

The University of North at Asheville

*Liebe deinen Nächsten: Love Thy Neighbor; Migration, Marriage and Assimilation Among  
Germans in Early North Carolina*

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the  
Faculty of the Department of History  
In Candidacy for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts in History

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Christian Bodenhamer and his wife Charity were filled with trepidation. The two had just endured a journey of between six to eight months, traveling from Bodenheim, a small town in southwestern Germany and located on the central portion of the Rhine River, through to Rotterdam, stopping in the British Isles, and across the Atlantic to the American Colony port of Philadelphia. The couple was about to begin a new life in a new country. Christian and Charity were but two in a long line of native Germans flocking to the new world. 85,000 Germans arrived on American shores in the 75 years before the American Revolution, more than English and Scottish immigrants combined.<sup>1</sup>

Those migrants that headed south faced little of the intolerance that the German immigrants that remained in the North suffered. Germans in North Carolina rapidly entered and integrated into the larger white southern society. The integration of the Germans who settled North Carolina is best charted in their changing marriage patterns. The Germans who settled North Carolina quickly intermarried into the greater white society evidenced by the high rate of outmarriage of Germans with non-German whites in the hundreds of marriages selected for this study. This data was compiled and analyzed by the author, through the analysis of over 400 pages of marriage records from Rowan County spanning this period. How and why these people came to North Carolina before becoming an indistinguishable element of Carolinian society is relevant to the narrative of integration. The Bodenhamer family's experience of migration, settlement and assimilation is demonstrative of precisely this phenomenon. The Bodenhamer line remains in North Carolina to this day, reaching even to the maternal grandfather of the Author.

German migrants flooded the American colonies in the decades before the Revolutionary War and they left an indelible mark on colonial society. What motivated these people to embark on the dangerous and costly transatlantic voyage to America? An examination of contemporary and secondary

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<sup>1</sup> Aaron S. Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700-1775: New Estimates." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22 (1992): 698

sources paints a horrifying picture of the voyage from Germany to the American Colonies, fraught with deceptive merchants and barbarous captains aboard crowded, filthy ships. Perhaps the dangers of the voyage have been overstated by politically motivated commentators, and historians searching to dramatize their forefathers' migration story. The positive accounts of life in the colonies had a far greater impact on motivating the migrants to embark on the journey. The promise of cheap, bountiful land and freedom from intrusive government intervention proved irresistible to many. While the Germans migrants settled predominately in the middle colonies near the entrepot of Philadelphia, smaller cohorts traveled in the back country of "Greater Pennsylvania." Some even established themselves on the North Carolina frontier.<sup>2</sup>

Carl Hammer's *Rhineland on the Yadkin*<sup>3</sup> is one such source on those German immigrants to North Carolina. His primarily examines the cultural legacy of those early migrants. He discusses everyday life for German migrants and their descendants in Rowan county and he devotes special attention to the formation of the Reformed and Lutheran church. Hammer's largest contribution to this work is the roster of German surnames recovered from Organ Lutheran Church, This list was critical in determining German marriages that are featured later in this work. His work is however handicapped by his sentimental tone and poor citations.

Aaron Spencer Fogleman in *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* is an exhaustive study of German migration to colonial America. Much of his focus is concerned with Pennsylvania, home to the largest population of Germans in the Thirteen Colonies. *Hopeful Journeys* also provided useful information regarding the early development of the German community in North Carolina. Fogleman's research into the "Pennsylvania Dutch" provides a useful counter example to the experience of North Carolina's

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<sup>2</sup> Aaron Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press), 1-10.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Hamer Jr in *Rhineland on the Yadkin* (Salisbury, Rowan Printing Company, 1965)

German community. Folgeman along with Otterness provided much of the background on what motivated Germans to leave their homeland and what compelled them to America.

Otterness, Philip. *Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York* examines the first wave of German migration to America,<sup>4</sup> offers valuable information on the role of promotional literature in encouraging German migration to America. Otterness' work is however limited in scope to the historical phenomenon of the 1709 Palatine Migration and their settlement of the Mohawk Valley in Upper New York.

Using marriage as a measure for integration, the Germans of Rowan County and western North Carolina, as early as 1773-1774, the marriage rate between Germans and Non-Germans was higher than that of German intramarriage. Marriage historically is a natural measure of integration. It represents a social and economic act, bonding two communities. Simply, one does not voluntarily enter a community they distrust or disdain. Large-scale outmarriage, termed "amalgamation" is considered one of the seven variables to measure a process of assimilation.<sup>5</sup> Given the social and economic value of the union, marriage offers a particularly intriguing vantage point from which to view German integration in the Yadkin Valley. This data also represents the first of its kind, offering a quantitative analysis of German migration to western North Carolina in supplement to numerous qualitative histories of Germans in North Carolina. Table 1 presents a systematic description of German integration into white society in the Carolina back county. The data was compiled by the author from the *Marriages of Rowan County NC 1753 to 1868*. Marriages involving presumed Germans were drawn from the record between 1753 and 1863. Those names determined to be German or their

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4 Philip Otterness, *Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004)

5 Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964 )

Anglicization were those previously identified as German in the 1790 national census<sup>6</sup> and those names from the records of Organ Lutheran Church.<sup>7</sup> Cross-referencing the list of names from the Church and census records with the tens of thousands of marriages listed, producing the almost 300 applicable marriages found in the table. The specifics of the marriages are listed in the accompanying appendix.

Table One: German Inter/Outmarriage 1773-1813

Year	Total Marriages	German&German	German&Non-German	% of out-marriage	10 year Average
1773	4	2	2	50	
1775	9	5	4	44	
1779	18	7	11	61	
1783	8	5	3	37	
1785	15	8	7	46	
1791	9	3	6	66	
1793	15	8	7	46	59
1795	12	0	12	100	
1797	13	7	6	46	
1799	35	20	15	42	
1801	22	7	15	68	
1803	25	13	12	60	63
1805	33	14	19	57	
1807	22	11	11	50	
1809	22	12	10	45	
1811	31	10	21	67	
1813	26	8	18	69	58

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The two discontinuities in the record, in which only one recorded marriage occurring in two, two year periods takes place, are presumably related to the shifting fortunes of war. The first period from 1776 to 1777 is explained by the first militia muster issued in 1776 in which 1500 men of Salisbury district took up arms in defense of the fledgling American Republic. The second documented reduction in marriages occurred during the 1780-1781. In this period only one marriage is recorded.

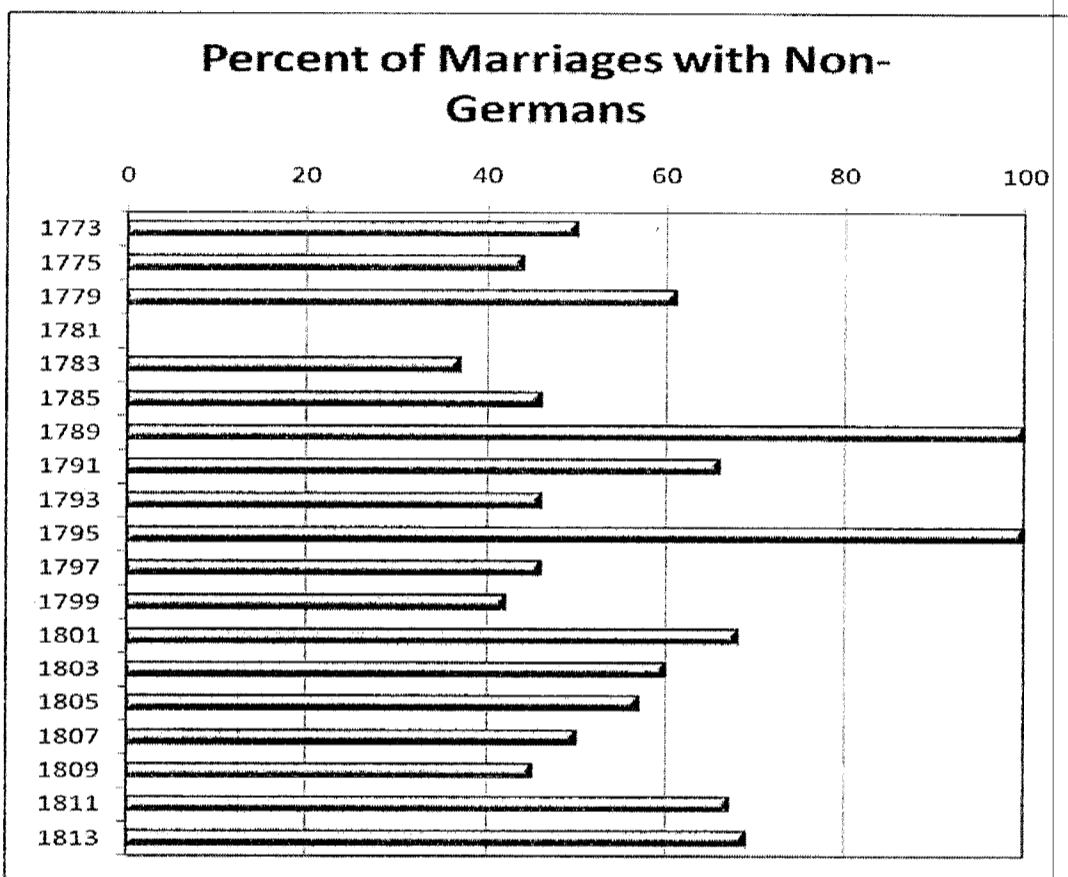
6 American Council of Learned Societies., *Surnames in the United States Census of 1790; An Analysis of National Origins of the Population*, (Baltimore, Genealogical Pub. Co. 1969 ), 312-318

7 Organ Lutheran Church Roster in Carl Hamer Jr in *Rhineland on the Yadkin* (Salisbury, Rowan Printing Company, 1965) , 31-33.

8 Compiled by the Author from Brent Holcomb, *Marriages of Rowan County NC 1773-1863*

This abrupt decline in marriage occurred concurrently with the fall of Charleston, South Carolina. 1781 saw the ignominious defeat of General Gate's army at the Battle of Camden and the ensuing occupation of North Carolina by British General Cornwallis.<sup>9</sup> This response of the German community in North Carolina to British occupation suggests that the Germans of North Carolina were more supportive of the patriot cause. Beyond these two anomalies in the record, German marriages demonstrate an undeniable pattern of sustained outmarriage between Germans and Non-Germans.

Chart One: Percentage of Outmarriage, from 1773-1813



<sup>9</sup> James Brawley, *The Rowan Story 1753-1953: A Narrative History* (Salisbury, Rowan Printing Company, 1953), 70-73.

<sup>10</sup> Table 1

While the annual percentage of German marriages show considerable variation from year to year, the decade average increases begin in 1773 and continue till 1813. There is evidence of German marriage and outmarriage before the Revolutionary War, and there was even a brief spike in 1774. However, most of the record before the Revolution is sporadic and inconsistent. Not until after 1772 were the number of marriages statistically significant. Marriage rates did not rebound until after the revolution. From 1783 to 1785 German outmarriage and German/ non-German marriage returned to their pre-Revolutionary levels. Ignoring the disruption in the record produced by the social instability of the Revolutionary War, the rate of German outmarriage was sustained and constant. Never over the 40 years examined did the 10 year average "outmarriage" rate dip below 50 percent. Germans married steadily into the English speaking white population of Rowan County. This fact does not indicate, however, that German outmarriage and assimilation was universally supported by all members of the German community. An outspoken critic of Germans' outmarriage was Rev. Arnold Roschen. He described the Irish [Scot-Irish] of the backcountry as "lazy, dissipated and poor." He also warned the Germans of Rowan County of the "feeble children" as the potential result of any marriage with the English or the Irish.<sup>11</sup> As demonstrated, Roschen's virulent defense of "Germanness" was unique among the liberal attitudes of most of the Lutheran clergy. There existed a number of historical, political, economic and social factors that explain the more rapid integration of North Carolina Germans into larger white society than their northern counterparts. The issue of toleration and integration will be addressed later. Before any of this could occur the migrants first had leave their farms and towns, and appear on American shores.

The immigrant experience in 18<sup>th</sup> was defined by not just by the assimilation process but also a far more challenging voyage than the later European migrants to the United States. Most German

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<sup>11</sup> George Raynor, "Bilingualism in Rowan County in *German and Politicians in Rowan County* (Salisbury: Salisbury Printing Co., 1990), 12.

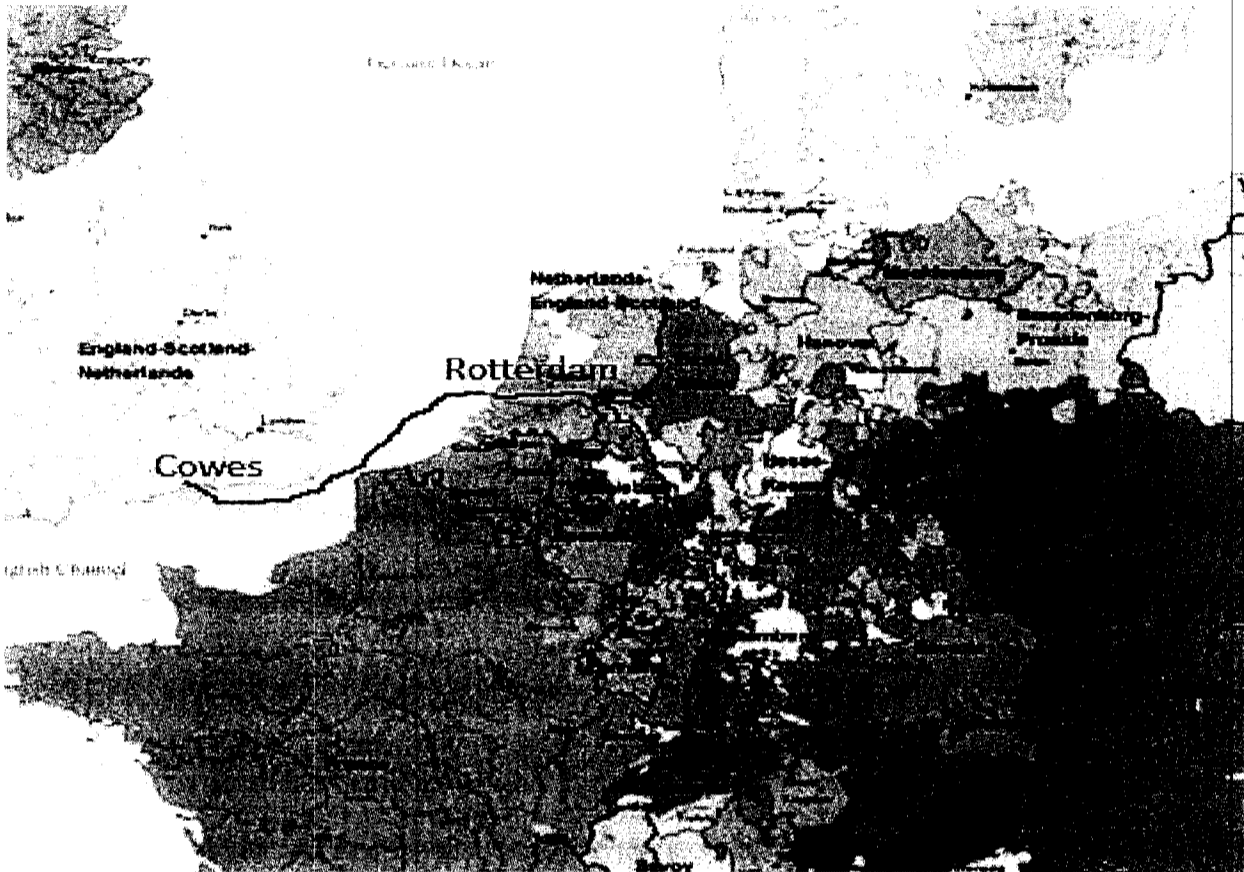
migrants had a far lengthier journey to America than immigrants from the British Isles. Two leading German commentators published harrowing accounts of their difficult trips from the Old World to the American Colonies. These accounts under modern examination sometimes register as hyperbolic to the reader, however they offer two of the most complete descriptions of the trip from Germany to America. The often expensive and time consuming journey up the Rhine River to Rotterdam, from the Dutch port to English ports, most commonly Cowes. Then there was the transatlantic voyage to American ports, normally Philadelphia which lasted months. From there, many Germans destined for North Carolina settled in the middle colonies for a brief number of years and then headed south overland. The Bodenhamers were one such German family to settle the North Carolina frontier from the Middle Colonies.<sup>12</sup> Though their experiences dot the historical record, there exists no account of their journey in their own words. Instead only a composite can be formed from a variety of disparate sources. There is no record of the Bodenhamers before their arrival in the America colonies as such the details of their journey and motivations to come to the Thirteen Colonies can only be speculated. This speculation can however rest on the rich literary accounts preserved in the historical record, foremost of which is Gottlieb Mittleberger's account. Gottlieb Mittelberger wrote a travelogue dedicated to his "Most Illustrious Prince" Carl Duke of Württemberg<sup>13</sup>, an important detail in the further examination of his account. He stated that the journey lasted no less than four months.<sup>14</sup> Mittelberger



wane. He stated that travelers could be detained for weeks in Rotterdam awaiting a vessel bound for.<sup>15</sup>

In Rotterdam the migrants encountered the villain of all German migration narratives, *Neulanders*.

These were the supposedly unscrupulous merchants, “Dutch man-dealers and their man stealing emissaries”<sup>16</sup>, that arranged the considerable payment for the migrants voyage. The method of payment, the “Redemption system” was unique to German migrants to the American Colonies.



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Then they had to sail to England, register in an English port, normally Cowes. The Bodenhamer's vessel followed just this course. It arrived in Cowes to pass into British customs from Rotterdam on

<sup>15</sup> Mittelberger, 18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>17</sup> Euratlas.com, “Complete Map of Europe in Year 1700”, *History of Europe*, The black line has been added by the author designating route of Rhine River and the Channel crossing traveled by Emigrants.

July 30, 1753.<sup>18</sup>

There the migrants were subjected to yet another search and customs fee. According to Mittelberger's telling, by the time most travelers were to embark on the most trying leg of the trip, the transatlantic trip from England to the American Colonies, they were impoverished and travel weary. Mittelberger considered the journey could be anything from uncomfortable to deadly. He said the human cargo aboard the ships were, "packed as densely as herrings so to say...scarcely 2 feet width and 6 feet length in the bedstead."<sup>19</sup> The passengers aboard suffered untold miseries. Mittelberger described his fellow passengers as stricken with "fever, dysentery, headache, constipation, boils, scurvy, cancer, mouth-rot."<sup>20</sup> Mittelberger himself was afflicted on the voyage. In addition passengers suffered physical depravity in form of want from fresh food and clean water. He even wrote, "Among the healthy, the impatience sometimes grows so great and cruel that one curses the other, or himself and the day of his birth."<sup>21</sup> The Bodenhamer's voyage to America was milder, lasting only half duration of Mittelberger's hellish trip. The Bodenhamer's arrived in Philadelphia on August 29, 1753 less than two months after they set out from Cowes.<sup>22</sup> Another prominent German wrote an equaling discouraging account of his trip to America.

Lutheran Minister Henry Melchior Muhlenberg kept detailed journals recording his experiences traveling to America and his ministry in the Colonies. He began his journey from Hanover, located in present day Northern Germany. Muhlenberg's overland route spared him considerable time and expense. He arrived in Rotterdam after only a week. He sailed in the summer of 1742 and he introduced yet another threat to the litany of dangers facing German migrants, the threat of Spanish

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18 Marianne S. Wokeck, Appendix: German Migration Voyages 1683-1775, in *Trade in Strangers*, (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999) 254.

19 Mittelberger, 19

20 Ibid., 20

21 Ibid., 21

22 Wokeck, 245.

capture.<sup>23</sup> Europe at this time was engulfed by the War of Austrian Succession, and the threat of Spanish attack hung over his convoy for the entirety of the trip. War again disrupted migration during the Seven Years War. Muhlenberg had a far milder trip than Mittelberger. He reached America after only after eight weeks; however, he reports similar difficulties as Mittelberger.<sup>24</sup> Muhlenberg was ill for weeks.<sup>25</sup> He too complained of the extremely tight quarters, finding the lack of privacy “irksome”. He also found the diet of “sour water, foul beer, peas, pork and stockfish half-cooked in the English fashion” to be less than adequate. However, “everyone was thankful to God if he could help himself and hold his head up” to enjoy his provisions.<sup>26</sup> English and German language newspapers also carried similarly negative accounts of the voyage from European ports to their American destinations.

In 1732 the sensational account of the vessel *Love and Unity* was printed in the Philadelphia Gazetteer. The Captain of the vessel, “A wicked murderer of souls”<sup>27</sup>, was said to have auctioned off rations after the vessel had been sea for 24 weeks. The passengers said they had been forced to eat the vermin they found on the vessel, they had been so deprived of sustenance. Furthermore, the passengers were eventually disembarked not at the agreed upon location of Philadelphia but on the island of Martha's Vineyard. The cruelties heaped on the passengers from the *Love and Unity* continued upon landing. The migrants stated “The captain constrained us to pay the whole freight of the dead and the living.” Even this was not the last injustice inflicted on the passengers, for after they exited the vessel they had found that their luggage chests had been opened and “plundered.”<sup>28</sup> While these sources dominate the historiography of the early German migration little attention has been given to the many less horrific accounts of transatlantic travel.

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23 Henry M. Muhlenberg, *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*. Vol. 1. trans. Theodore G. Tapper and John W. Doberstein. (Philadelphia, The Evangelical Lutheran Ministry of Pennsylvania, 1942). 16-18

24 Muhlenberg.,42

25 Ibid.,30

26 Ibid,28

27 Philadelphia Gazette May 18, 1732 in Julius Sachse, *Pennsylvania: The German Influence in Its Settlement and Development. A Narrative and Critical History* ( Philadelphia : The Pennsylvania- German Society, 1897)

28 Philadelphia Gazette May 18, 1732 in Sachse,

Christoph Sauer, a “well-known Separatist printer” wrote in what is a comparison to the aforementioned texts amounts to a glowing record of his voyage. In his letter, dated 1721, to relatives still in Germany, two of his five greatest hardships aboard were “the meat was over-salted” and the cod-fish though soaked in fresh water was “cooked in the same water in which it was soaked.” He even described other passengers as having the boldness and good spirits to joke at the turbulent seas, writing “The Palatines had their fun with it. When our ship would sometimes roll or pitch, they said; “The lion has fetched another mouthful of water.”<sup>29</sup> In Swiss archives, there are letters from migrants to the Thirteen Colonies providing a “favorable picture in the main.”<sup>30</sup> Despite the positive primary sources of the voyage from Europe to the American Colonies the secondary literature of German migration has been overwhelmingly negative.

Even as late as the 1970s this image of the transatlantic voyage as a floating holocaust dominated the secondary literature. In a 1977 article “Death and Life in a Colonial City” author Billy Smith believed “ German redemptioners, indentured servants and poor immigrants who collectively comprised the bulk of Philadelphia's new arrivals, frequently experienced appalling voyages across the Atlantic, at times equaling even the horrors of the African 'middle passage'.”<sup>31</sup> However, more recent scholarship contends this view as being largely incorrect. German migrants suffered a mortality rate far lower than that of their forced migrant counterparts. German mortality rates for adults were close to three percent, far below the nine percent experienced by slaves during their passage to America. German children, however, suffered mightily. Their mortality rate was over 9 percent, three times that of the adults.<sup>32</sup> This high child mortality rate can be viewed as a partial explanation for the

29 Christoph Sauer, Letter, in Adolph Gerber, trans. *An Early Description of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography).

30 Albert Faust, *Guide to the Materials For American History in Swiss and Austrian Archives* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1916). 14.

31 Billy G. Smith, “Death and Life in a Colonial Immigrant City: A Demographic Analysis of Philadelphia.” *The Journal of Economic History* 872, 37, no. 4, (1977).

32 Farley Grubb, “Morbidity and Mortality on the North Atlantic Passage: Eighteenth-Century German Immigration,”

overstatement of deaths in the secondary literature and the historical record as death struck across families taking children. The emphasis on the hardships endured by German migrants in both the primary and the secondary literature requires an examination of the sources.

The explanation for the prevalence of horrific voyage accounts, anecdotes of barbarous captains and unscrupulous merchants partially lies within the colonial newspapers. In a competitive marketplace, where newspapers fought for readership, naturally sensational and morbidly gripping stories made it to the press. This phenomenon is best explained in the colloquial adage “if it bleeds, it leads”. These arresting accounts predominate the early secondary literature on German migration as these works were often sponsored by private groups. The canonical work on German migration and its impact on American society, Julius Sachse's *Pennsylvania: The German Influence in Its Settlement and Development. A Narrative and Critical History*<sup>33</sup>, was written for the Pennsylvania-German Society. Consciously or unconsciously the desire to aggrandize one's forbearers could have motivated the dramatization of the transatlantic crossing. That is not to minimize the cost or dangers of eighteenth century long distance sailing but even primary source commentators had other motivations than simply the preservation of the historical record.

Mittelberger in his *Journey to Pennsylvania* displays his loyalties before a single word of his account is written. He dedicated his work to the ruler of his home, “To my most gracious prince and Lord.”<sup>34</sup> Mittelberger was subject to “[his] most gracious prince and Lord[‘s] vicissitudes especially if his work was found to be displeasing. Duke Carl had a vested interest in maintaining the population of his Duchy. Within the first chapter Mittelberger reveals that his expectations had not been reached in America, and he has decided to undergo the expensive return journey to Württemberg. Mittelberger then

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*Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 571, 17 ,no. 3, (1987),

33 Julius Sachse, *Pennsylvania: The German Influence in Its Settlement and Development. A Narrative and Critical History* ( Philadelphia : The Pennsylvania- German Society, 1897)

34 Mittelberger, *Journey to Pennsylvania*. I.

removes any doubt about his intentions in writing *Journey to Pennsylvania*. He takes a vow before God to reveal “the pure true” of the “hardships and dangers” one must endure to arrive in America.<sup>35</sup>

Whatever the motives of Mittelberger, the interests of the governments of Southwestern Germany and Switzerland were clear and emigration was to be stopped.

Through the eighteenth century an estimated 900,000 people emigrated from the territories of Southwestern Germany and Switzerland.<sup>36</sup> As early as 1717 putting a halt to the exodus was a priority for many of the rulers in the region.<sup>37</sup> In the Canton of Zurich emigration to “Carolina” by 1734 had been expressly forbidden, and those found trying to flee would suffer a *lose Landrecht* or a loss of all legal rights and privileges. The Canton of Bern mandates against emigration to Carolina were made and repeated 1735, 1738, 1742 and again 1742<sup>38</sup>. In the northern most canton of the Swiss confederation of Basel, there were even charges pressed against one Peter Hubers accused of “enticing peoples to Carolina.”<sup>39</sup> In Zurich, the descendents of a man who had died in the Carolinas were denied access to his estate.<sup>40</sup> Clearly the rulers and governments of Southwestern Germany and Switzerland felt their power severely threatened by their diminishing populations who were being lured away from their homes by the appealing offers of colonization. In the face of such extreme legal consequences, denial of legal rights and property, and discouraging reports of the dangerous passage to America, what then motivated German migrants to embark on their exhausting sojourn to the American Colonies?

By the peak of German migration to the American Colonies, the decade of 1750-1759,

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35 Mittelberger, 17.

36 Folgeman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 31.

37 “Verbot der Emigration, under wie zu hintertreiben.” in *Guide to the Materials For American History in Swiss and Austrian Archives*, ed. Albert Faust (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1916), 33.

38 “Mandate: Wiederholte Verbote nach Carolina zu resyen” in Peter Faust, *Guide to the Materials For American History in Swiss and Austrian Archives* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1916), 35

39 “Wegen behaendigung eines gewuesen Hubers [Peter Hubers], der die Leueth in Carolinam verlocket” in *Guide to the Materials For American History in Swiss and Austrian Archives*, ed. Albert Faust (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1916), 38.

40 “Knonau berichtet betr, die erbs theilung des in Carolina verstorbenen Christian Groben von Maschwanden” in *Guide to the Materials For American History in Swiss and Austrian Archives*, ed. Albert Faust (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1916), 22.

promotional literature advertising prosperity and a better life in America had proliferated in the German speaking world. This literature and its appeal was so abundant that Germans measured as the single largest voluntary migrant group in the Thirteen Colonies.<sup>41</sup> Literature extolling the virtues of the American landscape, its great fertility and the ease of the life within the Colonies first appeared in the 1680s commissioned by William Penn in an attempt to entice Germans to his new found colony.<sup>42</sup> Later in 1685, the *Curieuse Nachrichten von Pennsylvania* (The Interesting News from Pennsylvania) was written by Daniel Falckner. It would later be republished with an additional volume that included this encouraging exchange; “What is there a deficiency of in America? The chief deficiency consists in people and craftsmen. The other deficiencies will easily be supplied.” The first promotional tract lauding North Carolina appeared in 1706 in the *Ausführlich und Umständlicher Bericht von der berühmten Landschafft Carolina , in den Engellandishcen America Gelegen* (A Complete and Detailed Report from the Renowned District of Carolina located in English America). While the first edition appeared to have spurred little migration to the area, by its third printing in 1709 its impact had become visible. In the third edition an appendix was included praising the fertility of America saying “In Virginia, a man, when he wants to be only fairly hardworking, without even being particularly diligent, can raise 3000 pounds of tobacco and 20 pound barrels of grain in a year”.<sup>43</sup> Personal letters also encouraged migration.

An open letter dated from June 18, 1720 to the people of the canton of Zurich celebrated the founding of a German colony in Virginia, “Germanna”, composed of 32 German families. A leader of the colony wrote later that year asking that a tax be levied to support the building of a church and

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41 Aaron S. Fogleman. "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700-1775: New Estimates." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 689,22 (1992)

42 Philip Otterness, *Becoming German* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press,2004),3.

43 Joshua Kochertal, *Ausführlich und Umständlicher Bericht von der berühmten Landschafft Carolina , in den Engellandishcen America Gelegen* in, *Becoming German*, ed. Philip Otterness, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press,2004)

school for the benefit of the colonists in Germanna.<sup>44</sup> Curiously even Mittelberger's *Journey to Pennsylvania* helped to inspire migration to America

Despite his miserable voyage to the Thirteen Colonies, Mittelberger wrote glowingly of the American landscape. Though he describes the price of land in the vicinity of Philadelphia at the time of his arrival as already “quite expensive,”<sup>45</sup> he states, that there is still uncleared land that can be purchased cheaply. Praising the environment of Pennsylvania, “The land is also very fertile and all sorts of grain grow well.”<sup>46</sup> For those unable to afford the more expensive land of Pennsylvania he suggests that of the Carolinas; “it [the land] produces rice in abundance, much cotton and olive oil” and unoccupied, “There one has to go 1,2,3 and more hours to reach his nearest neighbor” and an especially appealing offer to the land hungry peasants of Southwestern Germany. Beggars are entirely absent from America as all occupations earn good wages, and because of this community’s support the indigent.<sup>47</sup> The people of America, being so prosperous, easily welcome strangers into their homes, so much so that “one might travel about a whole year without spending a penny.”<sup>48</sup> Beyond the incredible bounty of America described by Mittelberger, he waxed on the great degree of personal liberty afforded the citizens of the colonies.

Mittelberger describes the Colonies as a land almost wholly free of the restrictive economic and political practices of the Old World. Unlike in the potential migrants’ home villages and towns, no occupation is constrained by socially immobilizing guilds, so that men are free to take on whatever trade they so please. Perhaps his most powerful statement on American freedom is the limited government intrusion in the affairs of the individual, circumstances eagerly welcomed by those under absolutist rule in Europe. “Liberty in Pennsylvania extends so far that everyone is free from all

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44 Letters in Peter Faust, *Guide to the Materials For American History in Swiss and Austrian Archives* (Washington D.C., Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1916), 13.

45 Mittelberger, 13.

46 Ibid.,56.

47 Ibid.,67.

48 Ibid.,97.



molestation and taxation on his property, business, house and estates.” The religious freedom granted in Pennsylvania also greatly appealed to Germans of minority faith, who under the Treaty of Westphalia were unable to worship openly.<sup>49</sup> Mittelberger enumerated the multiplicity of faiths present in Pennsylvania from conservative Catholics and Lutherans to more esoteric Pagans and Freemasons.<sup>50</sup> However, the various promotional tracts and Mittelberger's account does little to illuminate potential migrants to the hostility discrimination shown to Germans in America.<sup>51</sup>

While Penn and other colonial leaders welcomed German immigration, local leadership of the colonies was more resistant to engaging Germans in the civic life of the colonies. The earliest example of Germans being denied the privileges of naturalization occurred in 1721, when a group of Germans applied for said rights and their request remained unanswered for three years. In 1724 a bill was proposed requiring a confession of faith and statement of property but was rejected by the Governor of Pennsylvania as thoroughly antithetical to the principles of the colony. Germans' requests to be recognized as full citizens in the colonies were thwarted for another five years. Not until 1729 were those Germans who had purchased property granted the privileges of naturalization.<sup>52</sup> Negative and discriminatory attitudes, however, prevailed for decades among Pennsylvania's "native-born" Anglo-Saxon elite.

Perhaps the most outspoken opponent of German immigration was "Founding Father," Benjamin Franklin. He described the incoming Germans as "most stupid of their own nation" and, being ignorant of liberty, [they] abuse it.<sup>53</sup> He complains of the growing number of German language newspapers and bilingual street signs, suggesting that if these trends continue unabated, the state legislature will surely be bifurcated, one part German and one English, each mutually unintelligible.

49 "Treaty of Westphalia" in the Avalon Project Library, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/westphal.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp) (accessed February 12, 2011).

50 Mittelberger, 54

51 Ibid., 56

52 *Statues at Large of Pennsylvania*, Vol. IV pp. 147-150.

53 Benjamin Franklin, *The Support of the Poor* letter, May 9, 1753

Franklin even resorts to fear-mongering; he suggested that the English Pennsylvanian culture will be swept over by the tide of German immigration.

In short, unless the stream of importation could be turned from this to the other colonies, as you very judiciously propose, they will soon outnumber us, which all the advantages we will have, will in my opinion, be not able to preserve our language, and even our government will become precarious.<sup>54</sup>

Franklin's diatribe against the "Palatine Boors that swarm into our settlements"<sup>55</sup> demonstrates the less than welcoming atmosphere that had developed in Philadelphia by the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century. The increasing tension between the English and German communities in Pennsylvania and the declining availability of land<sup>56</sup> in the region spurred some German migrants to head south into "Greater Pennsylvania," the colonial backcountry stretching from the Alleghenies to the North Carolina Blue Ridge mountains<sup>57</sup>, along the "Great Wagon Road".

With the exception of the Swiss enclave in New Bern most German migrants arriving in North Carolina were internal migrants attracted by the promise of cheap land and an open frontier society. Believing that their best chance for success lay south, those "Pennsylvania Dutch" who settled North Carolina choose an overland route through the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and Maryland emptying into the Yadkin River basin of the western Piedmont of North Carolina. By 1751 as Benjamin Franklin bemoaned the influx of "swarthy" Germans into Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson's father, Peter, had completed a map providing an accurate depiction of the proposed route.<sup>58</sup> While it is difficult to determine how many pioneers used the Jefferson-Fry Map, it does establish that by this time the internal migration along the Great Wagon Road was common and more or less predictable.

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54 Franklin, *The Support of the Poor*

55 Benjamin Franklin, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, & etc*, letter, 1755

56 Mittelberger, 118.

57 Aaron Folgeman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 8.

58 Peter Jefferson & Joshua Fry "A map of the most inhabited part of Virginia containing the whole province of Maryland with part of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and North Carolina." 1751, published by Thos. Jefferys, London, 1755.

