

The Germans in the Defense of
Baltimore

In the War of 1812 to 1814.

By

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It would not be necessary to relate here what part American Citizens of German birth or descent have taken in the defense of this city and country in the war of 1812 to 1814, when attacked by an English fleet and army, were it not for a persistent effort for the last five years in public press and speech, to claim whatever is good and worth preserving in our country, as of English origin and that we are of the Anglo-Saxon race. The overwhelming larger share of the German, Irish and other nationalities in the building and forming of this American nation is either ignored or studiously perverted as of Anglo-Saxon merit and virtue. In this controversy, I am only to relate the episode confined to the War of 1812 to 1814 in and about the City of Baltimore, and I cannot do full justice to my side, as I have not had the free access to all the historical data, nor sufficient time in research among the old manuscripts etc. Baltimore, in 1812, had a large population of German birth or descent. Germans were numerous from the very foundation of the City. They were patriots in the War of Independence and after the war in 1787, Captain Mackenheimer, of the Continental Army, organized "The First Baltimore Light Infantry"; it later occupied the right of the First Battalion of the Old 5th Regiment. Captain Mackenheimer was promoted Colonel, and Captain John Schrim for many years thereafter commanded the Company. In 1792, Captain John Stricker of the Continental Army organized "The Independent Company." Captain John Stricker had distinguished himself in the War of Independence. He later rose to the rank of Brigadier-General, and, in 1817, was Vice-President of

the German Society of Maryland. The Baltimore Jägers, commanded by Philip B. Sadtler, and die Union Jägers, commanded by Dominick Bader, were organized after 1792. These Companies belonged to the Militia of Maryland and are reported to be composed of citizens of German birth or descent. The Baltimore Jägers were commanded in the German language.

After the War of 1813 had lasted for more than a year and the English had suffered keenly from Privateers fitted out in our harbor, it became known that the English harbored a feeling of special hostility against Baltimore. An eminent British statesman declared that "our City was the great depository of the hostile spirit of the United States against England," and Admiral Warren had said, "Baltimore is a doomed town."

A committee of Vigilance and Safety of thirty, whereof the Mayor of the City was chairman, was formed in August 1814, among whom we find Henry Stauffer, Solomon Etting, William Lorman, Adam Fonerden, Frederick Schaeffer, George Woelper, Herman Alrichs and George Warner; Philip Cronmiller, Ludwig Hering, Frederick Leypold, Henry Schroeder, Peter Gold and George Decker were among the superintendents of work for the erection of fortifications. Peter Diffenderfer, William Brown and Daniel Diffenderfer were members of the committee on relief, and Christian Keller, Henry Schroeder, Balzer Schaeffer, and Jacob Miller were members of the ward committees.

The English came to destroy our good City of Baltimore on Sunday, September 11th, 1814; about seventy ships of the enemy anchored off North Point about twelve miles from the City and on the next day landed about seven thousand men, of infantry, artillery, marines and sailors, fully equipped for battle, and advanced toward the City. Our City, however, was not without succor; patriots from Western Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia hastened to its relief, and with them and among them we find a host of men of German birth or descent ready and willing to sacrifice their lives in the defense of our country against the foreign invaders. There came Captain Michael H. Spangler with his Company from York, Pennsylvania; Captain Frederick Metzger of Hanover, Pennsylvania; the

Hagerstown Volunteers under Captain Thomas Quantril, the Maryland Cavalry under Captain Jacob Baer, who were attached to the 5th Regiment in battle.

There came the Franklin Artillery under Captain Joseph Meyers, Steiner's Artillery of Frederick, Maryland; Captain Henry Steiner; The Baltimore Jägers, First Baltimore Light Infantry were with the 5th Regiment, the Union Jägers with the First Rifle Battalion; there was also a Company called the Gray Jägers, whereof Lieutenant André fell in battle. There were organizations more exclusively formed by citizens of German descent. There were men of German descent more or less in every other military Company, which took part in the Battle of North Point. The 51st Regiment Md. M. was commanded by Col. Henry Amey, who signs the orders he issued Amich; in his Regiment were Captain Haubert und Captain Michel Peters; in the original muster rolls of three Companies of this Regiment, which I personally examined, I find in Captain Andrew Smith's Company of sixty-one men, twenty-five German names; in Captain Matthews Company of eighty-eight men, sixteen German names, and in another Company of one hundred and eighteen men, thirty-four German names. Captain Daniel Schwarzauer and Captain George Steever commanded Companies in the 27th Regiment and Captain John D. Miller, Captain Thomas Warner, Captain Andrew E. Warner and Captain Henry Meyer in the 39th Regiment. Sergeant Clemm of the Artillery, a merchant of Baltimore, was killed in Fort McHenry during the bombardment.

These men marched shoulder to shoulder with their comrades of Irish and English birth or descent, as American citizens and patriots, on the 12th of September, 1814, into battle against the English, and, by their valor, under the benign designs of Providence, warded off the murderous designs of the enemy.

General John Stricker commanded the brigade, which bore the brunt of the battle, and Major George Armistead of the United States Artillery commanded Fort McHenry during the bombardment. Major, later Lieut. Col. Armistead was born 1780 at New Market, Va., where his ancestors had immigrated from Hessen-Darmstadt. Five of his brothers served in the

army during the War of 1812. The mother of President John Tyler was a daughter of Robert Armistead, whose grandfather immigrated from Germany. The Armisteads are relatives to four Presidents of the United States; viz: James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler and Benjamin Harrison.

