

THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF QUEBEC IN 1776

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As a German-Americans deeply devoted to our share in the building of the United States, and therefore repelled by the materialism of the Germanies of Europe in our time, we have always envied the French Canadians their tenacity in holding to their language and culture in Quebec. Our admiration for this tenacious love for the "Muttersprache, Mutterlaut" compelled us to end an address which we were invited to give recently at a Symposium dedicated to the theme "Tradition, Integration, Reception" with the words: "The French Language and Tradition in Quebec: Vivat, Crescat, Floreat." We should now like to follow up these sentiments with a few observations from our research since then on the one positive aspect of the part the German mercenaries from Brunswick played in helping preserve the French tradition in Quebec.

At the start we refer to Gustave Lanctot's book *Canada and the American Revolution, 1774-1783*. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1967.) His study has shown how close the Americans came to getting the Canadians to join the American Revolution. Lanctot was a very well informed man and one thoroughly at home in the French Canadian archives, which, like the German American archives have been so much overlooked by historians. In our view, however, Lanctot overlooks the significance of the German presence in Canada at the critical time when they appeared. The Americans had taken Montreal and were very close to taking Quebec, when they lost their inspiring leader. Records of the German mercenaries, such as the diary of Lt. Du Roi the Elder, recognize this fully, in fact, when the Germans set sail for Quebec, they even took along special landing boats in case Quebec should by that time have fallen to the Americans, and when they approached North American shores, the first news

to be brought to them before they got near Quebec, was that the siege had been lifted.

Adjutant and Lieutenant Du Roi I of the Prinz Friedrich Regiment on June 6, 1776, records in his diary: "In the morning the Regiment of Dragoons debarked and Lieutenant Colonel Baum was named Commander of Quebec." On June 14th: "On this day the Regiment Prinz Friedrich debarked in the afternoon and finally we exchanged the really hateful stay on the ships with the garrison in Quebec, after we had spent 90 days on the water. The regiment lined up on the shore in the lower part of the city and with flying banners marched up to the fort. It may rightly be asserted that the present garrisons of Quebec are the first Germans who ever, since Columbi discovery of the 4th part of the world, in closed regiments with their banners and weapons, stepped on the shores of America. A truth, which by all means deserves to be noted in history." (See his diary in Library of Congress. We are preparing it for publication.)

Another diary kept by an unidentified officer of the Prinz Friedrich Regiment writes — and we translate: "On the 6th of June the Regiments of Dragoons and Prinz Friedrich for the first time occupied the watches in Quebec. On the 14th of June the Regiment Prinz Friedrich disembarked and with flying banners and stirring music marched to the fort in Quebec for the purpose of occupation, several days after the Dragoons had already moved in. The high officers had to rent their own quarters . . . The non-commisioned officers and common soldiers were placed in the barracks not far from the Palais Gaté, except for the Major's company, which was assigned to several rooms in the Seminary. On the 17th of June by order of Major Hille, 300 men were quartered on the other side of the St. Lawrence River in the Parish St. Joseph at Point Levy, which bears its name from the first Quebeccan. These men entered a camp from which they were relieved every 14 days."

The reason for this special occupation on the other side of the St. Lawrence River was, that that part was still considered friendly to the Americans, who had not yet withdrawn from Canadian territory. This was the next task to which German

troops were assigned immediately, and before time came for the German troops in the field to go into winter quarters, the Americans, recognizing the superior fresh forces that had come from England and Germany to do battle with them, withdrew from Canadian soil to prepare the trap for these forces at Bennington and Saratoga, which then ended the brief success of Generals Burgoyne and Riedesel, bringing them into a long captivity, first in Massachusetts and then in Virginia. Colonel Baum, who had been named Commander of Quebec while the Germans occupied the city, lost his life in the Battle of Bennington, which turned the tide in favor of the Americans. We would emphasize, however, that the German records of the German occupation of Quebec and campaign through Quebec helped secure the establishment of French tradition and language in Quebec. Most of the German officers spoke French and their records show that they were on very friendly terms with the French Canadians, yes, even their German shows a strong French accent. By helping drive the Americans out of Quebec, they provided the affirmative action for French culture which today is asserting itself so powerfully in Quebec. Yet, we dare not forget that at the time of the German occupation French Canadian sentiment was also strongly American, and if the Americans had remained in Canada, i.e. if the British and German expeditionary forces had not arrived, the situation today might be completely different. The following incident during the German occupation may serve to explain this more fully.

The tour of duty at Point Levy described above must have been especially unpleasant and lonely, because on June 20 in the night going on the 21st, the musketeer Andreas Hasselmann deserted from his outpost, but was captured and on August 25, 1776, sentenced to be executed. In the absence of further detailed information but in consideration of the involvement of the German Society of Quebec in behalf of this deserter, it seems probable that he was motivated by the kindness that had been shown him by his former countrymen who were now leading a comfortable and peaceful life in Quebec and who wanted him to share it. This is exactly what

German-Americans did later when these German mercenaries, who had made the mistake of invading their territory, saw how well they lived. In the foreword to his already cited book, Lanctot says:

The American invasion of 1775, an important event in Canada's brief history, gave rise to a political and a religious crisis. The political crisis found expression in aid to the rebels to the south, refusal of militiamen to bear arms, the struggle between loyalist and pro-rebel Canadians, and a project for union with the American Colonies. The religious crisis manifested itself in repudiation of loyalist directives from the clergy, insults to the Bishop and to priests, the capture of priests and their removal to American camps, and excommunication of pro-rebels by the Bishop. By drawing Church and State within range of an impending upheaval, the invasion came within an ace of making Canada American territory and creating schism in the Canadian Church.

In this situation it seems proper to translate the following record from the diary of an unnamed Brunswick officer in the Prinz Friedrich Regiment. (Preussisches Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin. Heeresarchiv. Rep. 15A Handschriften. Nr. 382. From the photostat copy in the Library of Congress.)

Supplement to the diary of the year 1776, page 24, above, August 26th, concerning the announcement of death and the execution of the musketeer Andreas Hasselmann, who was sentenced to Arquebusade [A formal form of execution before the troops] Quebec September 4, 1776.

“The musketeer Hasselmann of His Serene Highness the Prince Friedrich Regiment and Major General von Stammer's company, who in the night from the 20th to the 21st of June 1776 deserted from the outmost double post of the Camp at Point Levy, according to confirmed laws of war on August 26 in the usual court room, in the presence of Regimental Adjutant Lieutenant Du Roi was notified of his death, but not the manner of the same, and that he would have only a few more days to live. He was immediately taken to the uppermost room of the Cape Diamond watch, a guard with drawn sword was assigned to him in this room and he was visited by the field chaplain. At each visit of the same, the guard stepped outside in front of the door. Now the delinquent was given better food

and each day $\frac{1}{2}$ measure (Quartier) of wine, which, like all other costs were paid by the Regiment. On September 2 the delinquent was given holy supper.

On September 3 in the morning at 8 by order of Major von Hille all higher and lower officers, drummers and common soldiers of the princely Regiment of Dragoons who were not on duty / these by special command of Major General von Riedesel / and of the Regiment of His Serene Highness Prinz Friedrich assembled at the usual parade grounds.

One Lieutenant, 3 non-commissioned officers, 1 drummer, and 30 men from the Regiment Prince Friedrich were commanded to bring the delinquent out of arrest. This detachment lined up at the left wing in 2 platoons, two men deep, marked time, and marched by the shortest route to Cape Diamond, there formed a square and awaited further orders, because the place of execution was near. The Dragoons and Regiment Prince Friedrich formed 1 battallion two men deep, marched to the Blacier Bastion and there formed a semi-circle, the ends of which reached to the edge of the wall. On the Cape Diamond side an opening remained for the detachment that was calling for the delinquent. This space was filled by non-commissioned officers.

Nine men from Major General von Stammer's Company designated for the purpose stepped into the middle of the circle in the first file, loaded, and dismounted bayonettes.

Auditor Wolpers saw to it that in good time 1 table and three chairs were carried to the place of execution and were set up on the right side in the circle in order to publicize the sentence for which 1 Captain (Diterichs) and 1 Officer (Lieutenant Heers) from the Regiment Prince Friedrich had been commanded.

Likewise on the part of the company it was seen to it that the chair on which the delinquent was to be shot, in similar manner the coffin together with the bier were carried there, and the first in the middle, the latter, however, placed on the left side of the circle, where 8 bearers lined up. After the detached officer had received orders to march up, the field chaplains led the delinquent into the square. The officer

marched away with very slow steps. The 3 non-commissioned officers were placed at the flank and behind. — As soon as the detachment entered the circle, the square opened. The preachers led the delinquent in front of the table, and he was unlocked. The detachment moved into the space that had been left open.

When all was still, the auditor while seated proceeded according to the painful order of judgement, read the sentence while standing and broke the stave.

The preachers escorted the delinquent to the chair. A non-commissioned officer took off his coat and vest, the arms were fixed to the chair, the eyes bandaged, and the black sign affixed to the shirt above the heart. At the notice of the Major the first 3 men already approached with cocked guns held high, when, while this was going on, Lieutenant Baum, commissioned by Major General von Riedesel, called out the pardon and Major von Hille received the letter of mercy.

Musketeer Hasselmann was bled immediately, and after he had recovered from his unconsciousness, the Auditor read the letter of mercy to him. Among other things this contained:

“that for moving reasons the musketeer Hasselman, after he has already really experienced the anguish of death, should be given his life and should also be free from all physical punishment.”

He was brought to the Cape Diamond watch for a short time and then dismissed from his arrest.

As sad as all these standing around were, so now the air was filled by the shouts of joy and the clapping of hands of the spectators because of the granted pardon, which was probably also caused by the supplication which the inhabitants of German nationality in Quebec had sent to Major General von Riedesel through a deputy.

The field chaplains testified that since announcement of his death, Hasselmann had behaved in a very Christian manner and had regretted his crime, and that he would have died blissfully confiding in the merit of the Saviour.

If Hasselmann had not been pardoned but would have been executed (arquebusiret), 8 men from Major General von Stammer's company would have placed him in the coffin, carried him to the churchyard and would have buried him there."

The full German text of the pardon has not been found, but there are four letters in French, then the official language of such communications:

1. A letter of August 27, 1776, signed by fourteen German citizens of Quebec, to General von Riedesel, pleading for the life of Andreas Hasselmann, who has been condemned to death for desertion.

2. Letter of August 29, 1776, by General von Riedesel answering the supplication of the Germans in Quebec, granting the pardon, although he deserved death. The pardon addressed to Lieutenant Colonel Baum is listed but seems lost.

3. Letter of thanks of the German citizens to Major General von Riedesel, dated Quebec, September 4, 1776.

4. General von Riedesel's reply of September 4, 1776, to the letter of thanks from the German citizens of Quebec.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND GENEALOGICAL DATA IN THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE GERMAN PIONEER SOCIETY OF CINCINNATI

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On May 11 and May 12, 1868 a group of German-American Cincinnatians published ads in two local German newspapers calling for a meeting of persons interested in forming a German pioneer society. On Tuesday evening, May 12, 1868, the meeting was held in Geyer's Assembly Rooms on Court Street between Main and Walnut. Temporary officers were elected as follows: Dr. Joseph H. Pulte, president; Joseph Siefert, vice president; Christian von Seggern, secretary. Appointed to serve on a committee to draw up a constitution were F. A. Roewekamp, Joseph A. Hemann, Dr. Pulte, Siefert, Michael Pfau, and Nickolaus Hoeffler. On Tuesday