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STORY OF THE REVOLUTION.

How Valentin Leonhardt and Wooldrich Fritz Met Death at the Hands of Tories.

(By Rev. J. C. Leonard, D. D.)

Among the German settlers who located in North Carolina during the hightide of the immigration of that nationality from 1745 onward was Valentin Leonhardt (Valentine Leonard, as the name would now be spelled.) He took passage from Rotterdam on the ship "Neptune," Captain Thomas Wilkinson. This vessel reached the port of Philadelphia October 25, 1746. Here the subject of this sketch took the oath of allegiance to the province and state of Pennsylvania. Just how long he stayed in Pennsylvania there are no records at hand to show. Most of the German settlers in North Carolina came from the German settlements in Pennsylvania. They took up their residence

LEONHARDT'S CREEK—SITE OF THE OLD GRIST MILL.
(Built and owned by the old soldier near his house.)

in that part of the state now covered by the counties of Alamance, Guilford, Davidson, Forsyth, Rowan, Stanly, Cabarrus, Lincoln, Catawba and parts of adjacent counties. Many of these men and women were born in the latter province, as is attested by inscriptions in old Bibles and hymn books, on tombstones, etc. There is in the old "Leonhardt's church" graveyard a stone bearing the inscription, "Abraham Reichard was born in Pennsylvania in July, 1764. Died September 2, 1828." Another reads as follows: "Adam Hetrich war geboren in Penselvani in Lencaster County im Jahre 1741, den 12 October." But some of the settlers came from the old world, especially those who came in the earlier years. Some of these came by way of the port of Charleston; but most of them made their way first to Pennsylvania, thence to North

MONUMENT AT GRAVES OF LEONHARDT AND FRITZ.
(The soapstone slabs are also shown.)

Carolina and other provinces. Valentin Leonhardt was among the latter class. The inscription on his tombstone is as follows: "Valentin Leonhardt, geboren in der Kuhr Pfaltz in Katzenbach den 13 October, 1718, und ist in dem Herrn entschlafen den 13 November, 1781. Nun hier liegt eine Handvoll Aschen mit Christi Blut gewashen." A free translation is as follows: "Valentin Leonhardt was born at Katzenbach, in the Electorate of Palatinate, October 13, 1718, and died November 13, 1781. Here now lies a handful of ashes washed in the blood of Christ."

Valentin Leonhardt came to America in 1746, and the probability is that if he tarried at all in Pennsylvania it was only for a few days. The records show that he was in North Carolina a few years later. The church, "Leonhardt's church," bearing his name was established as early as 1754, more likely a year earlier. This is a Reformed (German) church now known by the name of Pilgrim, or the Church of the Pilgrims. The selection of the site of this church forms an interesting incident in the life of Valentin Leonhardt. One of his nearest neighbors was Jacob Berrier (Berger.) One day in 1753 or 1754 the old man Berrier and two or three companions were riding through the country between the Yadkin river and Abbott's creek. The Indians then still roved through this section of North Carolina. Mr. Berrier and his companions had visited several settlers on the lands between and on the waters of these two streams. These men were neighbors, though they lived in some cases many miles apart. About three-quarters of a mile west of Abbott's creek these gentlemen came to a beautiful spot in a grove of oak, hickory and sugar-maple trees, where was also a spring of sparkling water bubbling up. Here they paused, and Jacob Berrier said to his companions: "Gott hat diese Stelle zur verehrung seines Namens geschaffen; hier mussen wir ein Versammlungshaus haben." (God fashioned this place for a house of worship; here we must have a meeting-house.) This spot was near the Leonhardt homestead on the Henry McCulloh lands. McCulloh was the agent appointed by Lord Granville to collect rents in Carolina and, when land was sold to settlers, to make the proper deeds. Lord Granville also deeded several large tracts of land to McCulloh himself, and the latter disposed of his own holdings to settlers. It will be remembered that Lord Granville was one of the eight Lords Proprietors who held his part of Carolina when the other seven surrendered their interests back to the king. Many of the early settlers were in a sense "squatters," and this church may also be so classed. It was established on a tract of the Lord Granville lands lying between the lands of Valentin Leonhardt on the south and Philip Sauer on the north. Leonhardt's first deed bears date of April 17, 1762, and his second August 27, 1762. Sauer's first deed was made in 1763. Of course these men lived on their lands several years before securing titles. No title of the church is on record at the date of its occupation. After North Carolina was properly organized as a state, and the government had confiscated the Granville and McCulloh lands, three elders of the church legally entered the lands in the name of the congregation. The date is October 4, 1782.

The records of the Reformed church at Katzenbach, Germany, do not chronicle the marriage of Valentin Leonhardt; hence there is uncertainty as to whether he married before leaving for America in 1746. He had then reached the age of twenty-eight years, and the probability is that he was married. The marriage records just after 1740 are very defective at Katzenbach and Rockenhausen in Germany. In the year 1745 only four marriages are recorded; in 1746 only five, and these stop with April. Under date of February 12, 1748, is recorded the marriage of Philip Leonhardt, brother of Valentin, to Anna Elizabeth Neuss. There is no positive record giving the maiden name of his wife. The church register gives her first name as Elizabeth. At the baptism of Elizabeth Sauer, daughter of Philip Sauer (mentioned above), born October 12, 1755, the sponsors were Valentin Leonhardt and his wife Elisabeth. It will be noticed that the little girl was born on the birthday of Mr. Leonhardt. Leonhardt and Sauer were neighbors, close friends and members of the same church.

The church register of the original Katzenbach, of the Rhine-Palatinate, Germany, gives in detail the records of the Leonhardt family. Valentin Leonhardt's parents were Martin and Anna Barbara Leonhardt (nee Spohn.) They were married November 11, 1704, by Rev. Carl Gervinus, pastor of the Reformed Church at Katzenbach from 1690 to 1710. Valentin, born October 13, 1718, was the youngest of four sons. The older brothers were the following: Sebastian, baptized February 14, 1706; Henry, baptized July 24, 1712; Philip baptized March 18, 1717. Valentine was baptized October 23, 1718, in the Reformed church at Katzenbach by Rev. Gotthard Steitz, pastor. The sponsors were John Paul Neuss and his wife Anna Ottilia. He was confirmed a full member of the same church at Easter, 1733, by Henry Julius Wagner, pastor from 1719 to 1763. The father, Martin Leonhardt, had also a brother named Michael.

Valentin Leonhardt and wife came to North Carolina in 1746 and settled in Bladen (afterwards Anson, then Rowan, and now Davidson) county on a large tract of land between Abbott's creek and one of its tributaries since called Leonhardt's creek after his name. To this couple were born eight children: Barbara, Valentin, Michael, Peter, Catharine, Elizabeth, Philip and Jacob. Each of these is mentioned in the last will and testament of the father, made August 22, 1779, two years prior to his tragic and cruel death. In his will he bequeathed to his wife Elizabeth the "Manor Plantation that I now live on, during her bearing the name Leonhardt, and in case she does not change her name she is to keep it to have rule over it during her life-time; and likewise I leave to my wife all my horses, cattle and my personal estate wholly." This plantation was to go to his sons Philip and Jacob after the death of his wife. To his other three sons he bequeathed his other plantations, and to the three daughters each fifty pounds in gold and silver, as well as household property. After the death of his wife, the remainder of his estate was to be converted into money and divided equally among the eight children. It will be noticed that the will was made during the revolutionary war. Valentin Leonhardt was a soldier at this time in the service of his country, fighting for American independence. He had seen many brave and strong men cut down in battle. Conscious that this might soon be his fate, he wisely made his will. The piety of the man is also seen in the wording of the will, which he wrote himself. It begins: "In the name of God, Amen. I, Valentin Leonhardt, of the county of Rowan and province of North Carolina, being in perfect health of body, and of perfect mind and memory, thanks be given unto God, calling to mind the mortality of my body, do make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner following: I recommend my soul into the hand of Almighty God who gave it; and my body to the earth to be buried in decent Christian burial....And as touching such worldly estate wherewith it has pleased God to bless me in this life, I give devise and dispose of the same in the following manner and form." He named as executors Jacob Hamm and Philip Sauer. The name Hamm has entirely disappeared from the community in which Leonhardt lived, but the name Sauer (now written Sowers) is still very common in this section.

The Rockenhausen records, near the original Katzenbach in Germany, show that Martin Leonhardt was a farmer. His son Valentin learned the tailor's trade, but after he came to America he too became a farmer on a large scale. His estate covered many hundreds of acres of land, and he had many horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, etc. It is not positively known whether he was a slaveholder or not. None are named in his will along with other bequests. However, he may have owned slaves, as they would have been included in the clause, "my personal estate wholly." His sons, as is shown by their several wills, were large slaveholders. At this date (1909) there still lives a very aged colored woman who belonged to Philip Leonhardt, one of the sons of Valentin, who came into a large property from his father's estate. Her name is Lucy, and she is a remarkable and interesting character. It is a rare pleasure to be able to present her picture to the readers of this magazine. Aunt Lucy does not know her exact age, but facts go to prove her considerably over one hundred years old. Her master Philip died about 1828, and Lucy was a grown woman at the time of his death, which she remembers and describes with clear vividness. He was taken ill on Saturday night at the home of his brother Jacob, whither he had gone to spend the night, expecting to attend church on Sunday. Jacob lived at the old home place quite near "Leonhardt's church." Philip was not able to return home until Monday, and then he lived only a few hours after reaching his house. Lucy testifies to the excellent character of her master. She says he was a good Christian man an officer in the "Dutch congregation" (Leonhardt's church), and that he often entertained the preachers in his home. She says she and the other colored people on his plantation had to go to church whenever there was preaching, and that the singing and preaching were in "Dutch" (German). Lucy learned to speak German while in this German family, and even yet she can speak and understand that tongue as she heard it spoken then. By the last will and testament of her master Philip, Lucy came into the possession of his daughter Leah. By a strange oversight the date when this will was made is not written in the instrument itself, which was probated in 1830, of course after his death. The will was probably made about 1828. Subsequently Lucy was sold by Leah to an English lady whom she speaks of as "Granny Lowe." It is a fact worthy of note that Aunt Lucy in speaking of the several families of her acquaintance in those distant years always speaks of them as "Dutch" or "English." She invariably makes that distinction. This is a distinction that no one in this section

VALENTINE LEONARD
(Great-grandson and namesake of the revolutionary patriot.)

now thinks of making; in fact a very small percentage of the people can even make a distinction in the German and English names. However, there are a few very old people of the white race still living who can speak the German which they learned at their mothers' knees. When freedom came to Aunt Lucy in President Lincoln's time, she was in the fourth generation of the Lowe family, having first belonged to "Granny Lowe," then to her son James, then to her grand-son James, then finally to her great-grand-son Cicero Lowe. The last named man died in 1892 at the age of 73 years. If he were living now he would be 90 years of age. It is easy to see that the age of Lucy is far more than a hundred years. She is still living at this ripe old age at the home of her daughter in the town of Lexington, North Carolina. Lucy says that her master Philip was very kind to his colored people, as were also his children, especially his daughters. She says that some "speculators" came to his house one day wanting to buy all the "niggers." She declares they had more money than she had ever seen in all her life. They poured it out on the table in a great heap. But the family would not hear to selling them, and the girls told the speculators to leave.

The name Leonard (Leonhardt) evidently is French. A celebrated French painter named Leonard died in 1580. There is a French town of that name south-west of Paris. All that can be found in regard to the name of this family points towards the flight of the Huguenots from France to Germany through Switzerland, some of whom tarried in the latter country. Katzenbach is only about twenty-five miles east of the Rhine and fifteen miles north-east of Heidelberg. It is a small village near the northern boundary of Baden at the present time, which is a Grand Duchy extending from Basel, Switzerland, along the Rhine to a short distance north of Heidelberg. The Kuhr Pfaltz (the Electorate of Palatinate) originally formed a part of Unter Pfaltz, of which Heidelberg was the capital.

Valentin Leonhardt took the side of the patriots in the revolution war. Some of the Germans in North Carolina were tories. This was in a sense natural, since the English had offered to the persecuted Germans an asylum in the new world. Rev. Samuel Suther was the pastor of "Leonhardt's church" from 1768 until after the close of the revolutionary war. He was himself an intense patriot and preached the doctrine of American independence from his pulpits. He was a brilliant man and an eloquent preacher, and his influence over those to whom he ministered was very great. Under his fiery eloquence the men of his congregations enlisted in the American army to fight against "taxation without representation." Leonhardt was himself past fifty-five years of age at the outbreak of the revolution, but he did not hesitate to enlist in the American army. Before the close of the war all of his sons had also seen service in the army. The last battle in which they fought was that of Guilford Courthouse between Cornwallis and General Greene, March 15, 1781, thirty miles distant from the Leonhardt farm. After this battle General Greene's army was partly disbanded, and Leonhardt and his sons returned home.

The elder Leonhardt had considerable money in gold coin when the war broke out. There were no banks in which to deposit it for safe keeping. How should he dispose of it during those perilous times when property and money were frequently exposed to the depredations of conscienceless British soldiers? He took a piece of walnut timber about three inches square and twenty inches in length, bored a hole into it, put the gold in, stopped it up and concealed it in the cellar wall under his house. He told no one about the place of concealment except his youngest son Jacob, who was also in the patriot army during the latter part of the war. He did not even tell his wife, fearing that cruel British soldiers might force her to reveal the place of

LEONHARDT'S CHURCH, NOW CALLED PILGRIM.
(A short distance from the Leonhardt homestead, being the third building to be erected.)

concealment if she really knew. Much cruelty of this kind was practiced by the British. Peter Hetrich lived ten miles south of the Leonhardt estate. He was also a patriot and enlisted in the army. While he was away from home one day a band of British and Tories came to his house, and, holding a pistol in the face of his wife, cursed her and told her to give up all she had or die. She answered that she was helpless, and begged them to spare her and her children and her property. They only abused her for her pitiful entreaties, and again told her to give up all she had or die. They took all of the provisions except a little salt, drove off the choice horses and cattle and shot the others, and then burned all the buildings. When Peter Hetrich returned a few weeks later and found his desolated home, he took his wife and children to Virginia until after the war, when he returned. The old soldier Leonhardt had in mind the possibility of just torture as this when he concealed his money. If he and his son had both been killed, the probability is that the money would still be in the cellar. But the son lived through the struggle, and took the gold from its hiding-place where it had remained throughout the years of the war. The walnut-timber bank was preserved and has been handed down from one generation to another. It is at present in the keeping of the writer of this article, and is highly prized as an heirloom. It is in a perfect state of preservation.

There were many tories in North Carolina and they hated the patriots. It so happened that neighbors were often on opposite sides in battle. This was notably true in the battle of Ramseur's Mill in Lincoln county, and at Guilford Courthouse in Guilford county, North Carolina. Valentin Leonhardt did not escape the malice of the tories. They were very bitter against him, and planned to take his life. On the second day of November, 1781, near the close of the war, a band of tories came to his farm with malice in their hearts. His "Mansion House" was built of immense hewn logs. Its dimensions were forty and thirty feet, two stories. Two long beams, twelve by fourteen inches, ran through the whole length of the house to support the joists of the upper floor. They were hewn with a "broad-axe" almost to perfect smoothness, and the lower edges were nicely chamfered. The logs of the walls were very large, the two bottom ones being twelve by twenty inches. These bottom logs were "rabbeted" on the inner side to receive the joists for the first floor. The joists themselves were worked out of logs with the broad-axe, and are much larger than carpenters now consider necessary. All the nails used in the house were made by hand, "wrought iron," as were also the hinges of the doors and window-shutters. The writer has a pair of the hinges that held the narrow shutters in place at one window, as well as the curious hand-made nails that fastened them on. Under the west end of the house was the great cellar, previously referred to in this article, partly walled with large rough stones. This cellar was entered by a heavy slanting door on the south side of the house. The immense chimney stood near the middle of the house, with a fire-place on either side below, but with none on the upper floor. The chimney was wide enough to receive wood eight feet long. This width of chimney was so common in those days that it became a custom to cut fire-wood eight feet in length, and the custom was kept up long after such chimneys ceased to be built. A hundred yards distant from the house is a large spring, and three hundred yards to the west flows "Leonhardt's creek," on which the pioneer built a gristmill, the site of which is still plainly visible. The front door was a double-door after a common pattern used in those days, sawed through the middle horizontally, making an upper and a lower door. Often in mild weather the lower door was closed and the upper one left open. The old soldier had returned from his day's labor on the farm on this second day of November, 1781, and was quietly resting by the old-fashioned open fire-place. Supper was over and the farm hands had gone to their places of rest. The revolutionary patriot sat peacefully by his own hearth-stone, "under his own vine and fig tree," meditating quietly in the gathering gloom of night. Suddenly, unexpectedly, a gunshot rang out at the open door; the good Christian man, the brave hero, the gallant soldier fell to the floor mortally wounded. The clean uncarpeted floor ran red with the master's blood. The perpetrators of this black deed, this bloody crime, this gruesome tragedy, were tories. They hated the man because he was a patriot and stood for American independence. The cruel murderers, thinking that they had executed their design when they saw the old man fall to the floor, fled into the adjacent forest and escaped. Escape was easy in a sparsely settled country, such as this was at the time. The murderers were never positively identified, though the family and friends had well-grounded convictions as to the primary actors in this foul crime. The murderers fled, thinking that they had killed Leonhardt on the spot. He was in fact mortally wounded, though he lived until the thirteenth of the month, when his spirit took its flight from the fallen

AUNT LUCY LOWE (1909) AT AGE OF 100 YEARS.
(She belonged to one of Valentin Leonhardt's sons.)

temple which had been its home for sixty-three years.

On the same night, the second of November, 1781, a similar murderous tragedy was enacted on the neighboring farm of Wooldrich Fritz. Wooldrich Fritz was also a revolutionary war soldier. He had enlisted in the army with Valentin Leonhardt, and had returned home with him after the battle of Guilford Courthouse. While one band of tories went to Leonhardt's house, another went to the home of Fritz and shot him dead. At the crack of the gun the man fell dead on the spot. The murderers here also made their escape.

The bodies of these two soldiers lie side by side in the old Leonhardt's church grave-yard. Fritz, who was killed on the second day of November, was buried first. When Leonhardt died of his wounds on the thirteenth, his body was buried by the side of his comrade. Soapstone slabs mark the graves of these two patriots. On the stone at the head of Fritz's grave is the inscription: "Wooldrich Fritz, deceased November the second, 1781, aged 50 years.

Remember me as you pass by;
As you are now, so once was I;
As I am now, so must you be;
Prepare therefore to follow me."

The stone at the foot of the grave of Fritz has these words on it: "Lo here doth lifeless Wooldrich lie, cut off by murder's cruelty."

We have already given the German inscription on the headstone at Leonhardt's grave; on the stone at the foot of his grave are the following lines in English:

"Beneath this stone doth now remain
An ancient man by murder slain."

This is a quaint inscription. The word "ancient" would seem to indicate that there was an idea in the minds of those who erected the stone that in the the years to come, down through many generations, men and women and children would look with reverence upon this grave. This inscription would tell them how the man came to his death. And so it has been; thousands have looked upon the grave, and have read the simple words.

These graves had no other monument to mark the last resting place of their heroic dead until the year 1896, when the citizens of the community decided to erect over them a handsomer and more pretentious stone. Popular subscriptions were taken to defray the expenses, and the people contributed liberally. A tall marble shaft was erected on a broad and strong concrete base. On the north side of this stone is the name of Leonhardt, with the dates of birth and death; on the south side is the same concerning Fritz. On the east face of the die are the words: "This monument was erected by citizens A. D. 1896 out of veneration for our brave dead. These men were of those who fought for and gained our liberty. Unveiled with appropriate ceremonies July 4, 1896." On the west face are the words: "The heroes buried in this spot were cruelly assassinated in their own homes by tories near the close of the revolutionary war. They were patriots and bravely fought for American independence." On the fourth day of July, A. D. 1896, one hundred and fifteen years after the death of these patriots who died as martyrs to American independence, this handsome monument was unveiled in the presence of ten thousand people. The memory of these brave men is fondly cherished not only by numerous descendants, but by the citizenship of the entire community. Peaceful be the slumbers of the brave heroes who sleep beneath this shaft.

RUINS OF THE FIRST CHURCHES AT PILGRIM.
([illegible] and—it is ever [illegible])

RUINS OF VALENTIN LEONHARDT'S "MANSION HOUSE."
([illegible])

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