



This is NewsLetter Issue No. Four ~ For the year 2022

The Tomahawk

One of the most widely used weapons of the Revolutionary War was the tomahawk. It was small enough to stick in a man's saber belt or to hang from the leather strap of his cartridge box slung over one shoulder. It was easily retrieved when needed. The tomahawk was handy to have when setting up camp and it could be used to deliver a deadly blow to the head of an enemy in close contact fighting. The Army issued at least one tomahawk to every 6-man mess.

The name of the tomahawk was picked up by the English from any one of a number of the Algonquian tribes inhabiting the northeast region of the North American continent. For two examples, from the Powhatan, the name of the weapon was: *tamahaak*.

The Lenape name for it was: *temahikan*. The root word, *temah* translated as: "to cut off with a tool".

The tomahawk is often mistakenly called a *hatchet*, but the hatchet and tomahawk are two different types of weapon / tool. The word 'hatchet' is derived from the German *hache* meaning a small axe. [The custom of hanging a tomahawk from a belt gave it its name of 'belt axe'.] The hatchet is fabricated with a hammerhead on



the side opposite the blade. It therefore could be used to hack or cut, or it could be used to hammer. The tomahawk was made with a poll head meaning that it was a single piece of iron bent or folded

around a rod resulting in a round end opposite the blade such as in the example shown here.

To fabricate a tomahawk, the blacksmith would start with a somewhat rectangular bar or plate of iron. The piece of iron to be made into a tomahawk was not completely rectangular. It would be wide at both ends and taper toward the center where the intended fold would be. The plate would be heated until it was pliable enough to be hammered around an iron rod. The plate would be hammered so that the two ends would be almost touching and a round space, called the 'eye' would be formed where the metal wrapped around the rod.

When the iron plate was sufficiently hammered into shape, the edges of the two ends would be positioned parallel to each other. Then a small wedge of steel would be inserted between the two ends of the shaped iron. Steel was harder to make or come by easily, so only the cutting edge of the tomahawk would be made out of it. With the

metal once again heated to make the metal malleable, the two ends of the iron plate would be hammered together with the steel wedge sandwiched between them. They would be hammered tight together and worked until a sharp blade edge would be produced.

After the piece cooled, a straight wood handle would be cut. One end of the handle would be inserted in the round space created by forming the tomahawk around the rod.

The tomahawk was the preferred weapon of the Amerindian warriors and the English who traded with them soon discovered that fact. Trade tomahawks were designed with a unique feature. A pipe bowl would be attached to the poll of the tomahawk and the handle hollowed out to provide a pipe stem. The warriors to whom this type of tomahawk was traded would use the trade tomahawk as a pipe.



**The next meeting of the
Frontier Patriots Chapter
of the Sons of the American Revolution
will be held at the Creekside Inn Restaurant
at 3059 Everett Road, East Freedom, PA
on Saturday, 10 December 2022
starting at 12 Noon.**

It is three and one-half years to the celebration of our nation's 250th Anniversary. Three and one-half years ago Covid-19 was not even a thing and that seems like just yesterday. Before we know it the calendar will read July 2026. As the descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution, it is our duty to honor those heroes. We need to start NOW to gather ideas on how we can celebrate the nation's SemiQuincentennial in a unique and honorable way. If you have any ideas on projects for our Chapter to undertake to celebrate the anniversary, please let me know by email, snail mail or phone.



Hessians Buried In Old Bedford County

After the war, a number of former Hessian soldiers, who fought for Great Britain during the American Revolutionary War, came to live in the region that (in 1771) would become Bedford County. In most cases, they were Germans who had fought on the British side not because of any political ideology but rather because they were mercenaries: soldiers hired by the British to fight in their armies. It has been suggested that in some cases the soldiers themselves might not have had any say in the decision on whose side they fought. They essentially were a commodity bought by the British Parliament and sold by the princes of the administrative districts from which they came. Germany as a unified country did not exist until 1871; before that the region consisted of territories, states and principalities. Each was ruled by a prince or other noble. Each of the princes or nobles made their own arrangements with the British government in regard to allowing their subjects to serve in the British Army.

The Germanic regions which supplied mercenary soldiers to the British Army included Hesse-Kassel, the most prominent and from which the name *Hessian* was derived, which supplied 16,992 soldiers; Brunswick- Wolfenbuttel, 5,723 soldiers; Hesse-Hanau, 2,422 soldiers; Ansbach-Beyreuth, 2,353 soldiers; Waldeck, 1,225 soldiers; and Anhalt-Zerbst, which supplied 1,160 soldiers. For these 29,875 soldiers, Great Britain paid £1,770,000.

Large numbers of these Hessians were taken captive in the military actions at Trenton on 26 December 1776 and at Yorktown in 1781. The captured Hessians were detained at various locations

such as Frederick, Maryland and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The Hessian prisoners were held in these camps until September 1783 when the Treaty of Paris brought an official end to the American Revolutionary War. At that time the Hessian prisoners were transported to New York City for return to Europe. Quite a number of the prisoners made their escape at that time and headed for settlements of Germans who had fought for the rebel colonists.

Many families that descended from Hessian soldiers felt a stigma about their heritage. Not wanting to suffer reproach from their German neighbors whose ancestors were Patriots, many descendants of Hessians fabricated stories ~ *family traditions* ~ that tended to follow a standard pattern. The basic Hessian family tradition stated that the Hessian ancestor, along with all the other Hessian prisoners, was being transported toward New York City, but he escaped and found his way to meet personally with General George Washington. General Washington, out of gratitude, immediately accepted him into the Patriot army and even presented him with a sword or musket. The fact of the matter, when it is researched fully, is that the stories are simply that ~ made up stories. The descendants of Harmon Dick claim that not only did General Washington give Harmon a sword, but he received a *grant* of a couple hundred acres of land. A check of the Land Office records shows in black and white that Harmon Dick *purchased* those acres.

There are eleven Hessians, who never joined the Patriot Cause, who were buried in the four counties of Bedford, Blair, Fulton and Huntingdon.

Bedford County

Arnold Haupt ~ Grenadier in the Hesse-Kassel von Donop Regiment, buried in St. Lukes / Stoler Cemetery, Saxton

Friedrich Hentze ~ Rifleman in the Hesse-Hanau Fusilier Regiment, buried in the Old Union Cemetery, Osterburg

Ludwig Hirschheuser ~ Private in the Landgraf Regiment, buried in the Friends Cove United Church of Christ Cemetery, Colerain Twp

Marcus Metzger ~ Private in the Beyreuth Regiment, buried in St. Luke's United Church of Christ Cemetery, Juniata Twp

Blair County

Harmon Dick ~ Grenadier in von Rahl's Regiment, buried in the Lower Cemetery, Roaring Spring

Johann Kaspar Dilling ~ Private in the Erb Prinz Regiment, buried in the Rebecca Furnace Cemetery, North Woodbury Twp

Wilhelm Loos ~ Private in the Feldjagerkorps Regiment, buried in the Kensinger-Daugherty Cemetery, Martinsburg

Friedrich Wilhelm Singer ~ Rifleman in the Hesse-Hanau Fusilier Regiment, buried in the Newry Lutheran Cemetery, Newry

Johannes Ulrich Zeth ~ Musketeer in the Hesse-Hanau Erbprinz Regiment, buried in the Union Cemetery, Claysburg

Fulton County

Conrad Plessinger ~ unknown company, buried in the Plessinger Family Farm Cemetery, Belfast Twp

Huntingdon County

Johannes Schmeiss ~ Private in the von Knyphausen Regiment, unknown burial site, Shirley Twp

ANNUAL DUES

*H*ave you already paid your membership dues for the year 2023? If you have not, please do so before the end of November 2022.

As was noted a year ago, instead of a deadline at the end of December, your yearly membership dues must be paid by the 30th of November. Failure to pay them by that date will result in your being dropped from the membership rolls ~ and to be reinstated will cost an additional \$10. If you think \$64 is a lot, won't \$74 be worse?



The option to pay by credit card online has been dropped due to the rising costs imposed by the credit card companies.

Please make every effort to pay your membership dues on time.

For those of you that receive this newsletter by US mail, if you have an email address, we would appreciate you informing us of it to use for future newsletters. Printing and mailing these newsletters is not that expensive, but it is time consuming. Please send to our Secretary Larry Smith at schmitt@motherbedford.com

Frontier Patriots Chapter website: <https://frontierpatriots.com>