

The Hessian Barracks Frederick, MD

The Hessian Barracks in Frederick tell the story of thousands of German soldiers captured during the American Revolution and held as prisoners of war in Maryland. Built in 1777–1778, the barracks housed Hessian troops captured after the American victory at Saratoga. Today, the building—located on the campus of the Maryland School for the Deaf—stands as one of the few remaining Revolutionary War prisoner-of-war sites in the United States, offering a glimpse into Maryland’s role in the Revolution and the lives of those caught between empires.



In the late 1700s, Frederick, Maryland became an important crossroads during the American Revolution. To house captured German soldiers known as Hessians, sturdy stone barracks were built on the edge of town.



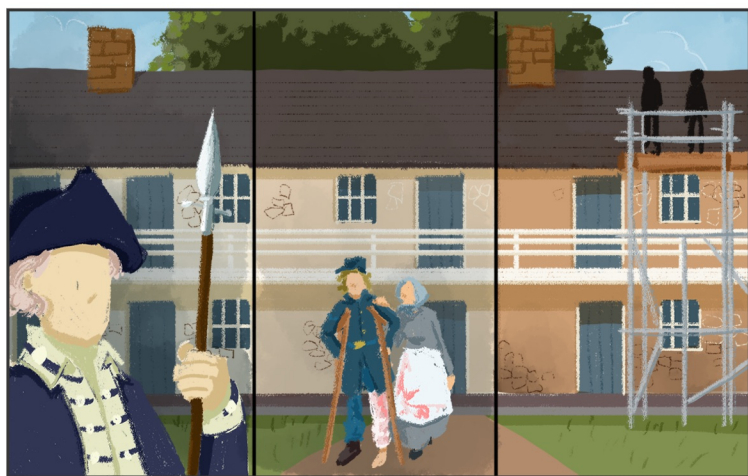
“Hessians” were German troops hired by the British Army to fight during the Revolutionary War. Thousands were captured by American forces after major battles.



The Hessian Barracks held prisoners of war under guard, but life there was often calmer than expected. Some soldiers worked in nearby towns, made crafts, and built relationships with Frederick residents. When the war ended, many chose not to return to Germany, instead putting down roots in Maryland and becoming part of the community they once entered as captives.



Frederick’s citizens witnessed the realities of war up close. The barracks became part of daily life, bringing soldiers, guards, merchants, and townspeople together in unexpected ways.



Over time, the barracks served many purposes, including military quarters, hospital space, and storage during later conflicts such as the War of 1812 and the Civil War. The site continued to adapt as the nation grew and changed.



In 1868, the same buildings welcomed the first students of the Maryland School for the Deaf. Children from across Maryland came to Frederick to learn, grow, and build a community. A place once connected to war and imprisonment became a place of education, opportunity, and belonging.



Though much has changed, the remaining Hessian Barracks buildings still stand as rare survivors of the Revolutionary era, preserving stories of conflict, captivity, and community.



Today, the Hessian Barracks remind us that Frederick played a meaningful role in the nation's founding and that history often lives quietly in the places around us.

Maryland in Frames: 250 Years of Place & Story is an initiative of Preservation Maryland, created to commemorate the nation's 250th anniversary with support from the Maryland Two Fifty Commission.

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