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Palatines and Switzers for Virginia, 1705–1738: Costly Lessons for Promoters and Emigrants*

William Penn's appeal to the ill-used sectarians of Central Europe to join him in his "holy experiment" and thus enhance the value of his holdings in Pennsylvania had only a meagre effect. The small bands of Quaker converts and their Mennonite friends from the Krefeld and Worms areas who heeded Penn's call, did not turn out to be the immediate vanguard of thousands of Germans swarming to the New World. The pietists who had so enthusiastically invested in Penn's land through the Frankfurt Company, and who dispatched Francis Daniel Pastorius over to prepare a safe haven across the sea, never left the shelter of their comfortable homes. The learned Pastorius found himself as village mayor in the wilderness and as the administrator of the considerable holdings of the Frankfurt Company with next to no takers. Despite publicity efforts hardly more than eight hundred German-speaking people came to Pennsylvania in the thirty-four years between 1683 and the arrival of the first larger shiploads of German emigrants in 1717. This was certainly not due to a lack of interest in emigration in many sections of Germany and Switzerland. Many of those willing to go simply did not have the means required for months of inland and ocean travel with their families, not to speak of any starting capital in the new country. In rare cases groups of religious dissenters such as the forty millenarians whom Johann Kelpius led to Philadelphia in 1694 were helped financially by kindred spirits in the Netherlands and in England.

Pennsylvania was by no means the only colony soliciting immigrants from outside the British Isles. Concrete offers came from the southern colonies, but they generally lacked provisions for the payment of transportation. In 1699–1701 both the Carolinas and Virginia were much in the news in Europe because some of the French Protestant refugees were taken there through royal and private charity. In 1700 one shipload of them, including a number of Swiss, arrived on board the *Nassau* in Virginia where they were settled on the south side of the James River. Their transport comprised a strange family from Bern whose subsidized

departure had been the talk of the town. The Bernese authorities provided Maria Elisabeth Lerber, widow of an army captain, with a viaticum of two hundred pounds to go to America with her three daughters and the illegitimate child of one of them, Margreth, whose "frivolous life" had aroused the displeasure of the Council on Morals.[1] But there is more to the Lerber stories than what the official records in Bern reveal. Obviously the family was involved with dissenters. Another citizen of Bern, the apothecary Hans Jakob Eggli, was also given forty-eight pounds and landed in Virginia with the Lerbers. The widow Lerber died soon after arrival, and the young women lived alone in the wilderness near Gloucester Church. One of them left again in 1702 to visit kindred spirits in London. Her sister, Maria Elisabeth, corresponded with Johannes Kelpius in Pennsylvania. They probably went to Virginia in the mistaken belief that Kelpius had settled there to await the anticipated end of the world. The exchange of letters between Maria Elisabeth Lerber and Kelpius is an intriguing example of the communications that existed between religious dissidents in early America.[2]

The emigration of some Swiss in the wake of the Huguenot wanderings aroused the curiosity of a young, adventurous Bernese, Franz Louis Michel, son of a former member of the Great Council of Bern. He decided to follow their trail and sample the opportunities for trading and settling in Virginia. We owe him the description of the miserable abode of the Lerber sisters and the first authentic reports of other Swiss in the colony. Michel's journey from Basel, where he boarded a Rhine boat on October 8, 1701, that reached Rotterdam on October 30, and on to London, where he landed on November 4, was an experience which was to be shared by thousands of Swiss and southwest Germans in the years to come. After six weeks of looking for a passage to America, Michel was directed by mere chance to the captain of the *Nassau*. He boarded her on December 15, taking a bunk space among 140 other persons on the same deck, most of them English indentured servants and some released convicts. Two months later they were still in England, now at Cowes on the Isle of Wight. At long last, on February 18, 1702, wind and weather conditions permitted the large ship to leave port. Seventy-nine days later, on May 8, the *Nassau* sailed into Yorktown harbor.[3]

Michel remained only a few months in Virginia on this exploratory trip. He was back in Bern in December 1702. But his lengthy report on the entire journey is one of the most vivid, frank and all-embracing accounts we have of the early eighteenth century. Some of his observations were to have a far-reaching effect on emigration. "Craftsmen are generally scarce and expensive," Michel wrote. He cites carpenters, joiners, coopers, shipbuilders, masons, smiths, locksmiths, tailors and glassblowers as being in particular demand and adds the enticing note, "moreover, a skilful artisan or workman can reach America with little expense." Then he describes how to go about it—sketching more or less a course that was to develop into the redemption system some twenty years later:

> In London such an artisan can go to a Virginian captain, none of whom will refuse to take him along, if not for the labor on the ship, at least for the payment promised on landing. For, when such a ship arrives, the inhabitants come in large numbers to buy or hire servants. Everyone would be willing to pay the passage money. The debtor then belongs to the creditor till he pays it off.[4]

This report was eagerly awaited by two of Michel's friends, Georg Ritter and Johann Rudolf Ochs. In the few weeks that Michel stayed in Bern, the three decided to go into the emigrant business together which eventually became the joint-stock venture of Georg Ritter and Company. Michel left again for America in February 1703. This time he also visited the Carolinas, Maryland and Pennsylvania. He was quite successful as a trader, selling all the goods he had brought along at considerable profit, and began to explore the frontier regions of Virginia and Maryland, following the Potomac westward and the Shenandoah southward. Based on Michel's letters to his partners in Bern, the Ritter Company approached English authorities with a project of an organized Swiss colony. The plan, formulated on February 19, 1705, contained some rather unprecedented requests as far as the Crown was concerned. They ranged from free exercise of religion, "all shall be considered equal" with respect to privileges and taxation, to autonomy as a separate entity not subject to provincial governors. But the crux was not in the initial free land grant sought. It was in this passage of the plan: ". . . we beg Her majesty to grant at Her own expense the transporation of the first colony from Rotterdam to its destination." The first reaction at the Court and the Board of Trade was less than promising but there was enough of an interest to keep the project alive over four years. Back in Switzerland, the Council of Bern had also endorsed it in 1706, no doubt in the hope it would enable the canton to send a number of Anabaptists and other undesirables along.[5]

On the English side the delay was due to a number of factors. While the Board of Trade was not disinclined toward foreign Protestant settlers, both the uncertain location and the desired autonomy presented problems. The land Michel had earmarked for an initial settlement of four to five hundred Swiss was "on the Hed of Potomack River and its branches, a considerable tract of uncultivated wilderness being the Westward part of her Majestys Province of Virginia." In February 1707 the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania was alarmed by word received from Indians that Michel and several others were building cabins on branches of the Potomac pretending they were in search of ore. Although the Board of Trade had only a vague concept of the unexplored western region, the representatives of the proprietors, notably of Lady Fairfax and Lord Baltimore but also the embattled William Penn, monitored western settlement schemes closely. Granting the land for Michel's project clearly would infringe on the Fairfax proprietary, if not on those conflicting claims of the Maryland and Pennsylvania proprietors. Michel returned to Europe in 1708. His enthusiastic report of the land and its alleged mineral wealth encouraged the Bernese promoters to make a more massive effort. Through

political backdoors Charles Spencer, the Earl of Sunderland, was approached. As the secretary of state for the southern department, Sunderland was in the inner circle of the Whigs. He submitted the project to Queen Anne. On June 18, 1709, Sunderland was directed by royal order to ask the Board of Trade "how far it is practicable and may be for her Majesty's Service and the benefit of Her Subjects to comply."[6] Meanwhile Michel was joined in London by Christopher von Graffenried, an enterprising dreamer seeking an adventure that would relieve him of pecuniary troubles. In July 1709, both Michel and Graffenried appeared before the Board after having been thoroughly briefed by political friends close to the English government.

This time the Swiss memorial no longer contained references to an autonomous regime except for the modest request "as we have a Language peculiar to Our selves . . . to allow Us to have a Minister from Our own Country." The new text stressed that the settlement "shall in no way be an injury to the neighbouring Lords Proprietors," and adds the enticing hint: "We shall be as a Frontier between Virginia and the French of Canada and Mississippi." There was no more mention of five hundred immigrants, on the contrary, "we also promise that they will not come in large numbers, nor in disorder, nor without first having notified you." The petition was so cleverly worded that it found immediate royal approval. An order of Council, dated August 22, 1709, directed the Governor of Virginia to allot to the petitioners upon their arrival in Virginia "certain Lands on the South-west Branch of Potomac," i.e., on the Shenandoah River.[7]

This Swiss settlement in the Shenandoah Valley never came about. In August 1709 there was bedlam in London. Graffenried and Michel promised to keep the Bernese migration small and orderly and not without prior approval. There was a reason for this concession. London was crowded with multitudes of Germans from the Palatinate, Württemberg, the Nassau principalities and adjacent areas. By the end of the year more than twelve thousand made it to England, aided stealthily by politicians and the camarilla surrounding the court of Queen Anne. While the actual causes of this mass exodus do not concern us here, there was an added propulsion given to this stampede by very interested parties. Emissaries from Pennsylvania were observed at strategic points in the departure area and a flood of booklets extolling Carolina as a haven appeared along the Rhine, Main and Neckar. Of course, neither the Quaker promoters nor the proprietors of Carolina had expected such a frenzy. The government was not inclined to strengthen the shaky position of the Penn proprietorship. Only a few sectarians ever made it to Pennsylvania in 1709–10. Instead, 3,300 of the sturdiest among the Germans were selected for transport to the frontier of the crown colony of New York, others to reinforce the Protestant element in Ireland. Only the Carolina proprietors managed to get a small bite of this large human cake. They won Graffenried as the head of the transport destined for North Carolina and succeeded in diverting Michel and his associates from their Virginia venture altogether. Graffenried, however, did not sail with the Palatines because he insisted that he had to wait for the

arrival of the first Bernese contingent which was originally Virginia-bound.[8]

The long wait gave Michel and Graffenried ample time to make additional contacts for a project that seemed even more promising to them than settling fellow Swiss in Virginia—their search for silver ore. Michel seemed to have been genuinely convinced that he had found deposits of precious metals in the back country. In a London teeming with schemers, they engaged a man by the name of John Justus Albrecht who readily called himself *Berghauptmann* (inspector of mines). Graffenried charged him with procuring the necessary workmen and tools in German mining areas. Albrecht, it turned out, was not an ordinary chief miner but a first-class imposter. After Graffenried left with the Bernese for North Carolina, Albrecht traveled to Siegen where he spent a considerable time to have mining implements made to order. He also contacted prospective workmen among the miners. His credentials seemed impressive. Siegeners were awed by this self-assured man who claimed to have been appointed to develop mines and smelters for gold, silver and other metals on behalf of Her Majesty of Great Britain and the proprietors of Carolina, Virginia and Pennsylvania. In order to create local good will, Albrecht grandly signed a donation contract for the benefit of the three Reformed ministers in Siegen in which he promised them an annuity of 350 rix-dollars in perpetuity from the proceeds of the American mines. This "document" was duly sealed by the imperial notary and signed by leading Siegen citizens as witnesses in the presence of the overwhelmed main beneficiary, the Rev. Johannes Daniel Eberhardi, inspector of the Reformed Church in Nassau-Siegen.[9] If we may believe Graffenried's apology, written long after the facts, Albrecht did arouse some suspicion in Germany and was apprehended by the imperial authorities but freed upon intervention of the English envoy.[10]

In May 1712 Albrecht was back in London and busy designing a fancy shareholders' book *(Gewercken-Buch)* of the mines and he began to sell shares. By this time he had promoted himself to *General Berg-Hauptmann* of the gold and silver mines in the province of South Carolina.[11] But he was also growing impatient. No orders to proceed to America were forthcoming from Graffenried. The latter had no sooner somewhat consolidated his German and Swiss settlers at New Bern, North Carolina, than an Indian attack practically wiped out the colony, and Graffenried himself barely escaped with his life. He did ask Michel by letter to tell Albrecht not to come with his company without express orders. Michel, however, eager to get the ore works started, met with Albrecht in Holland and advised him instead to come over with one or two others to have a look for himself.[12]

Albrecht returned to Siegen immediately. Twelve skilled miners and their families, complete with a Reformed minister and a schoolmaster, responded to his call. Thanks to his earlier public relations efforts, the emigrants were granted leave without trouble from the authorities.[13] The retired pastor, seventy-year-old John Henry Hager, was particularly eager to join the group because his son, John Frederick Hager, had left

Siegen in 1709 and was installed with the blessings of the Anglican Church as minister to the Palatines in the Hudson Valley. Old Hager, if he had hoped to be close to his son, must have had a shock when he became aware of the distances and the wilderness in America. At least there is no record of any meeting of father and son.

By the end of September 1713 the Siegeners were in London. Albrecht was unable to find a passage for them. Graffenried, a virtual refugee from the disaster that had befallen New Bern in North Carolina and a fugitive from creditors, arrived just about at the same time in London after a brief stay with Governor Spotswood in Virginia. When he came upon Albrecht and his forty charges, his sense of responsibility came briefly back to him and he tried to help them. Old pastor Hager went on his own to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to enlist their assistance, but since religious life in Virginia was firmly in the hands of the Anglican establishment and Hager's flock rather small, he was neither granted a travel stipend nor any subsidy for his salary. The personal funds of the miners were running low. Graffenried tried in vain to persuade them to return to Siegen for the winter but they feared rightly that the authorities would not re-admit them. After much vexation he found temporary work and shelter for some of them and got their agreement to serve four years for their passage. The agent of Virginia, Nathaniel Blakiston, whose aid Graffenried had enlisted, found space on a ship leaving for Virginia early in 1714. While the Swiss entrepreneur was still hoping that the miners could eventually be placed in the Potomac-Shenandoah area where he and Michel would engage them in the purported silver mines, Blakiston was confident that Governor Spotswood would welcome them for his own projected iron production, an activity that surely was contrary to English colonial policy.[14]

The Siegeners, accompanied by Albrecht and Hager, arrived in Virginia on April 28, 1714. Spotswood paid the captain 150 pounds for their transportation, allegedly from his own pocket. Thus they were his personal indentured servants. Informing the Board of Trade of their arrival, the governor disguised their real purpose by reporting that they were placed on the frontier and equipped with a cannon and rifles.[15] The palisades in which he fenced in the entire group was given the name Germanna, for their homeland, Germany, and in honor of Queen Anne. This was the first of several of Spotswood's shady deals involving German immigrants. The beginnings at Germanna were extremely hard for the Siegeners, and their life was a far cry from Albrecht's golden promises. In November 1715, when the young Huguenot, John Fontaine, visited Germanna, he confided to his diary: "The Germans live very miserably."[16] Pastor Hager had nothing to eat that he could have offered the weary traveler. Although Spotswood used public funds for their support as frontier guards, the miners and their families suffered considerably. It was not until March 1716 that anything resembling the work for which these men had chosen to go to America was begun. At that time, as Albrecht testified in Essex County Court in May 1720, Spotswood "did put under my command eleven laboring men to work

in mines or quarries at or near Germanna." According to Albrecht, now styled Holtman *(Hauptmann!)* John Justice Albright, and Hans Jacob Holtzklau, the schoolmaster who had come with the group from Siegen, the work continued only till December 1718.[17]

The miners, well aware of their four-year contract, began to grow restless in 1718. Spotswood, in one of his moves that five years later brought about his removal from office, had personally acquired the Germanna tract in 1716, thus making the Siegeners technically his tenants even after their indenture would expire in April 1718. Three of the Germans, John Fishback, John Hoffman and Jacob Holtzclaw, obtained their naturalization in order to be able to acquire and hold land on behalf of the group. In 1718 a warrant was issued to these three men for more than 1,800 acres on Licking Run where they removed to in the following year and founded Germantown. The erstwhile miners turned into versatile farmers, soon adding cash-producing tobacco to their crops.[18]

Meanwhile Spotswood had had occasion to secure other Germans whom he hoped to use more effectively for his own schemes than the clever and determined Siegeners. In the early summer of 1717 more than one thousand Germans, mainly from the Neckar and Main area, reached Rotterdam and boarded ships for Pennsylvania under credit arrangements from which the redemptioner system evolved in the following years. While three shiploads were on their way to Philadelphia after customs and victualling stops in England as required by the Navigation Acts, a fourth one had an unexpected delay. Their captain was arrested for previous debts and committed to jail in London for several weeks. Through this unexpected stay most of the passengers had to spend whatever monies they still had and also parts of the ship's provisions were consumed. When Captain Scott was finally freed and the voyage proceeded, it was late in the season. Adverse weather conditions lengthened the trip and a number of passengers died from want of food. The captain claimed that he was unwittingly driven on a southward course when he put into the Rappahannock River in Virginia instead of the Delaware as the passengers had agreed. We have only his word against the impression of the Germans who were convinced that Scott had a prior understanding with Spotswood. The latter immediately paid the transporation costs and the eighty persons who survived the ordeal became his indentured servants for seven years.[19]

The original passage contract was scrapped and, as later court proceedings revealed, Spotswood refused to give them copies of their indentures. He settled most of them on the south side of the Rapidan on rather poor soil while others were hired out by him to tidewater planters. The same fate awaited further arrivals in January 1719 and in June 1720. These people were partly scattered over the colony as servants on plantations. When the seven-year period was nearing its end, the Germans of the 1717 transport began to cast about for better land of their own. Spotswood's removal from office, largely because he had personally acquired by questionable means an estate of some 85,000 acres of land, no doubt encouraged the Germans to move from under

his tutelage. In 1724 Spotswood sued eighteen heads of families for money still due him for their ocean transportation. Only fragmentary records remain but the suits against three were dismissed, one was dropped by Spotswood and it seems that several of the others initiated a counter suit claiming that the former governor had never provided them with copies of the indentures. By 1725 all members of the 1717 transport had removed to Robinson River below the Blue Ridge Mountains where they started the so-called German Culpeper settlement. Here they prospered for three generations. Many of the later arrivals joined this settlement as their indentured service ended.

Word of the difficulties of Germans in Virginia spread to their homeland thanks to an adventurous merchant from St. Gall, Jacob Christoph Zollikoffer, who maintained a trading post known as "Zolicofer's Landing" on the Rappahannock. In 1720 Zollikoffer went on a business trip to London and the continent. Upon the urging of seventy-six-year-old Pastor Hager, he agreed to collect funds for a German church and at the same time acquaint people in Germany with the plight of the colonists. Zollikoffer's appeal, endorsed by the German clergy of London, was published in Frankfurt. At the time of his departure, in early 1720, he writes that altogether seventy-two German families had come to Virginia. Forty of them were still indentured while thirty-two Lutheran and twelve Reformed families were free of service. Zollikoffer was able to collect funds which, however, were used exclusively by the Siegeners to erect a chapel and schoolhouse in Germantown. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel refused again to sponsor a German minister and merely gave Zollikoffer twenty-five copies of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer in German. The mission of the Swiss trader, who "was taken before the King and princes to describe to them the conditions in America," had one by-product: The tenor of his report and his solicitations certainly did not make Virginia look as a desirable place to emigrate to.[20]

Indeed, for more than a decade there is no record of direct German or Swiss emigration to Virginia. Alexander Spotswood, who seems to have been the person most interested in procuring Germans as indentured servants, was irritated by their insistence on their legal rights and forthwith bought tractable Black slaves for his mining and smelter operations, and so did planters who had likewise found German servants troublesome. Thus no ready market developed in Virginia ports for German emigrants unable to pay for their passage. The redemptioner system as it evolved in the Rotterdam-Philadelphia trade from 1719 onward differed from indentured servitude. Passengers merely signed a contract to pay for their passage and related costs upon arrival. They could be redeemed by friends or relatives, pay their fare from the proceeds of the sale of goods carried along for that purpose, or go into service for anyone willing to pay for them. Indentured servants were usually contracted for specific services and for a fixed number of years prior to departure from Britain or Ireland. This distinction was not made at the time Spotswood so heartily welcomed the arrivals of Germans whom he might have directed to the Rappahannock himself.

The great influx of Germans into the western parts of Virginia in the 1730s and 1740s was an overland migration from the north. As early as 1728, a Swiss trader, Jacob Stauber, who had lived in Pennsylvania for seventeen years, applied to the Virginia Council for land in the forks of the Shenandoah. He brought a number of families from Pennsylvania in 1729 and seated them below the Massanutten Mountains even before the Council order was issued in June 1730. Stauber was so encouraged by this immediate success that he embarked for London to promote a scheme that he and a number of associates, among them again John Rudolph Ochs, had carefully prepared for several months. They tried for over two years to convince the British government that a huge Swiss and German colony west of the Blue Ridge would benefit the Crown. The negotiations dragged on for so long because the Board of Trade showed genuine interest in the project. Meetings were arranged and hearings conducted but the scheme faltered on account of the objections made by Lord Baltimore, Lord Fairfax and by the executors of William Penn, who all appeared before the Board on February 1, 1732.[21]

Stauber lingered on in England in the hope of gathering at least one shipload of Germans for his Massanutten grant. In June 1732 he seemed to have succeeded. But we can let one of his prospective settlers tell the outcome. The letter written by the Rev. Johann Spaler to the Lutheran consistory in Amsterdam at the same time gives us a unique glimpse at how volatile the situation was for emigrants waiting for passage in England:

> . . . on the advice of the Rev. Dr. Ziegenhagen, Chaplain of the Royal Chapel in London, and at the urging of Jacob Stauber, who had come over from Virginia with a written commission, and also at the request of the entire ship's company who, persuaded thereto by Jacob Stauber, were planning to go to Virginia, I accepted on the 29th of June Anno 1731 a call signed by 56 men. However, as these people heard that the livelihood in Virginia, especially for Germans, was supposed to be very bad while, on the contrary, New York had to help out other provinces with provisions, and moreover Jacob Stauber by various things had aroused suspicion and brought much distrust upon himself, they resolved to leave for New York, which after a most deplorable and pathetic voyage of nearly 30 weeks, was accomplished with a loss of about 70 persons out of 147. . . .

This was the slow *Experiment* which lost not only almost 80 passengers but also its captain before reaching New York in March 1733. Stauber himself returned to Virginia late in 1732 without having accomplished anything except contracting debts by his overly long sojourn in London.[22]

The last grand design to people substantial parts of the southern Piedmont of Virginia with Swiss and German settlers again involved John Rudolph Ochs. After having assisted Stauber in his vain attempts, Ochs appeared again before the Board of Trade in November 1734. While acknowledging the obstacles presented by proprietors he told the Board that "Land for these people up to the Mountains in Virginia and going Southward's into North Carolina into the sayd Mountains"

would be acceptable for "Swissers, who live in a high and hilly Country." His renewed efforts coincided with plans of William Byrd II to settle European Protestants on 100,000 acres on the south branch of the Roanoke. In his search for contacts, Byrd was referred to Ochs. The first attempt was sidetracked by seemingly better offers from South Carolina but by 1736 a group of Swiss entrepreneurs, headed by Dr. Joachim Lorenz Haeberlin, formed the *Helvetische Societät.* They dispatched Samuel Jenner and Dr. Samuel Tschiffeli to Virginia. After inspecting Byrd's lands, they concluded an agreement with him for 30,000 acres. Jenner returned to Bern in December 1736 and speedily compiled a promotional book with the appealing title *Neu-Gefundenes Eden.* After several months of solicitations, Haeberlin gathered the emigrants in Bern in March 1738 and by June they reached Rotterdam. The group also included some Italian-Swiss from the Grisons. In Holland Haeberlin added a number of Palatines and accepted a band of fifty-three paying passengers from Nassau-Siegen who were headed for Virginia to join their relatives and friends there. Haeberlin chartered the ship *Oliver* and with almost three hundred passengers they went to sea. In the annals of transatlantic migration the year 1738 turned out to be the most tragic of the entire century. Weather conditions played havoc with vessels from the North Atlantic to the Caribbean Sea. There had also been an outbreak of typhus in the staging areas near Rotterdam, and the disease was carried aboard. The *Oliver* left Holland in early July. Battered by storms and thrown off course several times, the captain, first mate and more than fifty passengers dead, guided by a brave sailor, Francis Sinclair, the disabled ship came within sight of the Virginia shoreline on January 5, 1739. There, at Lynnhaven Bay, forced at gunpoint by some crazed Palatines, Sinclair cast anchor and went ashore with Haeberlin and a few others in search of help on what turned out to be an uninhabited island. While most of the landing party froze to death during the night, the *Oliver* was thrown by violent winds against the shore and sank. Less than ninety passengers and crew members were saved by a massive rescue operation. Only a few of them eventually settled on Byrd's land. The news of the disaster reached Europe when some of the survivors returned home. It certainly was not encouraging for others who were planning to join the colony, a thought expressed also by the writer of the *Virginia Gazette* who spoke of the loss for Virginia "by this Disasters discouraging some Thousands of the same Country People from Coming hither to settle our back Lands." Moreover, the leaders of the enterprise were among the victims. Byrd had to abandon his project of importing German-speaking immigrants. He made a few sales of lots in his new town of Richmond but they were all to Germans and Swiss who were already in the country. The *Oliver* was the last ship chartered to bring Central Europeans directly to colonial Virginia.[23]

The settlements founded by the groups that had come in 1714 and 1717–20 were thriving meanwhile. They continued to attract additional settlers throughout the colonial period, but almost all came through the port of Philadelphia. The most active communication with the old

country was maintained by the Siegeners. New contingents joined them in 1734, 1736, 1737, 1738 *(Oliver)* and 1740. It was usually a home visit by an earlier emigrant that prompted others to follow. The people from Siegen who embarked on the *Oliver* were led by a kinsman who had come via Philadelphia two years before. Three-fourths of those on that ship died during the voyage or in the wreck on the coast.

The people in the Culpeper settlement also kept in touch with folks in the Kraichgau, in the old Duchy of Württemberg and Speyer and Mainz. As early as 1725 two of the 1717 immigrants made return visits. Having secured a Lutheran minister, Pastor John Casper Stoever, in 1733, they sent him and two members to Europe in the fall of 1734 on a fund raising tour. They crisscrossed Central Europe in what was undoubtedly the most successful of the many ventures of this sort. The campaign netted them nearly three thousand pounds sterling, barrels of books and a young assistant for Stoever. Unfortunately Stoever died on the return voyage to America but the new pastor, George Samuel Klug, oversaw the building of Hebron Church in 1740, the erection of a school and the acquisition of a revenue-producing glebe. The congregation also bought slaves to work their church farm and to be hired out for additional income.[24] For a while the settlement was one of the most prosperous colonial German centers in all of North America. No wonder then that this Hebron community attracted some of the best schoolmasters and a great variety of craftsmen. It was only after the Revolutionary War that the Culpeper settlement declined due to population pressure and the increasing competition of agricultural production in the western parts of Virginia. The Hebron community became the seedbed of new settlements in Kentucky, East Tennessee and Ohio.

The former commercial secretary of the government of Baden-Durlach, Philip Jacob Irion, who left Germany for personal reasons and came to Culpeper county as an agent for a Scottish merchant firm, was overly impressed by his countrymen when he wrote to a brother in Kaiserlautern in May 1766:

> Everyone enjoys such great liberties as may not be found anywhere else. I would not mind if there were a thousand times as many inhabitants here, who, if it could be, should all be Germans. Inasmuch as these are reputed for their diligence and industry, whereas others indulge in idleness, doing nothing but riding about and planting scarcely so much as to provide for their households, the saying probably came about that a German would thrive on a rock.[25]

By that time the Virginia Piedmont with its growing slave population was no longer immigrant country. The German settlements which derived from a largely unintended direct importation through Virginia ports succeeded in spite of plans others had for them. All other grandiose schemes ended in failure. The main colonial migration of Germans and Swiss via Philadelphia, and to a lesser degree via Annapolis and Charleston, was an unplanned, individual movement of people, handled solely for profit by merchant firms on both sides of the Atlantic. The compact settlements of Germans in the Shenandoah

Valley, Southwest Virginia and beyond came from this stream of individuals who were not pawns in the master plan of some promoter but were motivated solely by their desire for ample land and relative freedom.

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Notes

*The above article is in a sense a by-product of an overall study of the actual process of emigration from Central Europe during the eighteenth century, covering all North American colonies from Nova Scotia to Louisiana.

References to documents from the British Public Record Office, the Burgerbiblothek of Bern and the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, PA, which have appeared in print in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* will be abbreviated as follows:

e.g., Charles E. Kemper, ed., "Documents Relating to Early Projected Swiss Colonies in the Valley of Virginia, 1706–1709," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 29 (1921), 1–17: Kemper 29 *V* 1–17.

[1] Gottlieb Kurz, "State Archives of Bern," in *List of Swiss Emigrants in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. A. B. Faust and G. M. Brumbaugh (Washington, 1925), II, 2–4. See also Wust, 72 *V* 331–32.

[2] Kelpius Letterbook, Hist. Soc. of Pennsylvania; An English translation of the letter from Kelpius to Elisabeth Lerber, Oct. 8, 1704 in *The Diarium of Magister Johannes Kelpius* (Lancaster, PA, 1917), pp. 64–79.

[3] Michel's account, "Kurzer Bericht über die Amerikanische Reiss," was printed (pp. 63–127) in J. H. Graff, "Franz Michel von Bern und seine Reisen nach Amerika 1701–1704," *Neues Berner Taschenbuch auf 1898* (Bern, 1897), pp. 59–144. For an annotated English translation by William J. Hinke see 24 *V* 1–43, 113–41.

[4] Hinke 24 *V* 287–88.

[5] Teutsch Missiven-Buch der Stadt Bern, No. 37, pp. 1023/4 (March 19, 1705) in Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern. See also 24 *V* 5–9.

[6] Hinke 24 *V* 3–11.

[7] Hinke 24 *V* 14–17.

[8] For the best description and evaluation of Graffenried's American activities see Hans Gustav Keller, "Christoph von Graffenried und die Gründung von Neu-Bern in Nord-Carolina," *Archiv des Historischen Vereins des Kantons Bern*, 42 (1953), 251–90. On page 253 Keller gives this poignant characterization of Graffenried:

> He was truly a fool who sought the infinite and did not find it, a lofty spirit, resisting and fleeing the respectable confinement of his frugal homeland, an irrational creature amidst a rational people, a dreamer in the face of a here and now directed toward the ordinary and the useful. But the depth of his feelings and the loftiness of his aspirations were not matched by an ability to carry them through or by the cool sense of reality befitting a man of action. Despite all good will and all skill in dealing with others, he lacked the dogged perseverance and manly rigor toward himself and others which distinguishes the great statesman.

[9] Kirchenarchiv der Ev. Reformierten Kirchengemeinde Siegen, sub L 39.

[10] From Graffenried's "Fataliteten" (Burgerbibliothek Bern). English translation in Vincent H. Todd, *Christoph von Graffenried's Account of the Founding of New Bern* (Raleigh, NC, 1920), pp. 349–50.

[11] A copy of the Gewerckenbuch was bound into "Spotsylvania Co., VA Court Order Book 1724–1730." I owe thanks to Dr. George Fenwick Jones of the University of Maryland for drawing my attention to it.

[12] Todd, p. 386.

[13] Auswanderung 1713 Nassau-Siegen, Staatsarchiv Münster.

[14] Todd, pp. 257–59.

[15] Robert A. Brock, ed., *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, 1710–1722* (Richmond, 1882), II, 70; 13 *V* 262–64.

[16] Essex County, VA, Deeds (1718–1721), p. 180.

[17] William Stevens Perry, ed., *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church* (Hartford, CT, 1870) I, 247–48.

[18] For the Germanna colony and sources see Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville, VA, 1969), pp. 20–24, 256.

[19] "Petition of the German Congregation of the County of Culpeper, October 1776," Virginia State Archives. Klaus Wust, "The 1717 Immigrants to Virginia and the Beginning of the Redemption System," in George M. Smith, trans., *Hebron Church Register, 1750–1825, Madison, Virginia* (Edinburg, VA, 1981), I, vi–xii.

[20] *Extraordinäre Kayserliche Reichs-Post-Zeitung*, Frankfurt, 15 June 1720; *Warhaffte Nachricht von einer „Hochteutschen Evangelischen Colonie zu Germantown in Nord-Virginien in America, und derselben Dringendliches Ansuchen an Ihre Glaubens-Genossen in Europa* (Frankfurt, 1720). For Zollikoffer see also 11 *V* 381.

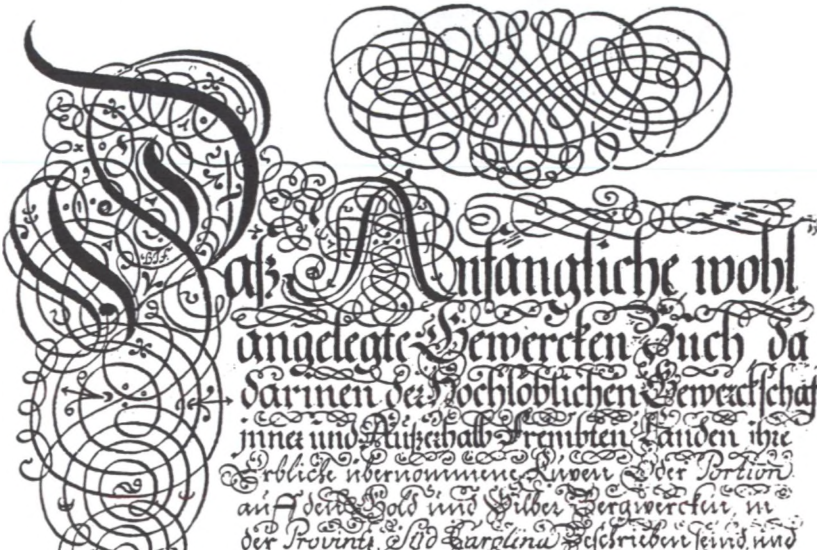
[21] Kemper 24 *V* 183–291. Additional documents 35 *V* 175–90, 258–66; 36 *V* 54–69.

[22] Lutheran Church Archives, Amsterdam, Portfolio America. See Klaus Wust, "Jacob Stover and his 147 Germans in London," *Rockingham Recorder*, 3 (Harrisonburg, VA, 1979), 20–23. A new survey of German immigration via New York in Wust, *Guardian on the Hudson* (New York, 1984), pp. 5 ff.

[23] The *Oliver* story is based on the author's research in the notarial files of the City Archives of Rotterdam. The full story with detailed documentation was recently published in Klaus Wust, "William Byrd II and the Shipwreck of the *Oliver*," *Newsletter, Swiss American Historical Society*, 20, No. 2 (1984), 3–19.

[24] Johann Caspar Stöver, *Kurtze Nachricht von einer Evangelisch-Lutherischen Deutschen Gemeinde in dem Amerikanischen Virginien* (Hannover, 1737); W. P. Huddle, *History of the Hebron Lutheran Church* (New Market, VA, 1908), pp. 13–19, 32.

[25] Fritz Braun, *Auswanderer aus Kaiserslautern im 18. Jahrhundert* (Kaiserslautern, 1965), pp. 14–17. The complete Irion letter, in translation, is available to American readers in Don Yoder, *Rhineland Emigrants*.



Das Anfängliche wohl angelegte Gewercken Buch da darinen der Hochlöblichen Gewerckschafft inner und Außerhalb Frembten Landen ihre Erbliche übernommene Kuxen oder Portion auff dem Gold und Silber Bergwercken, in der Provintz Süd Carolina beschrieben seind, und von den Woll Edlen HERRN Johann Justus Albrecht, General Berg Hauptman vorermelten Provintz die Gold und Silber Bergwerck, [illegible] zu nehmen und zu bauen,

[illegible] Süd Carolina [illegible] General Berg Hauptman [illegible] Privilegirt [illegible] Gegeben in der Königlichen Residentz Statt Londen den 26 May Anno 1712.

Klaus Wust