

# The 1709 Palatine Migration and the Formation of German Immigrant Identity in London and New York

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In recent years historians have begun to examine closely the emergence of distinct ethnic identities among the various peoples of British North America. Such identities, they note, are not inherent to groups of people but instead are constructed by them, or sometimes for them, usually in ways that define them in contrast to some other group of people. Immigrant identity in particular is usually defined in contrast to the more powerful host society the immigrant enters. It is not surprising then that historians who have sought to delineate the characteristics that defined German ethnic identity in colonial America have most often used British-American society as their foil.<sup>1</sup> But by focusing on elements common to all the German immigrants, the studies have often overlooked the differences that divided immigrants who came not from a central German state but from dozens of small principalities, each with different dialects, customs, religions, and political structures.

Such differences ensured that the process by which German-speaking immigrants developed a sense of group identity did not just pit German-speakers against a British other. German immigrants were also defined against many *German* others. Although some historians argue that most German-speaking immigrants came from territories with histories of frequent, massive in-migrations that consequently left the inhabitants with very weak territorial affinities, the history of the Balkans demonstrates that people of diverse backgrounds jumbled together for hundreds of years can still maintain a strong sense of difference and cling to identities that remain immune to changes in government, shifts in national boundaries, and the influx of strangers. When Hessians, Palatines, and Badenians moved to colonial America, nothing guaranteed that they would eventually share a common identity in the New World.

The process of making Germans out of the diverse people of the eighteenth-century Holy Roman Empire is illustrated by the so-called Palatine migration of 1709, when perhaps as many as 30,000 German-speaking migrants left their homes hoping for a better life in America. Out of this mass migration slightly over 3,000 people eventually reached America in 1710. Though the percentage crossing the Atlantic was small, the 3,000 settlers represented the first substantial migration of German-speakers to colonial America.<sup>2</sup> As such they became the first large group of immigrants to become "German" in America, taking on a common identity earlier and in a far different manner than those who remained behind in their homes along the Rhine.<sup>3</sup>

Both the War of the Spanish Succession, which saw French armies overrunning much of the German southwest, and the harsh winter of 1708-1709, which destroyed crops and brought famine to the region, helped set the stage for the 1709 migration. But as a British parliamentary investigation later revealed, the primary impetus for the migration was a sensational book filled with descriptions of the riches and ease of life in Britain's Carolina colony.<sup>4</sup> The Golden Book, as the emigrants referred to it, was almost certainly a new edition of Joshua Kocherthal's *Ausführlich und umständliche Bericht von der berühmten Landschaft Carolina* (*Complete and detailed report of the famed district of Carolina*). Kocherthal had written the book in 1707 at the behest of the Carolina proprietors. A year later he led a small group of German emigrants to England. Posing as refugees from French attacks on the Palatinate, Kocherthal's band managed to secure British support for a settlement—although they ended up in New York rather than the Carolinas. The Crown paid their expenses and provided them with a small subsistence.<sup>5</sup> When new editions of Kocherthal's book appeared in Germany in early 1709, a letter, probably written by Kocherthal, was appended to the text. It told about Queen Anne's support for Kocherthal's group and the free land they had received in New York. Although the letter did not say that the queen would do the same for other emigrants, it left the clear impression, referred to repeatedly by the emigrants, that the riches Kocherthal described could belong to any German peasant.<sup>6</sup>

The message proved almost irresistible, especially to the rural poor. In a matter of weeks thousands of emigrants from dozens of principalities began streaming down the Rhine. Among the emigrants were Nassauers and Hessians, Hanauers and Württembergers, Palatines and Alsations. They came from over 250 German villages in a broad band about 160 kilometers wide and 200 kilometers long, centered on Wiesbaden and extending up and down the Rhine River and along its tributaries. Some migrants came from even further afield, starting their journeys in Holstein, Thuringia, and Switzerland.<sup>7</sup> Unlike many eighteenth-century migrations, this was not a carefully considered and well-planned movement emerging from a compact group of closely-knit villages. It was instead sprawling, sudden, and almost unthinking, held together only by rumors of a free voyage across the Atlantic and dreams of an easy life in America.

By mid-March the first emigrants began arriving in Rotterdam. There the bankrupt travelers survived in makeshift shacks on dikes outside the city while seeking English assistance to cross the Channel. They found a sympathetic audience in James Dayrolle, the British representative at the Hague, who reasoned that the emigrants' skills and labor might prove beneficial to Britain. Not knowing that thousands more were on their way, Dayrolle began transporting the emigrants to London using ships that had ferried British soldiers to the Continent.

By late June, 6,500 German migrants had crowded into east London and the surrounding countryside. A committee established by the government to oversee the migrants' welfare soon moved most of the Germans to two large camps south and east of London at Camberwell and Blackheath, and on June 16, the queen authorized a nationwide charity drive to raise money for the "Relief, subsistence and settlement of the poor distressed Palatines."<sup>8</sup> As the British government searched for ways to care for them, the German immigrants continued to pour into London. By late June the queen's ministers insisted that Dayrolle stop the flow of Germans across the Channel. Notices placed in the *Cologne Gazette* warned that no more German immigrants would be allowed in Britain. In addition, Dutch officials, who had no desire to support any stranded migrants, employed two ships to patrol the lower Rhine and turn back boats of German peasants. Despite such efforts, the migration did not slow until late summer; by that time 13,000 villagers from across the German southwest found themselves settled together on London's outskirts.<sup>9</sup>

London, with a population of around 600,000, was the largest city in Europe, but the influx of so many migrants still created a sensation. One Londoner admitted, "The case of the Palatine[s] is all our domestic talk."<sup>10</sup> The camps at Camberwell and Blackheath drew hundreds of curious visitors, and the disparate groups of immigrants were soon being described, categorized, and evaluated by their British hosts. The Londoners first noticed the Germans' raggedness and poverty. One migrant later recalled arriving in London "where the people knew us by our old clothing."<sup>11</sup> But the British noticed much more than worn-out clothes, and over the summer the Germans found themselves being defined in ways that would have important consequences for their own sense of who they were.

From the beginning the British lumped the migrants together as one people. The Board of Trade supervised several detailed censuses of the new arrivals but never bothered to ask where they came from or why they left their homes. Still, the census revealed much about the immigrant community. Of the adult migrants, 80 percent were married, and most had children with them. They came from rural communities: two-thirds of the adult men were listed as "husbandmen and vinedressers." Almost all belonged to one of the three officially sanctioned German churches. Reformed were the most numerous, making up 39 percent of the group, followed by Lutherans who accounted for 31 percent. Catholics made up the remainder.<sup>12</sup>

But the Queen's ministers discontinued the census before half the immigrants had been counted, and they ignored much of what the census revealed. Despite the group's geographic diversity, which the census overlooked, and its religious diversity, which the census carefully recorded, the Earl of Sunderland, the Secretary of State, referred to them as "poor German Protestants . . . coming from the Palatinate." The journals of the Board of Trade were filled with

many similar references.<sup>13</sup> The minutes of the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel referred to “the poor persecuted Palatines lately arrived from Germany,” and Daniel Defoe, who wrote extensively on the new arrivals, referred to them simply as “the poor Palatine refugees.”<sup>14</sup>

These simplistic and ill-informed labels, based on the false assumption that the migrants were fleeing French persecution, might have been quickly forgotten had the Germans spent only a short time in London before being sent on to America. But the British government cared little about the Germans’ desire to settle in America. Already on May 3, 1709, Sunderland had informed the Board of Trade that, although the immigrants came “with Intentions to settle in Her Majesty’s Plantations,” the queen was “convinced that it would be much more for the Advantage of Her Kingdoms if a method could be found to settle them here . . . instead of sending them to the West Indys.” According to Sunderland, the queen believed that “this Addition to the Number of Her Subjects would in all probability produce a proportionable Increase of their Trade & Manufactures.” Sunderland therefore directed the Board of Trade to consider how the people might be employed and where they might be settled.<sup>15</sup>

The German-speaking immigrants arrived in London just as a contentious parliamentary debate over immigration and naturalization was coming to a close. During the debate, the Whigs had argued that a growing population increased a nation’s wealth and power. As Daniel Defoe wrote, “the more people, the more trade; the more trade, the more money; the more money, the more strength; and the more strength, the greater the nation.”<sup>16</sup> Despite strong Tory opposition, the Whigs had passed the General Naturalization Act in early 1709.

The Germans’ arrival so soon after the naturalization debate had important implications both for how the British viewed the new arrivals and for the way that the immigrants would portray themselves. The Whig leadership had not encouraged or anticipated the Germans’ migration to Britain, but after months of proclaiming the advantages of welcoming immigrants, it had little choice but to settle the Germans in Britain. The decision made the German immigrants the objects of intense public scrutiny. A poor people simply passing through the country was one matter, but if these people were someday to become Britons they had to be examined much more closely. This examination, and the labels that would emerge from it, would reflect British prejudices and desires, not the diversity and the desires of the immigrants.

The German immigrants of 1709 were not the first nor the last victims of simplistic and ill-informed labels. Newcomers are often compelled to accept labels that assign them a larger, less differentiated identity because the people they encounter either cannot make such fine distinctions or in fact prefer the simplistic, and often pejorative, labels they have created. The 1709 migrants

had many allegiances and many identities. Some were local, based on ties to kin group, village of origin, and dialect. Some were broader, including ties to principality or religion. Those who could write shared a common written language, but their identity as Germans remained weak. Before they left their homes, the German emigrants of 1709, coming from many different territories and speaking many different dialects, would have noted their differences more than their similarities. The British, however, would not do the same.

No one wrote more on the German-speaking immigrants than Daniel Defoe. Starting in late June and continuing through September, he wrote a series of articles for his newspaper *The Review* describing the German immigrants and defending Whig policy pertaining to them. To ensure wider dissemination of his arguments, Defoe summarized them in a small book, *A Brief History of the Poor Palatine Refugees*, published in mid-August. Through his writings Defoe helped popularize a history and an image of the newcomers that had little to do with their past or their reasons for leaving their homes. But over time the immigrants found themselves adopting the image that emerged from Defoe's writings. As they did so they also began to conceive of themselves in new ways—ways that would emphasize not their differences but instead a shared history, even if that history owed more to Defoe's imagination than to their own past.

Defoe, a supporter of Whig policies on naturalization, was determined to make the immigrants fit a particular mold—one that made them well-suited to become Britons. He first reminded his readers that “it's the constant and experimented Principle of all the rational part of Mankind, that People are the Riches, Honour, and Strength of a Nation.” He noted that the duke of Brandenburg had enriched his kingdom by encouraging Huguenots to settle in Prussia and in 1689 by inviting Palatines, like those now in London, to settle in Magdeburg.<sup>17</sup> Although Defoe admitted that the Germans were not generally skilled artisans like the Huguenots, he argued that the German farmers could help Britain by introducing new plants and farming techniques. They could be settled on wasteland and in the forests, thus making the kingdom more prosperous without hurting the livelihood of others. According to Defoe, the Germans were perfectly suited for the task. They were “laborious and skillful—Industrious to Labour, and ingenious in working, and exceeding willing to be employ'd in anything.”<sup>18</sup>

But Defoe went beyond economic arguments in his efforts to portray the Germans as worthy recipients of British aid. In the process he labeled them as “Palatine refugees.” Both parts of the label furthered Defoe's cause. The term “refugee” had first been applied to Huguenot migrants after 1685 and referred generally to people fleeing religious persecution.<sup>19</sup> The term “Palatine” also had a particular meaning in early eighteenth-century Britain. Through books such as the *Present Condition of the Protestants in the Palatinate*, published in

1699, and from reports of the ongoing Continental war, Britons had formed a picture of the Palatines as a downtrodden people suffering from French invasions and Catholic persecution.<sup>20</sup> The arrival in 1708 of Kocherthal and his band of German immigrants, all blaming their migration on French barbarity in the Palatinate, reminded Britons again of the problems in the German southwest. As Defoe noted, “the Palatinate groans under the Oppression of Popish Persecution, and we see the poor Inhabitants flying hither for the Liberty of Religion. . . .”<sup>21</sup> When such long-suffering, God-fearing, and Protestant people sought refuge among the British, Defoe argued, a place should be made for them to share in, and eventually add to, Britain’s bounties.

In the process of making the German-speaking immigrants well-suited objects of British charity and the potential beneficiaries of naturalization, Defoe created a picture of them that Londoners easily understood and readily adopted. These poor Palatine refugees were latter-day Huguenots—skilled (albeit rural) laborers on the run from French and Catholic tyranny. The label “Palatines” was misleading, simplistic, and ignored the territorial complexity of the migrants’ origins, but it conjured up the images Defoe wanted. Defoe’s readers quickly adopted the term, and during the eighteenth century English-speakers in Britain and America broadened it to refer to all German-speaking immigrants.

The picture Defoe created may have been simplistic and misleading, but, rather than chafing under the label “poor Palatines”, the German immigrants embraced it, willfully adopting an identity and a history that had not been part of their past. They had good reason to do so. They faced a dilemma. In one way Defoe had labeled them correctly: they were certainly poor. Most had spent all they had to get to London. They now needed British charity to feed and clothe themselves and, with luck, to get to America. They were not refugees, but it seemed a poor strategy to pose as what they really were: peasant opportunists bent on acquiring free land. Better to adopt the British label and use it to their advantage.

To that end the immigrants wrote a petition appealing for British aid. The authors are unknown, but their understanding of British sympathies suggests that German pastors resident in London assisted in writing the tract. The result, titled “The State of the Poor Palatines, as humbly Represented by themselves upon their first Arrival in this Kingdom,” shrewdly appealed to the anti-Catholic and anti-French attitudes that were integral to the way Britons defined themselves.<sup>22</sup> The British sympathized with the people of the Palatinate because the country had been so often overrun by the French. So, although the majority were not from the Palatinate, in their petition the migrants referred to themselves only as Palatines. Although almost a third were Catholics, they collectively signed the petition “the poor distressed Protestants.” And although few of the migrants complained of French atrocities when they left

their homes, in the petition they blamed the migration entirely on "the merciless Cruelty of a Bloody Enemy, the French." The petition cleverly used half-truths about the immigrants' background to appeal to a British populace that increasingly defined itself as anti-Catholic and anti-French.

At least initially, the Germans' account of their migration accomplished what they hoped for. Britons gave generously to the fundraising campaign that Queen Anne had authorized in June. Before the summer was over Londoners donated over £22,000 to the charity drive, and money poured in from throughout the country. Londoners flocked to the refugee camps to observe the new arrivals, and the appearance of booklets such as *A Short and Easy Way For The Palatines To Learn English* indicated a willingness to incorporate the Germans into English society.<sup>23</sup>

The immigrants' account of their recent history did more than encourage British charity. It also created for the migrants a shared, if fictional, past. When a people invent for themselves a common past, whether that past is real or imagined, they enhance their sense of a common identity.<sup>24</sup> By calling themselves Palatines, the German-speaking immigrants took a step along the path toward *becoming* Palatines. What began as a contrivance in London would eventually evolve into a New World reality.

During their first months in London, the German-speaking immigrants had adopted the simplistic labels assigned to them by their hosts because the labels helped ensure British sympathy and aid. But just as the immigrants were adopting the image bestowed on them, some Britons began questioning that image. As the British finally made the effort to determine who the immigrants really were, the Germans saw their fortunes dim.

Reactions to the charity drive on the Germans' behalf hinted at changing British attitudes. Despite initial success, the Germans soon learned that sympathy is more easily given when it costs nothing. By summer's end some Britons began wondering whether the Germans were worthy of such aid. Gilbert Burnet, the bishop of Salisbury, reported that the charity drive "filled our own poor with great indignation; who thought those charities, to which they had a better right, were thus intercepted by strangers."<sup>25</sup> No doubt many agreed with the pamphleteer who maintained that "our Charity ought to begin at Home, both in Peace and War, before we extend it to our Neighbors."<sup>26</sup>

The growing squalor and disease in the German camps also began to change the perception of the "poor Palatine refugees." One Englishman wrote to a friend, "Our [region of the] country has whole loads of them and call them gipsies, not knowing the language and seeing their poor clothes."<sup>27</sup> Britons had long viewed gypsies as parasitic intruders. Joseph Addison described them as "this race of Vermin . . . this idle profligate people . . . [who] infest all the Countries of Europe, and live in the Midst of Governments in a kind of Commonwealth by themselves."<sup>28</sup> Gypsies epitomized the mysterious and poten-

tially dangerous unknown; to be identified with them was a worrisome portent for the Germans. The immigrants' poverty might elicit some sympathy, but when it translated to "in need of charity" or "disease-ridden" or "gypsy," its usefulness as a definitional trait became questionable.

Soon the term "refugee" and the image of latter-day Huguenots also became suspect. The Germans were farmers, not artisans, and unless they somehow managed to establish vineyards in Britain's inhospitable climate, there seemed little chance that they would transform British agriculture. Jonathan Swift summed up the changing public mood when he noted, "The Maxim, That People are the Riches of a Nation, hath been very crudely understood by many Writers and Reasoners upon that Subject. . . . The true way of multiplying Mankind to publick Advantage in such a Country as England, is to invite from abroad only able Handicrafts-Men and Artificers, or such who bring over a sufficient Share of Property to secure them from Want."<sup>29</sup>

It was not just the immigrants' lack of beneficial skills that made them a poor fit for the Huguenot mold. By midsummer word had spread through London that many of the German migrants were Catholics. One visitor to the German camps wrote that many migrants came from territories that "were under Protestant princes; so religion, or persecution upon that account, was not in the case."<sup>30</sup> Defoe continued to portray the migrants as refugees while trying to downplay the number and significance of the Catholics. He admitted there were "a few" Catholics mixed in with the other Germans but argued "they are far from being either Frenchiz'd or Spanioliz'd Papists, for most of them having been Protestants, or the Children of Protestants, they still retain a Tincture of their Father's Religion, which they had not forsaken, but to avoid Persecution and Contempt, and to obey the Commands, and follow the Example of their Sovereign."<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless some Londoners began to suspect that the migrants might be more similar to the French and Catholic "them" than to the Protestant, charitable, but apparently gullible "us" who had allowed the migrants into Britain.

Not only did the Catholic migrants represent a potential threat to Britain's security, they also tainted the reputation of the Protestant migrants who associated with them. Protestant and Catholic migrants living in harmony, sometimes as husband and wife, did not argue well for the future. British liberties were Protestant liberties. If the German migrants could not maintain the distinctions between Protestant and Catholic world views, then it seemed unlikely that they could understand British liberty or ever successfully integrate into British society.

By August the people of London had taken stock of the new arrivals. Not all were convinced that the "poor Palatine refugees" had lived up to their billing. Rather than being fit objects of charity, one anonymous pamphleteer saw them only as "a parcel of vagabonds, who might have lived comfortably enough

in their native country, had not the laziness of their dispositions and the report of our well-known generosity drawn them out of it."<sup>32</sup> London's artisans and laborers, in particular, feared competition from German workers and the possible loss of jobs. They threatened to attack the German camps and to slit the immigrants' throats.<sup>33</sup>

The Germans found themselves again working to reinforce the image Defoe had created for them. In a petition to "the Tradesman of England" they drew upon that misleading image to mollify London's artisans and laborers.<sup>34</sup> The petition reiterated their earlier stories of suffering at the hands of the French and praised their British haven as that "Blessed Land!, Govern'd by the Mother of Europe, and the best of Queens." But they had little to offer the English tradesman in return for sharing their blessed land. The Germans could only beg that England's artisans "lay aside all Reflections and Imprecations, and Ill Language against us . . . , and we do assure you, it shall be our Endeavor to act with great Humility and Gratitude, and to Render our prayers for you." But the British had their own prayer, as expressed by an English pamphleteer visiting the German camps: "We'll pray for them, but wish 'em out o' the Land."<sup>35</sup>

Despite their appeals to British prejudices against the French and the Catholics, the immigrants were having trouble convincing their hosts that the similarities between Briton and German outweighed the differences. In British eyes the Germans were too poor, too unskilled, too Catholic, or too unenlightened to be British subjects. After several months of trying to settle them in Britain, the government began looking for ways to get rid of them instead.

It dealt first with the Catholics. They could convert or return home. This policy had a significant impact on the immigrants' group identity. Despite Defoe's description of these supposedly reluctant Catholics, almost all of them returned to the Continent.<sup>36</sup> Their return sent a strong message that their co-religionists in the German southwest seemed to have taken to heart: Catholics were not welcome in Britain or its colonies. The few remaining Germans who made it to London in 1709 were all Protestants, as were almost all who emigrated to British North America during the rest of the century. Because of the British government's decision in 1709, colonial American Germans found themselves sharing a strictly Protestant identity unknown to their German past.

British officials considered various schemes for settling the Protestant Germans on Britain's periphery. After attempting to resettle 3,000 of them in Ireland—the place the British believed most needed Protestants—the government decided to send the rest to America. A few actually made it to the promised land of Carolina. Christoph von Graffenreid chose 600 to help found his settlement at New Bern, North Carolina, although few enjoyed the riches Kocherthal's book had promised. Over half died on severely overcrowded ships during the Atlantic crossing, and another sixty lost their lives in 1711 when their settlement was destroyed during the Tuscarora War.<sup>37</sup>

The bulk of the Germans remaining in London came under the care of New York's Governor Robert Hunter. Hunter, who had just been appointed governor following the death of Francis Lovelace, was preparing to leave London in late 1709 to assume his new position. He proposed bringing the Germans with him. He wanted to settle them in the pine forests of New York where they would make tar and pitch for the British navy and serve as a buffer between the British and French along the New York frontier. Once the Germans had repaid the cost of their transportation and maintenance, the government would grant them each forty acres of land. The Board of Trade agreed to Hunter's plan, and after several delays over 3,000 Germans set sail for New York in April 1710.<sup>38</sup>

The Germans had no enthusiasm for the naval stores project or for the contract that tied them to it. They had left their homes for free farmland in America, not to make tar and pitch for the British navy. But Hunter's scheme got them to America, and they would wait until they were safely across the ocean before openly resisting the naval stores project.

Hunter and the Germans arrived in New York in mid-June. The Atlantic crossing and the Germans' reaction to it continued the reshaping of the immigrant community that had begun in London. They had arrived in Britain as hundreds of small groups of families and neighbors. The London experience had begun to give them a larger group identity based on their months living together in the refugee camps, their pragmatic adoption of artificial labels and histories, and their newly-imposed Protestant unity. In New York this emerging sense of a shared identity would be further strengthened by the exigencies of migration and the immigrants' desire to set themselves apart from British colonial society.

Although they had at last reached America, the Germans paid a high price. About one-quarter of the immigrants died on the voyage or during the first few months in New York.<sup>39</sup> The immigrants arrived in America determined to be farmers, and successful farms depended on the cooperative labor of members of a nuclear family. Because the loss of a spouse threatened the immigrants' dreams of prosperity, men and women who lost their partners during the crossing remarried quickly. When they did so, they ignored the religious and regional differences that had once separated the immigrants. Those who were married before emigrating had generally wed someone from their own village or a village nearby. But once in New York, widows and widowers found their choices limited. If they wanted to remarry quickly, they had to select people from different German territories—people who did not necessarily share the same customs, speak the same dialect, or attend the same church. Of twenty-three marriages recorded in 1710 where the origin of both bride and groom can be determined, only six were between people originating in German villages within twenty kilometers of each other. More often the bride and groom came from widely separated regions of the German southwest.<sup>40</sup>

When the German-speaking immigrants arrived in New York, they did not forget their dialects, local customs, or the name of the principality where they had once lived. Place of origin remained part of each immigrant's identity, and pastors carefully noted in their churchbooks the territories where members had lived before emigrating. But the high mortality of the crossing coupled with the immigrants' concept of what comprised the necessary unit for economic survival led them to create a new community where people from many different principalities intermarried. The Germans' reaction to the challenges posed by the Atlantic crossing blurred their territorial affinities and helped clear the way for the development of a German-American identity rooted in the immigrant experience.

That identity took on a more permanent status as Hunter moved the immigrants from New York City to encampments ninety miles to the north along the Hudson River. In seven crude villages, planned as centers for naval stores production, colonial officials settled the migrants without regard to their territorial origins. People who had not been neighbors in Germany now found themselves living side by side with fellow migrants from different principalities. The settlement pattern imposed on the Germans thus further weakened any local identities that might have divided them.<sup>41</sup>

The settlers' dogged determination to survive and to procure free land meant that they had to ignore inter-regional conflicts. Just as their desire to reach America had led the migrants to assume a common identity in London, their absolute contempt for making tar caused them to maintain their group coherence in New York. They cooperated closely with one another as they worked to thwart Hunter's plans for them. They began by arguing that Hunter had swindled them out of land that they claimed had been promised them in New York's Schoharie Valley. At one point the German men even threatened to attack the governor, and Hunter had to call in troops to disarm them. Although the immigrants no longer threatened violence, they continued to resist the naval stores project with footdragging, petty thievery, and other forms of obstruction.<sup>42</sup>

As the immigrants and Hunter faced off over the naval stores scheme, the British fictions and the German counterfictions that had labeled the migrants as "poor Palatines" in London wreaked havoc in America. The settlers found themselves battling in New York the image they had cleverly adopted in London when petitioning for British relief. Based on the stories the Germans had told in London, Hunter believed he was dealing with 3,000 victims of French aggression. He felt certain they would gratefully work to repay the generosity of Queen Anne and the charity of the British people. But the Germans, whose dreams of free land outweighed their memories of a made-up past, saw the naval stores plan as a trick to re-enslave them. They simply refused to work. Hunter's picture of his obstinate charges began to change. Before long, rather

than referring sympathetically to “the poor Palatines,” he described them instead as a “turbulent race of men” requiring “a strong hand and severe discipline.”<sup>43</sup>

Eventually the Germans’ tactics, along with diminished government support for the project, scuttled Hunter’s scheme. Except for a small amount of tar made from pine knots gathered by the German children, the immigrants’ two years of work in the New York forest did not result in a single barrel of naval stores. Hunter finally abandoned the project and left the Germans to fend for themselves.”

The demise of the naval stores project meant the end of British subsidies to support the Germans, and the immigrants had to scramble to find ways to feed themselves. Some remained settled along the Hudson River in the naval stores camps or as tenants on Robert Livingston’s manor just to the north. A few moved to New York City, and some managed to obtain land in New Jersey. These Germans eventually merged into the surrounding population, maintaining their language and churches but exhibiting a willingness to live peacefully among their Dutch and English neighbors.

Another group, however, maintained a strong group identity tied very closely to their shared experiences. They set out for the Schoharie Valley to claim the land they argued had originally been intended for them. After the naval stores debacle, these Germans no longer sought to define themselves in ways that made them objects of British sympathy. Instead they moved far away from their old benefactors and, to the extent possible, ignored British political power in the colony. In their settlements along Schoharie Creek and later along the Mohawk River, they sought a new protector—the Mohawks. They realized the importance of a peaceful alliance with their Mohawk neighbors and arranged for a teenage boy to be adopted by the tribe. The boy, Conrad Weiser, learned the Mohawks’ language and through his contacts strengthened the ties between the two peoples. He later became one of the most important figures in eighteenth-century Indian-white diplomacy.

For the next forty years, the Germans in western New York antagonized and worried the colony’s administrators. They ignored colonial land laws, attempting to purchase land directly from the Mohawks and squatting on property claimed by Dutch and English colonists. They pulled down a Dutch settler’s home and ran horses through his corn. The German women brutally beat a sheriff sent to the Schoharie community to enforce colonial law. And when the Seven Years’ War broke out, the Germans even attempted to negotiate their own treaty of neutrality with the Iroquois, completely ignoring British sovereignty over their settlements.<sup>45</sup>

Many Germans escaped the New York colonial authorities completely. Fifty families moved to Pennsylvania in the 1720s settling sixty miles north-west of Philadelphia along Tulpehocken Creek near present-day Reading. Here,

too, they threatened the social order by needling the colonial elite and by challenging conventions of proper behavior. They damaged Pennsylvania's relations with the Delawares by settling on land that the Delawares still claimed. In the 1730s their community became the center of a violent religious dispute known as the Tulpehocken Confusion. And they challenged traditional Protestantism and community norms by becoming leading members of the religious commune at Ephrata.<sup>46</sup> These Germans from New York were not the placid German settlers the Pennsylvania authorities were used to. By the 1750s, as imperial tensions heightened, observers in both New York and Pennsylvania so distrusted these backcountry Germans that they feared they were dealing secretly with the French.<sup>47</sup>

The Iroquois once described their German neighbors in western New York as "a Nation which is neither French, nor English, nor Indian."<sup>48</sup> Although not particularly precise, the Indians' categorization actually captured perfectly the Germans' sense of their relationship to the peoples of New York and Pennsylvania. By resisting the pressure to conform to British colonial society, the German immigrants who arrived in New York in 1710 perpetuated a separate identity. In London they had created a fictional past; in America they experienced a shared history that was actually theirs. To commemorate their sense of a shared past and a common identity, the Germans of western New York celebrated their own holiday, "Immigration Day," marking the anniversary of their arrival in New York.<sup>49</sup>

By mid-century the German-speaking migrants who had left their homes forty years earlier as Nassauers, Hessians, and Württembergers had long settled into a common identity under the label first given them by Londoners. They and their descendants were now all Palatines. Although the British in America generally referred to all German-speaking immigrants as Palatines, over time the label became more closely linked to the people who had first adopted it—the 1709 emigrants and their descendants in New York. Whereas the German settlers of Pennsylvania became the Pennsylvania Dutch and other German-speaking immigrants were more commonly, and accurately, known as Moravians or Salzburgers, in New York the German-speaking settlers and their descendants remained, and still remain, the New York Palatines.<sup>50</sup>

## Notes

1. Don Yoder, "The Pennsylvania Germans: Three Centuries of Identity Crisis," in *America and the Germans*, Trommler and McVeigh, eds., (Philadelphia, 1985), 1:44-65; Anita Tien, "'To enjoy their customs': The cultural adaptation of Dutch and German families in the Middle Colonies, 1660-1832," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1990); William T. Parsons, "Representation of Ethnicity among Colonial Pennsylvania Germans," in *A Mixed Race: Ethnicity in Early America*, Frank Shuffelton, ed. (New York, 1993), 119-41.
2. The 1683 migration to Germantown, Pennsylvania consisted of just thirteen families, and the town numbered fewer than 230 people in 1700. In many ways its founders, principally Quakers descended from recent Dutch immigrants to the German northwest, were more Dutch than *Deutsch* and did not resemble the majority of later German migrants to colonial America in origin or religion. See William I. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, no. 2 (Philadelphia, 1935), 178-79, 189.
3. The term "Germans," despite its shortcomings, is used in this article to refer generally to the 1709 migrants.
4. *The Journals of the House of Commons*, 17 (April 14, 1711), 597.
5. For an extended account of the 1708 migration, see Walter Allen Knittle, *Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration: A British Government Redemptioner Project to Manufacture Naval Stores* (Philadelphia, 1937), chap. 2. Knittle's book, which remains the definitive work on the 1709 German migration, devotes much of its analysis to British mercantile policy and the operation of the British imperial system. This article attempts to shift the focus from British policy to the migrants' reaction to both British policy and British attitudes about outsiders.
6. Joshua Kocherthal, *Ausführlich und umständliche Bericht*, 3rd and 4th eds. (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1709), 77-80.
7. Geographic data are drawn from a database of 438 immigrant families whose villages of origin have been documented in Henry Z. Jones, Jr., *Palatine Families of New York and More Palatine Families* (Universal City, CA, 1985 and 1991). The database is described in my broader study of the 1709 migration. See Philip Otterness, "The Unattained Canaan: The 1709 Palatine Migration and the Formation of German Society in Colonial America" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1996).
8. Queen's order, June 16, 1709, in *The State of the Palatines for Fifty Years Past to this Present Time* (London, 1710), 8-9.
9. Dayrolle report of July 1, 1709 NS. Public Record Office (hereafter PRO) SP 84/232: 168; Resolutions and Proceedings of the Burgomasters of Rotterdam, August 24, 1709, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Dutch West Indies collection, box 3, folder 9; Knittle, *Early Palatine Emigration*, 58-60, 65.
10. R. Palmer to Ralph Verney, Aug. 17, 1709. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *7th Report, Appendix, Verney MSS*, 507.
11. Undated journal attributed to Johan Georg Smidt in William V. H. Barker, *Early Families of Herkimer County New York* (Baltimore, 1986), 326.
12. PRO CO 399/76: 56, 64, 69, 69.
13. Sunderland to the Board of Trade, May 3, 1709. PRO CO 388/76: 54; *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, 14 vols. (London, 1920-1938) 1708-1714 vol.: 32, 33, 37, 38, 40, 46.
14. E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York* (hereafter *ERNY*), 8 vols. (Albany, 1910-1916), 3:1738; Daniel Defoe, *A Brief History of the Poor Palatine Refugees* (London, 1709).
15. PRO CO 388/76: 54.
16. Quoted in Daniel Statt, *Foreigners and Englishmen: The Controversy over Immigration and Population, 1660-1769* (Newark, Del., 1995), 49.
17. Defoe, *Brief History*, 2-8.
18. Defoe, *Brief History*, 14, 15; *Review*, vol. 6, no. 35, June 23, 1709, 137; no. 38, June 30, 1709, 150; no. 39, July 2, 1709, 154; quotation from no. 54, August 6, 1709, 54.
19. Bernard Cottret, *The Huguenots in England: Immigration and Settlement c. 1550-1700*, trans. Peregrine and Adriana Stevenson (Cambridge, 1991), 2.
20. Richard Parker, *An Account of the Present Condition of the Protestants in the Palatinate* (London, 1699) reprinted in *ERNY* 3:1453-1459.
21. *Review*, vol. 6, no. 26, June 2, 1709, 103.
22. "The State of the Poor Palatines," *The History of the Reign of Queen Anne, Digested*

- into *Annals, Year the Eighth* (London, 1710), Appendix, 34-35; on the role of anti-French and anti-Catholic attitudes in the development of eighteenth-century British identity, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992), ch. 1 passim.
23. *A Short and Easy Way For The Palatines To Learn English. Oder Eine kurze Anleitung zur Englischen Sprach. Zum Nutz der armen Pfälzer* (London, 1710).
24. For an examination of the ways real and imagined histories can shape group identity and of the ways people produce their own histories to help gain control of the present, see Gerald Sider, *Lumbee Indian Histories: Race, ethnicity, and Indian identity in the southern United States* (Cambridge, 1993), xvii-xviii and Joan Nagel, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," *Social Problems* 41 (February 1994): 163-64.
25. Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of My Own Time*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1823), 5:425.
26. *The Palatines' Catechism* (London, 1709) quoted in H. T. Dickinson, "The poor Palatines and the parties," *English Historical Review* 82 (July 1967): 473. Not only the poor grumbled; few Tory leaders contributed to the drive.
27. Letter of August 23, 1709. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *15th Report, Appendix, Dartmouth MSS*, 3:146.
28. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* no. 130, July 30, 1711. Quoted in Katie Trumpener, "The time of the gypsies: A 'People without History' in the Narratives of the West," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Summer 1992): 850, n. 9. See also, Christopher Hill, *Liberty Against the Law: Some Seventeenth-Century Controversies* (London, 1996), ch. 11 'Gypsy Liberty.'
29. Herbert Davis, ed. The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, vol. 7, *The History of the Four Last Years of the Queen* (Oxford, 1951; written in 1713 and first published in 1758), 94-95.
30. Robert Kenyon to his sister-in-law, August 2, 1709. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *14th Report, Appendix, Part IV, MSS of Lord Kenyon*, 442-43.
31. Defoe, *Brief History*, 23.
32. *A View of the Queen's and Kingdom's Enemies in the Case of the Poor Palatines* (London, 1711), reprinted in *ERNY* 3:1752-1755.
33. L'Hermitage to Heinsius, July 5/16 and July 15/26, 1709, A. J. Veenendahl, ed., *De Briefwisseling van Anthonie Heinsius, 1702-1720*, 10 vols. ('s Gravenhage, The Netherlands, 1976-1989) 9:58, 97.
34. The petition is in *The State of the Palatines*, 6-7.
35. *The Palatines' Catechism* in *ERNY* 3:1820.
36. List of Germans sent back to Holland, PRO T.1/119: 136-53.
37. For details on the Germans sent to Ireland, see Knittle, *Early Palatine Migration*, ch. 4 and Rüdiger Renzing, *Pfälzer in Irland*, Kaiserslautern, 1989. For the North Carolina migration, see V. H. Todd, "Baron Christoph von Graffenried's New Bern Adventures," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1912).
38. Hunter to the Board of Trade, Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, 1709 and the Report of the Board of Trade, December 5, 1709 in E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York* (hereafter *NYCD*), 15 vols. (Albany, 1856-87), 5: 112-114, 117-20.
39. Hunter to the Board of Trade, June 24, 1710, in E. B. O'Callaghan, ed. *Documentary History of the State of New York* (hereafter *DHNY*), 4 vols. (Albany, 1850-1851), 3:559. The Germans boarded ships in January but did not depart London until April. The long period on crowded ships increased the mortality rate.
40. Based on the Lutheran church records of the 1710 immigrants. Charles Kraemer, trans. "The Kocherthal Records," *Olde Ulster* 3 (February 1907), 51.
41. For a more detailed description of the demographic make-up of these villages, see Philip Otterness, "The New York Naval Stores Project and the Transformation of the Poor Palatines, 1710-1712," *New York History* 75 (April 1994), 142-145. Present-day West Camp and Germantown, New York mark the location of these early settlements.
42. Report of George Clarke to the Board of Trade, May 30, 1711, in *NYCD*, 5:238-41. Later the Germans would claim that Mohawk leaders visiting London in 1710 had taken pity on the Palatines camping in the city's parks and had granted the Schoharie land to Queen Anne for their use. See "The Conditions Grievances and Oppressions of the Germans, 1720," *DHNY*, 3:708.
43. Hunter to Alexander Strahlen, January 1, 1711/12 in W. N. Sainsbury, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series. America and the*

*West Indies*, 44 vols. (London, 1820-1969), (1712-1714), 70-71.

44. Hunter to J. Cast, September 6, 1712, *DHNY*, 3:683.

45. Some of the Germans' land deals and their treatment of Dutch settlers are described in *DHNY*, 3: 687, 688, 710, 711. The actions of the German women are recounted in John Brown, *Brief Sketch of the first Settlement of the County of Schoharie by the Germans* (Schoharie, NY, 1823), 12-13. Accounts of the Germans' attempt to negotiate a treaty of neutrality are in "Conferences between M. de Vaudreuil and the Indians," *NYCD*, 10:513 and in a Cadwallader Colden letter dated December 31, 1757, "The Letters and Papers of William Cadwallader Colden," *Collections of the New-York Historical Society*, 8 vols. (New York, 1918-1934), 5:212-13.

46. For a more complete description of the German activities at Tulpehocken and Ephrata, see Francis Jennings, "Incident at Tulpehocken," *Pennsylvania History*, 35.4 (October 1968); J. Taylor Hamilton, "The Con-

fusion at Tulpehocken," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society*, 4 (1895); and E. G. Alderfer, *The Ephrata Commune: An Early American Counterculture* (Pittsburgh, 1985).

47. William Johnson to Major General Abercromby, April 13, 1757, in James Sullivan, ed., *the Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 14 vols. (Albany, 1921-1965), 9:676; [William Smith], *A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania* (London, 1755), 30.

48. "Conferences between M. de Vaudreuil and the Indians," *NYCD*, 10:513.

49. "Translation of the Journal of Peter Nicholas Sommer" in Royden Vosburgh, ed., *Records of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church* (New York, 1914), 284, 287, 288, 289.

50. So strong is the Palatine identity that when a descendant recently wrote a genealogical study that carefully and with meticulous detail pinpointed her family's origins in Hesse, she still called her book *Palatine Roots*. Nancy Wagoner Dixon, *Palatine Roots: The 1710 German Settlement in New York as Experienced by Johann Peter Wagner* (Camden, Maine, 1994).

The author thanks the members of the McNeil Center for Early American Studies for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay. Special thanks go to Alison Olson for her careful reading of the manuscript and many useful suggestions as the essay was revised for publication.