

George Highbaugh (1755-1840) P181143

George Highbaugh (Heibauh) born September 22, 1755 in Germany was apprenticed at the age of 12 to a shipbuilder. In 1777 he learned that England was hiring Hessian troops for service in the Colonies. He enlisted as he realized this would be an opportunity to reach America. Somewhere at a point below Savannah, Georgia, young Highbaugh jumped ship and swam ashore, planning to travel north and reach the Continental forces and surrender to them in order to save his life. He knew as a deserter he would be shot by the Hessian troops. He had heard enough about America and the Colonists to feel sympathy for them. After walking for several days George reached a fort at Sunbury, Georgia, commanded by Lt. Colonel John McIntosh. George was accepted for service and was placed in a company of sixteen men under Major Lance.

The British were capturing most of Georgia. When capture was eminent, George and a few other soldiers slipped out of the fort at Sunbury. The escaping men found and joined a force of Americans under Lt. Colonel Samuel Ebert and made their way into South Carolina. In March, 1779 his regiment was forced to surrender by the British. Highbaugh was wounded in the leg but survived while many others were bayoneted by their captors. He remained in fear for his life that his captors might discover that he was a deserter from the Hessian troops. After three months as a prisoner he managed to escape and make his way to South Carolina where he found some of the men he had met at Sunbury.

George Highbaugh fought at the battle of Stone Ferry and was at the Siege of Savannah, which ended with the British evacuation in July, 1782. He was discharged in September, 1782 and booked passage on a ship for Philadelphia having heard that work was available in the shipyards.

He became acquainted with George and Elizabeth Close and their daughter, Catherine. When they decided to move to Kentucky, Highbaugh was responsible for building the raft which would be used for a journey down the Ohio River.

George married Catherine Close on June 6, 1789. George purchased 100 acres in Hardin County and built a cabin for his bride. In the year 1791 the settlers suffered near famine and the Indians were a scourge to the frontier. George took his wife and child to stay in Bardstown and he joined the Militia. The company marched to Ft. Jefferson (site of present day Cincinnati) and joined General St. Clair's expedition against the Indians. It was a complete disaster resulting in the loss of 860 men and 16 officers. Again, George escaped with his life, returning home shortly after the ill-fated campaign.

George Highbaugh died in November, 1840 at the age of 85. He is believed to be buried in the Bacon Creek Cemetery located in Hart County, Ky. No stone marks his resting place. His widow, Catherine, died in 1858. They were the parents of eleven children.

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Saramana Chapter SAR