Creek (Fayetteville) where it connected with Cape Fear River transportation. Another went south and east to Trading Camp Settlement (Salisbury) and then on down the Yadkin-PeeDee River basin to the seaport of Charleston, South Carolina.

The Shallow Ford was the only crossing point on the Yadkin between Donnaha and Salisbury. On each side of the river was a campground where travelers would stay when the river was flooded too deep to cross. Edward Hughes ran a tavern on the eastern side of the ford. This tavern operated for over 50 years and the settlement that grew up around it became modern Lewisville. There were various ferries operating across the Yadkin at several different points including Idol's Ferry as early as 1750. (Much later there was a Nading Ferry crossing near the site of modern U.S. 421, which ran until the Little Yadkin Bridge was built in 1920.)

To the south the Great Wagon Road crossed the Yadkin at Shallow Ford and ran straight south across South Carolina to Augusta, Georgia. Roads to the west ran across fertile farming lands of the Shacktown and Forebush areas (first settled in the 1740s) to Jonesville – where there was a covered toll bridge (the very first bridge over the Yadkin and which was not replaced until 1913) – and on to Wilkesboro.

Another road ran northeast to the New Garden Settlement and on to Guilford Courthouse (both now within Greensboro) and from there connected with the Trading Path going to the port at Fort Henry (Petersburg, Virginia). Another from Bethania ran either northward through Rural Hall to Old Hollow (Mount Airy) or to the southeast to Dobson's Crossroads (Kernersville).

One road to the north was the Dan River Road which left Salem and ran up past where my house now is on the north edge of modern Winston-Salem to connect with the road to Danville. This area where I now live was once owned by the Ogburn family. William Ogburn came to North Carolina from Mecklenberg, Virginia. His son, James Ogburn ran one of the very first tobacco farms in this state – which is why the plant diseases shared by members of the nightshade plant family (which includes potatoes and tomatoes as well as tobacco plants) affect my garden's

tomatoes grown in this soil so much.

The main road to the north, the Great Wagon Road ran from Bethania (on the northwest corner of Wachovia) to Town Fork (Germanton), the Dan River Settlement (Madison), across the southern Virginia mountains to Big Buffalo Lick (a marshy area rich in salt – now Roanoke), and then followed the valleys northward to the Schuylkill River ferry into Philadelphia.

These roads allowed travel and trade throughout the area. At times it could take 8 days to go from Town Fork (Germanton) to the Rowan county seat at Trading Camp (Salisbury). The roads throughout Wachovia became better in the 1780's when the road sides were ditched to divert water off the roadbed.

The Moravian industries were so strong during the Revolution that when the North Carolina Assembly considered paying a premium for goods produced domestically (as opposed to being imported from Britain), it was feared that the Moravians would get all the contracts. In fact, many of the supplies for American troops were ordered from the Salem warehouse including cloth for uniforms and leather for shoes.

During this time a farming community was growing about 9 miles further south along the southern border of Wachovia. Adam Spach was the original settler of the South Fork community. He originally came from Pfaffenheim in the Alsace area of Germany with his parents as indentured servants to a Mennonite in Pennsylvania. Even though just 13 years old, Adam worked to repay the cost of his own passage to America. In 1752, at the age of 33, he married Maria Elizabeth Hueter, a recent immigrant from Wurtemberg, Germany.

Adam Spach had first met the Moravians in Manakosy, Pennsylvania, in 1753 when he met the 3 Moravians returning from having accompanied the original Moravian settlers to Bethabara. They told him of the good and inexpensive land available there.

It didn't take Spach long to move to North Carolina and buy a farm on the first creek (3 miles) south of the Wachovia property. There he built himself a log hut. The Spach farm was just 15 miles south of Bethabara and he began trying to get a Moravian church established in his community.

In 1758 a Moravian minister preached to 8 families in Spach's house. Afterward on appointed times one of the men of South Fork would be waiting at the Middle Fork Creek with an extra horse for the minister to ride back to their meeting house and thus assisted his travel to hold their worship service.

Spach even cut a road to connect his farm with the Bethabara settlement. When it was discovered that the South Fork area was a good source for mill stones, the Moravians widened the road to allow the passage of their wagons to carry the stones.

Later Adam Spach built himself a sturdy and secure 30 x 36 foot 1-1/2 story rock house. It was built on a slope over a spring so that, if attacked by Indians, his family and livestock could be safely sheltered in the basement.

By the time Salem was settled, many more families had moved into the South Fork area – including the Voltz family – and a Moravian minister was holding services in homes in the South Fork community once each month.

The South Fork community by 1770, although it was still just a loose collection of farms without any other central town or industry, built their own 34 by 28 foot church and schoolhouse and had a full time Moravian minister/school teacher. And the settlers organized themselves into the Society under der Ens, or South Fork Society, giving their meeting house the name Friedberg – meaning in German: Peaceful Hill.

Peter Voltz was elected First Steward of the new Friedberg church and school. At first the boys and girls were taught separately, but at the insistence of their parents, the Rev. Badhol (their first pastor and school teacher) gave in and taught them together – a first for Moravians.

Because of its original formation by several non-Moravian German settlers, the Friedberg society remained somewhat autonomous from the other Moravians. Their members did not always adhere to the rather strict guidelines imposed in Salem regarding marriage, property, and other community matters.

Altogether by 1776 the Moravians in Wachovia numbered more than 500. Of that number, the community of Friedberg had grown to 19 families with 94 children.

The Moravians of North Carolina were a pacifist sect which did not participate in the war effort because of their conscientious scruples against fighting. Many of the German people already settled in America had fled the inequalities of the Old World to create a new society that allowed them a life free of the demands of kings and princes. Even so, the Test Act required them to take an oath of allegiance and to pay heavy fines for their refusal to join the militia. The Moravians paid a triple tax in lieu of military service.

By the autumn of 1780 Matthaues Noeding had found the friendly German speaking families located in Friedberg, North Carolina. The 54 year old Johann Peter Voltz, a cooper by trade, lived in Friedberg with his wife Eva Elisabetha Jacke, who was then 57 years old, and their two children. They had been married in Gundershoffen, the town of their births in Lower Alsace, Germany (about 28 miles north of Stasbourg or about 250 miles south and west of Bergheim, and now a part of France). Their marriage was on January 18th, 1744, when he was 18 and she was 21.

Five years later, after the death of two infant sons, the Voltz couple immigrated on the ship *Dragon* to Heidelberg, Pennsylvania, in October of 1749. After the deaths of four more infant sons and one infant daughter, around 1766 they moved with their remaining daughter, Eva Catharina, and son, Johan Heinrich Voltz, from Pennsylvania to Friedberg, North Carolina. There Johann, Sr., bought 200 acres of land extending from South Fork Creek to the Spach Store. The Johann Voltz's land lay right along the southern most border of Wachovia on both sides of the the Great Wagon Road.

Matthaues worked a while on the Voltz farm in Friedberg. Then Johan gave him a good recommendation and Matthaues moved on to Salem. There he found a town that looked much like his home town of Bergheim. Many solid brick houses and community buildings, and others built in the German half-timber style. Water was brought to the town square and several of its main buildings through wooden pipes from a spring on a hill one mile away. Nearly every one there spoke his native German language. And he most-likely enjoyed the treat of Moravian sugar-cake from the Salem bakery.

In Salem Matthaues found something else that was very familiar to him. The Single Brothers were engaged in flax weaving. This

was a trade that Matthaeus knew well from his days as an apprentice back home in Bergheim.

Moravian Brother Gottfried Praezel had been the first tradesman to set up his craft in Salem. Back on October 10th of 1766 just as soon as the second permanent building at Salem had its windows and doors installed, Praezel had moved his loom in and begun work there making cloth. So now Matthaeus asked Praezel to give him work that he might support himself there in Salem operating one of the two looms in the Single Brothers House. The Salem Conference, in charge of everything that happened there, on September 23rd, 1780, granted Matthaeus' repeated request and was taken into the weave-shed on trial.

The Single Brother's House provided unmarried young men a place to live and work in Salem. All the single brothers were taught English. Some lived there all their lives. Most just stayed there until they were married when they would set up their own household.

Even so, the Single Brothers operated most of the industries in Salem during those early years: farming, milling, brewing, distilling, cooking, baking, laundry, weaving, tailoring, shoe making, blacksmithing, locksmithing, clock making, cabinet making, tobacco manufacturing, saddle making, gun making, stock raising, butchering, and tannery. With most of these industries making a profit, the Single Brothers House was a busy and productive place. Gradually over the years each of these industries was privatized and moved out of the Single Brothers House.

Sleeping quarters for the 30 to 50 men who lived in the house at one time were on the second floor. A kitchen with a large oven in the basement provided all their meals, for a small fee – although the poor were exempted – and the kitchen never showed a profit. Each brother had to fetch his own water and milk for breakfast and supper from the spring-house below the garden near the creek at the bottom of the hill behind the house. Tile stoves provided heat when it was cold.

In addition to living space, the Single Brothers House and annex building had ample space devoted to the various trades the men were employed to perform. Each of the brothers (and sisters living in the Single Sisters House) received wages for their work.

To announce the hours a large bell was rung with two strokes to signal the start of the work day at 7:00 A.M., lunch time at 11:30, and end of each work day, at sunset, or not later than 7:00 P.M., in the summer. (This practice continued until 1822.) When Matthaueus arrived it was in a new bell tower constructed earlier that year, 1780, after the first tower became rotten, weak, and in danger of collapsing. The new tower was 12 foot square and as tall as the church house. It was faced with brick with a sloped cap to protect the bell from the elements. The peal of the 275 pound bell would often frighten horses.

Strict Moravian rules governed the lives among the Single Brothers in Salem. There were daily early morning prayers and an evening service as well. And at certain fixed intervals the house warden had an individual conversation with each brother in reference to his soul. Each night the house doors were locked at a certain time.

Among other things Salem rules required that young men and young women not mingle together. Even when they were free from work and church worship services on Sunday afternoons and they were allowed to go on walks about the town, the single men and single women had to walk in opposite directions.

If there were any matrimonial thoughts, these were to be told to the house warden. He would relay them to the Church Council for consideration. Part of their consideration process would be to put the question to the Lot. Then if there was no objection, the Council would inform the warden of the Single Sisters House, who would, in turn, inform the intended sister. The sister's response would be carried back through the same channels.

But not all of a Single Brother's life was dreary work and following the strict Moravian rules. They had a summer-house at the south-east corner of their garden which provided a place for passing their free time on Sunday afternoons with pipes and cigars. Plus music was recommended as a substitute for all "idle pursuits" of young people and played a major role in their lives with music being taught in both the Boys School and the Girls School. In the Single Brothers House was a closet in the sleeping quarters where sheet music was kept neatly stored. A small organ was in their meeting room where the Salem orchestra met and practiced.

And there seemed to always be time for mischief, most often at the house warden's expense. Wasps, cockleburrs, and the like were often placed in the warden's bed. And once they all conspired to jump out of bed all at once making a great thump in the middle of the night. This frightened the warden who thought the ceiling or roof was falling, but on checking he found everything in order and everyone sleeping soundly as if nothing had happened. Upon his return to bed the sound was heard again, but, again, seemingly by him alone as everyone else looked still sound asleep. The next morning no one except the house warden could recall having heard anything out of the ordinary all night long.

Even with this occasional lightheartedness, the strictness of life in Salem must not have fit well with Matthaeus' desired life style, because he kept going back to the more lenient Friedberg society. It was noted in the Conference's Minutes just 4 months later that "Matthew Noeding has left us *again* and has gone to Friedberg. Brother Beck shall be asked to notice closely whether, as rumor says, Noeding has it in mind to marry Peter Frey's daughter."

This disappearance would have occurred during the time that British General Cornwallis was chasing the American Army of General Greene across South Carolina and towards Salem in January of 1781. Matthaeus might have thought it wise to disappear into the woods around the farms of Friedberg rather than risk being captured by either of the armies.

In early 1781 American troops were quartered in specially built barracks and operated a military hospital at Salem from January 4th through February 4th. Salem, also, built a powder magazine to safely store the several wagon loads of gunpowder and ammunition the soldiers brought with them. Their British prisoners were marched through Salem on February 2nd – all of whom the Moravians were required to provision.

Then, on their heels came Cornwallis with his 2500 British and Hessian troops accompanied by another 3000 camp followers on February 9th and 10th wrecking havoc upon both Bethania and the Friedland (a few miles east of Friedberg) communities taking nearly every cow, horse, and chicken the hungry soldiers could seize as they passed through. They even tore down fences and outbuildings to use as firewood to cook their stolen meals. Just the encampment of the thousands of soldiers and their accompanying crowds ruined the farm lands where they set up their camp.

At Bethania Cornwallis took over the house of George Hauser for his overnight stay. The ladies of Bethania were forced to bake 100 pounds of bread for the British troops. And when they left they took with them 60 cattle, 17 horses, 18 oxen, and all the sheep and chickens they could carry.

A Mrs. Williams sent a slave girl with a goose to Lord Cornwallis. She told him that he and his men had taken virtually everything else, so he might as well have the one poor goose she had left. Cornwallis returned the goose, but kept the slave!

When Cornwallis passed through Salem the town leaders invited him to a luncheon ... while his troops kept on marching through town. And so the harm to Salem was much less than that at the two Moravian towns on either side of Salem were they camped overnight.

One officer did go into the Salem bakery to get some cakes. He unbuckled his sword belt and sword and laid them upon the counter. While he was distracted getting his order, a young patriotic Moravian boy put it out of sight under the counter. With his cakes bundled under his arms the officer left the bakery forgetting about his sword. Afterwards when the lad was reprimanded for being deceitful, he said, "Well, they are our enemies, and we want to do them all the harm we can." (Two revolutionary swords are still in possession of the Moravians. Perhaps one of them is this same sword.)

As Cornwallis moved his column which stretched out 10 to 12 miles long traveling on multiple parallel roads through Wachovia on his way to Guilford Courthouse he requisitioned wagon loads of supplies and the wagons, horses, and drivers to transport them. Amongst their other destructions, the soldiers brought smallpox to the Moravian communities, especially the Friedberg area, sickening 96 and killing 5 there.

During the battle at Guilford Courthouse on March 15th Cornwallis found his troops about to be overwhelmed by the Americans under General Nathanael Greene. So Cornwallis ordered his artillery to fire grapeshot directly into a crowd of both American and his own Hessian Guard troops engaged in hand to hand combat. This avoided their being overrun by the Americans, but left many of his own Hessian soldiers dead or wounded lying on the field. Although it was a technical victory for Cornwallis, his

losses left him too weak to further engage the enemy and he was forced to march to the North Carolina coast where they were taken by ship to Yorktown in Virginia – where the final victory by Washington, aided by the French, ended the war there just 7 months later.

After the battle at Guilford Courthouse was over, the Moravians sent rags for bandages to the military hospital set up there to tend the wounded.

The official Moravian archives tell of several Hessian deserters from Cornwallis's army in February and March of 1781 who were glad to find German speech and hospitality among the Moravians. Two of them were lodged in the home of Heinrich Krieger at Bethania in April.

Another of the Hessian deserters was the baggage handler for General Cornwallis, himself. While crossing the rain swollen Yadkin River on their way north from Salisbury, he lost a very expensive cup from the wagon. Cornwallis threatened him with courtmartial and possible hanging, so young Henning deserted and hid among the Germans in Wachovia. He became the ancestor of the Henning families now living in this area.

Matthaeus' name appears again in the Moravian Archive minutes for August 21st, 1782: It was mentioned that “Matthew Noeting plans to marry the daughter of the elder Volz, and buy a farm.”

On July the 4th of 1783 the first celebration of American independence and peace was celebrated at Salem and each of the 6 Moravian settlements in Wachovia. Their celebrations included their trombones, a thanksgiving church service, and an evening torchlight procession through town.

One of those celebrations was held at Friedberg where 26 year old Matthaeus had just the month before on Tuesday, June 10th, 1783, married 21 year old Eva Catharina Voltz. They were blessed there with the arrival of George Nading, the first of their 7 children, on May 27th the next year.

Food was scarce in 1784 and 1786. Salem grew to a population of over 1000. The town bought 2 hand pumped fire engines from Europe. After they arrived in May of 1785 a demonstration was put on showing that they could shoot water over the highest roof

in town. They were at first housed in in a small building used to dry fruit.

And by 1786, when Matthaeus was 30, he owned 200 acres of farm land, Wachovia Lot #106, crossing Lick Creek about 6 miles south of Salem and 3 miles east of Friedberg.

That year brought more changes to Salem. In July the first English speaking service was held at the church and was repeated every other Sunday afterward. And in November the southern addition was completed on the Single Brothers House.

During this time Wachovia was in Surry County and the county seat was at Old Richmond, a town of just 20 houses and the courthouse on a steep hill overlooking an Indian village at Donnaha on the banks of the Yadkin River below. In 1787 Andrew Jackson was licensed to practice law in North Carolina at Old Richmond. He later became the 7th President of the United States.

Old Richmond developed such a bad reputation that, in one writers words, in 1839 a cyclone “swept the wicked little place off the face of the earth, blowing ... shingles as far as Danbury and Germanton.” Old Richmond was never rebuilt.

In October of 1787 two families from the Friedberg community became the first Moravians to move further west when they moved over the mountains. These would be the first of a stream which would eventually include Noeding's descendants who became my ancestors. On December 9th of that year a second son was born to Matthaeus and Eva, Johanes Nading, named after his maternal grandfather.

And that same year the University of North Carolina was officially established at Chapel Hill although the first student did not arrive until 1795. Wake Forest College, now located in Winston Salem, was not founded until 1834.

As the Friedberg community grew they built a second church house near their original schoolhouse. The new building was consecrated on March 12th, of 1788.

In 1789 Stokes county was formed out of Surry county and the county seat was moved to Germanton (the community formerly known as Town Fork) just to the north of Wachovia. Another

change which still affects southern Moravian life was made that year when the decision to switch from serving English tea to coffee at the Christmas Love Feasts was made. And the use of the lot to decide marriages was ended everywhere except in Salem.

The original Moravian doctor in Wachovia, Dr. Jacob Bonn who had served there since 1759, died suddenly of a stroke. A new physician, Dr. Samuel Benjamin Vierling, arrived in Salem on February 26, 1790. The new 25 year old doctor had been sent directly from medical school in Berlin, Germany, by the Moravian leaders. He married Anna Elizabeth Bagge, the daughter of Salem leader and town merchant Traugott Bagge.

And on March 23rd, 1790, a third son was born into the growing Nading family, Simeon Nading.

At the end of May in 1791 President George Washington stopped at Salem for 2 whole days on his tour of the southern states. His travel of the 35 miles from Salisbury to Salem took 11 hours with 2 stops to eat and a slow fording of the Yadkin River.

A great number of people, even from surrounding communities, came to Salem to see their new President in person – perhaps even Matthaues and his growing family who lived just 6 miles south of Salem. The Moravians proudly showed Washington around their thriving community which included a paper mill (which operated until 1873) at Peter's Creek. The President was especially interested in Salem's waterworks since the nations capital, Philadelphia, was then in the planning stages of their own public water system.

On July 18th of that year the Salem town clock (still in use today) was first seen and heard strike the hours from a newly painted bell tower at the northeast corner of the square.

The next year the new United States Postal Service added Salem as one of its regular stops. Just like clockwork, the mail was delivered to the Salem Post Office every other Monday. Letters that once might take months to reach places like Philadelphia, now only took days!

Democratic thinking was thriving all across the new United States, including the Moravians in Wachovia, especially the young ones. Rules were being questioned. Individuals acted on their own

without the approval of Moravian church leaders. Young boys ran through the streets and played ball after school instead of working at useful jobs. An outside hat maker was hired without consulting the leaders. And one Moravian even ran for a seat in the state legislature ... and won!

Then on January 18th, 1793, a daughter was born to the Nading family, Anna Rosina Nading. That same month the Friedberg schoolhouse was expanded, but many were not able to attend because the freezing weather made it too cold for their feet since those children did not have shoes or stockings. Later that same year a bridge was built across the South Fork Creek at Friedberg which made travel much easier and safer.

The Friedberg Moravian minister recorded a visit to the Nading family on April 1st, 1794, which found them "all well and content." And that year the Salem Boy's Schoolhouse was constructed complete with sleeping space on the 3rd floor – moving this function out of the Single Brothers House.

The town clock was needing new paint by 1795. So it was painted black with shiny gold leafed numerals.

On February 27th, 1796, Matthaues' fourth son was born, Christian Nading.

In 1797, as a missionary outreach, the Salem Easter celebration was moved back outside to God's Acre to encourage larger crowds. That year 900 people attended, although only 244 people lived in Salem at the time ... and now, more than 210 years later, thousands still attend the Home Moravian Easter Sunrise Service held there each year.

Work in advance of the construction on a new church at Salem had already begun in 1797 with the making of 50,000 bricks (of the 117,000 total needed). Stone for its construction was obtained from the Friedberg area and hauled in horse drawn wagons to the building site with many of those men in the Friedberg community, such as Matthaues, helping in that effort.

Also that year the first street lights were installed at Salem to light the way at night. Things even got a bit more refined that year at the rural Friedberg church where the Noeding's attended when its inside walls were painted in May.

The Nading's fifth son, Martin, was born the next year on August 2nd, 1798.

On January 20th, 1799, Adam Spach, the original settler of Friedberg, earlier known as South Fork, had a big celebration for his 80th birthday.

Despite Matthaeus Noeding's actions when he first arrived at Salem, as he grew older he became a pious man and was elected Second Steward at the Friedberg church on June 22, 1800.

The year 1800 marks a major change point in Moravian life. The young people were growing up and assuming responsibility, as in the case of Matthaeus just noted, and the older generation was beginning to die off. On April 1st of 1800 Traggout Bagge, perhaps their most influential leader during the Revolutionary period, died.

A few months later on, November 11th, 1800, the Salem Home Moravian church (which is still in use today) was consecrated. Expecting a large crowd, the bakery made 1000 buns to serve at the Love Feast to be held that afternoon. But when they saw the actual crowd that showed up from communities all around Salem, each of these buns was cut in half before serving, and even then there were barely enough pieces to serve everyone in attendance – probably including Matthaeus Noeding and his young family.

The town clock was moved to the west gable on the front of their new church building. It was given a new larger copper face, longer hands, and a minute hand was added.

Stagecoach service came to Salem that year as well, although it was not yet regularly scheduled. But by 1804 Salem had 2 stage wagons: one with 4 horses for heavy hauling, and one with 2 horses. These made travel throughout Wachovia much easier. A few years later a regular stagecoach run was made to Baltimore covering the 400 mile trip in just 14 days!

In the summer of 1801 the town built Dr. Vierling and his new wife a large new house for his medical practice and apothecary. It was the largest private dwelling in Salem. The very next year when threatened by a new smallpox epidemic in June, Salem was spared because of the newly introduced inoculations with cowpox they were given by their new doctor.

Friedberg's founding father, Adam Spach, died on August 23rd, 1801.

That same month the Stokes County government, from the county seat in Germanton, rebuilt the bridge over the Salem Creek just south of town. This meant that responsibility for all future upkeep and repair expenses would be on the Stokes county government, not Salem town expenses as before.

Matthaeus and Eva's last child, Joseph Nading, was born on February 9th, 1802, when Matthaeus was 45 years old and Eva had just turned 40.

Around this time the Moravians began providing ministers to hold services in surrounding area Lutheran churches, including the Hopewell church a few miles south of Salem. Hopewell was later transformed into a Moravian church. Matthaeus and Eva's youngest son, my Great-Great-Great Grandfather, Joseph Nading is buried there.

The Salem Market Square Firehouse was finally built in 1803 to house their 2 fire engines giving them a proper central storage location 18 years after they first arrived.

The foundation for the Salem Girls Boarding School was laid in October of 1803 as an expansion of the Girls School started in 1772. The first class with non-Moravians attending began in 1804. And by 1805 had 41 pupils from Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Georgia. And the school is still instructing young girls today as Salem College – the oldest educational institution for women in the United States – using many of the original buildings there on the Salem town square with over 1100 pupils from all parts of the world.

Many things were changing in the new United States of America. And this included its currency. In May of 1805 the Moravians in Wachovia officially switched to American dollars and cents from the old English standard of pounds, shillings, and pence.

This period was a time of prosperity and unwelcome changes in Wachovia. There were more travelers, more coaches, more varied entertainments, and even circuses, all of which the Moravian leaders sought to hinder. Of the latter, they said it was a “show of all kinds of foreign animals by day and a circus by night [with] ...

all sorts of juggling and unfitting tricks which would injure modesty and lead to immorality and might be detrimental to the character of our town." But finally they decided to allow it and put the responsibility on the tavern keeper to make certain that the strangers did not "undertake anything unfitting to our town."

Even examination time at the Girls Boarding School each year brought unwelcome events to Salem for a week as the parents and other wealthy patrons of the school arrived. Their fancy coaches clattered up and down the streets as final tests were given and rehearsals for the songs and recitations of the exam ceremony were underway. Moreover, there were parties at night at the Salem tavern with loud talk, raucous laughter, bold stories, and worse of all, much dancing. The tavern keeper was instructed to "prevent [these things] as much as possible."

It seemed that the Salem tavern was the center of the undesirable chaos because it was the place strangers stayed in during their visits – and the one place where strong spirits produced in the Salem distillery were served. And even though it was built on the edge of Salem and without any street-level windows in the front, its wild influences seemed to seep out anyway and often led the young Moravians astray with drinking and the like. So the council instructed the tavern keeper and his staff to operate "so that by their conduct, without words, [they would] testify to Jesus' death, and in their difficult office and calling, be an honor to the Lord and Congregation." This was a difficult role to perform.

Another difficult role was that of town Forester. From as early as 1759 the Moravians had sought to conserve their forests with no wasting of the wood nor needless cutting of trees. Certain types of trees were to be used only for particular uses; even those on one's "own" town lot could only be used as directed.

Straight wood was not to be used for firewood; all branches were to be saved for firewood. And everyone was barred from cutting cherry trees.

The sale of firewood was considered an important source of community income. But by 1797 trees in the Salem town lot were becoming rather scarce after 30 years of consumption and its use was limited to the community owned businesses.

Firewood was an important resource in towns like Salem. It was

used year round for cooking. And wood stoves were the primary heat source for homes in Salem, as well as in larger public buildings like the Single Brothers' House, in the winter.

To supplement his family's income Matthaues hauled a load of firewood into Salem on Thursday, March 19th, 1807. Traveling with him was his son. (Just which one we don't know, but it was likely his oldest, George, who was named after Matthaues' grandfather. George would have been 22 and unmarried at the time.)

Matthaues road astride the left-hand horse pulling their wagon. On their way back home after making his delivery, his team of "horses were startled and bolted." The horses "ran away with the empty wagon." Even though he was astride one of the horses, when "he tried to hold them back," his efforts were in vain. "His son ... raced ahead by a short cut, and caught the bridle of one of the lead horses. But he could not stop [the runaway team], and [he] was thrown to the ground. [Fortunately the son] was not hurt."

Meanwhile Matthaues "retained his seat in the saddle for" all of this time, still trying to slow the runaway team which was pulling the empty wagon at breakneck speed down the dirt road. When everything else failed, Matthaues "turned the horses into the woods to stop them. [But as the team ran into the undergrowth along side the road] a small tree, about the size of a man's arm, was forced between the wagon tongue and the saddle-horse." The impact tore even the tough harness. "The tree injured his right leg and threw Matthaues to the ground. He saw at once that his leg was pitifully crushed and broken."

When he caught up with the wrecked wagon the son was able to get his father into the wagon and re-hitch the now settled team and get back to their home where his mother could tend to the wounds. However, "further examination showed that [his right leg was splintered to such an extent that] ... nothing [could] be done except [have the leg] taken off. So [two days later] on the 21st [Matthaues] was brought from his home [at Friedberg] to Salem. [There he] lodged in the house of Brother Christoph Reich."

"At four o'clock [on Saturday] afternoon he was commended to the Lord in prayer." Matthaues said that "if it was the Savior's pleasure to call him out of the world through the means of this

accident, he would go with his heart content and wholly surrendered to His will. He knew that the Savior through grace would take him to Himself as a poor sinner who simply placed his trust in Him and His merit." Then [Dr.] "Vierling performed the operation."

"The [Salem] congregation took a most sympathetic interest in the sad accident, as did the members from Friedberg and Friedland, who visited [Matthaeus] frequently in the following days." From his sick bed he could hear the town clock – now located in the gable end of the Salem church – striking the hours of the days. The town clock was originally made in the Moravian community at Herrnhut, Germany. Just the year before Matthaeus' accident additional mechanisms had been added by a Salem craftsman to the clock works. So while lying on his sick bed Matthaeus could hear it strike the quarter hours as well, just as it can be heard by visitors to Salem today.

Outside Matthaeus' window over the next several days Salem was abuzz with special events, because Easter Sunday was the next week. Easter is the most important day of the year at Salem, then just as it is now, because it exemplifies their hope of resurrection after death into eternal life because of their faith in their already risen Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The first recorded "Sunrise Service" took place in 1732 among the Single Brethren in the Moravian Congregation at Herrnhut, Saxony, in what is now Germany. Following an all-night vigil they went before dawn to the town graveyard, God's Acre, on the hill above the town, to celebrate the Resurrection among the graves of the departed. This service was repeated the following year by the whole congregation and subsequently spread with the Moravian missionaries around the world ... and to Salem.

The Moravian Easter celebration encompasses more than just the events early on one single morning. A series of services fill the Passion Week following the pattern of the last week of their dear Savior's life: readings, melodies, poetry, and sacred drama start on the previous Sunday and continue every evening of the week until Thursday. Then from Thursday through Saturday afternoon the most solemn scenes from the Bible are reviewed and their remembrance of the sufferings of Christ are accompanied by suitable hymns being sung. On Saturday afternoon they assemble for a Love-Feast exhibiting their love for one-another.

Many loyal Moravians never sleep that night, known as the Great Sabbath. And then very early in the morning, long before dawn, they go around the village awakening the sleeping inhabitants with an Easter morning chorale performed on their trombones – and, weather permitting, accompanied by flutes, clarinets, bassoons, violins, and cellos.

When everyone is assembled in front of the church, the service begins with readings and songs. Then they all move to God's Acre where lie their departed dear loved ones, family, and friends, and those who have carried on this Good News to those now celebrating there, as well as to other parts of the world. There in God's Acre they hear the announcement by the choir that the Master is risen from the dead! Assisted by the trombone choir, the singing choir, and the ministers, the service is concluded in the open air just as the first gleams of sunrise tint the eastern sky. And then singing a song of rejoicing everyone slowly departs.

The very first Easter Sunday celebrated at Salem had been just 36 years before in 1771, when the 2 year old community held their celebration inside their little temporary multipurpose congregation hall because there were no graves yet in God's Acre at Salem.

By March 29th, 1807 when Matthaëus lay on his sick bed listening to the trombones celebrating Easter in the early morning there, the Moravians at Salem had their new, permanent, and still in use today, church building and had been meeting to celebrate Easter outside of that building for 10 years due to the large crowds which always showed up for this celebration – and still do to this day over 200 years later. That morning about 1000 people walked the path to God's Acre in time to watch the sun rise in the east. Many of that number were outside visitors, not German speaking Moravians, and so the litany was prayed in the English language that morning.

In the days after his amputation, Matthaëus “felt very weak and had much to suffer from the wound as well as from other maladies. He often prayed ardently to the Savior for himself and for his dear wife, [Eva,] and [their] children. [Eva] faithfully cared for him, and the children visited him frequently. He ... also [was] faithfully attended by the doctor and [had] visits both from the members of [the Salem] congregation [and] those of Friedberg and the other congregations.”

“As the wound began to heal, he for the most part seemed to be recovering. Nevertheless his heart [seemed] concentrated more on going [to heaven] and [he] declined in health. He asked that in case [he were to die at Salem], he might have a little place of rest in [Salem's] God's Acre.”

On Monday, April 20th, Matthaeus “visited his family once more at home [in Friedberg] and took that opportunity to take leave of his dear wife and family. In a heartfelt prayer he commended himself and them all to the Savior for grace.” He then returned to Salem.

“In his increasing weakness it was a special pleasure for him when hymn verses were sung by his sickbed. Once, after the singing of the verses: 'Only let me, Lord Jesus, even unto death, immovably keep you before my eyes for my comfort, in that eternally beautiful picture of you as Redeemer as you on the cross have so tenderly poured out your blood for me,' he said: 'O what beautiful words! What beautiful verses! What comfort and refreshment for the heart is therein!'"

As his health continued to decline “he spent his last days for the most part in slumber. In the [morning] of the 29th one could see that his end was approaching, and he was given the blessing for his going home. ... After that, early on the 30th [of April, 1807,] at [4 o'clock in the morning], the faithful and elect soul [of Matthaeus Noeding] passed into the arms of [his] Redeemer.”

According to the established Salem tradition, next the trombonists would have been notified, and they would have quickly gathered on the little balcony just below the clock on the church. From there they would have sounded out the news of the home going of their Moravian Brother Matthaeus Noeding. His funeral, in the usual manner at Salem, would have included orchestral and organ accompaniment to a choir of the Moravian brothers and sisters singing from their separate balcony locations on either side of the organ at Home Moravian Church.

Matthaeus Noeding lived just 50 years, 4 months, and 6 days, here on this earth. And he was buried in God's Acre right here in Salem over 200 years ago.

Of course much has happened in those years since then:

Eva remarried about 3 years later and died 35 years after that

when she was 83.

Matthaeus' youngest son, Joseph Nading, was just 5 years old when his father died. He grew up and married a local Friedberg girl, Elizabeth Fischel. They lived in the Friedberg community and had two children before she died in childbirth with their third. Joseph went on to marry two more times and was buried at the age of 81 in the Hopewell Moravian God's Acre not far from the location of his father's original farm.

Joseph and Elizabeth's oldest, a son, Matthew Nading, was born February 12th, 1827, and married Mary Ann Fishel from Friedberg. Among their seven children is their eldest daughter, Eliza Ernestina Lucresta Nading, born February 22, 1856. Matthew died when he was just 38 years old.

Joseph's eldest brother, George Nading, was among the first Moravian missionary families to move to West Salem, Illinois, in 1840, to spread the Gospel to that new frontier area. And not long afterwards the younger Matthew's widow, Mary Ann Fishel Nading, gathered up her young family and, along with her parents, moved west to join the Moravians in West Salem.

Five miles to the south at Bone Gap, Illinois, Matthew and Mary Ann Nading's daughter Eliza married a young man recently arrived from England, Charles Marcellus Hocking. They had several sons and 2 daughters, Mary and Luvina Hocking.

When Luvina was 19 she and her parents moved further west to Corning, Arkansas. There she met a young man, also recently arrived from Illinois, William Oscar Attebery. They were married the next year, 1911.

After this new family had moved a few miles to the north into Missouri Oscar and Luvina's oldest daughter, Marie, met and married a young man whose family had recently moved into the Buncombe Community. He was Johnie E. Baxter.

A few years later, while living in Corning in 1951, Johnie and Marie had a son, John Roger Baxter. ... And that is where I come into this story, and why I have told you this story, the story of my Great-great-great-great-grandfather, Matthaeus Noeding.

Now, over 250 years after his life's story began, I just happened to

find myself living in the same area, and walking the same streets, as he walked. And I just happened to learn about him ... and his life ... and I wanted to share his tale of trials and terrors and triumphs with you.

Thank you for sharing your time with me today to learn about the memorable life of Matthaëus Noeding. And now whenever you visit, or hear of one of these places or events or related people, remember the part that Matthaëus played in our history ... the history that made us who we are today and can help guide us through the events of our tomorrows.

NOTE: This text is currently being developed as a video documentary by Roger Baxter and so, at least in some places, may read a little odd since it is designed to be supplemented by various illustrations and diagrams to help the viewer's understanding of the story. This text is being made available online so that other family members and other interested individuals may become more aware of our ancestor and the historical events surrounding his memorable life. – You can contact the author at JRBRO@RogerBaxter.com