

Topic Proposal

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Germans in the American Revolution; for too many this statement relates to the Hessian mercenaries that fought against the American cause during the war for independence. In the reality of the events of the American Revolution there lies a more complete and interesting story that counters that narrative; the Royal Deux-Ponts regiment. These men were Germans from the Duchy of Palatine-Zweibrücken that fought with the French in America and even in some cases fought other Germans. The proposed paper will explore four men through their memoirs and journals. These four men are: Count Duex-Pont or colonel Willihem Forbach, Baron Ludwig Von Closen, Leutiente Jean-Baptise Verger, and private Georg Flohr. The goal of the proposed papers is to answer the question what did they think of the American people? What did they think of the average American citizen? Or the high society of America or even what were the cities like? The comments they make about the people they meet are the essence of paper. By exploring these questions one can better understand what these four men for Zweibrücken thought of the new nation of the United States, and how these foreigners play into the story of the United States.

This topic is an exploration into four soldiers from the Duchy of Palatine-Zweibrücken who saw the people of the United States through their writings. These men were in service to the French army in America as it traveled from Providence, Rhode Island through New York to Yorktown, Virginia, so these areas are where the men of the study will comment on. For example, one source that will be used in the proposed paper is Georg Flohr who was a private in the Deux-Ponts. Arising from the German peasantry he recorded, in detail, in his journal his services as a chasseur or light infantry as part of the actions of the French Army in the United

States. Giving a day by day of the life he lived in for the 3 years he was in the United States. He records everything from how the people of Providence acted to how the Continental Army acted after the victory at Yorktown. Flohr's story does have an interesting spin, after his experience in combat in America, including, participation in the culmination of the war for Independence in the storming of redoubt #9 at Yorktown, he later decides to come back to the nation he grew to love. One such insight is how the people of Providence acted, he described them as acting as if everyone was equal in station. This perspective matters, since if a foreigner gives their perspective they do not have a stake in slandering or glorifying the country, so it is a more objective observation on the US.

The questions that need to be asked are based in views on the continental army and the people of the United States. This question can not be taken in a vacuum though, one needs to know who these people are so they can understand where they are coming from in their accounts, since the subjects of the study come from various backgrounds ranging from peasant to nobels. The main French army's time in the United States they did not visit every population center in the new nation. The places where these four men visit are the main subject of study. This paper will specifically focus on these four men's comments on the people of the United States. As well as their opinions on how the people acted. Were they well received, or will they be scorned by everyone? As the primary sources for these four men focus on the day to day and include a few mentions of the people of the US and they are insightful on how these people acted.

The cross section of these four men create a wide narrative and opinions on the people of the United States. One of them is Colonel Willhiem Forbach or Count Duex-pont, the commander of the regiment. So the winning and dining of a man of his status is important to the larger perspective. Jean-Bapsite Verger also kept a journal and a set of famous sketches of his

time in America; he gives the perspective of the middle officer in the Deux-ponts. Baron Von Clozen in, all his aristocratic self-importance, notes how much he liked everything in all the places the French army traveled, commenting on everything from the ability for the people to dance minutes to the taste of their food. He found himself in the under echelons of society since he was an aide-de-camp to the commander of French forces in America. The bottom ranks of the men are represented in Gerogr Flohr and his human account of fighting in America. Each one of these sources give a different perspective and angle on Americans.

With these primary sources there are secondary sources that all need to be added.. The secondary sources that will be used are for context of the French army in America or for the Yorktown Campaign in particular, since it is the main action the French army did in America. As for monographs on the Deux-Ponts, a portion of the only work has been translated in a separate collection and formed in a book by Wolf Prow. Otherwise, they are seldom discussed in different, wider books on the American Revolution, so only books that focus on the French army are helpful. With all these sources that are well documented and detailed the question on what these four men in French service thought of Americans can be answered.

The trope of evil Germans in British service is a tired view on the complex subject that is Germans in Revolutionary America. These four men of the Royal Deux-ponts regiment can tell a story seldom told: what did these four foreigners think of the United States? Wherever it is through the importance of their view on the american history or a prospective German immigrant, their story matters in the great view of the American Revolution. There are still questions that will be answered during the course of the research, but they are worthwhile questions. The sources exist in translated form and vary, so all that needs to be done is putting it all together. This idea will be executed in the proposed paper, if accepted.

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