

## Zacharias Flitner in Quebec, 1762

Susan E. Flitner's "Flitner Family" article contains a short biography of Dr. Zacharias Flitner, which begins as follows:

Zacharias Flitner was a native of Germany. His name was originally Flidner, as shown by his diploma. That he changed it soon after coming to this country is inferred from the following record of his marriage: Zacheus Flitner to Lucy Colburn Nov. 5, 1765," by James Howard Esq., magistrate of Augusta, Me. At the conclusion of his medical studies at Gotha, April 29, 1743, tradition says he traveled over parts of Europe before joining the Prussian army, to which he was attached as surgeon several years previous to coming to America. He arrived in Boston about 1764.<sup>1</sup>

There is evidence, probably unknown to Susan Flitner, that Dr. Flitner went to Quebec before he arrived in Boston. A "Mr. Zachariah Flitner" is listed as an officer ("Provost Martial") of His Majesty's Hospital in Quebec, in "General Murray's Report of the State of the Government of Quebec in Canada June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1762."<sup>2</sup> The first page of General Murray's report, listing Zachariah Flitner as provost martial, is reproduced on the next page.

A provost martial (more commonly spelled "provost marshal") is, in contemporary usage, "an officer who supervises the military police of a command."<sup>3</sup> However, provost marshal is also defined as an "officer ... whose duties and powers have varied at different times and in different countries."<sup>4</sup> Thus, assuming that the person listed as Mr. Zachariah Flitner was Dr. Zacharias Flitner, his duties as provost martial could have been other than just supervising the British military police in Quebec. His medical background and his identification as an officer of His Majesty's Hospital suggest that his duties involved or required his medical knowledge.

The notation "N-B<sup>o</sup>" is entered beside "Mr. Zachariah Flitner" in General Murray's report. This is an abbreviation of the Latin phrase "nota bene," which literally means "note well" but is used, "particularly in legal papers, to draw the attention of the reader to a certain (side) aspect or detail of the subject on hand, translating it as 'pay attention' or 'take notice'."<sup>5</sup> Without doing further research, we can only speculate as to why this notation was added for Dr. Flitner but not for any of the other persons listed. Unless the notation was erroneously placed beside his name, there must have been some aspect of his situation or person that warranted the attention of the report's intended audience, the British government.

How Zacharias Flitner went from being a surgeon in the Prussian army in Europe to being a provost marshal in the British army in Quebec, and how he came to leave the British army and move to the Maine frontier are questions that, if answered, could reveal interesting dimensions of his life.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

GENERAL MURRAY'S REPORT OF THE STATE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF QUEBEC IN CANADA JUNE 5TH, 1762.<sup>1</sup>

MY LORD,—In obedience to His Majesty's Commands signified in Your Lordship's dispatch to Sr. Jeffery Amherst of the 12th December last I have the honor to transmit the following account of His Majesty's Government of Quebec and dependancies thereof; however deficient it may prove Your Lordship may be assured it has been my earnest desire, as it is my constant study to fulfil my Royal Masters intentions.

The better to effect the same, and in order to state the several interesting matters of this Report in the clearest light, I shall divide the whole under the following heads.

- 1st—Return of His Majesty's Forces in His Government of Quebec and dependancies thereof.
- 2d—State of the Fortifications
- 3rd—State of the Government under the French Administration
- 4th—The Revenues and Expenses.
- 5th—Church Government.
- 6th—Indian Nations
- 7th—Nature of the Soil and its produce
- 8th—Population.
- 9th—Trade
- 10th—Character of the People

I shall subjoin some remarks pointing out the Errors of the Ancient System, and wherein by my own observations and the best information I have been able to procure, there is room for alterations or amendments.

QUEBEC.

GENERAL AND STAFF OFFICERS.

- The Honorable James Murray Esqr. Governor.
- The Honorable Lieut' Colo' Maitland D:A:G: Governor Murrays leave to the Southern Colonies.
- Lieut' Colo' Irving, Deputy Quarter Master General.
- Hector Theop' Cramartie, [Cramahé] Secretary to the Governor.
- Lieut' Mills, Town Adjutant
- Captain Malone, Barrack Master.
- Captain Cosnan, Town Major. Governor Murrays leave to England for the recovery of his Health.
- Zachariah Thompson, Captain of the Ports.

ENGINEERS.

- Captain Lieut' Spry } Established
- Lieut' Montresor }
- Captain Holland Assistant.

OFFICERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S HOSPITAL.

- Mr. Francis Russell Chief Surgeon
- Mr. Field } Mates.
- Mr. Mabane }
- N-B<sup>r</sup> Mr. Zachariah Flitner Provost Martial
- Benjamin Gable — — Hangman.

<sup>1</sup> In the despatch of Lord Egremont to Sir Jeffery Amherst of 12th Dec., 1761, in which the King approves of the system of military government established in the districts of Quebec, Three Rivers, and Montreal, he instructs him to send, for His Majesty's information, a full account of the newly acquired countries. In response to this command, communicated to Murray, Burton, and Gage, we have this and the two following Reports, which were transmitted to the Government by Sir Jeffery Amherst. These Reports were among the documents submitted to the Board of Trade for their information in preparing a plan of government for the territories ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Paris of 1763. See p. 96.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> “Flitner Family: Compiled by Mrs. S. E. Flitner, Boston, Mass.,” *Maine Historical and Genealogical Recorder*, vol. VI (Portland, Me.: S.M. Watson, 1889), 285.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted in *Canadian Archives: Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada 1759-1791*, 6-7 Edward VII, Sessional Paper No. 18 (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1907), 37, accessed through <http://books.google.com>.

<sup>3</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., “provost marshal.”

<sup>4</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), “provost-marshal.”

<sup>5</sup> *Wikipedia*, “nota bene,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nota\\_bene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nota_bene).