

Oswald never lost his interest in military affairs. During 1786 he was in command of a company of volunteers whose superior training and leadership was demonstrated in a parade on the common before Baron Steuben and General DuPlessis. This same group of men, on August 1, 1786, offered their services in driving the British garrisons from the military posts on the frontier which were being held contrary to the terms of peace.⁵⁶

On January 30, 1784 John Holt, Oswald's father-in-law, died in New York, leaving Elizabeth Holt a widow. She continued to publish the newspaper which Holt had founded and soon changed the title to *The New-York Journal and State Gazette*. Oswald was probably called upon to help her with advice and assistance during 1784 and 1785. The task must have proved too difficult for a woman of her age, for in 1786 her son-in-law took charge of the paper and his name appeared in the imprint. On January 25, 1787 the owners announced the sale of all their rights and materials connected with the paper to Mr. Thomas Greenleaf who "conducted this paper for near eighteen months past, to the public and our mutual satisfaction."⁵⁷

Although he was a staunch Anti-federalist, Oswald did not hesitate to take advantage of the Supreme Court which had been set up by the Constitution. As executor of John Holt's estate, he introduced one of the first cases tried by the Supreme Court. An agreement had been made between Holt and the State of New York that he was to print certain laws and resolutions in his paper and in return would receive an annual salary. The State refused to pay the eight thousand dollars due for his services from 1777 to 1784, so Oswald submitted the case to the Supreme Court in 1792. The State refused to appear before the court and a year later the case was decided in Oswald's favor, thus establishing the precedent that judgment would be passed against a state if it failed to appear at court.⁵⁸

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Perhaps the most picturesque portion of his career was that during which he was an officer in the French Revolutionary Army. He went to

⁵⁶ Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, Vol. I, p. 425. See *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. XLVI (1922), p. 264 for another mention of this offer.

⁵⁷ Evans, 20583 note.

⁵⁸ The summons for Oswald to appear in the Supreme Court, dated 8 February 1791, is among the McKesson Papers at the New York Historical Society. See *Cases argued and decided in the Supreme Court . . .*, 1, 2, 3, 4 Dallas, Rochester, 1901. Book 1, p. 400 and 415 for a brief summary of the case.