

PRIVATE LUDWIG WISSINGER
1756-1842
AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR PATRIOT

A GENEALOGICAL HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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Private Ludwig Wissinger

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In this 250th anniversary of our republic, we recognize those who endured hardship and risked their lives so that we may enjoy the benefits and freedoms provided by its founders and defenders. One such individual is our patriot, Ludwig Wissinger.

Ludwig's story begins with his father, colonist Johann Ludwig Wissinger, who was born in the Parish of Gross-Gerau, near Darmstadt, Germany, state of Hesse. He came to America (the only member of the family to do so) as an unmarried man, on the ship "Friendship", commanded by William Vittery, from Rotterdam. He arrived in Philadelphia, PA, on September 23, 1740. As he was unable to write, he made his mark upon arrival and had someone else write his name for him.

Once in the colonies, he met and married Catherine (Anna Catharina) in or around 1742. The young couple moved to York County, PA, where they homesteaded a small parcel of land. Within 10 years their family grew and they moved to Middletown, Maryland, where their fifth child, Ludwig Wissinger, was born in 1756. Johann and Catherine lived there for the rest of their lives. Johann suffered a stroke and passed away in 1778

Ludwig spent his childhood in Middletown, which was the frontier, assisting his family as they worked and struggled daily to make a home in the wilderness. He was a strong and healthy pioneer and, at the age of 20, on August 14, 1776, he "signed" his enlistment papers. He was sworn in as a Private at Frederick, Maryland, and began a three-year tour of duty with the Continental Army. He was initially assigned to the 3rd Battalion of the German Regiment, under the command of Colonel Weitner.

The German Regiment originated from a resolution of Congress, 27 June 1776, directing four companies of Germans to be raised in Pennsylvania, later increased to five; and four companies in Maryland, to comprise the newly formed "German Battalion," the companies to serve three years, unless sooner discharged. Nicholas Haussegger, major of the Fourth Battalion (Waynes), was commissioned Colonel to command the German Battalion. Pennsylvania furnished by far the larger number of both of its officers and recruits. The regiment was in the field and engaged at Trenton and Princeton, and in May 1777, was in Deborre's Brigade a Continental Army unit. During this time, the unit was assigned to Major General John Sullivan's division. They saw

action during the 1777 Philadelphia campaign, including the Staten Island raid and the Battle of Brandywine. At this point, Colonel Haussegger left the army after the Battle of Monmouth and returned to his farm near Lebanon, PA. Taking leadership was Lt. Colonel Weitner who succeeded to the command. The regiment took part in Sullivan's campaign against the Indians. In the spring of 1780, the unit was stationed on the frontier of Northumberland County. By resolution of Congress, in October the German Regiment was reduced and ended its organization on 1 January 1781.

Ludwig Wissinger was transferred to the command of Colonel Nicholas Haussegger's regiment that crossed the icy Delaware River on large, flat-bottomed Durham boats and engaged in the Battle of Trenton in December 1776. Under General George Washington, Haussegger's "German Battalion" participated in this famous Christmas night crossing of the freezing ice-choked Delaware River. General Washington and 2400 troops weathered an icy nor'easter and took part in the surprise attack on the Hessian garrison in Trenton. It is storied that the German Battalion used their German speaking skills to yell to the Hessian soldiers and order them to lay their weapons down. The brave German Battalion continued to fight in the Battle of Brandywine in September 1777 and the Battle of Germantown in October 1777. It is recorded on official muster rolls that Ludwig was also stationed at Valley Forge in March, April, and May of 1778 under the command of General George Washington.

Ludwig was stationed at "Second River," along the Passaic River, NJ from June through July of 1778, White Plains, NY, through September of 1778, and at Fishkill, NY, September through October 1778. He was honorably discharged on July 20, 1779, in Wyoming (near Wilkes-Barre), PA. Copies of his pay stubs reveal that his basic rate of pay while in the service was six and 2/3 dollars per month. He was 500 miles from home, with no horse, no spare clothing and unusable Continental Currency. Our patriot, battle-worn Ludwig, set off on his long journey homeward carrying his Pennsylvania Long Rifle. He made his way back to his home in Middletown, MD, but soon moved to York County, PA. Tax records indicate that he was employed as a mason and was also affiliated with the York County Militia from 1779 to 1783.

In 1781, Ludwig briefly returned to Middletown, Maryland and married Susanna Miller who was the daughter of John and Christina Miller of Frederick County, MD. As pioneers, they enjoyed a successful and productive 53 year marriage.

Thirteen children were born and welcomed into their family. Many of these children lived their lives and raised families in the villages surrounding Johnstown.

Ludwig purchased from the state of Pennsylvania 216 acres of land that was not previously surveyed, by warrant number 213 on September 13, 1786, in Roaring Springs Run in Woodbury Township, Bedford County, and sold it in 1790 to Jacob Stevens. He then purchased 300 acres of wilderness land in Solomon Run, which is now Cambria County. Records list this purchase as land grant number one by warrant which recorded the date of purchase as January 23, 1797. Ludwig Wissinger's property was known as the "Griffith Settlement" situated in the Oakland/Lorain neighborhood area of Stonycreek Township. It consists of all of the land on both sides of Bedford Street and east to the edge of what is now Geistown. Ludwig and Susanna built their family homestead and farm on what is currently the corner of Bedford and Penrod Streets.

In 1797-1798, Ludwig Wissinger helped clear the wilderness and worked alongside Joseph (Schantz) Johns to "lay out" the early town plan for Johnstown, PA. In the year 1810, Ludwig built the first schoolhouse in the township across the street from his home. The school was built from logs with a window on each wall. The windows were most likely made from heavy coarse paper made from woolen rags that were coated in lard. This process blocked the wind and rain, but allowed soft light to pass through. The students' desks were made of boards that were placed upon strong pins that were pounded into the walls. This primitive schoolhouse was kept warm by the wood burning open fireplace.

On April 19, 1833, at the age of 77, Ludwig was granted a pension of about thirty dollars per month. His beloved wife, Susanna, died in 1834 and after her passing Ludwig went to live with his son, George. Ludwig died on May 6, 1842, at the age of 86. His son George and three of Ludwig's grandsons purchased a plot of land that was originally part of Ludwig's farm. The small plot is the resting place of Ludwig, his wife Susanna, and roughly 17 other family members. The private Wissinger Cemetery is a small historic family burial plot located at the corner of Riffith, Ruby and Penrod Streets in Stonycreek Township, Johnstown, Pennsylvania 15902.

This plot of land is known as "the private Wissinger Cemetery" in Stonycreek Township, Johnstown, Pennsylvania 15902. In 1966, the Oakland Home and

Garden Club graciously purchased and placed official headstones for Ludwig and Susanna. The Club also dedicated their time and talents to install a white wooden picket fence around the plot. *It should be noted that the Ludwig's headstone has an incorrect year of death – 1840 instead of his actual year of his death – 1842.*

Years later, a local Boy Scout who was working toward his Eagle Scout rank cleaned the cemetery plots and added new white vinyl fencing. The descendants of Private Ludwig Wissinger are both pleased and thankful to know that each year on Memorial Day; the American Legion conducts a memorial honor service at “the private Wissinger Cemetery.”

This historical narrative was researched, compiled and edited on August 15, 2026 by family historians:

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