



Colonel Francois Henri de Meuron-Bayard b 25th December 1771 St Sulpice, Neuchatel in then Switzerland is the subject of this sketch along with the various connections to South Africa, Ceylon and India.

He boarded the Ship 'Barbestein' (an 1150 tonne ship built in 1783), Captained by Johan Koenraad Knot, as a Second Lieutenant of the De Meuron Regiment (then Swiss Mercenary Regiment). The ship left Rammekens in Holland and he departed at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. At some stage he was transported to Ceylon.

After the De Meuron Regiment was transferred to British control (prior to British arriving in Ceylon), on the 4/5/1799 as Acting Captain (we assume Acting as he was made Captain November 1802) he was one of the first officers to breach the Siege of Seringapatam under the eyes of Generals George Harris And Wellesley (Wellington).

On the 28th October 1802 in Seringapatam he married Susanna Cornelia Lever. Susanna had been widowed and previously married 19th November 1797 in the Dutch Reformed Church at Colombo to Captain William Castle (1777- August 1801) (also of the de Meuron Regiment). From this previous marriage she had two children both born in Ceylon, a William and a Mary Adelaide Castle (16th October 1799 Galle- 15th October 1876 Heusden, Netherlands). Susanna herself was born in Jaffna Ceylon in 17th August 1783 to Abraham Pusch Lever (5th August 1749 Breda, Netherlands- 22nd March 1791 Trincomalee, Ceylon) and Eva Adleida de Haart (mar 8th December 1775 Colombo, Ceylon). Eva Adleida was a sister to Benjamin Pieter Cornelius de Haart (1752 Tiel, Gelderland, Netherlands- 15th December 1808 Batavia) whom married 26th November 1786 in the Dutch Reformed Church at Colombo to Gertruida Johanna Leembruggen. Abraham Pusch Lever had come to Ceylon employed as a Sailor for the Dutch East India Company on the 29th December 1769 on the ship 'Renswoude' arriving 29th July 1770 at Ceylon. In 1772 he was Secretary for the Governor and one of the few Dutch Officials who travelled through the interior of Ceylon to Kandy. He finished up as a Under Merchant to the Dutch East India Company. He was Brother to Adrianus Cornelis Lever (2nd November 1746 Breda, Netherlands – 18th August 1789 Galle, Ceylon) whom married Susanna Isabella Oostdyk (1751 Galle, Ceylon- 9th Jun 1808 Madras, India). This is where Susanna Lever derived part of her name and interesting to note Susanna Oostdyk married 2nd on 13th December 1789 in Galle Ceylon to Captain Isaac Henry de Meuron de Rochat (a Cousin of Francois Henri de Meuron-Bayard). Susanna Oostdyk was to marry 3rd 5th November 1801 in Colombo, Ceylon a Captain Jean George Gradmann (also Captain in the De Meuron Regiment). Both Adrianus Cornelis and Abraham Pusch Lever were the sons to Hendricus Josephus Lever and Anna Helena Pusch. Their sister was Judith Charlotte Lever (11th January 1753 Bergen-op-Zoom, Netherlands- 9th September 1782 Colombo, Ceylon) was married to Martinus Mekern (a secretary to the Governor of Ceylon). The reasons for mentioning these links will becomes clearer soon. Hendricus Lever was the son of Adrianus Leever who the son of Jacobus Leever and Alida Helot and he was the brother of Abraham Leever. Abraham had a daughter Jacomina Lever



Figure 1 Governor Johann Gerhard van Angelbeek

(18th August 1732 Cape of Good Hope – 13th February 1793 Colombo, Ceylon) and married Governor Johann Gerhard van Angelbeek (12th September 1727 West Friesland – 2nd September 1799 Colombo, Ceylon) and being the Last Dutch Governor of Ceylon 15th July 1794- 16th February 1796. This connection is mentioned because Susanna Cornelia Lever had a sister, Benjamina Petronella Lever (born? Jaffna), whom married in 1803 a Colonel (later Major General) Richard Hassells Yates (1777 Stafford, England- 22nd February 1847). There was a note about their Son Henry Whannell Yates that Benjamina Petronalla Lever was a granddaughter of a Governor. I would suggest this was meant to be God Daughter and the name of the Governor should have been Governor Johann Gerhard van Angelbeek.

Coming back to Francois Henri de Meuron-Bayard whom was promoted to Captain in November 1802, he stayed in India until 1806 and was then sent to Gibraltar, Sicily, Malta, and Guernsey. He was promoted in 1807 to Major. We know he was then in England where a couple of his children were born before being sent to Canada in 1813 and promoted on 4th Jun 1813 to Lieutenant Colonel of the De Meuron Regiment. In this period, he took part in the War against United States and he distinguished himself at the Battle of Plattsburg and in September 1817 in the expedition of the Red River. He was the last commander of the de Meuron Regiment before the Regiment was dissolved, and he finished his career as Colonel.

The family apart from William Castle, son of Susanna whom continued to serve in the British Army, moved to the Netherlands. Francois Henry de Meruon-Bayard passed was on the 13th March 1859 in Heusden, Noord-Brabant and Susanna on the 19th September 1864 in the same place.