

**Jacob Sommer<sup>1</sup>**  
**Of Moreland Township,**  
**Philadelphia County**  
**in the American Revolution**

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DRAFT 1  
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<sup>1</sup> SOMMER is the original German spelling, and the spelling seen in the signature of Jacob Sommer of Moreland. Other spellings found in early colonial records include SUMMER, SUMMERS, SOMMERS, AND SOMERS.

## **Acknowledgments**

*Sincere thanks for research assistance to F. Moore, NE Philly History Network, and J.L. McCarty, family history researcher, relation, & friend.*

## **Disclosure**

*I am a genealogist and a descendant of Freistett Sommer families, which may or many not color the results of my research.*

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## **References**

I am using three books for reference about how to research, analyze, and report genealogical (and thus historical) questions. Each reference uses slightly different methods and terminology, and there is some debate about which is more “correct,” but I have found something useful in each during the writing of this article:

- Anderson, Robert Charles, *Elements of Genealogical Analysis*, Boston, MA 2014
- Jones, Thomas W., *Mastering Genealogical Proof*, Arlington, VA, 2013
- Weston, Anthony, *A Rulebook of Arguments, Fourth Edition*, Indianapolis, IN, 2009

## **A Quote**

“The Genealogical Proof Standard does not require direct evidence. Proof rests on the sum of evidence – any kind of evidence – arising from thorough research.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jones, Thomas W., *Mastering Genealogical Proof*, Arlington, VA, 2013; p. 16.

## **Introduction**

This article maintains that Jacob Sommer of Moreland (1758-1827) was an Ensign in the Pennsylvania militia during the American Revolution, who was captured by the British, held prisoner on Long Island, and released after four years. I will show evidence that differentiates Jacob-Moreland from another man named Jacob Sommer who also lived in Philadelphia County during the Revolution. That man was Jacob Sommer, 1749-1817, a carriage-maker who resided in Germantown. In this article, I refer to this second person as Jacob-Germantown.

First, I will provide some background information, some details of which contribute to the evidence of this case. Then I will summarize the sources used, and from those, analyze the information items and use genealogical reasoning to establish a conclusion.

## **Background**

### **Family History**

This article does not intend to provide the genealogy for the two individuals named Jacob Sommer, but I want to give here some context about the family history of each individual based on the research I've done to date:<sup>3</sup>

- Jacob-Germantown was apparently born in 1749 in Germany to parents named Johannes Sommer and wife Anna Margaretha. I have so far not been able to find a record of this Sommer family in Germany (town of origin unknown), nor when they arrived in America (presumably in Philadelphia). This family apparently attended the St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germantown, though again I have not found any church records that we can directly relate to this family. There is a baptism record for Leonard Sommer in 1763 whose parents were Johannes and Anna Margaretha, and Leonard was supposedly a brother of Jacob-Germantown, but again, I have not been able to establish that relationship. Jacob-Germantown is buried at Hood Cemetery in Germantown, though what became of his parents is unknown (assuming they ever came to America).
- Jacob-Moreland was born in 1758 in Philadelphia to parents named Johannes Sommer and wife Anna Eva.<sup>4</sup> Johannes Sommer arrived with two of his brothers on the ship *Brothers* in 1752.<sup>5</sup> This Sommer family was associated with St. Michael's and Zion Lutheran Church in Philadelphia where burial records for Johannes, Anna Eva, and Jacob-Moreland are recorded.<sup>6</sup> Church records in both Philadelphia and New Jersey<sup>7</sup> identify this family as originating from

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3 See article forthcoming, *A Study of Two Men Named Jacob Sommer*; will be posted on my research blog.

4 Hess, Robert L.; Wright, F. Edward (Frederick Edward); *18th Century Church Records Records of the German Lutheran Church of Philadelphia (St. Michaels and Zion), Volumes 1-5 (1745-1800)*, vol. 1, p. 91.

5 *Names of Foreigners Who Took the Oath of Allegiance to the Province and State of Pennsylvania, 1727-1775*, originally published as Pennsylvania Archives, Volume XVII, Second Series, Harrisburg, PA, 1890; p. 353. The ship *Brothers* out of Rotterdam, William Muir captain, arrived Philadelphia on 22 Sep. 1752; also included Hans Georg Sommer and Hans Martin Sommer, brothers of Johannes Sommer of Freistett.

6 *Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1708-1985*, accessed 9 September 2015), Burials, St. Michael's and Zion Lutheran Church; citing Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Collection Name: Historic Pennsylvania Church and Town Records.

7 St. James Lutheran Church, Greenwich, New Jersey, known as the "Straw Church."

Freistett, Baden, Germany, where many church records related to this Sommer family can be found.

As we will see in later discussion, knowing the descendants of Jacob-Moreland has bearing on confirming his identity. So to give context, I include here a brief summary<sup>8</sup> of Jacob-Moreland's lineage:

Johannes (John) Sommer (1724-1792) + Ann Eva unk.

Jacob-Moreland (1758-1827) + unk

Dr. John Sommer (1785 – unk) + Louisa M. Bethausen

Jacob J. Sommer (1830-1857) + Elizabeth Hahn

Mary A. Sommer (1832-1897) + Howard N. Potts

## Historical Context

Now, let's remind ourselves of the times. During the Philadelphia Campaign, in September of 1777, Washington was defeated at the Battle of Brandywine, and British General William Howe successfully captured the American capital of Philadelphia. Howe was replaced by Henry Clinton during the occupation, who evacuated Philadelphia in June, 1778 in order to defend New York from Franco-American attacks. This period of the British occupation of Philadelphia included the famous winter in Valley Forge where Washington's troops nearly did not survive the poor conditions.

There are no end of reputable sources about the Philadelphia Campaign, but here is a website that summarizes key events: <http://www.ushistory.org/march/phila/index.htm>.

### ***Military Organization of the Time***

Next, I would first like to address questions I've had pertaining to American military organization in Pennsylvania before and during the Revolution.

First, it's important to remember there were two arms of military during the American Revolution: the Continental Army lead by General George Washington, and the state militias made up of able-bodied local citizens. Ensign Jacob Sommer was part of the Pennsylvania militia.

Pennsylvania, however, did not organize its militia as the other colonies did, and in fact the entire subject became only more complicated as time went by. Under the Militia Act of 1777, all white men between the ages of 18 and 53 capable of bearing arms were required to serve two months of militia duty on a rotating basis.<sup>9</sup>

The whole question of ranks and seniority and who was called up when is somewhat mind-boggling.

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8 A Genealogical Proof Summary of this lineage is forthcoming.

9 Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Pennsylvania Archives, Revolutionary War Militia Battalions and Companies, "Historical Background," ([http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/revolutionary\\_war\\_militia\\_overview/4125](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/revolutionary_war_militia_overview/4125) : accessed 23 Sep. 2015).

“All field officers were elected by rank, within their district, and then drew lots for seniority. So the Colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion would have seniority over the Colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, and so on. This seniority extended beyond the county; seniority of militia officers originated in Philadelphia and extended beyond it, circling outward. So Colonels, Majors, Captains, and so on, from Philadelphia County outranked those from Chester County. Chester County officers outranked Northampton County officers, and Northampton outranked Cumberland County officers. But just to make everything more annoying, all officers were on a rotation through the classes.”<sup>10</sup>

“When the classes were called up, each captain would deliver a notice to each man's dwelling or place of business. Under the provisions of the Militia Act, each individual summoned had the right to file an appeal asking that their service be delayed and some successfully avoided service by repeatedly filing appeals. The names of these individuals will be found on the appeal lists. The names of those who actually turned out for muster duty would then appear on company muster rolls listing the men in their new arrangement. Some of the muster rolls provide the date when duty began, and in the case of officers, the date of their commission, and perhaps some additional comments indicating such types of information as whether they were detached on special duty or the dates of any desertions. Most of the muster rolls that have survived were made up just before the men were discharged from duty.”<sup>11</sup>

In addition, many of the active duty rolls for 1777 do not survive.<sup>12</sup>

What I take all this to mean, as it applies to this article's investigation, is:

- a) I have to assume the military records in hand could be, and probably are, incomplete.
- b) References to military units and ranks might be appear inconsistent, and it might be more prudent to look for associations by commander names than by unit names/numbers.

## Historical Events

Finally, I also want to understand what military actions were going on in the first six months of 1778, a time that included a Jacob Sommer being taken prisoner from his home. The following table shows military actions that took place in the area of Philadelphia<sup>13</sup> from January – June, 1778. Note the Valley Forge Encampment was 19 Dec 1777 – 19 Jun 1778, and the British evacuated their occupation of Philadelphia on 18 Jun 1778.

Action	Date	Unit	Notes
Smithfield Skirmish #1 <sup>14 15</sup>	14 Feb 1778	4 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, PA militia	40 Americans slain or captured

10 Verenna, Thomas, “Explaining Pennsylvania's Militia”, 17 Jun 2014, (<http://allthingsliberty.com/2014/06/explaining-pennsylvanias-militia/> : accessed 23 Sep. 2015).

11 Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Pennsylvania Archives, ibid.

12 Verenna, ibid.

13 Two battles took place in Salem County, New Jersey, which is also near to Philadelphia, but I have not included them in this summary.

14 *Pennsylvania Archives, Selected and Arranged from Original Documents, Volume 6*, edited by Samuel Hazard, John Blair Linn, William Henry Egle, George Edward Reed, Thomas Lynch Montgomery, Gertrude MacKinney, Charles Francis Hoban, Philadelphia, PA, 1853, pp. 265-266.

15 Martindale, Joseph C., *A History of the Townships of Byberry and Moreland in Philadelphia, PA*, originally published 1867, revised edition by Albery W. Dudley, 1901, p. 74. Note that description of this skirmish does not appear in the

Action	Date	Unit	Notes
Newtown Skirmish <sup>16</sup>	18 Feb 1778	6 <sup>th</sup> PA Regiment, Continental	Ensign Joseph Cox of Capt. Humphrey's company was taken prisoner <sup>17</sup>
Smithfield Skirmish #2 <sup>18 19</sup>	8 Apr 1778	6 <sup>th</sup> PA Regiment, Continental	Capt. Humphrey's company; one officer taken prisoner
Battle of Bristol	17 Apr 1778		Haven't found much information about this battle
Battle of Crooked Billet <sup>20</sup>	1 May 1778	Unsure, supposedly 3 regiments of militia	Date recorded of Jacob Sommer's capture (see section, <a href="#">Prisoner Records</a> )

## Source Analysis

The sources I studied for this article can be categorized as authored works and records.

### Authored Works

The following authored sources were used in the analysis of this article. A full citation for each source is given in a footnote for each list item.

A1. A historical narrative recounting that Edward Sommer, son of Judge Sommer, was taken prisoner by the British “early in the contest.”<sup>21</sup> This historical account is a compilation of notes originally taken by Isaac Comly of Byberry (1779-1847). The incomplete manuscript was later picked up by Watson Comly (uncle to author), Charles B. Comly, and Dr. Isaac Comly, who along with the author, “concluded to collect such additional matter as could be obtained and publish it.” The first edition was published in 1867.

The book was then revised some years later by Albert W. Dudley, apparently another local resident who wanted to include additional historical materials, as well as “numberless other sources of information,” all undocumented. Thus the second edition was published in 1901. It's important to note that some details are mentioned in the revised edition that are not mentioned in the first edition. The account of the Smithfield Skirmish in 1778 is one example. The accounts about the Sommer family, however, remained the same between the two editions.

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first edition published in 1867.

16 "Loyalist Raid of 1778 Historical Marker," ExplorePAhistory.com, (<http://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-17D> : accessed 23 Sep. 2015).

17 "Military History of Joseph Cox," State Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania, (<http://www.pasocietyofthecincinnati.org/Names/JosephCox.html> : accessed 23 Sep. 2015).

18 *George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799*: Series 4. General Correspondence. 1697-1799 John Lacey Jr. to George Washington, April 9, 1778; image 556 of 1082

19 Davis, William Watts Hart, *Sketch of the life and character of John Lacey: a brigadier general in the Revolutionary Army*, published 1868, pg 79-80

20 "Battle of Crooked Billet," Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Crooked\\_Billet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Crooked_Billet) : accessed 23 Sep. 2015).

21 Martindale, Joseph C., *A History of the Townships of Byberry and Moreland in Philadelphia, PA*, published 1867, pp. 224-225; revised edition by Albert W. Dudley, 1901, pp. 242-243.

Note that all the given names or titles associated with the Sommers surname used throughout this source are incorrect, based on what is known of the family history. This matter is covered more in my article “A Study of Two Men Named Jacob Sommer”, forthcoming.

A careful search made by myself as well as the other interested researchers has not yielded anybody of the name Edward Sommer/Summers from PA who served in the Revolution. However, aside from the mismatch of given names pertaining to the Sommer family, enough circumstantial evidence exists supporting other event details described throughout the book to give the source some historical value.

For this source to answer our question more fully, it would require finding the original notes of Isaac Comly to assess whether his descendants published exactly what he had written, and if so, were there any other indications in the manuscript that might indicate any uncertainty of memory in recounting stated details.

- A2. A narrative account of the Smithfield Skirmish<sup>22</sup> on April 8, 1778 where Captain Humphrey's command was attacked, and which resulted in one American killed, two wounded, and one officer taken prisoner.
- A3. A narrative account of Jacob Sommer of Germantown.<sup>23</sup> This account describes his family hiding during the Battle of Germantown, which happened in 1777. According to this source, Jacob-Germantown joined a company raised in Germantown along with his friend, Henry Fraley.
- A4. A narrative account indicating that Jacob Sommer of Germantown had been taken prisoner from his home on May 1, 1778.<sup>24</sup> This one is interesting. The author was the State Consulting Registrar for the Michigan Society of the DAR. During her time in that position, she had researched 391 families, and it was later decided that such notes needed to be published for DAR libraries. What's even more interesting is that pages devoted to the Sommers Family in this volume are attributed to research done by both the author and Dr. Naaman Keyser (1867-1922) who was a dentist and a historian who lived in Germantown. Curiously, Keyser was also one of the authors of *The History of Old Germantown* published in Philadelphia in 1907, where on pp. 199-201, we find a description of the Sommer family who were coachmakers. Although the *Old Germantown History* does describe the Revolutionary service of Jacob Sommer of Germantown, there is no mention of his being captured and held prisoner by the British.

The account given in Moore's narrative is rather all-encompassing of all the Revolutionary military records one can find for anybody named Jacob Sommer.

“He [Jacob Sommer] served in the Revolution as Private, Ensign, and Captain in the 4<sup>th</sup> Company, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Philadelphia County Militia, under Noah Townsend. He was taken prisoner at his own home on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1778, and listed as a non-exchangeable prisoner Feb. 25, 1779.”

The mention of Dr. Naaman H. Keyser as contributor to this information is important. When did this collaboration between Keyser and Moore take place? The 1907 publication of *History of Old Germantown*, which Keyser co-authored, did not mention that Jacob-Germantown had

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22 Davis, William Watts Hart, *Sketch of the life and character of John Lacey: a brigadier general in the Revolutionary Army*, published 1868, pg 78-79.

23 Keyser, Naaman Henry; Kain, C. Henry.; Garber, John Palmer; McCann, Horace Ferdinand; *History of Old Germantown*, Philadelphia 1907, pp. 199-200.

24 Moore, Vivian Lyon, *Genealogical Notes*, Vol. 1, Michigan, 1924, 1942, pp. 168-173.

been a British prisoner during the Revolution. Keyser died in 1922 and the Moore notes were first published in 1924.

The implication is that Moore consulted with Keyser before he died, either by referencing his book or possibly even by corresponding with him. And certainly Keyser had an interest in the Sommer family from Germantown because he was, apparently, a descendant. But which of the genealogical notes come from Keyser and which from Moore? We have no way to know.

It seems at least possible that Moore located the prisoner record after Keyser died, and then without realizing there had been multiple men named Jacob Sommer in the Philadelphia area at the time of the Revolution, simply lumped all Jacob Sommer notes together. Moore was, after all, publishing a compilation of genealogical notes for 391 families, not a biography of Jacob Sommer of Germantown.

Thus, in my opinion, Moore made a mistake when she associated Jacob-Germantown as the prisoner taken from his home in 1778, or at least she provided no independent facts that we can use to associate the military prisoner record with a particular individual of the name Jacob Sommer, knowing now there were two such individuals. We can conclude no more from Moore's compilation than from the military record itself: that *a* Jacob Sommer was taken from his home (an unknown location) in 1778.

### **Locale Records**

Let's start with census records. The following table shows individuals of the surname Sommer<sup>25</sup> (including spelling variations for the surname) who were enumerated in Philadelphia county in the US federal censuses from 1790-1820, grouped by location:

Census Year	Name	Location	Total in Hshld
1790	Jacob Summers	Germantown	10
1800	Jacob Summers	Germantown	7
1800	Jacob Summers Jr. <sup>26</sup>	Germantown	3
1810	Jacob Sommers	Germantown	7
1810	Jacob Sommers	Germantown	3
1820	Jacob Sommer	Germantown	10
1790	John Summers	Manor of Moreland	6
1800	Jacob Somer	Moreland	8
1810	Jacob Sommer	Mooreland	7
1820	Jacob Sammer	Moreland	8

25 Because one Jacob Sommer was nearly 10 years younger than the other, one of them would not have shown up in earlier records because he was too young. Therefore, we must also look for records of the previous Sommer generation.

Presumably, the father of each Jacob Sommer had the given name John (Anglicized from the German name Johannes).

26 In order to further keep track of all individuals named Jacob Sommer, it's worth noting that Jacob-Germantown had a son, Jacob, referred to as Jacob Jr. My understanding of the genealogy of Germantown Sommer's, is that Jacob Jr. was born in 1775 and died in 1842.



Census Year	Name	Location	Total in Hshld
1810	John Jacob Somer <sup>27</sup>	Lower Delaware Ward, PHL	Probably the merchant
1820	John J Summers	Frankford	Probably the merchant
1830	Jacob Sommer	Northern Liberties	Probably Jacob Jr. previously of GT

But where was “home” for each Jacob Sommer during the Revolutionary years (1775-1783)? Focusing on Germantown and Moreland, here are additional records that place where a Sommer lived in pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary years:

L1 – Germantown:

- 1773 – carriage shop owned by Jacob Sommer on the west corner of Manheim and Main Streets in Germantown<sup>28</sup>
- 1775 – deed from Delaplain to Feree for property on Main Street and Market Place in Germantown bounded by lands of Jacob Sommers.<sup>29</sup>

L2 – Moreland:

- 1773 – John Sommer was noted as being a supervisor in Moreland.<sup>30</sup>
- 1775 – John Sommer signed his name as a tax collector for Manor of Moreland<sup>31</sup>
- 1779 – the PA General Assembly restored title to John Sommer of Moreland whose deeds had been damaged during the occupation by the British. The order gives specific description of the Moreland properties that were owned by John Sommer.<sup>32</sup>

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27 John Jacob Sommer was a merchant from Hamburg, thought to be born about 1769, died 1847 at age 78. He was too young to be further considered for the years being discussed in this article.

28 Keyser, Naaman Henry, *Old Historic Germantown: An Address with Illustrations Presented at the Fourteenth Meeting of Pennsylvania-German Society*, Lancaster, PA, 1906, p.13. (need to see if we can locate this earlier deed)

29 *History of Old Germantown*, p. 356; citing Deed Book I , Vol 14, p. 479 [need to look this up]

30 Buck, William J., Bean, Theodore Weber, ed; “Moreland Township”, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, 1884, p. 976.

31 "A Tax of One Shilling", 1775. Longwood Manuscripts, 1438-1954, Series A (59), Henry Newcomb Potts (1819-1906), scrapbook of miscellaneous papers, 1749-1906 (Group 8, Box 11), Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE

32 *Pennsylvania Packet*, Philadelphia, PA, Nov. 2, 1779, p. 1, col. 1.

## Military Records of Jacob Sommer

The following table summarizes military records that pertain to somebody with the name Jacob Sommer, with the reminder that some military records no longer exist. These records are arranged in date order. The reference numbers are used later in the discussion.

Ref.	Date	Rank	Battalion/Company	Commanders	Notes
M1	May 1777	Capt.	2nd / 6th Germantown	Moor / Holgate	Archive records <sup>33 34</sup>
M2	May 1778 - Aug 1782	Ensign			Prisoner of war [see section, <a href="#">Prisoner Records</a> ]
M3	Nov. 1778 – Jan 1779	Capt.			Certified the service of Edward Evans in 6th-8 <sup>th</sup> classes of PHL Co. militia <sup>35</sup>
M4	1778	Capt.	2 <sup>nd</sup> bat. Of PA militia	Moore	Report of Fine Return <sup>36</sup>
M5	Spring 1779	Capt.	2 <sup>nd</sup> bat. PA militia	Houlgate	Report of Fine Return <sup>37</sup>
M6	Oct. 1779	Capt.	2nd / 5th Germantown	Haslet	Fines Return <sup>38</sup>
M7	Fall 1779			Haslet	Paid absentee fine <sup>39</sup>
M8	1780	Pvt. (assumed)	7th / 4th Germantown	Townsend	History of Old Germantown; militia roll <sup>40</sup>
M9	1780-1781	Pvt.	2nd / 8th Dock Ward, Northern Liberties	Forepaugh	PHL City Militia <sup>41</sup>

33 [Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War](#), accessed 5 September 2015; citing NARA microfilm publication M881, roll 0840.

34 Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Pennsylvania Archives, *Philadelphia County Revolutionary War Militia*, ([http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/revolutionary\\_war\\_militia\\_overview/4125/philadelphia\\_co\\_r\\_evolutionary\\_war\\_militia/439657](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/revolutionary_war_militia_overview/4125/philadelphia_co_r_evolutionary_war_militia/439657) : accessed 23 Sep. 2015)

35 [Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War](#), accessed 5 September 2015; citing NARA microfilm publication M881, roll 0840.

36 Pennsylvania Archives Series 3, Vol 5; *State of the Accounts of the County Lieutenants during the War of the Revolution, 1777-1789*, Vol. I, edited by William H. Egle, Pennsylvania, 1896, (<https://books.google.com/books?id=dEMOAAAIAAJ> | accessed 23 Sep 2015), p. 656

37 Ibid, p. 668

38 [Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War](#), accessed 5 September 2015; citing NARA microfilm publication M881, roll 0840. This comes from an index card, but the latest Fine Return I can find for the company of Jacob Sommer is Spring, 1779.

39 Pennsylvania Archives, Series 3, Vol 5; *State of the Accounts of the County Lieutenants during the War of the Revolution, 1777-1789*, Vol. I, edited by William H. Egle, Pennsylvania, 1896, (<https://books.google.com/books?id=dEMOAAAIAAJ> | accessed 23 Sep 2015), p. 675.

40 Pennsylvania Archives, Series 2, Vol 8; *Pennsylvania in the War of the Revolution, Associated Battalions and Militia, 1775-1783, Volume I*, edited by William Henry Egle, Pennsylvania, 1896, (<https://archive.org/stream/pennsylvaniaser213harruoft#page/n111/mode/2up> : accessed 23 Sep. 2015), p. 739.

41 [Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War](#), accessed 5 September 2015; citing NARA microfilm publication M881, roll 0840.

The question is whether all these records pertain to one individual named Jacob Sommer. Here are the differentiating points that I notice:

- Rank: many refer to a captain, one to an ensign, one to a private
- Locale of Unit: most refer to Germantown, one to Northern Liberties & city of PHL. We already know from the previous section [Locale](#) that one of the two Jacob Sommer's of interest in this article was living in Germantown.
- One was captured as a prisoner, which seems the most unique point to pursue.

## Prisoner Records of Jacob Sommer

The following table lists only those records that pertain to a Jacob Sommer who was a British prisoner during the Revolution. A full citation for each source is given in a footnote for each list item. Again, reference numbers will be used later in discussion.

Ref.	Information Item	Source	Reporter/Informant
P1	Ensign Jacob Sommers of the PA militia, taken “at home” on 1 May 1778	Return of the American Officers & Others Prisoners on Long Island dated 15 August 1778 <sup>42 43</sup>	Capt. Rufus Lincoln, Undetermined.
P2	Ensign Jacob Sommers of the PA militia, taken “at his own house” on 1 May 1778	Return of Officers Prisoners dated August 1778. <sup>44</sup>	Maj. Tarlton Woodson, Undetermined.
P3	Jacob Sommers was listed as a nonexchangeable prisoner in 1779	Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography <sup>45</sup>	Col. Samuel Blachley Webb, Undetermined.

42 [Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War](#), accessed 5 September 2015; citing NARA microfilm publication M881, roll 0840. This source cites a notebook by Capt. Rufus Lincoln, which is still being located. Note, however, the following source (footnote 43) indicates that the information there was copied from the notebook of Capt. Rufus Lincoln.

43 *Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783*; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M246, 138 rolls); War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; National Archives, Washington, D.C., (ancestry.com : accessed 19 Sep 2015), image 570 of 693; Miscellaneous, Regiment : General and Staff, 1775-1783 (Folder 1) - Quartermaster General’s Department, 1779-1782 (Folder 5). This source contains a note on the last sheet saying the information was copied from the notebook of Capt. Rufus Lincoln, and an attached letter indicates the prisoner list had belonged to Gov. George Clinton (NY) who had been a brigadier general in 1777. There is still no indication of who the informant was for this prisoner list.

44 Ibid; (ancestry.com : accessed 19 Sep 2015), image 294 of 762; Pennsylvania, Regiment : 01st Regiment, 1775 (Folder 1) - 2d Regiment, 1777-1779 (Folders 5-14). Major Tarlton Woodson, apparently recorded the prisoner list; he was a fellow prisoner captured 22 Aug 1777. There is no indication how he knew the details he recorded, whether from each prisoner himself or from a British officer or a British report is unknown.

45 Historical Society of Pennsylvania, *The Pennsylvania magazine of history and biography*, vol. XVII, Philadelphia, 1893., "British and American Prisoners of War, 1778", contributed by Worthington C. Ford; citing *Correspondence and Journals of Samuel Blachley Webb*, three volumes, collected and edited by Worthington C. Ford, published 1893-1894.

Ref.	Information Item	Source	Reporter/Informant
P4	Jacob Summers, among others, petitioned US Congress in Dec. 1780 to be exchanged	Correspondence <sup>46</sup>	George Washington, Undetermined.
P5	Entry for John Sommer included notation "Pris'r at York"	1780 Tax List for Moreland <sup>47</sup>	John Sommer or tax collector
P6	Ensign Jacob Sommer of PA militia owed money by order of Commissary General of Prisoners	Account of Debts for sundry American Officers during their captivity to the inhabitants of Long Island for mentainance, dated Newburgh, 5 Aug 1782 <sup>48</sup>	Abraham Skinner, but informant assumed to be person who provided the maintenance?
P7	Ensign Jacob Sommer of PA militia owed money by order of Commissary General of Prisoners	Certified Account of Debt dated 1785, but maybe based on another report? <sup>49</sup>	Joseph Hardy, Registrar, Undetermined.
P8	Jacob Summers petitioned for compensation for being an officer held a prisoner for four years.	Newspaper article <sup>50</sup>	Newspaper reporter, Jacob Sommer himself <sup>51</sup>

It's interesting to me that almost all the records in this set carry some degree of uncertainty because all the information is secondary – hearsay – reported by someone who heard the information from someone else. But the most important factor we need to determine is the reliability of each source:

- Are these originals or copies? I would say P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, and P7 are all original (even though I am now viewing facsimiles, the records are still original).
- When was the source created? All the documents were created within 7 years of the event (capture of Ensign Jacob Sommer).
- Who created the source? Six of the eight sources were created by officers of the American army. One source was created by a civil servant (tax collector), and the other by a reporter of government activities.

46 *Calendar of the Correspondence of George Washington with the Continental Congress*, prepared from orig. ms. from Lib. of Congress, by John C. Fitzpatrick, Division of Manuscripts, Washington, 1906, p. 469.

47 Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission; Records of the Office of the Comptroller General, RG-4; *Tax & Exoneration Lists, 1762-1794*; Microfilm Roll: 334 .

48 *Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783*; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M246, 138 rolls); War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; National Archives, Washington, D.C., (ancestry.com : accessed 19 Sep. 2015), image 535 of 693; Miscellaneous, Regiment : General and Staff, 1775-1783 (Folder 1) - Quartermaster General's Department, 1779-1782 (Folder 5). The prisoner names in this report appear alphabetically, which leads me to think the information was being gathered from other sources.

49 "This Certifies", 14 Feb. 1785. *Longwood Manuscripts, 1438-1954*, Series A (59), Henry Newcomb Potts (1819-1906), scrapbook of miscellaneous papers, 1749-1906 (Group 8, Box 11), Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE. Joseph Hardy was the Registrar who signed the document; I believe he lived in New York City and must have been associated with the office of the Commissary General of Prisoners. Nevertheless, even if Hardy recorded the document, we can't know where he got the information.

50 *Pennsylvania Packet*, Philadelphia, PA, Dec. 21, 1784, p. 3, col. 3.

51 *Minutes of the First Session of the Ninth General Assembly of the Commonwealth of PA* which commenced Monday 25 Oct 1784, Tuesday, November 30, 1784, A.M. p. 38. Petition was read by Jacob Sommers.

So are these reliable sources? I say, yes, understanding that each source presents some questions because the identity of the informants is, for the most part, unclear. However, these are original documents created close to the time of the event by a range of responsible reporters, giving these sources more than enough credibility to use for this analysis.

## ***Linkage Analysis***

Direct evidence answers a research question all by itself. If the question is, “Who was Ensign Jacob Sommer of the PA militia who was also taken prisoner by the British?”, we don't have any direct evidence. But indirect evidence is a set of information details that, when combined, suggests an answer to a question. With this in mind, I'm going to compare two or more records from the above-mentioned sources to determine if they apply to the same individual. I will first list the records I am comparing, then present a conclusion, rationale, and confidence level. Let's see how it works out.

I have adopted the following labels to describe my confidence:<sup>52</sup>

***Certain*** (82.5-99): author has no reasonable doubt about assertion based on sound research & good evidence.

***Probable*** (66-82.5): author feels assertion is more likely than not, based on sound research & good evidence.

***Possible*** (49.5-66): author feels some evidence supports the assertion, but the assertion is far from proved.

***Likely*** (33-49.5): author feels the odds weigh at least slightly in favor of the assertion.

***Apparently*** (16.5-33): author has formed an impression or presumption, typically based on experience, but has not tested the matter.

***Perhaps*** (0-16.5): author suggests idea is plausible, although it remains to be tested.

## **1 – The Question of Identity**

The first step is to determine whether all records with the name Jacob Sommer pertain to the same person or not.

### **Linkage 1-1:**

***Conclusion:*** From 1800-1820, there were two men of the name Jacob Sommer, one lived in Germantown and the other lived in Moreland.

#### ***Sources:***

- 1800-1820 federal census of Moreland (see section, [Locale Records](#))
- 1790-1820 federal census of Germantown

***Rationale:*** The comparison points between the two sets of census records are the dates and heads of household. It's clear there were two different Sommer families living in two different locales during the same years.

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<sup>52</sup> Mills, Elizabeth Shown, Evidence Explained, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2009. p. 19. I have added numbers to represent a percentage range to help me further express the level of my confidence.

***Confidence:*** Certain

### **Linkage 1-2:**

**Conclusion:** Jacob-Moreland and Jacob-Germantown each lived in their respective townships prior to the start of the American Revolution in 1776.

**Sources:**

- Linkage #1-1
- #L1 and #L2 ([Locale Records](#)) for Sommer in Germantown and Moreland

**Rationale:** Having established two different men with the same name in different locales, we now look for the Sommer name in those different locales during the Revolution years. Establishing that Germantown was the actual residence of Jacob-Germantown prior to 1776 is a little easier because he was older, and he executed deeds showing he lived in Germantown. It's harder to prove Jacob-Moreland's residence in 1776 because at that time, he was only 18 years old. But [Locale Records](#) clearly indicate that Jacob-Moreland's father, John, resided in Moreland both before and after the Revolution. Considering that Jacob-Moreland's name does appear in the 1800 census of Moreland after his father's death (1792), it seems certain that Jacob-Moreland lived with his father's family in Moreland during the Revolution.

**Confidence:** Certain

## **2 – The Question of Rank**

### **Linkage 2-1:**

**Conclusion:** Jacob Sommer who lived in Germantown before the Revolution was enlisted as a Captain in 1777 in a company from Germantown Township.

**Sources:**

- #M1 Military Records naming Capt. Jacob Sommer of Germantown
- #L1 Residence of Jacob Sommer in Germantown

**Rationale:** The points of comparison are the name and location. There was only one adult of the name Jacob Sommer living in Germantown in 1777.<sup>53</sup> Under the 1777 PA Militia Act, Jacob would have been required to bear arms or pay a fine. Although many of the 1777 militia rolls no longer exist, there is no evidence that Jacob-Germantown did not enlist.

**Confidence:** Certain

### **Linkage 2-2:**

**Conclusion:** Capt. Jacob Sommer of Germantown served in the Pennsylvania militia in the years 1777, 1778, and 1779.

**Sources:**

- #M1, M3, M4, M5, M6 Military Records naming Capt. Jacob Sommer of Germantown

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<sup>53</sup> Jacob-Germantown had a son named Jacob, born in 1775.

**Rationale:** The points of comparison within the military records are the rank and name. There was a Capt. Jacob Sommer present in the Second Batallion during all years mentioned to file reports of soldiers in his command.

There is a record that Jacob Sommer of Haslet's company paid an absentee fine in the fall of 1779. I speculate that Jacob-Germantown took some time away from the militia, for whatever reason. The evidence is not clear whether Jacob-Germantown returned to service again without the rank of Captain, or whether there was a different Jacob Sommer who might have served in the capacity of Private.

**Confidence:** Certain

**Linkage 2-3:**

**Conclusion:** Ensign Jacob Sommer was called up and then captured before a muster roll was created to show his rank and service.

**Sources:**

- #P1-#P3 and #P6-#P7 records all showing Jacob Sommer of the PA militia who was a prisoner in NY had the rank of Ensign.
- The absence of the name of Jacob Sommer on any Pennsylvania muster roll, pay roll, or fine list prior to May, 1778, understanding that many 1777 muster rolls no longer exist.
- #P1 and #P2 summary of all the names on the officer prisoner list who were captured from the PA militia between Jan-May, 1778.
- General knowledge that militia service was required in 60-day rotating terms. It's not clear to me whether officers had a different time-service requirement, but we can assume 60 days was the minimum time of service.
- General knowledge that militia field officers were elected within their district.

**Rationale:** The point of comparison here is simply *the Pennsylvania Militia*. The prisoner records show Jacob Sommer *of the PA militia* had the rank of Ensign, yet there is an absence of records *of the PA militia* that show a Jacob Sommer of that rank. This, of course, does not mean that Ensign Jacob Sommer did not serve with the PA militia; it only means the record of his enlistment, if it ever existed, has not been located.

I suppose it's possible that Ensign Jacob Sommer was never actually an ensign with the PA militia, i.e., he only claimed he was an Ensign, thus explaining the absence of militia records. But it doesn't seem likely to me that the British would then keep Ensign Sommer on Long Island for four years or that his name would later appear as a non-exchangeable prisoner or that his name would still later appear on a petition to the US Congress asking to be exchanged. So I must proceed with the assumption that a Jacob Sommer did serve as an Ensign with the PA militia at the time of and subsequent to his capture by the British.

Next, we know from looking at the prisoner lists that do exist, there were 10 lieutenants who were captured from the PA militia between January and May, 1778, nine of them before April! I believe those positions would have needed to be filled, probably by people with some military experience, thus moving previous Ensigns to a Lieutenant position and opening an Ensign position. It's within the realm



of reason that Jacob Sommer was either called up or promoted to the Ensign position, probably within weeks of the first Smithfield Skirmish when most of the other officers were captured.

Thus if Jacob Sommer became an Ensign in the PA militia some time around March 1, 1778, and he was reported captured by May 1, 1778 (whether that exact date is correct is debatable), he was probably within his 60 days of service and had not been officially discharged before his capture.

Also, because the militia units were local, we still don't know what unit might Jacob Sommer have belonged to if he was of Moreland. It seems likely he would have been with either:

**Third Battalion:** Cheltenham, Abington, Lower Division of the Manor of Moreland, Lower Dublin, Bibury & Oxford. Commanded by Col. Benjamin McVeagh, Lt. Col. David Schneider, and Major John Holmes. There do not seem to be any records of any company of this battalion between Sept. 1777 and late April, 1778.

**Fourth Battalion:** Upper Division of Manor of Moreland, Horsham, Upper Dublin, Gwinedth & Montgomery. Commanded by Col. William Dean, Lt. Col. Robert Soller, Major George Right. Note that at least two of the officers captured at the first Smithfield Skirmish came from this battalion. Again, any muster records for this battalion between Sept. 1777 and April-May, 1778 are absent.

Taken together, this evidence provides the only reasonable explanation I can find as to why Jacob-Moreland never appeared on any militia roster: the time between the start of his service and his capture could have been as little as seven weeks. And knowing that many military records from this time period are known to be non-extant, and that leeway must be given to the sources that do exist which recorded prisoner information, this scenario also explains discrepancies between the reported date and place of capture, and the recorded dates for recorded events.

**Confidence:** Probable. I would love to find more evidence pertaining to this question, but the evidence on hand already supports the stated conclusion.

### 3 – The Question of Captivity

So far we have established that Jacob Sommer of Germantown was a Captain in the Revolution from 1777-1779, meanwhile knowing that during the same time:

- A different individual named Jacob Sommer, younger by nearly 10 years, lived in Moreland with his father, John Sommer
- Somebody identified as Ensign Jacob Sommer was reportedly taken from his home on May 1, 1778<sup>54</sup>

The problem of determining which Jacob Sommer was taken prisoner is threefold:

- The rank of Jacob Sommer who was captured does not match the rank of Jacob-Germantown, and yet at the same time,
- There is no found record of Jacob-Moreland in the PA militia, and
- We don't know exactly where Ensign Jacob Sommer was taken from.

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<sup>54</sup> Note that I am not going to include in this discussion the Jacob Sommer who was a Private in the city of Philadelphia from 1780-1781 because those years are beyond the date a Jacob Sommer was captured.

Let's see if establishing linkages will help reach a conclusion.

Note that the numbers next to each source refer to the list of sources given in the previous section.

### **Linkage 3-1:**

**Conclusion:** Ensign Jacob Sommer was a prisoner in New York for four years, 1778-1782.

#### **Sources:**

- #P1 Return of the Officer Prisoners on Long Island dated August 1778
- #P6 An Account of Debts for sundry American Officers during their captivity to the inhabitants of Long Island “for mentainance,” dated Newburgh, 5 Aug 1782
- #P8 A newspaper record dated 21 Dec 1784 of the minutes from the first session of the Ninth PA General Assembly, reporting a petition read by Jacob Summers asking for compensation for being held a prisoner for four years.

**Rationale:** The point of comparison here is the dates. The first record shows imprisonment started in 1778, but the second record in 1782 is an account of debt so it's not clear to me if that was issued to Sommer on his release date exactly. However, the record of Jacob's petition, presumably a record of the words he himself stated to the Assembly, specifically claims imprisonment for four years.

**Confidence:** Certain

### **Linkage 3-2:**

**Conclusion:** Jacob-Germantown and Jacob-Private were accounted for in other places during the time a Jacob Sommer was imprisoned on Long Island, and thus neither was the prisoner captured by the British in 1778.

#### **Sources:**

- Linkage #3-1 – Prisoner for Four Years, 1778-1782
- Linkage #2-2 – 1778-1779 [military records](#) of Capt. Jacob Sommer making reports of Fine Returns and 1780-81 military records of Private Jacob Sommer
- 1780 execution of deed in Germantown<sup>55</sup>

**Rationale:** The point of comparison here is, again, dates. In Linkage #3-1, we established that the length of incarceration for the Jacob Sommer taken prisoner was four years, from 1778-1782. Two other sets of records, military and deeds, which include the years of incarceration, establish that Jacob-Germantown and Jacob-Private were accounted for in Pennsylvania, and neither was a prisoner in New York.

**Confidence:** Certain.

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<sup>55</sup> *History of Old Germantown*, “Manheim Street”, John Dedier to Jacob Sommer, 24 Jan 1780, p. 192; citing Deed Book D, No. 5, p. 529.

### **Linkage 3-3:**

**Conclusion:** Some male individual of the name Sommer who had lived in Moreland Township and who was old enough to participate in military action was imprisoned in New York.

#### **Sources:**

- #A1 History of Byberry and Moreland narrative
- #P1, #P2 prisoner records on Long Island
- #P5 1780 Tax List for John Sommer including notation for “Pris'r at York”

**Rationale:** The point of comparison is the reference to somebody named Sommer as a prisoner and the place of the prisoner's captivity. The prisoner records tell us that Ensign Jacob Sommer was associated with the PA militia, he was captured in 1778, and he was imprisoned in New York. The tax record in Moreland is dated two years later. It shows that John Sommer, father of Jacob-Moreland, was living in Moreland in 1780 and paid his taxes, so the prisoner notation next to his name cannot apply to him directly. But the prisoner notation next to John's name does indicate to me knowledge of a prisoner being held in New York, and either John Sommer or the tax collector had that knowledge. Either way, it seems that the prisoner situation had some bearing on lowering the tax assessment of John Sommer. And finally, the local historical narrative describes a person of the Sommer surname who was captured and imprisoned on Long Island. Even though the narrative reports the prisoner's name as Edward Sommer, which does not match the given name of the prisoner held in New York, the original author was a local person who was close in time to the events described, and enough circumstantial evidence exists (see section [Historical Events](#)) in support of the details described to give this source at least some measure of credibility.

**Confidence:** Possible, over 60%. Two unrelated sources associated with Moreland around the time of the prisoner's capture associate the Sommer name with a prisoner in New York, which matches the record of Ensign Jacob Sommer of the PA militia captured at his home in 1778.

### **Linkage 3-4:**

**Conclusion:** Ensign Jacob Sommer, who had been taken prisoner by the British in 1778, was of Moreland.

#### **Sources:**

- #P6 The Account of Debt for Ensign Jacob Sommer, as part of compiled military service records
- #P7 The certified account of debt for Ensign Jacob Sommer, as part of personal papers

**Rationale:** The points of comparison are the name, rank, and a matching debt amount. In addition, and most importantly, the second record was found as part of a collection belonging to Philadelphia lawyer, Howard Newcomb Potts (1819-1906). Potts was the husband of Mary A. Sommer, who was the granddaughter of Jacob Sommer of Moreland. The existence of the original certified account of debt for Ensign Jacob Sommer in the personal scrapbook of a related descendant of Jacob-Moreland, together with details in that document that match the prisoner records, provide solid indirect evidence of Jacob-Moreland's identity as a Revolutionary prisoner.

**Confidence:** Probable. A Genealogical Proof Summary is forthcoming that establishes the lineage of Jacob-Moreland. Once that proof is established, the confidence of this conclusion is Certain.

### **Linkage 3-5:**

**Conclusion:** Ensign Jacob Sommer was captured in the vicinity of his home residence in Moreland around May 1, 1778.

#### **Sources:**

- #P1 & #P2 prisoner records that record Sommer taken “at home” and “at his own house” on May 1, 1778
- Local military actions on and around May 1, 1778, see table, [Historical Events](#) section
- Linkage #1-2, known residences of Jacob-Germantown and Jacob-Moreland in 1778

**Rationale:** First, we have to acknowledge that questions exist about the two prisoner records reporting the capture of Ensign Jacob Sommer. It's not clear if the reporter of each record recorded the information as told by the captured Jacob Sommer himself, or if the reporter somehow gathered data from another source. It's also possible, at least in my mind, that the two sources are not independent, meaning the information in #P1 might have come from #P2 or vice versa.<sup>56</sup>

Also, a careful examination of the list of officer prisoners reveals some additional observations:

- There were no officers on the prisoner list reported taken on April 8, 1778, the date of the second Smithfield Skirmish. The closest date of capture is April 17 when a First Lieutenant was captured at Bristol. This conflicts with the narrative reports that one officer was captured on April 8.
- The only other officer reported as taken on the same date as Ensign Sommer, May 1, 1778, was Ensign John Green of the PA militia, apparently taken from Bristol. Bristol is not near Hatboro where the Battle of Crooked Billet occurred on May 1.
- First Lieutenant John Kerr of the PA militia was one of two on the prisoner list who was taken from Crooked Billet. The date of capture says May 4, 1778. The other officer, a captain, was taken at Crooked Billet on Feb. 24, 1778. Again, these dates do not align with the date of the battle at Crooked Billet.

It's clear to me that the reported dates of capture are probably inexact as compared to the dates recorded for certain events. In the examples just cited, did the capture dates get mis-recorded or have they since been misread because the original prisoner documents are fading and blotched? This question itself highlights the lower reliability of the information reported.

The same doubt can be cast, I think, on the place of capture. Nevertheless, if we use the date-of-capture as a frame of reference, and compare that date with dates and locations of known military actions (shown in [Historical Events](#) table), here are my observations:

- Two skirmishes occurred in Smithfield, the village closest to where Jacob-Moreland lived, the second of which was three weeks before the reported date-of-capture, AND which reported one officer taken prisoner. Smithfield was the village closest to where the Moreland Sommer family lived.

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<sup>56</sup> Until I can locate the notebook of Capt. Lincoln, we can't know if his notebook was recorded separately or it was a copy of Major Woodson's list. This is an open issue.

- The Battle of Crooked Billet occurred at Hatboro on May 1, 1778 where 58 prisoners were captured. Hatboro was six miles from Jacob-Moreland's home and at least twice that distance (13-15 miles) from the home of Jacob-Germantown.

Because the prisoner sources cited here contain both secondary and undetermined information, the details cited in them could be questionable, specifically the exact date and location. The dates and locations of military actions in the area are more exact, and allow us to observe there were only three weeks between the second Smithfield Skirmish where one officer was taken prisoner, and the Battle of Crooked Billet on May 1, 1778. Jacob-Moreland lived in/around Smithfield, and in 1778, he was of age to serve in the militia (20 years old). He could have been the officer taken prisoner on April 8 in Smithfield.

**Confidence:** Possible. I could almost move the confidence level to Probable given that the British were in Jacob-Moreland's own back yard so close to the reported date of capture, but the evidence is admittedly circumstantial.

### **Evidence Summary**

Let's look at the supporting conclusions we've come to.

### **Supporting Conclusion 1**

There were only two men in Philadelphia county with the name Jacob Sommer at the time the Revolution broke out:

- One lived in Germantown and became a Captain in 1777, a rank he held through most of 1779.
- The other lived in Moreland. We know that militia service was required for able-bodied men from 18-53, and Jacob-Moreland would have been 20 years old in 1778. Nevertheless, we don't have a record of his enlistment or his rank.

### **Supporting Conclusion 2**

The prisoner identified as Ensign Jacob Sommer of the PA militia who was held prisoner in NY from 1778-1782 was not Jacob-Germantown.

Here are the three linkages of evidence to support the conclusion:

<b>Linkage</b>	<b>Confidence</b>
#2-1 Jacob-Germantown held the rank of Captain	Certain
#3-1 Ensign Jacob Sommer was a prisoner for four years	Certain
#3-2 Jacob-Germantown not imprisoned during the four years Ensign Sommer was imprisoned	Certain

Given the conclusion that there were two men in PHL County named Jacob Sommer at the start of the Revolution, and the added conclusion that the prisoner from the PA militia held on Long Island by the British was NOT Jacob-Germantown, we can move to the logical conclusion that the prisoner must have been Jacob-Moreland.

At this point, I could be done. We have differentiated one man named Jacob Sommer from another, both served in the Revolution, one was a Captain from Germantown, and the other was an Ensign from Moreland who was captured and held prisoner in New York for four years.

But there are still some tangential questions. Let's see if there is any more to deduce from all this analysis.

### Supporting Conclusion 3

Jacob Sommer of Moreland was an Ensign in the Pennsylvania militia.

Linkage	Confidence
#2-3 Ensign Jacob Sommer was called up and then captured before a muster roll was created to record his militia service.	Probable
#3-4 Ensign Jacob Sommer, prisoner, was of Moreland.	Probable

A careful examination of the prisoner records as well as a diligent search through existing military records gives us sound reason to consider that Jacob Sommer became an officer in the militia during a turbulent time when many officers were captured and few American records were kept (which survived). Add to that the existence of records recorded 4-7 years after the capture event which name Jacob Sommer as an Ensign in the PA militia, one of which provides indirect ties to Jacob Sommer of Moreland.

### Supporting Conclusion 4

Linkage	Confidence
#3-5 Ensign Jacob Sommer was captured in the vicinity of his home residence in Moreland around May 1, 1778.	Possible

The ultimate question here is how reliable are the date and place of capture in the prisoner records?

Let's think about the question we're trying to answer. If Jacob-Moreland was the Ensign who was taken from his home on May 1, 1778, why does that date not align with the skirmishes known to have taken place in Moreland, and why does the place not align with where a battle is known to have occurred on May 1? We already know the sources providing these details are questionable. But maybe we need to wonder how pertinent are the questions themselves.

In other words, do the exact date and place of capture change the fact that Ensign Jacob Sommer of the PA militia was imprisoned on Long Island from 1778-1782? No. Records #P1-P4 and probably P5, all establish Ensign Jacob Sommer was accounted for on Long Island after his capture by the British.

The details about exactly when and where Ensign Sommer was captured do not change the fact of his imprisonment in NY. However, the fact that the specific details of the event are in the proximity of the time and place where Jacob-Moreland is known to have resided prior to his capture is nevertheless highly relevant to our story.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the identification of Jacob-Moreland as the Ensign of the PA militia who was held prisoner by the British on Long Island from 1778-1782 rests on four supporting conclusions, all documented and explained. The only questionable details are the exact date and place of capture, and yet the uncertainty of those details in no way contradicts the conclusion. The cumulative evidence presented here together with sound reasoning provide proof that Jacob Sommer of Moreland served in the PA militia during the American Revolution, and he survived capture and imprisonment to return and begin the next phase of his rather interesting life (the story of which is the next installment, eventually forthcoming).