

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN  
ELEMENT IN ROWAN AND CABARRUS  
COUNTIES, NORTH CAROLINA

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## THE FIRST ARRIVALS

The first indisputable record of the existence of a German settlement in the region of North Carolina now known as Rowan and Cabarrus counties occurs in a report of Arthur Dobbs, colonial governor from 1754 to 1765, to the Board of Trade in London. Dobbs writes that, in addition to seventy-five Scotch-Irish families, twenty-two families of Germans or Swiss had settled on his western lands seven or eight years previous to his visit in 1755.<sup>1</sup> From other sources we know that prior to the Revolutionary War natives of both Germany and Switzerland had built their cabins in that then remote country. Thus Martin Phifer, progenitor of the influential colonial family of that name, was born in Berne, Switzerland, in 1720.<sup>2</sup> Among the Rowan County wills we find one dated January 4, 1757, in which the testator, Johannes Agedert, declares "before witnesses and in the presence of my children, that I on my sickbed give Conrad Michel my rights to my paternal and maternal inheritance from Switzerland". Michel, whose signature, together with that of Georg Erinner, appears on this seared German document, may have emigrated from the same canton as Agedert. Although it may be the merest coincidence, it is worth noting in this connection that Franz Louis Michel of Switzerland, in 1710, was associated with von Graffen-

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<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1886), V. 355 f.

<sup>2</sup> Wheeler, John H., *Reminiscences and Memoirs of North Carolina and Eminent North Carolinians* (Columbus, Ohio, 1884), p. lxvii.

ried in the founding of the Palatine settlement at New Bern, the first German colony in North Carolina.

However, because of the preponderance of the Teutonic population in Switzerland and the constant intercourse with the people of Germany, which is greatly facilitated by a common language in the adjacent portions of the two countries, the Teutonic element among the Swiss may be regarded as German. Moreover, branches of the Phifer family resided in Breslau, Germany. Martin Phifer spoke German as his native tongue and married Margaret Blackwelder, a German maiden. In 1768, the Reverend Samuel Suther preached to the Germans residing in that portion of Mecklenburg County which was, in 1792, set off as Cabarrus County. And Governor Tryon, who knew that Suther was a Swiss, called him a "dutch minister".<sup>3</sup> By association and by intermarriage the Swiss in the piedmont so thoroughly identified themselves with such neighbors as had come to North Carolina from Germany that already in colonial days they were considered as Germans. And since all spoke the same language, it was immaterial to Governor Dobbs, who carefully noted other details of his western tour, whether the twenty-two families of squatters on his lands were called Swiss or Germans.

There is evidence, though very meager, that at least one isolated German family lived in the western section prior to the founding of the settlement discovered by Dobbs. On February 16, 1737-1738, one "Jacob Shives (Scheibe)" sought to obtain a patent for 220 acres of land in what was then Bladen County.<sup>4</sup> If the alternative spelling of the patronymic is the correct one, and it can be shown that "Shives" is the Anglicized form of "Scheibe", then the name leaves no doubt as to the German origin of its possessor. Moreover, Shives is

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<sup>3</sup> *Colonial Records*, VII. 821.

<sup>4</sup> *Colonial Records*, IV. 329.

today the name of well-known families of German descent in both Rowan and Cabarrus counties. Hence, probably already in 1737, and certainly in 1747, six years before the Moravians, who are popularly credited with being the first Germans in the piedmont of North Carolina, began their trek from Pennsylvania, Germans were living in the back country.

Several writers declare that the German emigration to this region began considerably earlier than 1747. Vass wrote that the Germans entered Granville County, in 1740, with the ministers Tobler and Zuberbuehler.<sup>5</sup> Loehner says:

"During the first third of the former century [the eighteenth], Captain General Tobler and Pastor Zuberbuehler (Bartholomaeus Zauberbuehler) of St. Gall came to the Granville district<sup>6</sup> and the surrounding country with a considerable body of fellow-countrymen. Tobler became a justice of the peace. In addition to these, many Germans from Pennsylvania and Virginia came at an early date, who settled mainly in the mountainous districts, in the upland, as they called it, as far as the mountains moderated the heat of the sun."<sup>7</sup>

Graebner, in his *History of the Lutheran Church in America*, says: "Since 1736 a certain Bartholomaeus Zauberbuehler from Appenzell, Switzerland, had resided in the Carolinas; he had preached in Savannah, New Windsor, Purrysburg, and at other places without, however, obtaining a firm hold anywhere."<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, none of the above historians state the source of their interesting information, though Vass, in another connection, laid Loehner's history under tribute. And Graebner mentions only such towns as are outside of the present boundaries of North Carolina.

<sup>5</sup> Vass, Rev. L. C., *History of the Presbyterian Church in New Bern, North Carolina* (Richmond, Virginia, 1886), p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> The region bounded by 35° 34' and 36° 30', north latitude.

<sup>7</sup> Loehner, Franz, *Geschichte und Zustaende der Deutschen in Amerika* (Cincinnati and Leipzig, 1847), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Graebner, A. L., *Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in Amerika* (St. Louis, 1892), p. 567.

Although Loeher definitely localizes the supposed German colony, it is not improbable that this settlement was actually made in South Carolina. In colonial days North and South Carolina were easily confused, since until 1712 these two provinces formed the single colony of Carolina and the establishment of a line between the two provinces was delayed until 1735. A clear example of such confusion we have in a letter written by Pastor Johann Martin Bolzius of Ebenezer, Georgia. On December 2, 1737, he wrote: "Giesendanner . . . again wrote a letter to me from Orangeburg in North [*sic*] Carolina",<sup>9</sup> a mistake which, in view of the contour of North Carolina, could easily be made by pioneers who thought in terms of latitude and longitude. Moreover, as late as 1757, settlers in the western parts of North Carolina petitioned South Carolina for patents.<sup>10</sup>

Going back even to the seventeenth century, Loeher continues: "Emigration from Pennsylvania to North Carolina was so considerable that in the fall of 1685 it amounted to about 1500 persons". But his statement is ambiguous, for William Penn's letter of 1685 to Thomas Lloyd, the authority cited by Loeher, makes no mention of German emigrants, of whom there were few in Pennsylvania prior to the year 1683. Writing from Worminghurst in England, Penn says:

I am extremely sorry to hear y<sup>t</sup> [that] Pennsylvania is so Litigious and brutish. . . . The report reaches this place with y<sup>t</sup> disgrace, y<sup>t</sup> we have lost, I am told, 15,000 [*sic*] persons this fall, many of y<sup>m</sup> men of great estate y<sup>t</sup> are gone and going to Carolina.<sup>11</sup>

Then there is the statement that, in 1722, Michael Wohlfarth traveled on foot from Germantown, Pennsylvania, to North Carolina for the purpose of con-

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<sup>9</sup> Graebner, A. L., *Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in Amerika* (St. Louis, 1892), p. 565.

<sup>10</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, V. 762.

<sup>11</sup> Cist, Charles, *Cincinnati Miscellany* (Cincinnati, 1845), p. 163.

ducting services.<sup>12</sup> While the Germans at New Bern may have been the recipients of Wohlfarth's ministrations, it should be noted that he traveled past Conrad Beissel's hut on the Muehlbach,<sup>13</sup> near Lancaster, the route to the piedmont of North Carolina. But it is possible that he first preached to the Germans in Pennsylvania and then continued his journey in an easterly direction to the coastal regions of North Carolina.

John Casper Stoever, a German pastor, is "supposed to have gone to North Carolina" about 1728 or 1729, "where even at that early date there were a few Germans".<sup>14</sup> In the absence of further information on this visit, we assume that he, too, served the Palatines at New Bern.

After pointing out that there were settlements of Scotch-Irish in the Shenandoah Valley in 1737, Foote says that some of these settlers may have found their way to the region later embraced by Rowan County.<sup>15</sup> However, if surmises may be indulged in, it is just as probable that Germans came to this State at an even earlier date. On an old French map of 1687, a German settlement is marked at the headwaters of the Rappahannock and on an English map of the same period this location is called *Teutsche Staat*<sup>16</sup> [German State], evidence of the existence of a rather large number of Germans. Some of these may have explored to the southward and discovered the fertile land along the Yadkin River.

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<sup>12</sup> Sachse, J. F., *German Sectarians of Pennsylvania, 1708-1742* (Philadelphia, 1889), p. 80.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>14</sup> Cassell, C. W., Finck, W. J., Henkel, Elon O., *History of the Lutheran Church in Virginia and Eastern Tennessee* (Strasburg, Virginia, 1930), p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> Foote, William Henry, *Sketches of North Carolina* (New York, 1846), p. 357.

<sup>16</sup> Wayland, John Walter, *German Element of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1907), p. 10 n.

Finally, there is Wheeler's curious notion: "Rowan was early settled (about 1720) by Protestants from Moravia, fleeing from the persecutions of Ferdinand the Second".<sup>17</sup> The historical impossibility of this statement has long since been pointed out by Rumple as follows: "Ferdinand II., Emperor of Germany, reigned from 1618 to 1648,<sup>18</sup> more than a hundred years before the time required and the Moravians did not appear in North Carolina until 1753".<sup>19</sup>

Even if a more thorough research should succeed in bringing to light additional contemporary documents pertaining to the first settlements, we know in advance that in no case will they reveal the existence of an appreciable number of Germans prior to 1747. John Lederer, the first German to set foot on the soil of the present Rowan County, in the description of his journey of exploration during 1670 mentions neither Germans nor Scotch-Irish as living in this region. Lawson, who in 1701 followed the same trail into this section, is also silent. In 1746, the commissioners left off running the line between the King's lands and the Granville District about a fifth of a mile east of Cold Water Creek, where, twenty-two years later, Governor Tryon in company with Mr. Phifer found the notches and blazes on four trees standing in a square.<sup>20</sup> These men declared that they were obliged to discontinue their labors because the country was very thinly peopled and no inhabitants west of the Saxapahaw River could supply them with corn for their horses or provisions for themselves.

Owing to the paucity of colonization accounts, it cannot be ascertained whether the Germans or the

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<sup>17</sup> Wheeler, Colonel John H., *Historical Sketches of North Carolina from 1584 to 1851* (New York, MCMXXV, reprint), p. 357.

<sup>18</sup> Ferdinand II. ruled from 1619 to 1637.

<sup>19</sup> Rumple, Jethro, *History of Rowan County, North Carolina* (Salisbury, North Carolina, 1916, reprint), p. 42.

<sup>20</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VII. 825.

Scotch-Irish were the pioneers in this region. However, the presumption has always been in favor of the latter.<sup>21</sup> Foote declares that on the basis of records preserved by a certain Clark family on the Cape Fear River, a family, and probably a company of settlers, migrated to the upland as early as 1746 to join some families who were already at that time living west of the Yadkin River.<sup>22</sup> There is also a tradition among the descendants of one of the German pioneers that a German vanguard of 1747 found the Scotch-Irish from Pennsylvania in possession of land within the limits of the present Rowan County. And since Scheibe's land claim of 1737 in Bladen County cannot be localized, we are compelled to continue regarding the priority of the Scotch or of the Germans as a moot question.

#### THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS

According to a seemingly well-founded tradition, the spot on which the earliest arrivals felled the first trees and hewed the first timber is what, in 1884, was known as the "old Ovenshine place", near the homestead of Henry Propst, about one and one-half miles northeast of Mt. Pleasant in Cabarrus County.<sup>23</sup> A monument, erected on November 29, 1894, on the supposedly exact location of the first German church, bears this inscription: "Sacred to the memory of those members of the Lutheran and German Reformed churches who were buried here prior to 1750". People in the community believe that a number of depressions in the ground, which has long since grown up with timber, mark the graves of a few of the pioneers. In 1850, a few remains of the old log church were still strewn about this plot of ground.

Besides this settlement on Buffalo Creek, another

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<sup>21</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, V. xxix. f.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 1222 ff.

<sup>23</sup> *University Monthly*, IV. (1884), 281.

was formed about the same time along lower Second Creek in Rowan County. Before 1753, a small group of Germans settled along Dutchman's Creek in Davie County, which, until 1836, was embraced in Rowan County. A larger number erected their humble cabins along Abbott's Creek, now in Davidson County. Even as far west as the Catawba River a nucleus of Germans staked out their claims before 1750.<sup>24</sup>

Who the first Germans in this section were, may not now be determined. It is said that Paul Barringer, Dry, and Smith were the earliest pioneers,<sup>25</sup> though it seems that Martin Phifer, Senior, and the Blackwelders must have reached North Carolina about the same time. In fact, Valentine Leonard is believed to have come in 1746.<sup>26</sup> As early as 1750, Henry Weidner obtained a grant along the Catawba. In 1753, Jost Henkel and the Dieters were living on Dutchman's Creek;<sup>27</sup> Jacob Berrier and Philip Sauer were living in this region in the same year.<sup>28</sup> Johannes Agedert's will, dated January 4, 1757, was witnessed by Conrad Michel and Georg Erinner. In 1761, John Beard received a grant of land. In 1771, Christopher Rintelmann and Christopher Lyerly were commissioned by about sixty families to go to Germany in quest of a preacher and a teacher.<sup>29</sup> Pastor Nuessmann and Teacher Arends arrived in 1773. An entry in Organ Church record reads:

In the 1774th year after the birth of Christ, the following members began building the so-called Organ Church, namely: Georg Ludwig Siffert, Wendel Miller, Peter Edelman, Johannes

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<sup>24</sup> *Harris Deed Book*, IV. (Mecklenburg County), 10 f.

<sup>25</sup> *University Monthly*, IV. (1884), 280n.

<sup>26</sup> Clapp, J. C., editor, *Historic Sketch of the Reformed Church in North Carolina* (Philadelphia), p. 158.

<sup>27</sup> Graebner, A. L., "Aus Paul Henkels Leben". *Lehre und Wehre* (St. Louis), XLIII. (April, 1897), p. 107.

<sup>28</sup> Clapp, *Historic Sketch of the Reformed Church in North Carolina*, pp. 157, 160.

<sup>29</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VIII. 630 ff.



Steigerwalt, Philip Grass, Peter Steigerwalt, Michael Guthmann, Christoph Bless, Leonhard Siffert, Jacob Klein, Anton Jruhn (?), Georg Heinrich Berger, Christoph Guthmann, Johannes Rintelmann, Johannes Ekel, Bastian Lenz, Jacob Benz, Georg Eckel, Franz Oberkirsch, Johannes Jose, Heinrich Wenzel.

#### ORIGINS OF THE GERMANS

Usually the names of streams and villages in the territory settled by the Germans are indicative of the places of origin of the people. Thus in south-east Missouri we find such villages as Frohna, Altenburg, and Wittenberg, names of towns in the native province of the Germans. But this method of determining the ancestral homes of the Germans in Rowan and Cabarrus counties cannot be employed, since the names of such places as Phifer's Hill, Savits, Mocksville, and others are those of influential families who resided in the district.

The familiar German name which could serve as a possible indicator of the origin of the Germans is misleading. This is Mecklenburg County, which was formed in 1762 and of which Cabarrus was a part until 1792. Especially people outside of this State have been misled into believing that the adoption of this name signifies that a large portion of the Germans in this county were people from northern Germany, who sought to perpetuate the memories of their ancestral province. But a careful search of available records does not reveal a single family as having emigrated from the German province of Mecklenburg. The name was chosen by the Scotch-Irish in honor of Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who in 1761 had become the consort of George III. of England, the then ruler of the province of North Carolina.<sup>30</sup>

Practically the only reliable sources of information

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<sup>30</sup> Martin, Francois-Xavier, *History of North Carolina* (New Orleans, 1829), II. p. 172.

as to the native provinces of the inhabitants are occasional references in early wills and burial notices preserved in church records. Thus, in 1815, one Felhauer of Rowan County in his will mentions a "legacy left me in Urop by my father, John Michael Felhauer, in the Electirate of Palinatinate in the city of Eppingen". Christoph Gutmann emigrated from Alosophe in the Palatinate;<sup>31</sup> Johann Christian Bernhard, St. Johannes, Palatinate; Jacob Koch, Grolsheim, Lower Palatinate.<sup>32</sup> Valentine Leonhard was born at Katzenbach, Palatinate.<sup>33</sup>

From a German geography, written originally for prospective merchants in North Carolina, in 1788, we translate freely this description of the Palatinate, one of the fairer portions of Germany:

Area 2,400 square miles.<sup>34</sup> Inhabitants: 300,000. The chief products of this very fertile, pleasant, and in parts mountainous province are cereals, fruit, especially chestnuts and nuts, the finest kinds of wines, tobacco, silk, madder, rhubarb, hemp, flax, timber, sheep, horses, quicksilver, gold from the sands of the Rhine, copper, lead, salt, coal, granite, various kinds of marble. There are also several institutions of higher learning and an observatory with excellent instruments. At Eberbach there are many tanneries. The number of factories is not considerable."<sup>35</sup>

So many people emigrated from this section of Germany, for reasons to be discussed shortly, that in America a Palatine not only was regarded as a kind of article of export, but the term "Palatine" became synonymous with the term "German" and people actually spoke of Palatines from Holstein. Thus, too, not a few regard every eighteenth century German of Rowan

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<sup>31</sup> *St. John's Church Record*, I.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Clapp, *Historic Sketch*, etc., p. 158.

<sup>34</sup> The original reads: 150 *Qu.M.* [*Quadrat Meilen*]. But one German mile is equal to four English miles, long measure.

<sup>35</sup> Bruns, P. J., *Geographisches Handbuch in Hinsicht auf Industrie und Handlung* (Leipzig, 1788), p. 120 f. This description applies to the Electoral Palatinate.

and Cabarrus counties as a Palatine. But the records prove that a considerable number came from other portions of Germany besides the Palatinate. For example, the Barringers (Behringer) hailed from Schweigern in Württemberg and Catherine Schuffert, according to her burial record, was born in the German part of Lorraine.<sup>36</sup> In the upper Rhine region, especially around the Black Forest such North Carolina names may still be found as Schwartzwaelder, Propst, Seits, Bosheimers, and others.<sup>37</sup>

But it should be borne in mind that both Württemberg and Lorraine were so similar to the Palatinate, that a traveler hardly knew where one ended and the other began. Concerning Württemberg, we are told in the geography already quoted:

Area: 3,150 square miles.<sup>38</sup> Inhabitants: 560,000. The province is almost enclosed by a chain of mountains, among which the Black Forest [Schwarzwald] to the west is the most remarkable because of its height and the dense forests. The country is counted among the most fertile and beautiful in Germany. With the exception of salt, all products necessary to sustain human life are grown in abundance and in perfection. Of the cereals many are exported to Switzerland. Flax and hemp are converted into yarn and linen and traded in Switzerland, Alsace, and in the lower Rhine country. Fruit is also so abundant that cider is made. Wines are exported. Pine and oak lumber are exported to Holland, though occasionally there is a shortage of lumber. A considerable number of cattle are raised. The exportation of raw wool and the importation of foreign iron ore are prohibited. There are several kinds of good clay.<sup>39</sup>

Besides the above provinces, other portions of Germany were represented in the two counties. Margaret Stauch was born in Hamburg; George Friesland emigrated from Hanover. Reverend Storch was born in Helmstedt in the Duchy of Brunswick; Pastor Nuess-

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<sup>36</sup> *St. John's Church Record, Buffalo Creek*. I. (Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina).

<sup>37</sup> *University Monthly* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina), IV. (1884), 283.

<sup>38</sup> The original has 200 *Qu.M.* [*Quadrat Meilen*].

<sup>39</sup> *Bruns, op. cit.*, p. 117 f.

mann registered in Goettingen, Germany, as being from Maastricht, Holland.<sup>40</sup> According to a tradition, Henry Weidner was a Saxon from Coburg.<sup>41</sup>

Like the Palatine emigrants to New Bern, these Germans did not come directly from Europe to North Carolina. In colonial times, as now, few ocean liners anchored along the shores of this State. Excepting the Cape Fear, the harbors could not accommodate ships of more than seventy or eighty tons.<sup>42</sup> While there was proportionately little direct immigration from European countries into the eastern parts of North Carolina, there was practically none into the western region. Even pastors, who left Germany with the express purpose of living and serving in the back country, landed at some port outside of the State and then traveled overland to their congregations. Reverend Nuessmann and Teacher Arends sailed to Charleston, South Carolina; Reverend Storch first landed in Baltimore and there boarded a coastwise vessel bound for Charleston.

While a few immigrants, besides pastors and teachers, left Europe with the intention of settling in North Carolina, where relatives and friends had obtained patents, the dominating majority spent a few years in Pennsylvania before trekking southward. In wills, deeds, church records, and on tombstones, we occasionally find such additions to the names as: "Rudisail in the County of York"<sup>43</sup>, Pennsylvania. Catherine Fried *née* Syfert was from Tulpehocken County, Pennsylvania.<sup>44</sup> Jacob Boger and his wife *née* Loeffler were

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<sup>40</sup> Letter to the author from R. Firk, University Library, Goettingen, March 8, 1930.

<sup>41</sup> Murphy, J. L., *Henry Weidner, His Life and Character* (Hickory, North Carolina, 1895), p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> Bruns, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>43</sup> *Harris Deed Book* (Mecklenburg County, North Carolina), IV. 67.

<sup>44</sup> *St. John's Church Record*, I.

born in Maxataney Township, Pennsylvania.<sup>45</sup> That the Coons (Kuhn) and Trexlers emigrated from Pennsylvania is evidenced by the fact that, in 1748, we find a Doctor Adam Kuhn in Lancaster and a Trexler's Church in New Hanover.<sup>46</sup> Especially from Lehigh, Northampton, Berk, and Lancaster counties the early Germans came to this State. Familiar German names in Rowan and Cabarrus counties are equally familiar in these counties of Pennsylvania, such as Edelman, Bieber, Berger, Barringer, Heilig, Misenheimer, Krause, Kohlman, Kruse, Miller, Melchor, Rothrock, Seitz, Paulus, Klein, Bastian, and Bost.<sup>47</sup>

Some moved from Pennsylvania to the Shenandoah Valley and in a few years their sons pushed on to North Carolina, though during the Indian troubles numerous families from Rowan County fled to Virginia. Of the North Carolina names found also in Virginia during the eighteenth century, we list the following: Lawrence Snapp of Strasburg; Zimmermann in Madison County, 1717; Samuel Obenschein, New River, Montgomery County, 1749; David Dieterich, Jacob Braun, Johannes Lemly, Johannes Lentz, and Michael Glueck at Winchester, 1764; John Ritenour at Woodstock, Powell's Fort; Jacob Beard at Mt. Tabor near Staunton; Andres Braun and Christopher Spracher near Wythe Courthouse, 1776; Jacob and Peter Zink, Stony Creek in Shenandoah County, 1782.<sup>48</sup>

In a slight degree the German population was also augmented during the Revolutionary War by Hessian mercenaries, who became deserters from the English

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<sup>45</sup> Clapp, *Historic Sketch of the Reformed Church*, p. 38.

<sup>46</sup> *Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1748-1821* (Philadelphia, 1898), p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Bernheim, G. D., "Address", Cox, George H., *History of Organ Church* (Newberry, South Carolina, 1894), p. 23.

<sup>48</sup> Cassell, Finck, and Henkel, *History of the Lutheran Church in Virginia and Eastern Tennessee*, pp. 4, 2, 25, 8, 21, 23, 48, 10.

armies after the battle of Camden. They hired themselves out as farm laborers, eventually married their masters' daughters, and were thus completely absorbed. To day the name of only one is known, that of John Reed, who lived in Cabarrus County in 1791.

#### THE CAUSES OF THE EMIGRATION

Conditions which moved so many thousands of German Protestants to leave the Palatinate are briefly summed up by Bruns as follows:

The reasons for the poor economic situation are chiefly to be sought in the ravages made by the French during the former century, in the many harmful monopolies, and in the oppression of the Protestants, who constitute a considerable portion of the inhabitants, by a Catholic and very bigoted ruler.<sup>49</sup>

Thus the two factors, which in all ages have exerted the most profound influence on the lives of men and in terms of which almost all history may be interpreted, namely, religious and economic conditions, motivated the emigration. Here, as elsewhere, both factors were most closely allied, the latter being the result of the former. However, it must not be supposed that these emigrants experienced the persecutions of the Roman Catholics and the destruction of property by the French armies in the same degree as the Palatine settlers at New Bern. The bulk of evidence seems to show that the pioneers we are dealing with were all comparatively younger men, who were born after the most troublous times in the Palatinate. Johann Christian Bernhard was born in 1719; Jacob Koch, 1722;<sup>50</sup> Valentine Leonhard, 1718.<sup>51</sup> Felhauer's will is dated 1815. The census of 1790 shows that in the Salisbury district the number of males under sixteen exceeded

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<sup>49</sup> Bruns, *op. cit.*, 120 f.

<sup>50</sup> *St. John's Record*, I.

<sup>51</sup> Clapp, *Historic Sketch, etc.*, 158.

those above sixteen by nearly one seventh, while in the Edenton district the difference was less than one twenty-seventh. Williamson ascribes this difference in part to the "greater salubrity of the climate" and in part to the fact that the natives had not yet "attained the length of years that corresponds with the climate." When this time comes, "a greater proportion of the inhabitants above sixteen years will doubtless be found".<sup>52</sup> Hence, the grievance of our pioneers was the discrimination to which they were subjected as Protestants, which resulted in the loss of opportunities for economic advancement.

In Württemberg, while not a part of the Palatinate, economic conditions were only slightly better. A direct descendant of the early pioneers from this province declared that his ancestors had left home and country because they were not allowed to buy or hold real estate and were denied certain political rights.<sup>53</sup>

America was regarded as the land of promise. William Penn had traveled through many parts of Germany offering an asylum in Pennsylvania to the oppressed and downtrodden. News of this haven may have penetrated the Rhine region. Then, Josua Kocherthal, a pastor, eloquently wrote of the opportunities offered especially by South Carolina. And although the Palatine emigrants to New Bern met with bitter disappointments, yet it is possible that letters from Pennsylvania to Germany negated all adverse reports on the condition of the Germans in the New World. For in Pennsylvania the Germans after the first years of hard times rapidly became prosperous. Regarding Lancaster and other settlements, we are

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<sup>52</sup> Williamson, Hugh, *History of North Carolina* (Philadelphia, 1812), II. 210 f.

<sup>53</sup> Barringer, Paul B., "The Influence of Peculiar Conditions in the Early History of North Carolina." *Proceedings of the 18th Annual Session of the State Literary and Historical Association of North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1908), 14.

told that the industry of the Germans and the fertility of the soil had made Lancaster the largest inland city.<sup>54</sup> Long before this statement was circulated, there was much favorable comment by leading men on German prosperity in Pennsylvania.

Then the tide of immigration set in. About 1750 the number of Germans in Pennsylvania reached seventy or eighty thousand, almost one-half of the entire population. In the single year of 1749, the Swedish traveler Kalm estimated that 12,000 Germans had entered into the State. People began to fear that Pennsylvania may become German in law and language or that the Germans might form an alliance with the French and drive out the English.<sup>55</sup> But the only result of the influx was an agreeable one to property owners. Tillable soil greatly increased in value, compelling newcomers to look elsewhere for cheaper land.

About this time favorable reports on the fertility and cheapness of the land in the Granville District reached Pennsylvania,<sup>56</sup> and people began flocking southward.<sup>57</sup> But, as Mühlenberg points out, since the coastal region in North Carolina was already thickly settled, the high Germans were obliged to remove many hundreds of miles inland,<sup>58</sup> where fortunately the soil was superior to that of the coastal region. And, to quote a son of an early German settler, as the people penetrated the western section and saw the "towering forests", the "luxurious range of grass, cane and pea vine abounding everywhere", the fame spread to the North and "emigrants from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia poured thither their population."<sup>59</sup> The

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<sup>54</sup> Bruns, *op. cit.*, 11 f.

<sup>55</sup> Graebner, *Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche*, 473.

<sup>56</sup> Williamson, *History of North Carolina*, II. 71.

<sup>57</sup> *Colonial Records*, V. 472.

<sup>58</sup> *Nachrichten von den vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Gemeinen in Nord-Amerika absonderlich in Pennsylvanien* (Halle, 1787), I. 684.

<sup>59</sup> *Western Carolinian* (Salisbury, North Carolina), July 24, 1821.



climate was found to be less rigorous than in the North. "In North Carolina neither the cold of winter nor the heat of summer are in the back country at all disagreeable; the land continues to be plenty and cheap; grain is raised with so much ease, and the trouble of providing for cattle in winter so trifling, that a man supports his family with half the labor that is required in the cold climate".<sup>60</sup> The Germans saw that North Carolina is a "kind of middle ground where the staples of the North and the South meet together in the same fields and flourish in social proximity".<sup>61</sup> In brief, as Hunter summarizes, "The fertility of the soil, the healthfulness of the climate, the abundance of cheap and unappropriated lands were powerful inducements in drawing a large influx of emigrants".<sup>62</sup>

#### THE JOURNEY TO NORTH CAROLINA

While we do not have a journal written by a German settler in North Carolina depicting the voyage across the ocean and the trip overland, yet we do have a sufficient number of scattered references which permit us to form an idea of the many and fatal hardships encountered in the small sailboats of the eighteenth century. In one of his letters Pastor Storch describes his journey as having been exceedingly short and pleasant; yet it required his boat from May second, when it put to sea at the mouth of the Weser River, to June twenty-seventh to reach port in Baltimore.<sup>63</sup> In his journal Storch wrote: "Trusting in God I put to sea on May 4 (*sic*), 1788, and arrived safe in America in

<sup>60</sup> Morse, Jedidiah, *American Universal Geography* (Boston, MDCCXCIII), 580. This is a slight exaggeration.

<sup>61</sup> *Western Carolinian*, July 24, 1821.

<sup>62</sup> Hunter, C. L., *Sketches of Western North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1877), 20.

<sup>63</sup> *Lehrbuecher fuer die Jugend in Nordcarolina entworfen von einer Gesellschaft Helmstaedischer Professoren*. Dritte Lieferung (Leipzig, 1788), 8.

Baltimore on the twenty-seventh of June of the same year. The journey lasted seven weeks and five days''. Pastor Roschen, who sailed from Bremen directly to Charleston, South Carolina, was on the water for twelve weeks.<sup>64</sup> Although he encountered two rather violent storms, was seasick often and long, suffered from the lack of fresh water, and other necessary refreshments, he, too, regarded his voyage as pleasant.<sup>65</sup> In 1738 Samuel Suther, one of the first resident pastors in our region, put to sea in company with his father and about twelve other members of the family. He was on the ocean for four weary months and weathered no fewer than thirteen storms. Six days before landing, water and provisions were exhausted. Then another storm arose and after it had subsided it was found that 220 had perished. Samuel was the only member of the family to survive and he was brought to the shores of Pennsylvania almost lifeless.<sup>66</sup> Paul Barringer, it is said, made provisions for his father, mother, and sister to follow him to North Carolina, but both parents were buried at sea. Children under seven years hardly ever survived the voyage. In 1775 a ship reached port in Philadelphia with fifty passengers, although originally four hundred had left the shore of Europe.<sup>67</sup> In view of these accounts, it is no wonder that Dr. Johnson declared, "He that can go to jail, will not cross the sea''.

Not only did the emigrants have the violent elements to contend with, but also unscrupulous men, especially the so-called *Neulaender* or men from the new country.

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<sup>64</sup> *Lehrbuecher fuer die Jugend in Nordcarolina entworfen von einer Gesellschaft Helmstaedtischer Professoren*. Dritte Lieferung (Leipzig, 1788), 8 f.

<sup>65</sup> Boyd, William K., ed., Krummel, Charles A., tr., "North Carolina Church Reports". *North Carolina Historical Review* (Raleigh), VII. No. 2 (April, 1930), 241.

<sup>66</sup> Harbaugh, A. M., Rev. H., *Fathers of the German Reformed Church in Europe and America* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1857), II. 156 ff.

<sup>67</sup> Cronau, Rudolf, *Drei Jahrhunderte Deutschen Lebens in Amerika* (Berlin, 1909), 118 f.

From merchants at European ports and from captains of ships, they received a commission on each German they persuaded to embark for America. The activities of the *Neulaender* are described by Mühlenberg, a contemporary, as follows:

In order to enlist as many as possible, they employ all sorts of artifices. They are in the habit, as long as the performance of the comedy requires it, of making a big show in dress, of repeatedly looking at their watches, and in every way they represent themselves as rich people, in order to make the people all the more anxious to emigrate to such a happy and rich country. They make such representations and give such descriptions of America, that one must believe this country contains only Elysian fields. . . . He that emigrates as a servant becomes a master; a maid becomes a lady; a farmer, a nobleman; a citizen and mechanic, a baron. The government is elected by the people and at their pleasure it is again removed. . . (They continue) who would not like to journey to the New World, especially, since it is said, the Old World is overpopulated and particularly the poor are regarded as very unworthy, and taxes and contributions in forced labor are intolerable. Families now break up, convert their small possessions into money, pay their debts, and the balance they entrust to the care of the *Neulaender* and finally begin their journey. The trip on the Rhine is already charged to their account. From Holland they cannot set sail at the same time and often obtain an advance of funds from the merchants. To this is added the heavy charges for passage across the ocean, as well as a capitation tax. Before embarking they must sign an accord or obligation, drawn up in the English language and the *Messieurs Neulaender* persuade the people to believe that as impartial friends in connection with the accord, they are on the alert, that their fellow-countrymen may suffer no injustice. . . . [The ship arrives in Philadelphia] Local merchants receive the list of passengers and the agreement, which the emigrants had signed in Holland, besides the remaining accounts for the journey on the Rhine and the advances of the *Neulaender* for refreshments. . . . Notices are then inserted into the newspapers that so and so many Germans are to be sold for their passage. . . . The ship is the market. The buyers make their selections, reach an agreement with them as to years and days of service, bring them to the merchants, pay the freight and other debts, and have the proper authorities make an indenture for a definite term of service. The young and single persons of both sexes are the first to leave. . . . Old married people, widows, and the frail no one wants to buy. . . . But if they have healthy children, the passage of the old people is added to that of the children . . . [although] they seldom again see their aged parents. . . . Thus the aged

leave the ship free, are poor, naked, and weak, look as if they had come out of the grave, beg at the doors of German inhabitants, since the English, fearing contagion, usually close their doors to them. This being the case, one's heart bleeds when one sees and hears how the poor children of men . . . in part whine, scream, lament, and beat their breasts because of the wretchedness and dispersion which they had not thought of before; others again adjure and call on all the elements and sacraments, indeed, even on all the thunder storms and terrible inhabitants of hell to crush and torture the *Neulaender* and the Dutch merchants who have deceived them. . . . The *Neulaender* only laugh and give no other comfort than the Pharisees bestowed on Judas Iscariot, Matthew 27, 5: "What is that to us? See thou to that." Even the children, when they are held to hard service and realize that they must for the sake of their parents remain longer in servitude, give room to hatred and bitterness against their parents.<sup>68</sup>

Such was often the lot of the redemptioners upon their arrival in Pennsylvania.

How many of the Germans of North Carolina were redemptioners, cannot be determined. There is a tradition that Paul Barringer, Dry, and Smith entered this country as such. It is certain that the first named, who sailed from Rotterdam in the *Phoenix* and landed in Philadelphia on September 30, 1743, was bound out for his passage. His original term of service was three years, but by dint of faithful work, he canceled the debt in a single year.<sup>69</sup> In the translation of a contract, signed by Johann Heinrich Groessel on January 10, 1793, who taught a German school in the neighborhood of historic Lowerstone Church in Rowan County, we find the following: "Whereas Mr. Conrath Frack and Mr. Christian Schumann stood good for me for 35 pounds *vice* 70 Thalers, therefore I have promised them that I will teach school about here, in this vicinity, until I have paid back said money." From this statement the conclusion may be drawn that Groessel was a redemptioner. Both pastors and teachers were occa-

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<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Graebner, *Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in Amerika*, 474 ff.

<sup>69</sup> *University Monthly*, IV. (1884), 280.

sionally secured in this way. Thus Reverend Kurz of Philadelphia in 1773 declared: "If I at some time should have a reserve of twenty pounds, I would buy the first German student who lands on our coast, owing his passage money, and begin a small Latin school in my upper room".<sup>70</sup>

Only a fragmentary record of the overland journey to North Carolina is in existence. Storch says in his journal: "After a stay of six weeks [in Baltimore], I traveled by water to Charleston in six days. In Charleston I sojourned fourteen days and rode on a horse, which I purchased there for eleven pounds Sterling, to Pastor Nuessmann; a distance, as I traveled, of 300 English miles. In the beginning of the month of September, 1788, I came to Mr. Nuessmann".

As to the journey from Pennsylvania, this was undoubtedly much like that of the Moravian Germans. Usually in the fall of the year, after the harvest had been gathered, the head of the house loaded his primitive household effects, including his crude farm implements and a supply of precious seeds for the next harvest in distant Carolina, on a large wagon and then the journey began. A few head of cattle were driven along the way and, in case of a large family, some rode on horseback and others may even have followed the wagon on foot, in the early days, with guns on their shoulders.

In course of time a wagon road was blazed to North Carolina, although a map of this State, printed in 1751, and preserved in the Library of Congress, lists neither a road nor a trail to the western regions. A map of 1763 depicts an Indian trail as passing through Cosart, west of Salisbury, to Wateree in South Carolina. However, in 1753, the route from Pennsylvania to the Moravian settlement was popularly known in North Carolina as the "Upper Pennsylvania Road". And in

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<sup>70</sup> Graebner, *Geschichte*, etc., 481.

1775, we find this route marked on a map as the "Great Road from the Yadkin River through Virginia to Philadelphia, distant 435 miles". This wagon road passed through the following places: Lancaster, York, William's Ferry on the "Patowmack" River, "Frederick Town" or "Winchester", to the "Fluvania" River in Virginia, through a gap in the Blue Ridge on the Staunton River, to the Dan River, to Unitas or the Moravian settlement, to the Yadkin River, where it stopped just above the mouth of Linville Creek, about ten miles above Reedy Creek.<sup>71</sup> One has observed that this is the road General Lee traveled when he marched into Pennsylvania on that memorable Gettysburg campaign at the head of his columns, composed, in part, of descendants of the pioneer Germans, who a century before had come to North Carolina by that very route.<sup>72</sup>

#### STATISTICS REGARDING THE GERMANS

The question as to the number of Germans, who came to Rowan and Cabarrus counties in the eighteenth century, is one of considerable interest, but, in the absence of definite information prior to the census of 1790, no exact answer can be given. However, existing evidence does show that at all times during the century the Germans were in the minority. Names of creeks and streams, mentioned in old deeds, are almost invariably of English or Scotch-Irish origin, as for example Second Creek, Fourth Creek, Muddy Creek, Rocky River, Abbott's Creek. Swearing Creek, which was named for a German family, constitutes almost the only exception. In other regions, in which the Germans are in almost exclusive or prior possession of the land, a distinctly German nomenclature for streams and villages is found. Nor are the names Dutchman's Creek

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<sup>71</sup> This information was gleaned from the maps by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson.

<sup>72</sup> *Colonial Records*, IV. xxi.

or Dutch Buffalo Creek, which have endured to this day, the choice of the Germans. In the early days they never referred to themselves as "the Dutch", but correctly termed themselves "Germans". Thus the names of localities prove nothing as to the size of the German population, though they may argue priority of other race elements.

In 1747 there were not more than one hundred fighting men of all race elements in the entire region west of Hillsboro.<sup>73</sup> That Matthew Rowan did not underestimate the population is evident from Reverend Nuessmann's statement that about 1747 there were few or no inhabitants, except the Indians, in the entire district around Salisbury.<sup>74</sup> However, about this time twenty-two German and Swiss families settled on the lands owned by Governor Dobbs, amounting possibly to four score souls. Immigration now increased to such an extent that on February 15, 1751, Governor Johnston could say people were flocking in daily and that many thousands had settled in the west almost as far as the mountains.<sup>75</sup> Two years later, June 28, 1753, Matthew Rowan wrote that there were at least three thousand fighting men in what was then Anson, Orange, and Rowan counties, most of whom were Irish Protestants and Germans.<sup>76</sup> Other contemporary records speak of hundreds of wagons as coming into the back country.<sup>77</sup> Additional evidence of the greatly increased number is also found in this fact that within a very short time two new counties had to be created in the western section: Anson in 1749 and Rowan in 1753.

While there were a goodly number of Germans among these immigrants, as Matthew Rowan also declares, yet, we believe, their number has been some-

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<sup>73</sup> *Colonial Records*, V. 24.

<sup>74</sup> *Lehrbuecher, Dritte Lieferung*, 17.

<sup>75</sup> *Colonial Records*, IV. xxi.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 24.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 149.

what exaggerated. It is significant that Spangenberg, who traveled through the province along the main highway, the Trading Path, nowhere specifically mentions seeing any of the Germans, though he does say that Germans were then coming into the back country. Writing from his camp on the Catawba, November 12, 1752, he recorded that the next settlement was that of one Jonathan Weiss, more familiarly known as Jonathan Perrot, hunter,<sup>78</sup> who, as his original name indicates, was a German. But when Spangenberg reached the Mulberry Fields in December, he says that excepting the cabin of a Welshman, who had been there less than a year, the nearest house was sixty miles away.<sup>79</sup> This statement would imply not only that there were few, if any, Germans in that section, but also that there were few inhabitants in the entire region north of the present city of Salisbury, the county seat of Rowan County. Accordingly, by 1752, the Germans had not spread over a large territory, but perhaps were all congregated along Buffalo Creek. In 1754 Rowan County, which then extended almost to the present site of Greensboro, had a white population of 1116 taxables, amounting to about 4,500 souls.<sup>80</sup> However, the German settlement along Buffalo Creek had as yet not been sufficiently augmented by new arrivals to make it a clearly defined German colony. In an application for a land grant by Paul Barriner, which was not executed, the name of the creek in 1753 is given without the descriptive adjective "Dutch". Then, on July 12, 1756, Governor Dobbs made his much discredited, yet, we believe, fairly accurate, statement that there were not one hundred families of Germans in the entire province.<sup>81</sup> On Dobbs's tract number five, on which the early Germans had settled, there were in 1757 only about

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<sup>78</sup> *Colonial Records*, V. 6.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 f.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 152. II. 889.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 601.



700 souls,<sup>82</sup> of whom in 1747, seventy-five families with numerous children were Scotch-Irish.<sup>83</sup>

Owing to the Indian wars, a total stop was put to immigration about this time. In fact, during the troublous days of the war some Germans emigrated from North Carolina to Virginia. In 1761 one said: "Within the last ten years the inhabitants increased by birth, not by influx".<sup>84</sup> In the mean time the German settlement on Buffalo Creek had begun to attract attention, as will be noted from the following remark in a will: "I, Bastian Bost of the Settlement on Dutch Buffelow Creek, in the county of Anson".<sup>85</sup> And ever after this stream was known by that name to distinguish it from Irish Buffalo Creek. Thus in 1762 Christian Ovenshine's land is described as being on the "ridge between Dutch Buffalo and Little Cold Water".<sup>86</sup> Paul Barrenger's land grant of February 15, 1764, is localized as on "Big Dutch Buffelow Creek", indicating that the German settlement was spreading out over the region. In 1765 George Barringer obtained a grant on Dutch Buffalo Creek.

By this time the immigration of all race elements reached new peaks. A captain of militia wrote in 1764: "I very much want some commitions for part of the Redgment of Macklenburg County as the people settle fast on our frontier of late".<sup>87</sup> Within a few months in 1766, more than a thousand wagons passed through Salisbury in Rowan County. The writer believes that during the period from the close of the French and Indian War, 1763, to about the opening of the Revolutionary War, 1776, the majority of Germans emigrated from Pennsylvania to North Carolina. While the record of Pilgrim Reformed Church, in what was

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<sup>82</sup> *Colonial Records*, V. 742.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, V. 355 ff.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, VI. 614.

<sup>85</sup> *Mecklenburg County Wills*.

<sup>86</sup> *Harris Book I*. 29. Mecklenburg County Courthouse.

<sup>87</sup> *Colonial Records*, VI. 1025.

then Rowan County, contains 179 baptismal entries from about 1757 to 1798, only thirty-three were recorded prior to 1772,<sup>88</sup> a fact that may in part be ascribed to the absence of a stated preacher and in part also to the small proportion of Germans in the county.

In 1771, Rector Drage of St. Luke's parish, Salisbury, wrote that in Rowan, Orange, Mecklenburg, and Tryon counties there "are already settled near 3,000 German Protestant families". His statistics must be regarded as a gross, but pious exaggeration. The estimate that in 1785, 15,000 Pennsylvania-Germans<sup>89</sup> resided in North Carolina is also too high. Drage's further observations are interesting: "Being very fruitful in that healthy climate, [the Germans] are besides vastly increasing from Pennsylvania and other provinces of America".<sup>90</sup> Now, since their numbers had increased, the Germans made preparations to obtain both a pastor and a teacher, especially for the larger settlements along Second and Buffalo creeks. But even then the Germans did not constitute one-half of the total population of Rowan and Mecklenburg counties. In 1786 Reverend Nuessmann spoke of thousands of German families, but the connection shows that he was referring to the whole of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.<sup>91</sup> One who carefully noted the size of the different race elements, because he was writing a geography, said: "There are interspersed some settlements of Germans" in the western parts where the Presbyterian Church was strong.<sup>92</sup>

We now approach the official census of 1790, the first reliable source of information on the size of the German element. According to Doctor Faust there were in

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<sup>88</sup> Clapp, *Historic Sketch of the Reformed Church*, 160 f.

<sup>89</sup> *Colonial Records*, VIII. 728.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 630.

<sup>91</sup> Boyd and Krummel in the *North Carolina Historical Review*, VII. 145.

<sup>92</sup> Morse, *Universal Geography*, 578 f.

Mecklenburg County, of which Cabarrus was a part until 1792, a total of 11,395 inhabitants, of whom he regarded 2,500 as Germans; in Rowan County he found 15,828 souls, among whom he counted 3,000 Germans.<sup>93</sup> The writer has also carefully examined these census lists and after including every family, whose nationality appeared doubtful and also Anglicized names which could hardly be recognized as such without an examination of the original wills, subjoins the following table:

County	Heads of families	Free white males of sixteen years and upwards, including heads of families	Free white males under sixteen	Free white females, including heads of families	Totals
Mecklenburg	292	374	443	850	1667
Rowan	628	886	1006	1794	3686
Totals	920	1260	1449	2644	5353

The increase in the German element after 1790 was mainly by births as there is practically no evidence of a subsequent immigration after 1800. In fact, by the turn of the century these Germans were supplying neighboring States with immigrants. The names appearing in the early minutes of the North Carolina Synod, for example, were all well known in the section for a generation. Moreover, in a total population of 27,305 in Rowan County in 1820, only seventeen persons are listed as "not naturalized foreigners".<sup>94</sup> In 1830 there were no unnaturalized foreigners in either Rowan or Cabarrus counties. The census of 1850 lists forty-six as foreign born in Rowan in a total population of 9,900 and thirty as foreign born in Cabarrus in a total population of 6,942 white people. Since such as

<sup>93</sup> Faust, Albert Bernhardt, *The German Element in the United States* (Boston, 1909), II. 15.

<sup>94</sup> *Western Carolinian*, May 15, 1821.

were natives of England, Scotland, Ireland, and other countries are included in the list of foreign born, the percentage of Germans from the Fatherland must have been negligibly small.

As to the proportion of Germans among the race elements in Rowan and Mecklenburg counties, percentages can be given only for 1790, since no other census lists have been released for publication. After deducting 1602 slaves and 70 free Negroes from the total number of inhabitants in Mecklenburg, and 1742 slaves and 97 free Negroes from the census returns for Rowan, the two counties in 1790 had a net total of 9,722 and 13,989, respectively, of free white persons. Thus in Mecklenburg County, 17.1 per cent of the people were Germans and in Rowan County, 26.4 per cent. Calculating on the basis of 23,711 free white inhabitants in the two counties, including the 5353 Germans, 22.5 per cent were people of German origin.

In 1792 the "Dutch side" of Mecklenburg was set off as Cabarrus County. Since in 1795 the new county had 568 free polls<sup>95</sup>, the dominating majority of the inhabitants must have been German. Thus at the close of the eighteenth century, Cabarrus was the "most German" county in North Carolina. And in the region of our particular interest, fully 40 per cent of the inhabitants at the close of the eighteenth century were persons of German descent.

These Pennsylvania-Germans, whose settlements in Rowan and Cabarrus counties we have traced, were destined to usher in a new era in farming in the State of their adoption by introducing meadows, practising soil conservation, and by founding both the Rowan Agricultural Society, the first in the piedmont of North Carolina, and the Board of Agriculture of North Carolina.

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<sup>95</sup> *Cabarrus County Court Minutes*, July 20, 1796.