

# THE "UNKNOWN MARBURGER" – ANOTHER PORTRAIT OF JÄGER COLONEL VON WURMB IS FOUND

Jörn Meiners

## Introduction

The following story should be considered the conclusion of my article in the 2004 *JSHA Journal*. At the time I introduced two Hessian Jäger officers. One was Alexander Wilhelm Bickel (1752-1810) concerning whom nothing further could be found. The other was an unidentified Jäger officer who was decorated with the Hessen-Cassel order *Pour la vertu militaire*. My request for an identification of him from the readers of the *Journal* had no results, so I had to continue the search myself.

My effort went not only into the Marburg University Museum of Art and Cultural History, but also to a number of other public museums and archives in Hessen, Thüringia, and Lower Saxony. I also made special efforts to contact private persons of noble families who were descendants of officers of the Hessen-Cassel army who took part in the American Revolution. On making contact and begging for help, happily, I was always graciously received and found them cooperative. I have to remark that in my article, I also have to mention the paths taken which did not lead to the desired result, but led to astounding new information, connections and aspects. For example, the case of the former Hessen-Cassel Jäger officer Cornelius.

The results of my research are now presented in the following article, and I can add that this article includes a small sensation.

## Portrait of Unknown Officer with the Order *Pour la Vertu Militaire* (Figure 1)

### Description of the Portrait

In the dark background of an oval field is the bust of a clean-shaven man turned half-left. The subject wears a typical 18<sup>th</sup>-century powdered wig rolled at the temples and with braid at the nape. He wears a green coat with carmine-red, gold-edged lapels. Under that he wears a white vest, a white ruffled shirt and a black stock. He also wears the cross of the PLVM on a long blue and silver-edged ribbon. The border trim and carmine-red color of the lapels and facings, the arrangement of the gold-colored buttons, and the aiguillette on the right shoulder all indicate the uniform of the Hessian Jäger Corps. The gold-colored trim on the coat dates the painting to before 1788, as in that year the trim color was changed to silver. These are in evidence in the Bickell portrait.

### Toward Identification

The museum, in connection with United States Bicentennial in 1976, tried to identify the subject. With this portrait they were forced to deal with two unknowns, the

artist and the subject. The museum chose the following approaches without reaching a clear conclusion.

### The Possible Artists

To identify the artist the Marburg University Museum of Art and Culture requested opinions from Art History Professor Erich Herzog, Dr. Lahusen and Frau Dr. Pilz, all of the State Art Collection in Kassel. They all concluded that it was the work of the artist Johann Werner Kobold, Sr. (ca.1740-1803) working in Cassel.<sup>1</sup> But on the University of Marburg Museum's inventory card there is a penciled note that it could be from the studio of Heinrich Tischbein, Sr. (1722-1789), as he was court painter in Cassel for a long time after 1753.<sup>2</sup> Here there are no further findings.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 1 – Portrait of unknown man with the Hessian order *Pour la vertu militaire*, oil on canvas, oval, 67 cm high, 53 cm wide. Owned by Universitätsmuseum, Marburg, Inventory No. 6254. Photo by Bilderarchiv Foto Marburg No. 221264. Rebacked, cleaned and varnished by restorer Ernst Knoll in May 1968.

### The Donor of the Portrait: Adele von Gehren

The portrait was the gift of Frau Louise Kayser of Marburg to the museum in May 1968. It was to be displayed with the notation "In memory of Professor Emanuel Kayser and his son Gerhard, gift of Frau Louise Kayser." However, the portrait is from the estate of Fräulein Adele von Gehren (hereafter Adele v.G.).<sup>4</sup> How the Adele v.G.'s portrait reached Prof. Kayser remains unknown.

The question of who was Adele v.G and where she was from was taken up by both the museum and me.<sup>5</sup> The results of these two investigations did not lead to the desired results, but yielded new interesting aspects, which are presented here.

Adele v.G. was born in 1861 in New Braunfels, Texas and was the oldest of the six children of Carl Hugo von Gehren (b.1836 in Melsungen, Hessen, d. 1897 in New Braunfels) and Elvira Nohl (b.1842 in Wuppertal, Ger., d.1889 in New Braunfels).

Her siblings, three girls and two boys were all born in New Braunfels.<sup>6</sup> The family belongs to emigrants who departed under the activities of the "Mainzer Adelsverein" under Prince "Texas-Carl" von Solms-Braunfels (1812-1875).<sup>7</sup> It is remarked that Adele v.G.'s uncle Ph.D. Hermann von Gehren (1841 Melsungen- 1912 Marburg) also emigrated to the USA, received US citizenship, and had a factory in New York. He returned to Hessen and lived in Marburg.

How and why Adele v.G. returned to Marburg where she died in 1947 and how she acquired the portrait is not known. It is hard to imagine that Adele v.G.'s parents brought the picture to America and it withstood the rigors of the immigration to Texas, hard life on the frontier, and the results of the Civil War.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, she may have acquired the picture after her move to Marburg, perhaps from the above mentioned uncle Hermann v.Gehren.

From this evidence it appeared useful to go back several more generations in the von Gehren family tree. (The von Gehren family coat of arms appears in Figure 2.) This led to another interesting aspect. Adele v.G.'s



Figure 2 – Von Gehren Family Coat of Arms.

great grandfather, Dr.Theol. Carl Christian von Gehren (1763 Marburg - 1832 Felsberg, Hessen) was pastor of the German-Reformed Church in Copenhagen, Denmark between 1790 and 1806.<sup>9</sup>

Adele v.G.'s grandfather, Edmund Franz von Gehren (1798 Copenhagen - 1873 Cassel), was born there. He was later a forestry official in Electoral Hessen.<sup>10</sup>

His wife, Adele's grandmother, was Henriette Cornelius (1807 Breitenau, Fulda - 1891 Marburg). She was the younger of two daughters of the major and rent/tax collector of Breitenau near Guxhagen, Hessen, Maximilian Cornelius (1747 - 1825).<sup>11</sup> He served during the American Revolution as a second lieutenant in the Hessen-Cassel Jäger Corps.<sup>12</sup> From 1788 to 1819 he was a Hessen-Cassel officer and official in Felsberg and Breitenau, Fulda. With this connection to the Jäger Corps, the portrait could have come down from<sup>13</sup> the family of her grandmother who was a Cornelius. Also the Cornelius surname appears often in personnel lists of the Hessian forestry service, and the forestry service was the personnel reserve for the Jäger Corps.<sup>14</sup>

A further possible connection is the popular ex-Hessian Jäger Captain Johann Ewald (b. 1744 Cassel - d. 1813 Kiel).<sup>15</sup> Ewald, at the invitation of Prince Carl von Hessen (Statthalter of the German-speaking Danish duchies of Schleswig and Holstein), organized the Schleswig Jäger Corps in Eckernförde and commanded it. An officer named Johann Wilhelm Cornelius (b.1766 Kassel - d.1834) served in this corps from 1800-1819.<sup>16</sup> No further ancestry was found except that he was the nephew of the America-veteran Maximilian Cornelius.<sup>17</sup> Here also, due to the close Cornelius family ties to Denmark, a connection to Ewald and the Jäger troops was possible.

### The Hessen-Cassel Order *Pour la Vertu Militaire (PLVM)*

To enhance the prestige of his court, Landgraf Friedrich II of Hessen-Cassel founded two knightly orders during his lifetime. One was the military service order *Pour la vertu militaire* on 25 February 1769. He used the Prussian order *Pour le merite*, created by King Friedrich II in 1740 as an example, also in appearance.

The order consisted of an eight-cornered Maltese gold cross, filled with plum to pink enamel. A golden Hessian lion was mounted between the arms of the cross. Written on the cross in gold were "FL," the monogram of the Landgraf, and the word "VIRTUTI."

The order was topped with a ducal crown. During the American Revolution the order was awarded to company grade officers for the first time.

The second knightly order, founded in 1770, was the Order of the Golden Lion. This order was based on the Prussian Order of the Black Eagle. The insignia was a star, with a Hessian lion in the middle of a blue field surrounded by the inscription *VIRTUTE ET FIDELITATE*. To it belongs a light red sash with the jewel, an oval ring in which stands a golden lion. This was awarded seldom and then only to the highest officials and officers.<sup>18</sup>

### The Museum's Efforts to Identify the Portrait via the PLVM Order

The museum attempted the identification via the PLVM. But there is no von Gehren among the 242 knights of the order on the list created by Philipp Losch.<sup>19</sup> Adele's ancestors were theologians and foresters, as mentioned above, but not military men.

Among the Hessian officers decorated with the PLVM was one named Scheffer. There were several marriages between the von Gehren and Scheffer families. The attempt of the museum to link the unknown of the portrait with Colonel Franz Scheffer, who received the decoration in 1783, failed.<sup>20</sup>

In 1976, in connection with the American Bicentennial, the museum attempted to identify the unknown portrait by a request to the Hessian State Archives in Marburg. Doctor Philippi allowed the later Professor and expert on Hessian troops in America (co-creator of *HETRINA*), Dr. Inge Auerbach to prepare an expert opinion. The museum replied on 5 March 1976 that it was not clear whom the portrait portrayed, as several Jäger officers had received the PLVM, namely: Ernst Carl v.Prueschenck, Ludwig Adam v.Wurmb, Philipp v.Wurmb, Johann(es) Ewald, and August v.Wrede.

### My Efforts to Identify the Portrait via the PLVM

This is based on my personal research and reflections. The officer wears at the neck the PLVM on a silver-edged blue ribbon. Since he is a Jäger officer, only 17 officers come into consideration. Several more can be eliminated by award date. Based on hairstyle and uniform cut the picture can be dated before 1788/89. In this year the Hessian Jägers were issued uniforms in the English style.<sup>21</sup>

The Landgraf's monogram on the PLVM "FL" places its manufacture during the reign of Friedrich II, 1769 (when he created the order) and 1785 (when he died).

Up to the death of the Landgraf there were very few awarded to Jäger officers:

LtCol Ludwig Johann Adam v.Wurmb	16 June 1777 in America
Major Johann Philipp v.Wurmb	16 June 1777 in America
Captain Johann(es) Ewald <sup>22</sup>	16 June 1777 in America
Captain August v.Wrede	16 June 1777 in America
Colonel Wilhelm Ernst v.Wintzingerode (Above was Jäger Corps commander during the 7-years War)	5 June 1778 in Hessen
LtCol Ernst Carl v.Prueschenck	12 Nov. 1781 in America <sup>23</sup>

This listing—except for v.Wintzingerode—is identical to the Museum's. The next award was not made during the reign of Friedrich II, but by his son Landgraf Wilhelm IX (1743-1821) on 27 May 1787. This order was

marked with the monogram "WL." When Landgraf Wilhelm IX was raised to the status of Elector (of the Holy Roman Emperors = Kurfürst) in 1803 he became Kurfürst Wilhelm I and his monogram on the order was changed to "WK".

Seven officers were decorated during the maneuvers of May 1787, including Colonel Carl Adam v.Creutzburg (d.1796), who commanded the Hessen-Hanau Jägers in America and was later commander of the Hessian Feldjäger Corps.<sup>24</sup>

### My Efforts to Locate Comparison Portraits

The identification of the "Unknown Marburger" would have been easy if a comparison portrait with identification could be found. To find a comparison portrait is difficult as portraits are indexed by the museums by the name of the subject, this was, of course, unavailable. It also became clear that the subject was not Captain Ewald, as portraits from his Danish period are known.

My research for a biography of Johann Ewald took me to other museums and to private persons, mostly descendants of Hessen-Cassel officers who took part in the American Revolution. Here I was fortunate in that the portraits and papers for which I was searching were made available to me without great difficulty by the descendants. So it was that the Count v.Wintzingerode family made available to me an *almost identical portrait* (Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 3 – Oil on canvas, 67 x 53 cm. Von Wintzingerode Collection.

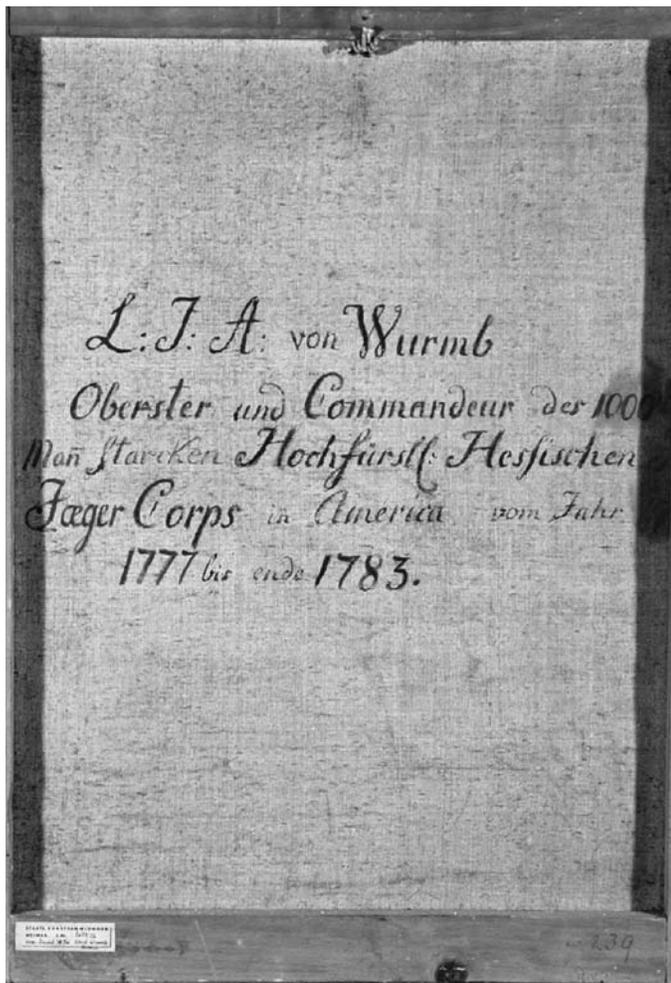


Figure 4 – Reverse side of portrait in Figure 3.

This portrait can be described the same as the Marburg example. The artistic rendering of the uniform is simpler than on the “Unknown Marburger,” almost sketchy. The colors green/blue differ, this can be attributed to age. Even the order PLVM is rendered incompletely. But the physiognomy of the subject was drawn by a master’s hand. It leads one to believe this is a study, for later completion; or, an unfinished portrait. The portrait is unsigned, so the artist is unknown.

In spite of these negatives the picture is a sensation! It is marked on the back:

*L:J:A: von Wurmb  
Colonel and Commander of the 1000  
Man strong High-princely Hessian  
Jäger Corps in America from  
1777 to end of 1783.*

With this, the “Unknown Marburger” loses his heretofore status and mutates into a “Known” whose name and accomplishments have a special place in Hessian history. To support this, I present here a detailed biography.

### Biography of Ludwig Johann Adolf (Adam) von Wurmb<sup>25</sup>

Ludwig Johann Adolph (Adam) von Wurmb (b.10 May 1736 in Krimderode - d.5 April 1813 in Cassel) comes from an old and multi-branched noble family of von Wurmb (Wurmb von Zink) in Thuringia. Their original seats were Gross-Furra, Klein-Furra, Porstendorf, Wolframshausen, Klettstedt, Krimderode/Sondershausen, et al. These towns all lie in a district known as the Thuringian Basin, in which several minor German States were established. In 1945 this area was occupied by the US Army and several months later relinquished to the Soviet Army. This Soviet Zone of Occupation then developed into the communist-controlled German Democratic Republic (GDR). The noble families were immediately disowned and ejected by the Soviet Army in 1945. With the collapse of the GDR in 1989 the noble families were able, by the terms of the German Unification Treaty, to get their confiscated furnishings returned. Their real estate, on the other hand, could only be repurchased.

The multi-branching divided the family into several lines – e.g., the Danish line has died out. The Thamsbrück-Clettstädter line with its sub-lines the New Wolframshäuser line, the Kloster line, the Crimderöder line and the Kleinfurraer line, etc. are here mentioned as examples of the branching. Good information is available from a multi-volume family history.<sup>26</sup> The entries in the well-known charts in the *Gotha*<sup>27</sup> are supplemented by the v.Wurmb’sche Familienverband’s informative text at [www.vonwurmb.de](http://www.vonwurmb.de) on the Internet (Figure 5).

Like his brother Friedrich, Ludwig (Family History #535) also reached the highest levels of the Hessian army and by his dedication achieved great military fame and many decorations. He was born 10 May 1736 in Krimderode and after the death of his father came to Cassel to become a hunting page at the Landgraf’s court at Cassel-Waldau. On 25 May 1753 he entered the von Ysenburg Regiment as an ensign, and became a lieutenant in 1758. In 1756 he was on the expedition that took Hessian troops to England and then to Hannover where he took part in the campaign against the French, first under the Duke of

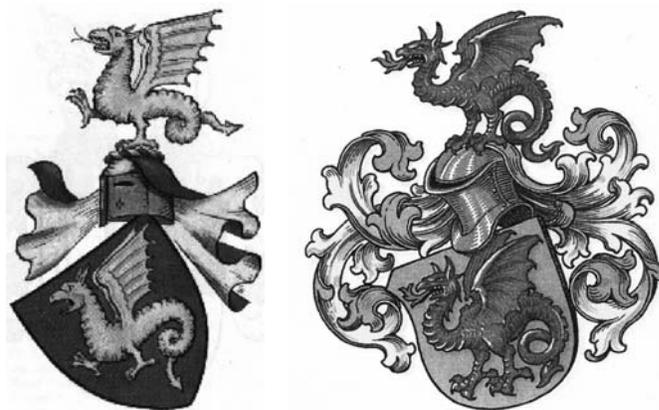


Figure 5 – Von Wurmb Family Coat of Arms. From Familienverband Internet version on left, and *Danmarks Ådels Årbog* on right.

Cumberland then under Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick. Ludwig fought in the battle of Hastenbeck, then found himself in 1758 advancing with the Prince of Holstein's detached corps, then finally with the main army. He was in the battle of Sandershausen and in the bloody meeting at Lutterberg, in which the Ysenburg and Canitz Regiments had the heaviest losses.

On 10 March 1759 Ludwig was transferred to the Jäger Corps. He fought with them at Bergen and was wounded on 28 July in the assault on Lübbecke, where he distinguished himself.<sup>28</sup> He soon returned to his old corps where he became a captain at age 23 after he was a lieutenant for only 18 months. He took part with the Leib Regiment in the siege of Münster and the meeting near [Bad] Nauheim. During the campaign of 1762 Ludwig and 50 Jägers occupied Ullrichstein Castle and was attacked there by the French General Affri with two brigades and six cannons.<sup>29</sup> After a confused defense the small band had to surrender to the superior forces. Ludwig was a prisoner of war probably until war's end in 1763.

In 1766 he was promoted to Major in the Leib Fusilier Regiment, where he served until the beginning of 1776. Both he and his brother took part in the American campaigns. On 1 February 1777 he received a commission as Lieutenant Colonel with date of rank from 25 January 1776. He was transferred to the Jägers and took over command in October 1777 after the death of Colonel von Donop in the unfortunate assault on Fort Redbank.<sup>30</sup>

Overall, where it was the hottest, there were the Hessian Jägers. In the battle of Iron Hill on 3 September, Ludwig for the first time led the 1000-man Feldjäger Corps and together with English light troops defeated a much larger corps of the Americans. In the history of the war Ludwig was known to be uncommonly brave and insightful, and one of the outstanding leaders of light troops. He added much to the successes and fame of the Jägers.<sup>31</sup> The English commanding General Sir William Howe praised him and his Jäger officers "in the most laudatory terms." "He earned the highest praise and the complete approbation of the General *en Chef* and has drawn the highest admiration of the entire army on himself."

In the battle of Germantown on 4 October, where the Jägers again distinguished themselves, Ludwig was wounded. The carelessness of the English almost led to the destruction of the army but Ludwig did not become discouraged like the English leaders; he remained confident.

In recognition of this he soon received permanent command of the Feldjäger Corps, as "during the seven years in America he had earned the outstanding satisfaction of commanding generals."<sup>32</sup> In 1778 the retreat from Philadelphia to New York was covered by Ludwig and his Jägers. "In recent years," it was said, "few retreats were carried out with such good planning and order." Eelking says of this: "The Hessian and Ansbach Jägers, under the valiant Wurmb, particularly distinguished themselves in this trying retreat."<sup>33</sup>

Ludwig was promoted to Colonel in 1782 with a date of rank of 3 January 1778. The year before that he took part in the expedition of General Clinton to the

Southern States. Lafayette and Pulaski were his constant opponents after 1778, but they never forced him to surrender. In 1784 the Jägers returned to Hessen. On 19 May 1784 Ludwig was transferred to the Knyphausen Regiment as the Jäger Corps was disbanded. He had received the order *Pour la vertu militaire* some time ago. His other contributions were fully recognized. Even the American historian George Bancroft praised him positively in his *History of the United States*.<sup>34</sup>

There followed eight years of peace. The Knyphausen Regiment was garrisoned at Ziegenhain. In 1787 Ludwig was made commander of this regiment; a year later commander of the Leib-Grenadier Regiment, which was renamed the Grenadier-Guards Regiment that same year. In 1789 the Landgraf named him his Adjutant-General.

He was in this position in 1792 when the First Coalition War to repress the French Revolution and to free Louis XVI began. The Hessians contributed 6,000 men. The Landgraf, with Ludwig as his adjutant-general advanced into the Champagne. When French forces threatened Hessen, the Landgraf hurried to Cassel to organize a defense. In March 1793 Ludwig, in the name of the Landgraf, entered into an agreement to provide two artillery brigades, in which he signed as "Baron L. Adam [!] von Wurmb, Brigadier of Infantry, Colonel and General-Adjutant." In October he moved into the field with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division.<sup>35</sup>

On 12 November 1793 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division moved *en parade* into winter quarters at Tournai [France]. M. von Difturth remembered that "The Duke of York as commander approached the division at the head of a very shining and numerous suite. He especially praised Colonel v. Wurmb as an exceptionally gifted officer who had already gained fame and respect in the Seven-years War and in the American War."

Ludwig was quartered at Bebecke [?] with several battalions and squadrons. Here he was named a major-general. In April 1794 part of his regiment joined the main army, the other part became part of the observation corps of his brother Friedrich; and they moved to a camp at Denain.

In the battle near Tourcoin on 17-18 May Ludwig with five battalions and six squadrons attacked the enemy repeatedly at Pont á Tressin and threw them back. As the French received strong reinforcements they counterattacked, but they were held up by the Hessians. In the middle of this hot fight Ludwig was wounded in the leg and carried from the field. It was seen as a great loss for the army.<sup>36</sup>

On 9 August 1794 we find Ludwig leading a brigade of three regiments at Breda, where the Hessians remained for two weeks until they joined the withdrawing army moving toward Nimwegen. Here the brigade halted to support the outposts. As the army withdrew further, General v. Wallmoden wanted to make him commander of the post, but Ludwig refused to allow his troops to be sacrificed without orders from the corps commander.

On 30 December 1794 Ludwig participated with other battalions in the English attack on Bommel Island. In thankfulness for the bravery of the Hessians the city of Kuillenburg (?) donated five wagonloads of food for the cold and hungry troops.

With the constant rear guard actions, plus hunger and cold, the troops of General von Wurmb became extremely exhausted. They withdrew across the Yssl River, here the "Oude Veluwe" had to be crossed, where conditions were similar to those encountered in Russia in 1813. Many died there. Ludwig commanded the forward outposts and rescued many stragglers from death or imprisonment. He also took part in the battle of Bentheim on 13 March 1795. In November the troops returned to their homeland. Ludwig became commander of the Leib Infantry Regiment.

On 13 July 1800 the Landgraf promoted him to Lieutenant-General and named him commander *en chef* of the Leib Regiment, of the grenadiers in 1803, and then Governor of Cassel. Later he was also chief of the War Board's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Departments and the director of the war-widow's fund.

In 1804 Napoleon sent a corps of 15,000 troops toward Hessen's border. The Landgraf, expecting an invasion, ordered most of the Hessian army to concentrate around Cassel, under Ludwig's command. But only a friendly transit-march took place. In the Fall of 1805 the Elector [formerly the Landgraf] mobilized his troops near Fulda under Ludwig v.Wurmb's command. The next year most of the Hessian troops, under the command of Lieutenant-General Carl von Wurmb (of the Kloster line) (Family #627),<sup>37</sup> were collected for maneuvers when Napoleon ordered "Hessen-Cassel erased from the list of nations." He sent two corps to occupy the Electorate.

The Elector held a war conference on 31 October 1806 with Ludwig and General von Webern, but it was too late for resistance. The Elector fled and Napoleon turned the country over to his own brother Jérôme. From exile the Elector later complained he wanted to defend the land, but "both his generals, the bravest of the corps, were against it." Ludwig and v.Webern both protested against this assertion.<sup>38</sup>

This embitterment, which he and Webern drew on themselves, plus being furloughed on 1 November

1806 was probably what decided Ludwig to join [King] Jérôme [of Westphalia]'s service. Under him Ludwig became palace governor of the Residence-palace in Cassel and Brigadier-General. Later, on 11 December 1807 he became a divisional-general. In this position he died on 5 April 1813 in Cassel after receiving for his services in 1810 the knightly Order of the Westphalian Crown. He did not live to experience the wars of liberation. It is said of him, "he earned a place in Hessen's temple of fame," especially as he was "always an outpost commander, who the top generals could trust because of his bravery and his true military talent. The English light troops also trusted him." "He knew how to lead his subordinates on the path to fame." His decorations included the *Pour la Vertu Militaire* and the Order of the Golden Lion.

Ludwig remained unmarried. To distinguish him from cousins Carl and Philipp (both from the Kloster line), he became known as the "bitter Wurmb."

Besides the men of different generations and lines of the von Wurmb family, there was a large number of men from noble families of the Thuringian basin who also served in the Hessen-Cassel military. The von Wintzingerode, von Wangenheim and von Bodungen families are examples. The reason for such a large percentage in the Landgraf's army is that many of the sovereign small states could not afford their own military establishment. On the other hand, the neighboring Landgraf kept a standing army, out of proportion in size to the population, which always needed new personnel.

At the time of the American Revolution, seven von Wurmb served as officers in North America. As they served in the Hessen-Cassel army, they are documented in the Hessian State Archives in Marburg and are easily found in the *HETRINA* publication.<sup>39</sup> As some served there in the same units, they were distinguished by nicknames. Besides the "bitter" v.Wurmb on the portrait, there was also a "sweet" and a "sour" von Wurmb. The following Figure 6 clarifies this.

	NAME	FAM. REF.NO.	LINE	MILITARY UNIT	NOTES	CITATION IN FAM.HIST.
1)	ERNST FRIEDRICH WILHELM <u>ADOLF</u>	521	KLEINFURRA	ANSBACH MTD. JÄGERS	†1783 IN AMERICA	3:131FF.
2)	<u>FRIEDRICH</u> WILHELM	533	CRIMDERODE	H-K LIFE REGT.	GEN.-LT., PLVM	3:180FF.
3)	<u>LUDWIG</u> JOHANN ADAM	535	CRIMDERODE	H-K JÄGER CORPS	„BITTER“ v.WURMB, GEN.-LT., PLVM	3: 186FF.
4)	<u>CARL</u> GEORG LUDWIG	627	KLOSTER	H-K DONOP REGT	„SWEET“ v.WURMB, GEN.-LT., PLVM	3:246
5)	JOHANN <u>PHILIPP</u>	629	KLOSTER	H-K JÄGER CORPS	„SOUR“ v.WURMB, GEN.-MAJ., PLVM	3: 249
6)	<u>CONSTANTIN</u>	630	KLOSTER	H-K LOSSBERG REGT.	†1779 IN AMERICA	3:251
7)	<u>CARL</u> FRIEDRICH	644	KLOSTER	H-K MIRBACH REGT.	†1777 IN AMERICA	3:275-76

†Killed in action

Figure 6 – Table of von Wurmb who served in America

### Other Portraits of L.J.A. von Wurmb, 1736-1813

The reason I inquired about a portrait of this officer at the Hessian State Art Collections in Kassel is that he lived mostly in Cassel, spent most of his career there, and died there. After a study of the relevant literature I asked them about a portrait.<sup>40</sup> They checked their holdings for a portrait of Ludwig v.Wurmb, but without success.

As mentioned above, in 1945 the noble families in the Soviet Zone of Germany were dispossessed and had to leave their family portraits behind. These were, to a limited extent, secured by state museums and galleries. After Unification they had to be returned if requested, but some remained with museums. A number of v.Wurmb family portraits reached the Castle Museum in Sondershausen (Figure 7).<sup>41</sup> The v.Wurmb family history reports that additional Ludwig v.Wurmb portraits should exist. So, under "and others" there were others as given below:<sup>42</sup>

Inventory No.	Portrait
Kb 41	Johann August von Wurmb (1730-1788)
Kb 306	Anton Ludwig von Wurmb (1685-1769)
Kb 307	Emilie von Wurmb (1806-1887)
Kb 308	Ludwig von Wurmb (1613-1685)
Kb 309	Georg Ludwig von Wurmb (1643-1721)
Kb 310	Caroline Friderike Erdmuthe von Wurmb (geb. 1737)
Kb 311	Friedrich Ludwig von Wurmb (painted 1774)
Kb 312	Sophia von Wurmb (1700-1771)
Kb 313	Ludwig Heinrich von Wurmb (1677-1762)
Kb 314	Johann August Ludwig von Wurmb (1730-1788)
Kb 315	Friedrich Wilhelm von Wurmb (1690-1768)
Kb 316	August Eduard von Wurmb (1842-1885)
Kb 317	Herr von Wurmb(?), anon. man in uniform (prob. 1 <sup>st</sup> half 19 <sup>th</sup> Cent.)

Figure 7 – List of portraits of the von Wurmb Family in the Schlossmuseum at Sondershausen, Thuringia.

### Portrait Possessed by Elisabeth Baroness v.Werthern<sup>43</sup>

Elisabeth, Baroness von Werthern was born in 1832 in Reval, now Estonia, the daughter of the Czarist-Russian district administrator [Landrat] v.Lilienfeld. In 1857 she married Ludwig Baron von Werthern (1826-1891 in Cassel), whose mother, Julie v.Wurmb (1799-1837) was a grand niece of Ludwig v.Wurmb. The Werthern's had three daughters, of which only one, Anna (1863-1953), who married the Prussian Captain August von Verschuer of Infantry Regt. No.113 and remained childless. She lived at Kronprinzenstrasse 2 in Cassel in 1941.<sup>44</sup> A family tree suggests the possible route of the portrait to Elisabeth v.Werthern. The actual existence and the location of this likeness is unknown.

### Portrait "In Porstendorf" <sup>45</sup>

Porstendorf, a knightly estate near Halle on the Saale, was also a possession of the v.Wurmb family until 1945. This branch of the family is known as the Grossfurra line, second branch and Postendorf twig. There was supposed to be a copy here of the Baroness v.Werthern's original. The estate's buildings were razed after 1945 and the actual existence and location of the portrait is unknown.

### Portrait Possessed by an Electoral-Hessian, Later Prussian, Regiment<sup>46</sup>

The Royal Prussian Fusilier Regiment von Gersdorff (Electoral-Hessian) No. 80 evolved from the Hessian Guards Regiments whose names changed often. With the annexation of Hessen-Cassel by Prussia in 1866 it became the Infantry Regiment No.80 in the Prussian army. In 1902 it received the title of "Kurhessisches." Around 1914 battalions of the regiment were garrisoned at Bad Homburg and Wiesbaden. As mentioned before, in 1800 Ludwig v.Wurmb was named commander of the Leib Regiment in Cassel and in the same year the unit was renamed the Grenadier Guards Regiment. This is perhaps the reason his portrait adorned the officer's club of the Gersdorff Regiment. It is uncommon that a regiment has two histories done within a short interval – 1901 and 1913.<sup>47</sup> There are illustrations in both histories but none of Ludwig v.Wurmb. There is also no mention of this picture. The existence and location of this portrait is unknown.

### L.J.A. v.Wurmb in a Group Portrait (Figure 8)

In 1803, three years before the end of the Holy Roman Empire, Landgraf Wilhelm IX of Hessen-Cassel was named an elector of the emperors.<sup>48</sup> A large-format portrait shows the Hessian generals paying homage to their new elector.

This portrait was formerly in the Landgraf's Museum in Cassel.<sup>49</sup> After wartime storage, since 1945 it has been in the Museum at Schloss Fasanerie near Fulda. The museum describes the picture:

Wilhelm the first Elector of Hessen  
from his thankful army  
3 June 1805



Figure 8 – Homage of Elector Wihelm I of Hessen.Kassel by his Generals, 1805. By Wilhelm Böttner (1752-1805). Oil on canvas, large format. Owned by Hessische Hausstiftung, Schloss Fasanerie, Eichenzell/Fulda.

- Gen.-Lt. Karl von Wurmb, fifth from the left, the “sweet” von Wurmb.
- Gen.-Lt. Ludwig von Wurmb, eighth from the left, the “bitter” von Wurmb.
- Gen.-Maj. Philipp von Wurmb, eighth from the right, the “sour” von Wurmb.

This is what is on the nameplate, painted by Wilhelm Böttner, the court artist of Elector Wilhelm I.

The generals of the two-year old electorate stand around the throne of their prince, wreathed by fame and surrounded by Athena/Bellona, he is seated on his throne and rendered in an ideal profile. The viewer’s eye goes past the group and out of the room past a Ionic colonnade, out into a park which can be recognized as Wilhelmshöhe, the Elector’s favorite residence. To the right in the park stands a round temple with the statue of a seated Mars.

The allusion to accomplishments of the army in the creation of a new state is very clear. After the Landgraviate was raised to an Electorate a constitution was to be worked out and the army wished to be included.

The elector, like his father and grandfather, was proud to be General Field-marshals of the Prussian king. He was decidedly a military person judging by his bearing, his discipline and his great economy. Also he saw the prosperity of his country assured by a powerful army, which presented a known size to/against the great powers. The Landgraviate’s treasury received aid money, called subsidies, which funded all state agencies. This is shown on the painting by a small horn of plenty at the feet of Bellona issuing forth fruit. The only deviation of the thrifty Elector was his construction of Wilhelmshöhe castle. He desired to create a symbol of his position in the world which would promote the cultural and business recognition of the country.

The renaissance residence castle in Cassel received a new audience reception hall after the Landgraf’s promotion to Elector. Part of the hall appears in Böttner’s

painting. We know from a description of the hall that it contained Ionic columns, was paneled in red damask and the seats were of red velvet with wide gold trim.

The throne in this scene and the expensive gilded seats are survivors of the residence fire and the regime’s collapse. This was set up after the return of the elector from exile in the Bellevue palace after the Napoleonic Period. The entire furnishings of the audience hall, including kneeling bench and a throne carpet with the Hessian arms, made in Hanau, were given to the Landgraf’s family.<sup>50</sup>

#### Studies for the Group Portrait (Figures 9 and 10)

This aquarel was once among others by Böttner in the possession of the Hessian House in Schloss Fasanerie in Eichenzell near Fulda. It was purchased by the City Museum in Cassel.<sup>51</sup> In this study the artist was very sketchy with the physiognomy of Ludwig v.Wurmb as the uniform is incomplete, rendered only with a few pencil lines. For the tip on the existence of this picture I am thankful to Dr. Markus Miller of the Schloss Fasanerie.

This copy comes from a photograph by an unknown cameraman. It shows, in spite of blurriness, a relatively clear background and a recognizable Ludwig v.Wurmb. In comparison with the above study the presentation is better. It seems to be another aquarel sketch. Physique, uniform, plus effects such as the general’s ribbons and the various decorations are shown, e.g. the star of the Order of the Golden Lion can be easily recognized. Unfortunately the existence and location of this work is unknown.



Figure 9 (Left) – First Study of L.J.A. v.Wurmb by Wilhelm Böttner, Aquarell over pencil, 18 x 14 cm. Stadtmuseum Kassel, Inventory No. 04/906.

Figure 10 (Right) – Second study of L.J.A.v.Wurmb. Owned by Count Quirin von Wurmb, Flossholz.

### Conclusions and Acknowledgments

The question of who the individual is herewith answered. Contrary to my past opinion, I am now convinced that the portrait of the "Unknown Man with Order PLVM" in the Marburg University Museum can be attributed to a historical person: **Ludwig Johann Adolph (Adam) von Wurmb**.

On the other hand, the identity of the artist still has not been solved. It remains for further study. Perhaps the indices of the works of Johann Werner Kobold (ca.1740-1803) or Johann Heinrich Tischbein, Sr. (1722-1789), or even a third artist will turn up.

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### Additional about the Author

Jörn Meiners was born in 1944 in Verden/ Aller. For additional biographical information, see the 2004 *JSHA Journal*, p.18. He is now retired.

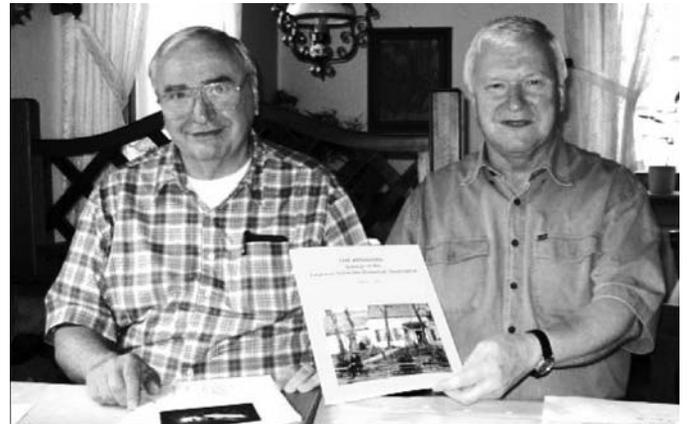


Figure 11 – Henry Retzer on left, Jörn Meiners on right, August 2005 at Eichenzell near Fulda, Hessen.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> N.N. Fiorio, "Die Kasseler Maler Kobold, ein Vortrag vom 2 April 1917." *Mitteilungen an die Mitglieder des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde*, 1916/17: 68-76. The speaker set up a small index of works by the artists Johann Werner Kobold, Sr. (1740-1803) and Johann Gottlieb Kobold, Jr. (father and son) and list of citations. He is listed as a collector.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Eisenhauer and Stefanie Haraeus, *Spätbarock und Klassizismus. Bestandskatalog der Gemälde in den Staatlichen Museen Kassel*, Band 28:220 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cited according to entries on the inventory cards of the Marburg University Museum.

<sup>4</sup> Cited according to entries on the inventory cards of the Marburg University Museum.

<sup>5</sup> Cited according to entries on the inventory cards of the Marburg University Museum. This entry fails to mention that by Neu-Braunfels, New Braunfels, Texas is meant.

<sup>6</sup> Hermann v.Gehren, *Familiengeschichte und Stammbaum* (Marburg, 1904); and on the Internet [www.v.gehren.freehosting.net/Irrvg.html](http://www.v.gehren.freehosting.net/Irrvg.html).

<sup>7</sup> Correctly the "Verein zum Schutz deutscher Einwanderer in Texas" (1842-48), through whose auspices 7,380 Germans emigrated to Texas between 1844 and 1847. Members and patrons of the Verein were members of the German nobility. The aim of the groups was to confront the acute poverty in Germany and by this resettling, to create new markets for German products. Every family was promised about 300 acres of land and they were to be supplied with food until their first crop, medical attention and public accommodations. These promises were not fulfilled due to poor financing and the promised land belonged to the Comanche tribes and was not available. This led to failure. Disease and starvation caused high mortality. Otfried Hans von Meusebach (1812-1897), the second general-commissar made a peace treaty with the Comanches that was never broken and is still celebrated by both parties today. The American Civil War (1861-65) caused many of the settlers to drift to Mexico or even return to Europe. The cities of New Braunfels and Fredericksburg in Texas reminders of those early settlers. See also [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mainzer\\_Adelsverein](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mainzer_Adelsverein) and [www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/AA/ufa1.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/AA/ufa1.html) for detailed bibliographic and archival citations.

<sup>8</sup> Many of the settlers fled to Mexico. Adele v.G. also lived there for a time.

<sup>9</sup> Carl Frederik Bricka, ed., *Dansk biografisk Lexicon* (Copenhagen, 1887-1905), Band V: 588.

<sup>10</sup> Hubertus Kraienhorst and Heinz Ullrich, "Edmund Franz von Gehren," *Biographien bedeutender hessischer Forstleute* (Wiesbaden, 1990), 177-78.

<sup>11</sup> Wilm Sippel, *Nordhessische Führungsschicht* (1989) (hereafter cited as Sippel), Band 6, 1417.

<sup>12</sup> Universitätsbibliothek Kassel – Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel, Woringen-Kartei; Kirchenbuch Guxhagen und Breitenau 1801-1830, Sterberegister 1825, Nr.14; Georg H. Wetzel, *Das Hochfürstlich Hessische Feld-Jäger Corps im Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg 1776-1783* (Kassel, 1992 and 1998); Inge Auerbach und Otto Fröhlich, eds., *Hessische Truppen im Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg* (Marburg: Archivschule, 1971-76) (hereafter cited as HETRINA), IV, 1364-66.

<sup>13</sup> Sippel, Band 6,1417.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Jörn Meiners, "Vivre sans reproche. Eine Kurzbiographie des Jäger-Offiziers Johann (von) Ewald.," *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für hessische Militär- und Zivilgeschichte*, Band 2 (2003): 127-41. Jörn Meiners, "Johann Ewald," in *Biographisches Lexicon für Schleswig-Holstein und Lübeck*, Band 11 (2000), 95-100.

<sup>16</sup> Stadtarchiv Eckernförde, Volkszählung vom 12.Februar 1803 in Dänemark. Cornelius was ranked as a Seconde-Lieutenant.

<sup>17</sup> Vilhelm Richter, *Den Danske landmilitaeretat 1801-94* (Copenhagen, 1977), Band 1, 91.

<sup>18</sup> General information on the PLVM is in: Philipp Losch, "Der Orden *Pour la vertu militaire* und seine Ritter," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde* (hereafter cited

as Losch), Band neue Folge 41 (1917), 22-62. Eric C. Ludvigsen, "The Hessian Order *Pour la Vertu* in the American Revolution," in *The Medal Collector*, 27 (Oct.1976), 5-15. Gerhard Grosse-Loescher, "Der Hessen-Kasselsche Orden *Pour la Vertu militaire* unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ordensdekoration," *Orden-Militaria-Magazin*, No.50 (Oct.1992). Donald M. Londahl-Smith, "The Hessen-Cassel Knightly Orders of the Golden Lion and the *Pour La Vertu Militaire*," in *Journal of the Johannes Schwalb Historical Association*, 7, No. 2 (2002): 1-4. Wolf v.Both and Hans Vogel, "Landgraf Friedrich II von Hessen-Kassel. Ein Fürst zur Zopfzeit," *Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen*, 27.2 (1973), 133-34.

<sup>19</sup> Losch, 22-62.

<sup>20</sup> Losch, 51.

<sup>21</sup> Uwe Peter Böhm, *Hessisches Militär. Die Truppen der Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel 1672-1806* (Beckum: Herausgegeben im Auftrag der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Heereskunde e.V., 1986), 39.

<sup>22</sup> Ewald's original decoration still exists. It was sold by Auktionshaus Andreas Thies auction No. 29 in April 2006 and passed from a private collection in the USA to private hands in Germany.

<sup>23</sup> Losch, 49-50.

<sup>24</sup> Rainer von Hessen, trans. and ed., *Wir Wilhelm von Gottes Gnaden. Die Lebenserinnerungen Kurfürst Wilhelms I. von Hessen 1743-1821* (Campus Verlag: Frankfurt and New York, 1996), 256. Losch, 52.

Extracted by Jörn Meiners from Gerhard v. Wurmb, *Familiengeschichte der Familie v.Wurmb*, 3 vols. (Gerlingen/Stuttgart: private, 1955-59), 3: 186-91. Translated by Henry J. Retzer.

<sup>26</sup> Gerhard von Wurmb, *Geschichte der Familie von Wurmb, Bände 1-3* (Gerlingen/Stuttgart, 1955-57) (hereafter cited as v.Wurmb).

<sup>27</sup> Justus Perthes, ed., *Gothaisches Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Uradeligen-Häuser. Der in Deutschland eingeborne Adel (Uradel)* (Gotha, 1938; Marburg, 1971), 487-506.

<sup>28</sup> Renouard, *Geschichte des Krieges in Hannover, Hessen und Westfalen 1757-63* (Kassel, 1863).

<sup>29</sup> He may be mistaken here for Capt. Johann August v. Wurmb (#508) of the Grossfurra line. (See Band II, 84).

<sup>30</sup> See Kloster line, Band II, 276.

<sup>31</sup> V.Eelking, *Die deutschen Hilfstruppen im Nordamerikanischen Befreiungskrieg 1776-83*, (Hannover,1863)(hereafter Eelking), Ad. I, II.

<sup>32</sup> Eelking, Band I, 214.

<sup>33</sup> Eelking, et al.

<sup>34</sup> Kretschmer (Bancroft's transl.), *Geschichte der vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Leipzig, 1859), Band 8, 213.

<sup>35</sup> V. Ditfurth, *Die Hessen in den Feldzügen 1793-95*, Band I,47, 200, 202, 204; Band II, 34, 48-50, 51, 53, 57ff, 94, 103-105, 110-111, 156, 236, 294, 296, 301, 322-34, 326-27, 329, 331, 332, 338, 339, 340, 342, 343, 347, 351ff, 379-80, 384, 393, 399, 416-18, 507, 513, 514.

<sup>36</sup> V. Dalwigk, *Geschichte der hessischen Stammtruppen*, 446, 451, 452. He calls Ludwig "the most beautiful decoration of the officer corps."

<sup>37</sup> Carl v. Wurmb #627, see Kloster line, Band III, 246.

<sup>38</sup> Philipp Losch, *Kurfürst Wilhelm I.* (Marburg, 1923), 274-75.

<sup>39</sup> HETRINA, I:8690-8696, II: 12081-12108, III: 16441-16451, IV: 7861-7668.

<sup>40</sup> August Woringer, *Bildnisse hessischer Heerführer im hessischen Landesmuseum zu Kassel* (Kassel, 1936). Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Kassel, *Aufklärung und Kassizismus in Hessen-Kassel unter Landgraf Friedrich II. 1760-88*, the catalog of the 1979 exhibition. Stefanie Heraeus, ed., *Spätbarock und Klassizismus. Bestandskatalog der Gemälde in den Staatlichen Museen Kassel, Catalog No. 23* (Kassel, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Letter from Frau Bettina Bärninghausen, collections director at Schlossmuseum Sondershausen, to the author, 25 May 2006.

<sup>42</sup> V. Wurmb, III, 191.

<sup>43</sup> Genealogical table of v.Werthern family, Justus Perthes, ed, *Gothaisches Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Freiherrlichen Häuser*; 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 841-848; 8<sup>th</sup> ed., 838-844; 42<sup>nd</sup> ed., 995-1003. *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels, Freiherrliche Häuser A, Band IV* (Limburg, 1962), 496-509.

<sup>44</sup> Genealogic table of v.Verschuer Family, Justus Perthes, ed., *Gothaisches Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Freiherrlichen Häuser*, 43<sup>rd</sup> ed., 999-1002; 63<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1016-1019; 69<sup>th</sup> ed., 1033-1037. *Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels, Freiherrliche Häuser, Teil B*, 91<sup>st</sup> ed. (Gotha, 1941), 532-536.

<sup>45</sup> v.Wurmb, III, 191.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Dechend, *Geschichte des Füsilier-Regiments von Gersdorff (Hessisches) Nr.80 und seines Stamm-Regiments des Kurhessischen Leibgarde-Regiments von 1632 bis 1900* (Berlin, Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1901).

Dechend, *Geschichte des Füsilier-Regiments von Gersdorff (Kurhessisches) Nr.80 und seines Stamm-Regiments des Kurhessischen Leibgarde-Regiments von 1631 bis 1913* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert'sche Universitäts- und Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913).

<sup>48</sup> The word comes from Old High German, "Kür" means election, therefore Kurfürsten are the nobles who elect the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in Frankfurt/Main. The electors consisted of 10 nobles in 1803.

<sup>49</sup> August Woringer and Burkhard v.Lepel, "Kurfürst Wilhelm I. von Hessen und seine Generale auf dem Huldigungsbild von Wilhelm Böttner im Landgrafenmuseum zu Kassel,," *Einzelchriften zur hessischen Militärgeschichte, Heft 2* (Kassel, 1938). This 11-page booklet contains a biography of the artist and the persons in the picture.

<sup>50</sup> Meinhold Siemer and Kornelia Wagner, *MUSEUM, Museum Schloss Fasanerie bei Fulda* (Braunschweig, 1987), 43-47.

<sup>51</sup> Telephone conversation with Dr. Markus Miller, museum director at Schloss Fasanerie in the Fall of 2005.