

# **FREDERICK RODERICK – OUR GERMAN ANCESTOR**

**2010 Roderick Reunion: Garland, Tx**

--Larry Roderick, Ph.D., P.E.

## **Background:**

There have been a lot of Rodericks, including myself, who have spent a lot of time researching Frederick Roderick (circa 1756-1842) my great-great-great grandfather. I will start by including what we know (or what we think we know). Then I will look at the “facts” in an attempt to indirectly solve the riddle of the man.

Somewhere in the 1950’s, someone, presumably from North Carolina, sent a pamphlet to numerous Rodericks in Texas. I remember reading this with a sense of amazement when I was probably about 12 years old. I regarded the information as being 100% accurate and had no doubts until recent years. The document was revised from the works of Helen Lupton and Dixon Lackey. Helen was the primary writer and the great-great-great granddaughter of Frederick Roderick. Dixon was her dad, born in 1910 and presumably lived in the North Carolina area. The following is a quote from their “update” of the times of Frederick Roderick.

“The updated Roderick History in no way replaces the “original” written by the late John Roderick of Rutherford College, North Carolina.

This is intended to be a compiled edition of his several versions. We have based this “history” on several versions by John Roderick, specifically his written history dated 1935 that was the “official” copy read at Roderick reunions, plus letters answering family history inquiries, and even one version taken in shorthand by the writer’s Mother as he told the story.

By and large, John Roderick was the undisputed family historian, and as such he wrote and told the story many times; and in doing so, each time it was written or told, some events were included or omitted, some facts varied, etc., as he grew older.

For several years, the writer and her Father (Dixon A. Lackey) have worked at verifying “facts” and dates included in the Roderick History. In order not to change the History as written by John Roderick, we have added verification and corrections in the form of Appendices. Almost all birth and death dates have been verified either from tombstones, family records, North Carolina archives, newspaper articles, etc. Some dates may vary from those written by John Roderick, but those in the Appendices have been verified and should be correct.

Included in the Appendices is an updated list of descendants of Sidney Roderick, down to present generations. We hope other branches of the Daniel Roderick descendants will eventually bring their lineage charts up to present.

There are endless questions still unanswered. If any of you who read this have information to add or corrections to make, please let us know. We wonder what happened to Charlie Roderick—where did he go and does he have descendants? Nicholas and William are mentioned in the Appendices, but how about Annie—the writer is working on the Kerleys and feels that Annie’s husband was a Kerley she knew in Charlottesville since our ancestor, Aaron Kerley (father of Sarah Jane Kerley Roderick) was a descendant of Henry Kerley who migrated to North Carolina from Charlottesville about the same time Frederick Roderick brought his family to North Carolina. The Aaron Kerley referred to in Annie Roderick’s marriage may have been an uncle of the above-mentioned Aaron Kerley.

Another question—Why did Frederick Roderick, with four grown or nearly grown children, a second wife and a nine-year old son, sell a large farm and move to North Carolina at his age? Was it that the War of 1812 scared him? Frederick was still (in his mind, at least) a deserter and was probably fiercely afraid of the British. 1812, 1813, and 1814 found the British again in the United States with battles in New England, Pennsylvania, and in the District of Columbia by 1814. Fear of them “discovering” him in Virginia could have sent him to the mountains of North Carolina!

In our research, one thing stands out loud and clear about our ancestor, Frederick Roderick. He was a keen, sharp business man, buying and selling land, and each time “making a profit”. He probably was about sixteen years old when he landed in New York in 1776. He lived to be a very old man by mortality standards of the 1800’s. We picture him as a wirey, fiery old man, living a full exciting life!”

## **The Family Story of Frederick Roderick:**

The following is the story of Frederick Roderick as handed down in the family.

The history of the Roderick family begins in America with the American Revolution. Not long after the Battle of Lexington when the farmers “fired the shots that were heard around the world”, King George III decided that he was going to put a stop to the trouble in America. He called it a “Rebellion against the English Crown”.

At this time, Frederick the Great (Fredrick II) was in power in Germany. King George sent some crafty officers over to Germany to make arrangements to hire an army of Germans to help England whip the Americans back into subjection. An army of 17,000 of the very best young manhood was raised from the provinces Hesse, Hanover, and Ansbach. These men were the best physically and best trained in Germany. According to history, the most of these men were Hessians but it is not clear just which province Frederick Roderick came from.

The English Government paid the German Government for these soldiers to fight for them. These men were in some sense of the word, sold by their government to another country to fight. These men undoubtedly did not like this idea too well.

This army was landed on Staten Island, near New York, in July or August 1776, but there were quite a number of these men who decided that since their native country had sold them that they would not fight for England. After landing on American soil, they found out that the American cause was a good one. At once their sympathies were for the American people, who should be free and independent. Also, they were liberty-loving and decided to desert the English Army at the first opportunity and help win the independence of the American people by joining the American forces. After catching a chance to desert their army, they made their way to General Washington’s Army which was in and around New York. This was a perilous task but most of them succeeded. One of these men was Frederick Roderick.

As Frederick was making his escape, the British and/or Tories tried very hard to catch him and kill him. They ran him into a swamp where he hid under a fallen tree for three days and nights without food or water. The British and/or Tories walked on this fallen tree hunting for him while he was hiding under it. He heard them talking about him and there they gave him up as escaped beyond their reach. After they had gone he remained hidden until he thought it safe to come out.

Slowly he made his way to General Washington’s Army and offered to render his services. These were accepted and he fought through to the end of the war to be a free man in a free country.

Now at the end of the war, Frederick had fought for seven years for the liberty of the American people. He found himself without a home or a country. He was given an Honorable Discharge from the American Army, which was then in Virginia, but he lost it later and never received any payment from the government for his services. This discharge was made during the summer of 1783.

On September 5, 1783, Frederick went to an officer of the state of Virginia, and took the Oath of Allegiance to that State, becoming an American by adoption. A copy of this Oath\* which was written in longhand is as follows:

“I do certify that Fredrick Roderick hath taken and subscribed the oath or affirmation of allegiance and fidelity as directed by an act of General Assembly entitled an act to oblige the free male inhabitants of this State (Virginia) above a certain age to give assurance of allegiance to the same and for other purposes, witnessing my hand and seal this 5<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1783 John Henderson\*\* SEAL”

\*The original of this Oath was last known to be in possession of descendants of the late W.S. Roderick in Spencer, N.C. \*\*The name “Henderson” is not clear, and could be “Hendrey”.

Frederick then settled down to civil life in Albemarle County, near Charlottesville, Virginia. Not long afterward, he married a Virginia lady whose maiden name is not known. They lived for several years on a farm which he sold in 1792 and moved to the town of Charlottesville. There he was a merchant for several years. His wife died, leaving him four children, three boys and one girl. The boy’s names were William, Charles (or Charlie), and Nicholas. The girl’s name was Annie.

A few years later he married again. This time to an English girl of Virginia. She was a widow whose given name was Elizabeth, but her maiden name is not known. To this marriage was born one son, Daniel, from whom the Rodericks of Burke County are directly descended. He was born January 2, 1804.

In 1808, Frederick sold his mercantile business in Charlottesville and moved his family and as much of their movable effects as they could carry in their six-horse wagon from Charlottesville to North Carolina, to settle in Burke County. Just what part of Burke County they lived in for a few years is not known.

In 1813, Frederick bought a 200-acre tract of land from Waightstill Avery in Linville Township on Kerley's Creek. (Rose's Creek and Irish Creek are mentioned in some versions but all are in the same vicinity.) For this 200 acres, he paid \$66.66 2/3. This land is located on what is now the Jamestown Road and where the old family graveyard now is. Many of the Rodericks are buried there. Here on this land, he built a house near a good spring and near the head of the east prong of Kerley's Creek.

After his children by his first marriage were grown, they left home. William and Nicholas went to Lincoln County to live. William was a farmer, and Nicolas was a bad cripple, having gotten badly hurt while working at a mill, so he never married but made his home with his brother, William. There they lived until he died. Charles left home because he and his father had some trouble over some work which had not been done to suit him. After leaving, he was never heard from again. The only girl, Annie, married a man by the name of Kerley, the son of Thomas Kerley, and a brother of the late Aaron Kerley, of Burke County. She and her husband left Burke County shortly after they were married and moved to another state.

Daniel remained at home with his father and mother. He married Peter Spainhour's daughter, Elizabeth, when he was 19 years old, that being in 1823. He bought a farm adjoining his father's land. In 1835, Daniel sold a piece of land valued at \$300 to Noah Spainhour for a Negro girl, Cindy. This was the first slave he ever owned. Noah made a title to her to Daniel. At the time of the Civil War, he owned twenty slaves.

Frederick Roderick was a stone mason by trade. He learned his trade in his native country, Germany, when he was a young man, as the laws of Germany required. After coming to Burke County, he worked at his trade as well as farmed. He built quite a few stone walls for different people. One of these jobs was for a Mr. John Caldwell. It was a stone wall under Caldwell Mill on Upper Creek, in about 1820. Most of this wall is still standing. About the last stone job Frederick did was on the present Burke County Courthouse, built between 1836 and 1838. The contractor hired Frederick for between 18 months and two years. When he had finished, he put a plank down on the top of the building and stood on his head!

In 1835, Frederick Roderick made a will leaving everything he had to his son, Daniel, providing he would take care of him and his mother as long as they lived. Daniel made a bond for the faithful performance of this duty as requested in his father's will. He cared for them until they died, becoming heir to the entire estate.

On March 15, 1842, Frederick Roderick died. He was buried in the family graveyard on his farm which is the Roderick graveyard previously mentioned. His wife survived him seven years. She died on March 14, 1849, and was buried next to her husband.

Daniel was the father of 14 children, seven boys and seven girls." (End of Story)

### **A Study of the Facts:**

I have spent many hours in study of Frederick Roderick, his family, and the extended Roderick family. My premise has always been that the Frederick Roderick story as told and recorded is 100% accurate. The problem with this approach is that existing facts sometimes makes pieces our family story seem doubtful. There is hope for the future however. With more old documents being studied and placed online and the continued development of DNA procedures, some of the mysteries of Frederick Roderick will be understood. In this section, I will bring you up to date on my research and present possible scenarios for consideration.

1. Was Frederick Roderick a "Hessian Soldier"?
2. If a German soldier, from which province? Hesse-Kassel, Hesse-Hanau, Brunswick, Waldeck, Anspach-Bayreuth, or Anhalt-Zerbst.
3. If a German soldier, what was his German name?
4. Was Frederick a stonemason?

5. Was Frederick Roderick of German descent?
6. Did Frederick Roderick's ship land on Staten Island near New York or elsewhere?
7. Did Frederick Roderick desert the British forces?
8. Did Frederick Roderick join Washington's Army?
9. Did Frederick Roderick live in Charlottesville, Virginia?
10. The family history says that the German soldiers were "liberty-loving and decided to desert the English Army at the first opportunity and help win the independence of the American people by joining American forces." Is there evidence that this was the case?
11. Was Frederick Roderick honorably discharged from the American Army?

**History of Germany (from Kromminga family web site):**

"The first identifiable permanent settlers in the area that is now Germany were Celtic tribes in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC; the Rhineland was a key area of production in their industrial society. But new forces were developing in Europe. The Roman Empire was expanding, and Germanic peoples were on the move from Scandinavia. Germanic tribes moved to lands east of the Rhine and north of the Black Sea, and their invasions and periodic uprisings created instability within the Roman Empire. Roman attempts to push across the Rhine failed to establish permanent occupation. They ended in AD9; after reaching the Elbe the Romans were pushed back by German tribes under the leadership of Arminius, who destroyed three Roman legions.

By the time of Constantine, when the Roman empire's capital shifted to Byzantium in the east, Roman rule was beginning to break down. After the introduction of Christianity by Emperor Constantine, the Roman Empire disintegrated and the area that is now Germany was overrun by the Franks. When Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800, Frankish influence stretched across most of Europe, including the Frisian homelands which came under full domination by the Roman Catholic Church. Civil war followed Charlemagne's death; the Treaty of Verdun in 843 split the empire into a Latin western section, and a Germanic eastern part led by Ludwig the German. Ludwig's appointment marked the emergence of a German identity.

In 911-9 eight German duchies were formed which were Saxony, Frisia, Thuringia, Franconia, Lorraine, Swabia, Bavaria, and Rhaetia under Conrad I the first King of Germany. Small proprietary holdings (allods) and freemen (Gemeinfreie) persisted in Frisia, Ditmarsch, Saxony and the Alpine Forelands. Most of the other Germanic lands were under servile labor and the manorial system.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the area came under the rule of the Saxons. Otto the Great was faced with invading Magyars from the east and a growing threat from duchies and principalities inside the eastern empire. After defeating the Magyars in 955, Otto strengthened his ties to the papacy, which led to Roman Church dominance over a large part of the country. In 962 he was crowned Holy Roman Emperor. In 1151-1250 Friesland became part of lower Lorraine under the Kingdom of Germany.

The influence of powerful dynastic German families increased steadily. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Holy Roman Emperor had little power against feudal princes. The German nobles abode largely in great castles, with the exception of Frisia which was considered a relatively safe area. Many of the princes began to push eastward, conquering Poland and setting up German communities in areas now in Russia and Romania. The black plague invaded Frisian territory about 1349. In 1356 the law regulating the election of an emperor (the Golden Bull) was introduced, based on the votes of four noble and three ecclesiastical electors, excluding the papacy. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Hapsburgs were elected Holy Roman Emperors, and they retained the title until it was abolished some 400 years later.

Discontent with the church authorities increased. Martin Luther led accusations over corruption, nailing his 95 theses, an attack against papal abuses, to the door of Wittenburg church in 1517. Luther was excommunicated but politically powerful German princes were able to protect him from sentence of death.

After publication of Luther's translation of the Bible, the oppressed in Germany were ready to revolt. The Peasants Rebellion of 1524-5 brought destruction of church properties but was put down by princely armies. About 1560 the Friesland territories in northern Holland remained Roman Catholic, but the East Friesland territories in North Western Germany became a mixture of Calvinist & Lutheran religions.

Before the Revolutionary War more than 200,000 Germans had congregated in New York and the Pennsylvania back country, where they became known as the Pennsylvania Dutch. Many of them emigrated from the German Rhineland, called the Palatinate, in order to practice a number of dissenting religions. They were called Mennonites, Dunkards, Moravians, Schwenkfelders, or sometimes were all lumped under the common title of the Plan People. Later, Lutheran Germans came. Although they were industrious, sober settlers, and usually welcomed. Thomas Jefferson, for one, was afraid of the influx of Germans, and warned against foreigners deluded by the maxims of absolute monarchies. He needn't have worried about any such democratic backwardness. During the Revolutionary War, the Germans already in America so successfully propagandized the 30,000 Hessian mercenaries hired by the British that nearly half of them deserted and settled in New England and Pennsylvania.

After 1848, a time of destructive revolution, bad crops, and avaricious landlords in the German states, a new wave of 1.5 million German immigrants arrived to help develop the Middle West. They settled in Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, traveling even as far as Texas."

### **The Stonemasons of Germany:**

Germany is famous for its stonemasons. The beautiful buildings of Florence, Italy were constructed by German masons. "...the building authorities of St. Victor at Xanten in north Germany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, besides renting quarries and overseeing the working of them, had to arrange for the purchase and manning of ships for the river transport of the stone to the building site. (The Building of Renaissance Florence)." From "The History of Freemasonry", "LXI. And it is so decreed that no craftsman shall accept an apprentice in the rough, otherwise than for five years, LXII. And a father, being himself a mason, shall have power to bind one or more of his sons for five years and to complete their instruction, but only in the presence of other stonemasons; and such an apprentice shall not be under fourteen years of age. LXIV. And henceforth no master shall accept a rough apprentice, or declare him free, except in the presence of a craft (lodge), and the fellows who are at that time employed in the lodge, in order that if variances or errors arise they may the more easily be arranged." This tells me that Frederick Roderick had to have been at least nineteen years old at the time of his journey to America.

I copied the following from the Obernkirchener Sandstone website. "As one of the world's oldest active quarries, we have been supplying to projects throughout all of Europe and beyond for 1,000 years. Throughout this period, well-known master builders and architects have used our sandstone to create impressive edifices. Every single BERNKIRCHENER SANDSTEIN® is an original piece of medieval building history in Europe. We have made our mark in Northern Germany, in particular - not just in architectural but also in urban development terms. The owner of the Obernkirchen sandstone quarries, Prince Adolf III von Schauenberg (nowadays known as Schaumburg) und Holstein, for example, founded the Hanseatic city of Hamburg in the 12th century. Even before then, his predecessor - Adolf II - had already founded the Hanseatic city of Lübeck. OBERNKIRCHENER SANDSTEIN® has been a product of the Hansa since medieval times. It has been exported in massive quantities to all of Europe since the 15th century at least. The opening of the "Transatlantic Shipping Route" by merchants in Bremen (1783) marked the expansion of export business to America. What used to require arduous manual labour is now produced on state of the art production systems. Although the most filigree works are still created using the traditional art of craftsmanship by our own stonemasons in Obernkirchen. Our quarry is one of the oldest active quarries in the world. We have been quarrying sandstone and delivering it throughout Europe and beyond - both as hewn stones and delicately processed - for more than 1,000 years.



The thick, virtually horizontal layers of sandstone from the early Cretaceous period can reach a depth of as much as 20 m; in period terms, they are also known as Wealden or Bückeberg formations. Our sandstone is covered by a diluvial layer of loose stone that is between 4 and 8 metres deep.

In former times, the raw blocks were mostly quarried and hewn in one step. Initially, the master stonemasons and their assistants used muscle power and the simplest tools to break the blocks. Back then, as many as 27 master stonemasons quarried at the same time.

As industrialisation progressed, so the first machines started to be used for stone quarrying. Manual hammer drills or lewis hole hammers were used to drive numerous drill holes and/or lewis holes into the stone to pre-shape the contours of the blocks. These patterns of drill holes weakened the stone, enabling wedges to be driven into it, or pinch bars or gunpowder explosions to be used to separate the stone. Once the raw blocks had been separated from the bed, chains were packed around them and a derrick crane was used to lift them out of the high wall. Back then, we employed some 350 people.



**Is this the site where Frederick Roderick did his apprentice stonemasonry?**

### **The American Revolutionary War & German Soldiers:**

In early 1776, King George III of England hired units from the various houses or states of Germany to assist with bringing the colonist's rebellion to order. The hiring of foreign troops to supplement a country's army

was a normal procedure during this time of history. Several of the German rulers, needing hard currency and being "between wars", were only too happy to oblige.

They were Frederick II, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel (a principality in northern Hesse) King George III's brother in law, his son William, count of Hesse-Hanau and nephew to King George III; Charles I, Duke of Brunswick; Frederick, Prince of Waldeck; Charles Alexander, Margrave of Anspach-Bayreuth; and Frederick Augustus, Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst.

About 18,000 Hessian troops arrived in North America in 1776, with more coming later, of this about 3/4 of them were from Hesse-Kassel. Thus the colonist's newspapers referred to all of them as Hessians and the name stuck.

In addition to firepower, American rebels used propaganda against Hessians. They enticed Hessians to desert to join the German-American population. In April 1778, one letter promised 50 acres (0.2 km<sup>2</sup>) of land to every deserter. Benjamin Franklin wrote an article that claimed that a Hessian commander wanted more of his soldiers dead so that he could be better compensated.

After the war ended in 1783, 17,313 Hessians returned to their homelands. Of the 12,526 who did not, about 7,700 died - around 1,200 were killed in action and 6,354 died from illness or accidents. Approximately 5,000 Hessians settled in North America, both in the United States and Canada - some because their commanders refused to take them back to Germany because they were criminals or physically unfit. Most of them married and settled amongst the population of the newly formed United States. Many of them became farmers or craftsmen. The number of their direct descendants living in the U.S. and Canada today is still being debated.

### **The Battle of Trenton:**

We are all familiar with the famous painting of George Washington crossing the Delaware River. Most of us forget, however, that he was taking his army to Trenton, New Jersey to battle the German soldiers who were camped there for the winter. It was one of the coldest winters ever. Washington's men crossed the half-frozen river in boats and in some brilliant strategies, captured about two-thirds of the 1,500 Hessian-Germans stationed there. This was on Christmas night in 1776. The real struggle began on the re-crossing of the Delaware; this time with over 900 prisoners of war.

Once the Hessians reached the Pennsylvania shore, the officers and privates were held in separate locations throughout the area. Some officers were held in what is believed to be the McKonkey Ferry Inn. Hessian officers were asked to meet and dine with Washington and his staff officers as a gesture of gentlemanly behavior in the etiquette of war. Some of the Hessian officers recalled their conversations with Washington and Lord Stirling.

Some of the prisoners make reference to a local clergyman who spoke in the Hessian's language. He visited them to tell them that they were misguided in taking up the English cause and tried to persuade them to join the ranks of Washington's army. At the time, the prisoners were offended by this outcry against their allies, **but eventually, many of the Hessians would find life in North America to be to their liking as several remained in the country after the American Revolution.**

**Eventually, some of the prisoners were taken to Philadelphia and ultimately marched all the way to Winchester, Virginia. Many were sent to work on farms in German speaking areas of the country like Lancaster, PA. Arrangements were made between the military and the farmers whereas a farmer could take a prisoner to work on his land and was responsible for shelter and food. If the prisoner escaped during that time, the farmer was responsible to pay for the loss of the prisoner.**

### **The Battle of Saratoga:**

The Brunswick troops marched, like the Hessians, in two divisions. The first left Wolfenbutterl, (Germany) on the morning of February 22, 1776. The command was given to Col. Frederick Adolph von Riedesel, a good and experienced soldier. He enjoyed the confidence of his superiors and the love and obedience of his men. The troops marched through the city of Brunswick with a great display, reviewed by the reigning duke. With the general staff and 77 soldiers' wives, there were in all 2,367 Brunswickers on board the ten vessels anchored in the Elbe.

General v. Riedesel went on the “Pallas”, and on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March (1776) the fleet set sail, anchored on the 28<sup>th</sup> at Portsmouth, where on the 30<sup>th</sup> four vessels joined with the Hesse Hanau regiment, 760 men, under Col. V. Gall. The English fleet welcomed the troops with every honor. Gen. Phillips, with part of the English artillery, and Gen. Burgoyne, also embarked for Canada, thus making a large fleet. On May 12<sup>th</sup> (1776), land was seen, and on the first of June (1776) Quebec was reached. The local garrison was strengthened while the remainder of the troops went on to Three Rivers.

General Carleton, on arrival of the Germans, determined to send them to the relief of Montreal, still besieged by the Americans, and Gen. v. Riedesel received command of a corps, consisting of the Riedesel and Hesse Hanau regiments, The Brunswick Grenadier battalion, the British regiment of McLean, a division of Canadian troops, and a band of Indians.

The English plan was to move the northern army, under Carleton, to Lake Champlain, drive the Americans out of the forts, and push on to the Hudson. A southern corps, under Lord Howe, should move up the Hudson from New York and join the other at Albany. Col. St. Leger was to make a diversion, by going to the right from Oswego to the Mohawk valley and so to Albany, to rejoin the main body. He was to engage Schuyler’s force of Americans, take Fort Stanwix, and destroy the other forts on the Mohawk—thus, if successful, cutting off the northern from the southern provinces, and ending the war.

The troops under Riedesel suffered greatly from sickness, due to the trying climate, in spite of his efforts to secure them fresh vegetables and good food. **He lost a few by desertion**, but the officers amused themselves and exchanged civilities.

The Second Brunswick division having reached Quebec on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September, the Dragoon regiment was, at Riedesel’s request, added to his force, and 390 boats were assigned to him to transport his command.

For the winter, the Germans were head-quartered at Trois Rivieres, a small Canadian city with 250 inhabitants. The troops were quartered in the houses of the inhabitants, with as much regard as possible to their comfort and that of the owners. The soldiers received everything free, and had no right to ask for anything more without paying for it. The men were obliged to cut wood in the forest, but the landlord had to bring it to the house. Each man received daily one-half pound of meat, half fresh, half salt, bread and necessary vegetables for soup, etc. By the end of December, eight feet of snow lay on the ground.

Carleton was to retain in Canada a force of Brunswick and Hesse-Hanau troops. Burgoyne was to take 3,600 Germans in his total strength of 8,000 men. In early 1777, the army was moved by boats across Lake Champlain, landing at Crown Point. After a number of skirmishes, Burgoyne decided to move directly to the Hudson River and then to Albany. On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, Burgoyne at last received and returned messages from and to Gen. Howe, and expectation was aroused of an early general engagement.

Burgoyne continued toward Albany, fighting limited battles along the way. It was perceived by the British that there were so many loyalists among the American ranks that it would be easy to defeat them. Burgoyne ordered the advance on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1777, burning bridges behind themselves. The British were attacked again and again by small numbers of Americans attacking from concealed positions in the forest. With English ammunition nearly exhausted and their forces heavily wasted, German regiments twice saved Burgoyne from the hands of defeat. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, Burgoyne received dispatches from Gen. Howe that British Gen. Clinton was moving to attack American Gen. Gates. Burgoyne determined to remain for eight days, the time for further news from the south, and kept his men at work strengthening his camp. Daily attacks were made by the Americans. Hardly any patrol was sent out without losing some of its men. Provisions ran short, sickness rapidly increased, discipline diminished under growing hardships, **desertion increased, in spite of the dreadful punishment inflicted on the deserters recaptured.**

While the American forces continued to grow at his front, Burgoyne continued to wait more than the eight days he waited for. An enemy four times his strength in front of him and winter fast approaching—he proposed a flank movement around the left of the Americans and an attack on their rear. Riedesel, seeing the hopelessness of the situation, recommended a retreat back across the Hudson River; Burgoyne would not hear of retreat.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, the Americans attacked the left wing with 600 men and then retreated. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, Burgoyne ordered 1,500 men sent on reconnaissance, but were met with sturdy resistance, inflicting heavy casualties on the center of the British positions.

Burgoyne gave orders for a retreat, but wanted to bivouac for one day. Riedesel warned him of a delay could be disastrous. About 800 of the sick and wounded were left behind. The Americans pressed on, threatening the retreat from all sides. Burgoyne found his boats and his provisions captured, his force under fire, his outposts captured, and three batteries posted in the rear of his army, his supplies cut off, his troops losing courage and discipline, and the outlook hopeless. Riedesel advised abandoning guns and baggage, and pledged himself to bring the army to Lake George. Delay followed delay, and finally Burgoyne countermanded the order to move. By the next day, October 13<sup>th</sup>, all was lost. Burgoyne opened negotiations with Gates for the surrender, which was agreed to on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Of the 5,800 men included in the surrender, 3,500 were still able to bear arms, and of these the Germans counted 2,431.

The British forces marched by slow stages to Boston, with the loss of only a hundred deserters from the German troops. The German prisoners were encamped on Winter Hill, in wretched barracks, built in 1775 for the American troops engaged in the siege of Boston. Other German prisoners were scattered throughout Massachusetts, in private families, and the soldiers had to work for their food and clothing. **Every effort was made to induce the men to desert and especially to get those who were skilled artisans to benefit the Americans by their industry. Some of them did, indeed, profit by the change, and found brilliant rewards for their new citizenship. While the British desertions, to the end of December, were nearly 400, the Germans lost only 20.**

Riedesel kept his men in good condition by constant exercise. He gave his men leave of absence for fixed periods, that they might go into the country and do farm work, both for their health and the little wages they could earn. Fifty Brunswick soldiers died in four weeks from the results of bad food and intense summer heat. With winter approaching, General Heath issued an order that the men were to go to Virginia, a march of 650 miles, through a country full of hostile inhabitants, with no provision for health or comfort. Clinton refused to supply the prisoners, and as Boston was heavily taxed to feed French troops, it was thought best to send the prisoners southward, where food was more abundant, and where the climate would not be so severe for them.

In December, 1778, they passed through New Jersey and Pennsylvania—and at Lancaster met a curious reception; the story had spread that the King of England had given Lancaster to Gen. Riedesel as a reward for his services and that he was now come to take possession. The people were greatly excited, and it took some time to convince them of the truth. On December 25, 1778, they reached Virginia and celebrated New Year's Eve in a wild wood, with snow a foot deep, with no shelter and little protection. On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1779, they got to Charlottesville, Virginia, followed later by Riedesel. Few officers were left with the soldiers at Charlottesville. It was thought that with the absence of officers the remaining 906 soldiers would be free to be persuaded to desert and find new and profitable employment in America.

Deprived of officers, the men stood stoutly by their colors and resisted the temptations held out to them to make their homes in America, with all the rewards offered. They made themselves comfortable in their temporary barracks, surrounded themselves with gardens and such comforts and occupation as they could provide, built a church—with a graveyard, fitted up a theatre, had constant visitors from far and near, and made new life in the desolate little country village.

By May, 1782, nearly all the Hessian and Ansbach-Bayreuth prisoners of war were returned to their commands in New York. Many were delighted at the prospect of returning home, but a goodly number preferred to stay in America, and permission was freely given to all who chose to make their home there.

The Germans did not desert in as great number as the English and American troops, but after the war was over, they decided to make their homes in America. Most of the recruits sent to the Hessian forces were volunteers from Hanau, and they had joined just for the purpose of going to America and staying there, and they were quite justified in doing so. Many of the soldiers who remained in America did so with the consent of their officers. **The Duke of Brunswick reduced his standing army at the close of the war and gladly gave their men and officers leave to stay in America, granting them six months pay. Congress offered the German soldiers every advantage, in case they remained in America.** (Taken from "German Allied Troops").

Another writer, Claus Reuter, says, "The Brunswick and the Hessen-Kassel soldiers were professionals who served in a voluntary army. Some of the soldiers who served from Hessen-Kassel were taken against their will. Most of the Brunswick soldiers were from the Duchy of Brunswick or other areas nearby. Only a few came from the southern part of Germany. The number of deserted soldiers includes only those who deserted from their units. Not included is the number of soldiers who left their unit in the last month of the war and the soldiers who escaped the prison camp. The average age of the soldiers who remained in North-America was 32." Reuter lists the numbers of these Brunswick soldiers who did not return home:

Stayed in Canada	733
Deserted	111
Prisoners sold selves to Americans	144
Prisoners of war	1024
Belonged to Convention Army	529
Killed in action	117
Misc. deaths (sick, etc.)	932

One source states, "**The Americans tried to encourage the German soldiers (prisoners) to serve in the American Army.** Not many soldiers took this route." Other sources reveal much higher numbers for desertions. We must remember that huge sums of money were involved in the contracts between Germany and England regarding the numbers of men involved in the various lists. A dead soldier brought much more money while a deserter meant no money.

**Cambridge:**

A total of about 5,900 British, German, and Canadian troops surrendered at Saratoga. Under guard by John Glover's troops, they were marched to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where they arrived on November 8. The rank and file was quartered in crude barracks that had been constructed during the 1775 siege of Boston, while most of the officers were billeted in houses. The army ended up spending about one year in Cambridge, while negotiations concerning its status took place in military and diplomatic channels. **During this year, about 1,300 prisoners escaped, often because they became involved with local women while working on farms in the area.** The Continental Congress ordered Burgoyne to provide a list and description of all officers to ensure that they would not return. When he refused, Congress revoked the terms of the Convention, resolving in January 1778 to hold the army until King George ratified the convention, an act they believed unlikely to happen, as it represented an acknowledgment of American independence.

**Virginia-The Convention Army:**

In November 1778, the Convention Army began marching south 700 miles (1,100 km) to Charlottesville, Virginia, arriving in uncharacteristically snowy weather in January 1779. **Approximately 600 men escaped during the march.** They were held at the hastily and poorly constructed Albemarle Barracks until 1781. During the army's years in Virginia it had an important economic impact on the Blue Ridge area of Virginia. The Virginia troops assigned to guard duty were generally better fed and equipped than any other forces, so that prisoner letters would reflect a strong Continental Army. Money sent by the prisoner's families in Britain and Germany provided a lot of hard currency and coin for the back-country area. The presence of the POWs created new demands for food and other goods - items for which they had to pay steep prices. Thomas Jefferson estimated that the presence of the prisoners increased the area's circulating currency by at least \$30,000 a week.

High ranking officers, and sometimes their wives, such as the Major General Riedesel and his wife and Major General William Phillips were sought as guests on the social scene. The rank-and-file, however, dealt with miserable living conditions as the small amount of money appropriated to build the barracks proved inadequate. "Each barrack," observed Lieutenant August Wilhelm Du Roi, "is 24 feet long, and 14 feet wide, big enough to shelter 18 men. The construction is so miserable that it surpasses all that you can imagine in Germany of a very poorly built log house. It is something like the following: Each side is put up of 8 to 9 round fir trees, which are laid one on top the other, but so far apart that it is almost possible for a man to crawl through ... The roof is made of round trees covered with split fir trees..." And then, "**a great number of our men preferred to camp out in the woods,** where they could protect themselves better against the cold than in the barracks."

In 1781, when British forces became active in Virginia, the army was again moved, this time being marched north to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Except for specific officer exchanges, they were held there until 1783. When the war formally ended, those who survived the forced marches and camp fevers were sent home.

**Doing research on Revolutionary War soldiers is very difficult. Unfortunately, many records no longer exist, if they ever existed at all. This was not a culture given to documentation and leaving a paper trail. One has to keep in mind that many of the soldiers couldn't read or write and certainly were not schooled in how to preserve documents. More than one Revolutionary War soldier lost his discharge papers to "vermin".** One has to make do with what records exist.

After Burgoyne's surrender, late 1777, German mercenaries, mostly Hessian, were held prisoners at various places until end of war. Those brought to Reading, 1781, were encamped until 1783 in huts on the



hillside a quarter-mile to the north.

Washington's defeat of the dreaded Hessian mercenaries at the Battle of Trenton...

Berks County was a critical center of Pennsylvania's support for the patriot cause. Its Scots-Irish and German residents volunteered in large numbers for the Continental Army, and also provided food, munitions, and shelter for the army, wounded soldiers, and prisoners of war. The county seat of Reading, founded in 1748, was an especially important site for the internment of prisoners. Beginning in December 1775, when Congress designated the town as a prison camp, Reading provided food, shelter, and firewood, first to British soldiers captured by Gen. Richard Montgomery at St. John's in Canada, and later to Hessian troops captured at the Battles of Trenton and Saratoga.



A 20th-century depiction of the Hessian retreat at the Battle at Trenton, December 25, 1776.

When the British Army landed in New York in July, 1776, it included more than 10,000 **Hessian mercenaries from Germany. Known as the finest soldiers in the world** - and also rumored among many Anglo-Americans to be among the most vicious - the Hessians were deeply feared by the poorly trained American forces. Their

defeat and capture provided a much-needed proof of Americans' fighting abilities and resolve. Disarmed and placed under a curfew, the **Hessian prisoners in Reading - along with German Brunswickers captured by Americans at the Battle of Saratoga - lived in the homes of local residents, and were permitted to wander about the town at will.** Because much of the migration into the upper Schuylkill Valley was from the German principalities of central Europe, German-speaking colonists dominated Reading and, by 1776, the vast majority of the residents were fiercely loyal to the patriot cause. Any concern that German prisoners might sabotage the local munitions depot and destroy the town was quickly resolved by the confiscation and immediate destruction of enemy weapons and the decision to mobilize the local militia as round-the-clock guards. British prisoners were treated less hospitably.

Because of the difference in ethnicity, the German-speaking residents were less forgiving of the British prisoners than the **Hessians and Brunswickers, especially when they began working as laborers in the county's iron industry** and instigated drunken brawls in the local taverns. By May, 1779, the presence of Redcoat prisoners was resented by many townspeople. Joseph Reed, president of Pennsylvania, recommended to the Board of War that the captured Redcoats be relocated from Reading to New Jersey. His request was denied on the grounds that it was an "avoidable expense," and that Capt. P. Pitcairn, one of the British officers imprisoned at Reading, assured the Board of War of "better behavior."

Reading's Committee of Correspondence appointed Henry Haller to be in charge of all prisoners - German and British - and to provide for their basic needs. It took him nearly five years to establish a prison camp on a "piece of ground which belonged to the late Proprietaries." Located on the east side of Mount Penn "some small distance" from Reading, the camp was opened in 1781 and most all of its 1,000 prisoners were Hessians, who "behaved themselves very orderly and peaceably." **Two years later, when the prisoners were evacuated from Reading, some of the Hessians decided to remain in Pennsylvania, where they worked as farmers or laborers in the state's burgeoning iron industry.**

**The American military wanted to keep the officers separated from the men so the men could be encouraged to hire out to farmers or desert without admonition or threat from their superiors.**

#### **German Prisoners of War: Examples**

*Peter Hart*, possibly Reinhart. Records at Petersham, Massachusetts, show Peter Hart and George Hatstat were POWs hired out for farming. It is not certain that Peter was a German soldier. No one with the name Hart or Reinhart is listed among the Brunswick and Hessen-Hanau troops who remained in America. **It is possible that Peter was a Hessen-Cassel Jäger serving with Georg Hatstadt and captured at sea, but his military records, like most of the Jäger Corps, did not survive.**

*Daniel Hartunk*, likely Rudolph Hartung, from Halberstadt, born about 1740, **drummer** with Captain Pölinitz's Company of the Riedesel regiment. He was captured at Bennington and listed as a POW in Springfield. **He may have become a stonemason.**

*Abraham Scholt*, local records indicate he was a servant to Captain Fricke of the Brunswick Dragoons who was quartered in Westminster after his capture at Bennington. Scholt is said to have deserted and married a local woman and settled in Petersham where they raised a family. No one named Scholt is listed in the vital records for Petersham. **Servants were not listed in the army muster rolls.**

#### **Continental Congress, June 5, 1782, Resolutions on German Prisoners:**

The Committee to whom were referred the letter of the 3d of May from the Secretary at War and the letter of the 27th of April from the Commander in Chief report as follows:  
Whereas the events of war have put into possession of these United States great numbers of prisoners taken at different periods in the service of the King of Great Britain. And whereas the British commander in chief hath not yet concurred in any measures for liquidating & discharging the arrears due to the United States for the past subsistence of the said prisoners or providing for their future subsistence And whereas a considerable proportion of the said prisoners consists of Germans by nations many of whom from a dislike to the service into

which they have been involuntarily hired upon a prospect of amending their condition have expressed a desire of entering some of them into the military service of the United States & others into a reasonable period of common service with a view of eventually becoming citizens and settle within the said States; and whereas the indulgence of the said prisoners in their respective desires will tend to counteract the unjust and cruel design of the Enemy and to aid the States in filling up the quotas of troops respectively required of them.

Resolved that the Secretary at War be authorized & directed to take immediate measures for enlisting into the Army of the United States for the term of three years or for the war at the option of the party enlisting so many of the German prisoners of war to the said United States as shall voluntarily agree thereto and take the Oath of fidelity prescribed by the articles of war. That the said secretary be authorized to allow to each recruit so enlisted a bounty of eight dollars to be advanced from time to time on his application by the superintendent of finance and to stipulate in behalf of the United States to all recruits the same pay & other provisions and on the conditions that have been stipulated to other soldiers enlisted for the same time into the service of the United States. That the recruits enlisted be placed by the said Secretary to the credit of the several States in proportion of their quotas of troops respectively required of them by Congress in the same manner as if the recruits had been raised by & received from them in performance of such requisition. That the said recruits as fast as they shall be enlisted shall be marched to such places as the Commander in Chief shall direct and shall be arranged in the army in such a manner as shall judge most conducive to the public service. That the Superintendent of finance & the Secretary at war take order for the disposing of the services of such of the said prisoners as shall desire for such period as they shall deem reasonable not exceeding three years & on such conditions as will secure to the same a comfortable acquaintance and be most conducive to the public interest.

June 5, 1782. Ordered that the foregoing report except the last clause be referred to the Commander in chief and Secretary at War and the Superintendent of finance, to take order any action [?] to the contrary notwithstanding Ordered that the last clause be referred to the Superintendent of finance and Secretary at War to take Order so soon as order is taken on the former part. Chas Thompson, secy  
Resolve of the Congress relative to the enlistment of German prisoners- April 27, 1782

### **11 Questions Answered:**

1. Was Frederick Roderick a "Hessian Soldier"? Although there currently is no proof that Frederick Roderick was a Hessian soldier, I believe that he was. He was about the correct age, likely did not speak English, and, apparently, claimed to his family that he was.

2. If a German soldier, from which province? Hesse-Kassel, Hesse-Hanau, Brunswick, Waldeck, Anspach-Bayreuth, or Anhalt-Zerbst. In each German state, very accurate records were kept of the men who boarded the ships for America. Frequent muster rolls were taken of these men once they landed in America. Frederick's name, as we know it, is not to be found on any of these lists, nor is it to be found on any American list of prisoners of war, Germans who deserted and fought for the American cause, Germans who returned to their homeland after the war. Nowhere is the name Frederick Roderick (or anything similar) to be found. Without the name, it is difficult (if not impossible) to ever find where he came from in Germany.

3. If a German soldier, what was his German name? All that we know is that Frederick signed his name with an "X". Various documents from 1788 to 1813 spelled his names as: Frederick, Fredrick, Friedrich, Roderick, Roderich, Rodrik, Rotherick, and Rhoderick. The correct German spelling of his given name is Friedrich. None of the possible surnames listed above are on any German, British, or American document to date. I have gone through literally hundreds (if not thousands) of German names from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, beginning with the letter "R". There are a few names such as Roderig, Roederer, and Roehrich that are similar, but again, there are no such names on any Revolutionary War list. Thus, we are left with these surname possibilities:

a. His German name was actually something sounding like Roderick but is missing all lists for some reason.

b. He changed his name from something that was very different; perhaps out of fear of being discovered as a deserter.

c. He was never a "Hessian" soldier. Perhaps he was a servant or musician.

Regardless of the surname, I do believe that his first name was Friedrich.

4. Was Frederick a stonemason? I have little doubt that he was a stonemason and did receive training in Germany. Some of his masonry work still stands in North Carolina. It is reasonable to expect that a trained stonemason would have done such work in Charlottesville, Virginia where he lived for about 25 years prior to North Carolina. I contacted one Masonic lodge in Charlottesville about his name, receiving a negative response. These masons almost always belonged to local lodges. Perhaps we need to check those old lodges in the Burke Co., North Carolina area.

5. Was Frederick Roderick of German descent? Frederick Roderick was absolutely of German descent. The Y-Chromosome of DNA taken from myself would be identical to that of his. "Haplogroups" are groups of people who are very closely related and who came from an originator of the group in some distant time. Frederick, myself, and all male Rodericks who are his descendants are in the same group with identical DNA markers. Our haplogroup is I2b1. The first thing we note about this group is that marker DYS 390 is equal to 23. This marker of 23 denotes that these people were called "Vikings". The Vikings lived in the state of Lower Saxony (northern) Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway. In addition, the highest frequency of haplogroup I2b1 is centered in Lower Saxony Germany. Even more interesting is the fact that Lower Saxony is known as the stonemason state. *If this does not put chills down your spine, then you are not a Roderick.* It is my understanding (at this time) that the men who lived in and near this state were called "Brunswickers". Based on these facts, I believe that Frederick Roderick lived in (and was likely born in) Lower Saxony, Germany. His ancestors for about 3000 years (in all likelihood) had lived in the same area. An interesting story related to this:

Two Germans share the longest proven family tree in the world. Manfred Huchthausen, a 58-year-old teacher, and Uwe Lange, a 48-year-old surveyor, had known each other from living in the same village, about half a mile apart from each other. But they never knew they were related through a 3,000-year-old shared ancestor. They only recently found out they are both true descendants of Bronze Age cave-dwellers who lived in the area three millenniums ago. Thanks to a DNA test on well-preserved Bronze Age bones found in the Lichtenstein cave in the foothills of the Harz Mountains in Germany's Lower Saxony, the men can now claim to have the longest family tree in the world. "Before the discovery, I could trace my family back by name to 1550," Lange said. "Now, I can go back 120 generations." Lange comes from the small village of Nienstedt, which is near the excavation site. "We used to play there as kids," he told ABC News. "If I'd known that there were 3,000-year-old relatives buried there, I would not have set a foot in that cave." A local team of archaeologists discovered the L. cave, which had been hidden from view, in 1980. But it wasn't until 1993 that they found the Bronze Age remains. The cave was used between 1,000 and 700 B.C., according to archaeological investigations conducted by scientists at the nearby University of Goettingen. One of them, anthropologist Susanne Hummel, confirmed that Huchthausen and Lange share the longest proven family tree. They found the bones of 23 people -- nine females and 14 males -- along with what appeared to be cult objects, prompting speculation among scientists that the cave was a living area and a sacrificial burial place. Scientists found that the bones had been protected from the elements by calcium deposits that formed a protective skin around the skeletons. The remains turned out to be from the same family group that had a distinctive and rare DNA pattern. When 300 locals were tested with saliva swabs as part of the archaeological research, two local residents turned out to have the exact same genetic characteristics:

**These 2 men and their 3000 year old relatives belonged to the haplogroup I2b2, a very close relative to our I2b1 group. I believe that this may be the only way for us to learn more about Frederick Roderick. There may be records in the state of Lower Saxony that will aid us. I do wish I spoke German.**

6. Did Frederick Roderick's ship land on Staten Island near New York or elsewhere? The early regiments of Brunswick troops did not land on Staten Island, but were sent to Canada as part of a plan to divide America down the middle by controlling the Hudson River valley. I believe that Frederick was aboard one of these ships.

7. Did Frederick Roderick desert the British forces? He fought in the Battle of Saratoga and was taken captive by American forces. This "Convention Army" marched to Cambridge, Massachusetts, spending one year there (11-77 to 11-78), marched to Charlottesville, Virginia (Albemarle Co.) and spent almost two years there. In 1781 they moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania until the end of the war on February 14, 1783. To the Germans, if you escaped from captivity and did not immediately return to your regiment, you were considered a deserter.

Deserters were treated brutally. Frederick was allowed to mingle with the local people and to “live in the woods” around Charlottesville. In so doing, he met and married (December 16, 1783) Mary Francis (Fluvanna, Co.) after the war was over. Fluvanna Co. was created from Albemarle Co. in 1777. If Frederick left the POW barracks in Charlottesville, VA, he would he been considered a deserter by the Germans and the British. Of this he was very aware. The story about hiding in a log while the British and/or Tories soldiers looked for him was likely an “embellishment” added by someone later. Since Frederick did not speak any English, how would he have been able to understand that they were talking about him? Not being a career soldier, he was likely easily persuaded by all the German-Americans talking to him about abundant land that you could “own”; something that did not exist in Europe. It is difficult to see how Frederick would have escaped from another location and ended up in Albemarle Co., Virginia. Stories of numerous other deserters reveal that they settled in areas within a few miles of German armies from which they escaped.

8. Did Frederick Roderick join Washington’s Army? While a few German deserters fought with Washington’s army, there are no records that Frederick did. Washington was supposed to have kept good records of his men. Other German supporters joined other outfits fighting for the American cause. While records were kept in all units, some were probably not very accurate. It was hard to take notes while being shot at and on the run. I do believe that he was a patriot and believed in, and perhaps supported, the American cause.

9. Did Frederick Roderick live in Charlottesville, Virginia? There is no doubt that Frederick lived in or near Charlottesville, Virginia. He got married (twice) and bought and sold property there from 1783 to 1813 when he moved to North Carolina.

10. The family history says that the German soldiers were “liberty-loving and decided to desert the English Army at the first opportunity and help win the independence of the American people by joining American forces.” Is there evidence that this was the case? There is nothing in the records to show that this was the case. The soldiers from the states of Hesse and Brunswick were the finest professional soldiers in the world. These two states contributed about three-quarters of the German troops. While most of these troops had other lives, they spent much of their time either in training or in fighting wars. These were very proud men who were very loyal to their royalty. Many of the men had just come from the Seven Years Wars in Europe. They were offered substantial wages and use of land for their service to Germany. While fighting a British war, they were defending their states because the contracts with Britain were actually treaties in which Britain would come to their defense if these states were ever attacked. This was always a possibility; especially from the hated French. Having said this, it is true that when the American war drug on, and the German-Americans (with their propaganda) war became effective, many of these German soldiers did desert. It was not so much that they wanted to help win America’s independence from Britain as it was to “own” land and have liberties that were not available anywhere in Europe.

11. Was Frederick Roderick honorably discharged from the American Army? Even though Frederick was sympathetic to the American cause, I do not believe that he joined the American Army. He was, apparently, a freemason and not a soldier. I think he was likely very young and perhaps had volunteered to join the Brunswick army to get to America. People in Germany were very much aware of the wonderful opportunities for freedom in America. Why would he want to join one army just to leave it and join another?

### **Conclusions:**

After hundreds of hours of research of numerous books, documents, etc., I have come to the following conclusions. My conclusions are based, primarily, on the reasoning mentioned above. Frederick Roderick was a very young man, perhaps about twenty years old at the time he volunteered to join the Brunswick regiment to go to America. For years he had heard of the wonderful opportunities of freedom to own your own land and to live the life according to one’s own desires and not those of the “state”. These opportunities were transmitted back from those numerous Germans who had gone to America and experienced them first hand. Frederick knew some of these people. Frederick had just completed his five-year apprenticeship and was now a freemason. He followed in his father’s footsteps, seeing and experiencing the arduous work involved in becoming a stonemason. He expressed his desires to go to America to which his father either encouraged or discouraged. Frederick could not read or write, as noted by his “X” mark for his name on documents.

On February 22, 1776, Frederick joined one of three Brunswick regiments (likely the infantry regiment of Col. Riedesel and Lt. Col. von Speth), leaving the city of Wolfenbuttel and marched through the city of Brunswick, past the Duke of Brunswick. There was a great display from the people. The army was marching to the Elbe River. While the remainder of the army gathered, there were two daily drills. At the Elbe, the 2,282 man army boarded one of ten ships anchored there. The general staff and 77 soldier's wives boarded also. On March 26, 1776 Frederick bid farewell to his homeland. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, the fleet arrived at Portsmouth and was joined on the 30<sup>th</sup> by four vessels containing a regiment of 760 men from Hesse Hanau. The English fleet of Generals Phillips and Burgoyne joined the Germans under a great welcome and fanfare. The fleet set sail for Canada on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, meeting other vessels along the way, making for a total of 76 ships in the fleet.

First land was seen on May 12<sup>th</sup> and Quebec was reached on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The troops happily left the ships only to re-board and leave for Trois Rivieres on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, arriving there on the 11<sup>th</sup>. For some reason, the regiment to which Frederick belonged had left England or Germany later and did not arrive at Quebec until the 17<sup>th</sup> of September. At Plymouth, they joined the Second Hessian division and the Waldeck regiment in a fleet of 21 ships, leaving England on May 26<sup>th</sup>. The supply of provisions was so small and so bad that 19 men died and 131 were sick of scorbutic diseases. These troops reached Fort Chambly and were greeted by Riedesel, a man they knew and loved, on October 13<sup>th</sup>. The Germans marched and set up winter quarters at Trois Rivieres. Frederick was housed by a local inhabitant, who did not speak German, receiving daily one-half pound of meat, half fresh, half salt, bread and vegetables for soup. Everything was free. It was a harsh winter with eight feet of snow. Frederick received extra warm clothing and spent time hunting and fishing and wondering about America. He wondered what it would be like to kill someone, possibly a German-American who was defending his freedom against the German forces paid by the British. Knowing that the one who gets killed might just be him, he tried to imagine when he would get his chance to desert. Yet from where he was today, it looked like that might never happen. By March, Frederick and the other troops were inspected and found to be in good condition and of exemplary conduct.

June, 1777 came and General Burgoyne assembled 3,600 Germans as part of his army of 8,000 men. In 400 boats, the army moved across Lake Champlain in gallant array, while the Indians moved by land. It was the first time that Frederick had seen Indians as Burgoyne gave the chiefs a formal reception. The army pushed forward from Crown Point with two German brigades, including Frederick, on the left wing. Frederick looked dashing in his white pants and blue coat. Of course, the British were in their customary red coats. A series of forts, Carillon, Independence, and Ticonderoga were attacked on July 1<sup>st</sup> by the Germans. After a brief battle, the Americans fled the forts, leaving 200-300 men captive. So little pains were taken by the Germans to prepare a camp that the men were lost in the woods, and were a day in joining their fellow soldiers. This was Frederick's first encounter with the dense forests of Canada and the strange manner in which the Americans fought with great success. Riedesel quickly learned of this advantage of "fighting in open order" and ordered his officers to practice the men in the new system, adding a useful lesson to the strict German system. Frederick had practiced the European method of standing in an open field to battle. Burgoyne decided to move quickly to the Hudson and then to Albany. The Americans abandoned Fort St. Anna and Fort Edward and took up positions at Stillwater. Burgoyne ordered Brunswick Lt.-Col. Baum to seize 1,300 horses by using 200 Brunswick Dragoons, 40 Light Infantry, 60 Canadians, 140 Indians, and 160 men (including Frederick Roderick) from his left wing. Of the 551 men, 374 were Germans—360 Brunswick infantry and 14 Hanau artillerymen. On August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1777 Burgoyne ordered Baum to go directly to Bennington. Baum, following orders, met an American force of over 1,500 men. Frederick and the others had been told that these Americans were mostly loyalists and would join their ranks. This was not the case; the Americans attacked sharply. Another German force of over 600 came to the rescue but met a very large force of Americans. The Germans fought until they ran out of ammunition and surrendered. Of these some 1,100 men, only 29 Dragoons made it back. The remaining forces were either taken captive or were killed. Frederick was one who surrendered.

While Frederick waited as a prisoner of war, Burgoyne vacillated and finally decided to attack the Americans on October 12<sup>th</sup>. After a series of mistakes, Burgoyne surrendered to American General Gates on October 16<sup>th</sup>. In all, 5,800 prisoners were taken, 2,431 were German and included Frederick Roderick. These

prisoners marched slowly to Boston, with a loss of only a hundred German deserters. Frederick had considered a desertion attempt along the way, but wanted to wait until he was in America.

Frederick, along with the other German prisoners, was encamped on Winter Hill, in wretched barracks. Prisoners were forced to buy their own shoes. They were allowed to work for private families to pay for their own food and clothes. Many were induced to desert and 20 did. Frederick did not desert here because of only speaking German and not being able to converse with an American who did. He decided to wait. Brunswick Regiment commander Speth reported a sad account of the condition of his men as starved, sick, ragged, hopeless and despairing. Frederick felt every one of these and wondered why he ever considered going to war. How he longed to be back with his family in Germany. The next summer (1778) fifty Brunswick soldiers died in four weeks, from the results of bad food and intense summer heat.

An order was issued for the men to go to Virginia, a march of 650 miles through a country full of hostile inhabitants, with no provision for health or comfort. The prisoners were moved in 3 divisions, the first were the Grenadiers and the Dragoons, second was the regiment led by Specht, to which Frederick belonged. The journey was tedious and trying, and the men found great difficulty in getting shelter or food in the thinly populated country through which they moved. Often bivouacking in the woods, without tents, or cover, exposed to frost and rain, their condition was a wretched one. In December they passed through New Jersey and Pennsylvania—and at Lancaster were met as some kind of heroes. Most all the people spoke German and cheered them, lifting their spirits. On the last day of the year, they reached Virginia, and celebrated New Year's Eve in the woods with no shelter and a foot of snow on the ground. On January 15, 1779, they arrived at Charlottesville, Virginia with about 1,000 men. The officers had been removed so that the men would be encouraged to desert and become useful citizens. One big advantage was that Charlottesville had a German speaking population. Rewards were offered the men to encourage them to make their homes in America, particularly those who had skills. Frederick had such skills as a stonemason. He found himself undertaking jobs as a stonemason, taking an oath of allegiance to America (1783), and soon got married and bought land.

Is this a 100% factual story of Frederick Roderick's adventures during the American Revolution? Of course not, but the recent DNA discoveries and the subsequent facts concerning stonemasonry in Germany lead us to a possible scenario of events to some answers concerning our patriarch Frederick Roderick.

#### What needs to be done now?

- Masonic lodges in the Charlottesville, Burke Co., NC, and perhaps Lancaster, PA areas should be checked for Frederick's name from 1779 to 1820.
- Virginia state archives should be searched for early records of land purchases, etc.
- Lancaster, PA archives and (Lutheran) churches should be examined for information.
- Masonic lodges, churches, and quarries in the Lower Saxony state of Germany (especially Obernkirchen) should be checked for a similar name and a possible father's name.