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MIGRATIONS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS TO WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

HOMER T. ROSENBERGER

MIGRATIONS from Europe and the British Isles to America and ultimately to the four corners of continental United States comprise a fascinating study. The identifying of the migrations of any one major segment of the vast throng, throughout a half-dozen or more generations, is not an easy task. In general the early arrivals settled near the Atlantic coast. Later waves of immigrants tended to move beyond the coastal area in order to find inexpensive land.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries hundreds of thousands of people from the British Isles and from German-speaking parts of Europe migrated west. In New York they followed the Mohawk Trail and later used the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo. In Pennsylvania they travelled the Lancaster Turnpike, opened in 1797 from Philadelphia to Lancaster, and the Pennsylvania State Road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh via Lancaster, now known as the Lincoln Highway or U.S. Route 30, a thoroughfare dating back to the construction of the Forbes Road in 1758. In the 1840's a large proportion of the persons travelling from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh on their way to the Ohio country rode the cars of the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad and the boats on the Pennsylvania Canal which were carried over the mountains by the Allegheny Portage Railroad. The Braddock Road,

An address delivered by Dr. Rosenberger, an outstanding authority on the Pennsylvania Germans. Dr. Rosenberger, a historian, an educator and administrator, is president of the Pennsylvania German Society and of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D. C.—Editor

built in 1755 from Cumberland, Maryland, to Pittsburgh, brought pioneers to southwestern Pennsylvania. The National Road, begun in 1811, ran from Cumberland, Maryland, to Vandalia, Illinois, and was an important route from Baltimore to southwestern Pennsylvania, Wheeling, West Virginia, and the midwest. The Wilderness Road, opened by Daniel Boone in 1775 from Virginia to central Kentucky, enabled people to enter the western country lying south of the Ohio River. The Santa Fe Trail, dating from 1821 and extending from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and in 1830 on to California, speeded migration to the southwest. The Oregon or Overland Trail, from the Missouri River to the Columbia River in the northwest, was a route of travel much used as early as 1845, and one that had a branch going to San Francisco.

The Pennsylvania Germans

A Pennsylvania German is one who is descended from early settlers in Pennsylvania who were of Germanic origin, and who arrived before there was a German national spirit. German immigrants arriving prior to 1808 had in general no European political ties. By 1808, when a German national spirit was budding, and especially after 1825, the large majority of German immigrants arrived in New York rather than Philadelphia, many going west on the Erie Canal. The Pennsylvania German Society therefore has for many years defined a Pennsylvania German as one descended from Germanicized people settling in Pennsylvania before 1808.

Thousands of people with Pennsylvania German blood in their veins do not even realize they are Pennsylvania German. Thousands more are only vaguely aware of their heritage.¹

The port of Philadelphia was the most important port in the western hemisphere in the 18th century and the city of Philadelphia was the metropolis of the English colonies in North America, and then, of the new nation. The ancestors of nearly all Pennsylvania Germans of today arrived in the port of Philadelphia from Rotterdam, Holland, or from English ports after leaving their homes on the continent of Europe. The first group of Pennsylvania Germans arrived in 1683, under the leadership of Francis Daniel Pastorius. They settled in Germantown, now within the boundaries of Philadelphia. Succeeding groups of Germans arriving in the port of Philadelphia in the next

1 Homer T. Rosenberger, *The Pennsylvania Germans 1891-1965* (Lancaster, 1966), 25-27.

125 years pushed on in search of good farm land, although many remained in Penn's city of brotherly love. There they attained eminence in business, public affairs, and the professions. For example, the Pfeffers, who Anglicized their name to Pepper — one became the head of the University of Pennsylvania and another a distinguished lawyer and United States Senator.

There were three major periods of German migration to Pennsylvania. One began in 1683, another started in 1709, and the third began about 1727 and continued rather steadily until the Revolution. The best single source of concise data concerning nearly all the immigrant ancestors arriving in the port of Philadelphia from 1727 to the end of 1808 is the three-volume work, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, published by the Pennsylvania German Society in 1934. Unfortunately, there is no complete record of arrivals prior to 1727, for it was not until that year that immigrants entering the port of Philadelphia were required to take an oath of allegiance to the British King and make a declaration of fidelity to the Proprietor of the province. For persons living in Pittsburgh, Erie, Tarentum, Titusville, or elsewhere, who want to determine whether or not they are descended from an early German settler in Pennsylvania, those three volumes are an almost absolutely essential source.

The Germans pushed west and north from Philadelphia, into what are now Bucks, Montgomery, Berks, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Northampton, York, and Dauphin Counties. Then they continued to move west in Pennsylvania and beyond, and south into Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, following the valleys and searching for fertile land.

Approximately one-third of the population of Colonial Pennsylvania was German. Between 1749 and 1754 about 31,000 Germans came to the province, an average of more than 5,000 per year. In 1776 Pennsylvania had approximately 100,000 Germans, and in 1790 about 120,000.

The large majority of Pennsylvania Germans in colonial times were Lutheran or Reformed. In a countless number of Pennsylvania German communities the steeple of the Lutheran Church was within sight of the steeple of the Reformed. A considerable number of Pennsylvania Germans in the colony were Dunkards (Tunkers, members of the Church of the Brethren). A very small per cent were Mennonites and a still smaller number were Amish. In the 19th century the number of "Brethren" denominations of various kinds increased in the state, and were composed mainly of Pennsylvania Germans, as was also

the Evangelical Church which through a merger and later an absorption became part of the United Methodist Church, created in 1967.

In the 1800's the large majority of Pennsylvania Germans were farmers. In 1970, a time of urbanization and homogenization, a large minority still live on farms or in rural communities, in or beyond Pennsylvania.

Overflow from Eastern Pennsylvania

Many Pennsylvania Germans migrated to the southwestern part of the province and commonwealth but relatively few to the northwestern. Where they could not find limestone valleys they looked for land having thick stands of large hardwood trees, and especially for land where the black walnut grew to a great height. The fertile valleys of Bedford County, the good soil on the rolling highlands and mountain meadows of present Somerset County, and the fertile land in present Indiana County, among others, attracted them. Conversely, land in heavily timbered Potter, Cameron, McKean, Elk, Forest, and Warren Counties generally failed to entice these agrarians. Nevertheless, a small number of Pennsylvania Germans may have wandered and a few may deliberately have migrated to such locations which had tall pines and hemlocks and rather thin, stony soil. Undoubtedly, in every county in Pennsylvania in the 19th and 20th centuries there were at least a few residents who were of Pennsylvania German stock.

In this article the migration of Pennsylvania Germans into the western *half* of the state is being examined. Migration into and beyond Potter, Clearfield, Blair, and Bedford Counties, to the Ohio border, is discussed.

In the 1700's there were three distinct periods of Pennsylvania German migration to Western Pennsylvania. The first took place in the spring of 1769, when the western lands were opened to settlement by the whites. The second was in the spring of 1784, a time when the border warfare that ravaged Western Pennsylvania during the Revolution seemed to be at an end. The third period of migration was in the summer of 1794. Anthony Wayne's victory over the Indians in Ohio on August 20 of that year had made Western Pennsylvania a relatively safe place to settle.²

A quick glimpse of migration to Western Pennsylvania and the life of early Pennsylvania Germans is given in a chapter entitled "The

2 Ellis B. Burgess, *History of the Pittsburgh Synod of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1748-1845-1904* (Philadelphia, 1904), 250-251.

German Pioneers, 1748-1845," in *History of the Pittsburgh Synod of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*.³

Solon and Elizabeth Buck made the following statement :

The German immigrants who settled in western Pennsylvania prior to 1812 were largely children of settlers in the eastern or central part of the state. These settlers came principally from the Rhine country; that is, from Württemberg, Baden, the Palatinate, Alsace, and part of Switzerland. (Page 124, *The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1939.)

Families are traced from Europe to Western Pennsylvania in two of the most thorough of all Pennsylvania German genealogies — one by Dr. Gaius Marcus Brumbach and the other by Dr. Albert H. Gerberich. The former is entitled *Genealogy of the Brumbach Families* and was published in New York City in 1913. Its 850 pages carry the Brumbaugh (Brombach, Brumbach, Brownback, Brombagh, etc.) family from the German parts of Europe to Pennsylvania, and on to the Pacific Coast. In this volume we find them in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1743,⁴ in Berks County, Pennsylvania, 1776-1875,⁵ in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, in 1788,⁶ and in Portage and Stark Counties, Ohio, 1844-1913.⁷ Members of one branch of the family were in Penn Township, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, in 1868, then in Canyon County, Idaho, and after 1909 were raising oranges in Los Angeles County, California.⁸

The other work, by Gerberich, is entitled *The Brenneman History*. It was published in Scottdale in 1938 by the Mennonite Publishing House. The volume traces meticulously the Brenneman family from the early 1600's in Europe to the far corners of the United States in the 20th century. The "Geographical Index," pages 1195-1217, shows the dispersion. A note at the beginning of that index summarizes succinctly the Brenneman migrations as follows: Flight from Switzerland in 1671; migration from Germany 1709 (probably); the Rev. Mechior Brenneman, 2d, settled in Donegal, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1751; Abraham Brenneman settled in the Shenandoah Valley in 1769; three brothers, Benjamin, Samuel, and William Brenneman, moved from Chester County to York County in 1770; fourteen years later Christian Brenneman migrated to Lincoln County, North Carolina, and then to southern Indiana. Daniel Brenneman

3 *Ibid.*, 7-48.

4 Dr. Gaius Marcus Brumbach, *Genealogy of the Brumbach Families*, 77.

5 *Ibid.*, 759-760.

6 *Ibid.*, 64.

7 *Ibid.*, 581.

8 *Ibid.*, 618.

settled in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, in 1795. In about 1803 a Christian Brenneman of Pennsylvania settled in Ontario and Abraham Brenneman of Virginia settled in Ohio. Adventurers in the family went to Utah in 1847 with the Mormons and in 1849 several other Brenneman descendants went to California during the "Gold Rush."

In addition to examples found in Brumbaugh's and in Gerberich's work, of Pennsylvania Germans who settled in eastern Pennsylvania, migrated across the state, and finally settled beyond its borders rather than in Western Pennsylvania, the Ebersohl and Weber families can be mentioned. The family of Johannes Ebersohl lived in the Emmenthal Valley in Switzerland. Johannes Ebersohl arrived in Philadelphia on September 3, 1739, from Rotterdam, Holland, on the ship *Robert & Alice*. (*Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, volume I, page 268.) His great-grandson, Jacob, lived near Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Jacob's son farmed near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, during the Civil War. Jacob's son, Christian, moved to Palmyra Township, Lee County, Illinois. However, Henry Weber of Switzerland had arrived in America about 1718 and settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. John Weber, of the seventh generation, was born near Chambersburg and moved to Sterling, Illinois. The two families intermarried. Dr. Harry F. Weber, of the eighth generation, moved with his family to Oklahoma in early childhood and then back to Illinois, and resides in Washington, D. C.

Migration to the Southern Counties

One of the most distinguished of all Pennsylvania Germans, Conrad Weiser, journeyed to Western Pennsylvania in 1748. In that year he visited the Delaware Indian Village, Shannopin's Town, on the site of present Pittsburgh, Aliquippa's Town at McKees Rocks, and Logstown on the Ohio River when attempting to maintain friendly relations between the government of Pennsylvania and the western Indians. However, Weiser was only a transient. He made his home in Berks County in eastern Pennsylvania from 1723 until his death in 1760.

King George II of England granted in 1749 a half-million acres of land, mostly west of the Alleghenies and south of the Ohio River, to a group of wealthy Virginians known as the Ohio Company. The Company wanted to promote settlement beyond the mountains. The presence of the French and the Indians retarded settlement by the

English. Lawrence, brother of George Washington, was for a time the principal manager of the Company. Lawrence Washington attempted to persuade the Pennsylvania Germans to settle west of the mountains and hoped their friends and relatives in Europe, too, would settle in a large area including the Forks of the Ohio. Virginia then claimed much of what is now southwestern Pennsylvania. Joseph Smith, in his extremely useful *Old Redstone*, gives the details as follows:

... Their [the Pennsylvania Germans'] only objection was the *parish taxes* they would have to pay to support the Episcopal Church. Mr. Washington exerted himself to get this difficulty removed; but high church episcopacy was too strong for him; and so his scheme failed; and a large portion of Western Pennsylvania and Virginia was kept open for a different race — mainly for Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. Thus the intolerant Episcopal Establishment of Virginia was overruled by the purpose and providence of God, to contribute unwittingly to provide a home for many of our fathers; or rather *to keep open for them* such a home. Mr. Washington, in a letter to Mr. Hanbury of London [the Company's London representative], wrote, "I conversed with all the Pennsylvania Dutch whom I met — and much recommended their settling. The chief reason against it was the payment of an English clergyman, when few understood, and none made use of him. It has been my opinion, and I hope ever will be, that restraints on conscience are cruel, in regard to those on whom they are imposed, and injurious to the country imposing them. England, Holland, and Prussia I may quote as examples, and much more Pennsylvania, which has flourished under that delightful liberty, so as to become the admiration of every man who considers the short time it has been settled. As the ministry [British Government] have thus far shown the true spirit of patriotism, by encouraging the extending of our dominions in America, I doubt not by an application, they would still go further, and complete what they have begun, by procuring some kind of charter to prevent the residents on the Ohio and its branches, from being subject to parish taxes. They [the Pennsylvania Germans] all assured me that they might have from Germany any number of settlers, could they but obtain their favorite exemption. I have promised to endeavor for it, and now do my utmost by this letter. *I am well assured we shall never obtain it by law here.* This colony (Virginia), was greatly settled in the latter part of Charles the First's time, and during the usurpation by the zealous churchmen; and that spirit which was then brought in *has ever since continued*, so that, except a few Quakers, we have no dissenters. But what has been the consequence? We have increased by slow degrees, *except negroes and convicts*; whilst our neighboring colonies, 'whose natural advantages are greatly inferior to ours, have become populous.'" These sentiments do great honor both to the head and heart of Lawrence Washington. But he labored in vain. A proposition was made by several Germans in Pennsylvania, that if they would have the above exemption secured to them, they would take fifty thousand acres of the company's land and settle it with two hundred families. But nothing was done. Parliament was too busy with public affairs, and the ministry otherwise engaged. And Episcopacy in the colony was unyielding.⁹

In detailing his subject, western Presbyterianism, Smith gives us a picture of customs, events, and persons in the area from Brownsville to Pittsburgh, particularly for the period 1780-1800. He tells of the first settlements, Pontiac's War, land titles, adventures of pioneers,

⁹ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone; or, Historical Sketches of Western Presbyterianism, Its Early Ministers, Its Perilous Times, and Its First Records* (Philadelphia, 1854), 23, 24; see also Neville B. Craig's *Ye Olden Time*, I, 294.

commerce of the west, the state boundary question, temperance, the whiskey insurrection, and the like. His second chapter, "Manners, Customs and Domestic Circumstances of Early Frontier Life," pages 93-110, is priceless. His note 30, pages 355-356, describes emigrants from New England who wintered at present West Newton 1777-1778 and then proceeded by boat and founded the Marietta settlement. Yet, regrettably, Smith seems to tell us nothing about his Pennsylvania German neighbors except explaining Lawrence Washington's effort to draw them west of the Alleghenies.

Thomas Eckerlin and his two brothers, almost certainly Pennsylvania Germans, were the first settlers in Greene County. Those three, and other Dunkards (members of the Church of the Brethren), settled at the mouth of Dunkard Creek in or before 1750. After a time they went to Dunkard Bottom on the Cheat River in an area that is now within West Virginia. The Dunkard Bottom settlement was ravaged by a war party of French and Indians.

The Brush Creek Settlement, near which the Bushy Run Battle took place, was founded in 1759 by Andrew Byerly and other Germans. The settlement was attacked by Indians in 1769, 1779, 1781, and 1782.

Dunkards were the first permanent white settlers in what is now Blair County. These Germans came into the southern end of Morrisons Cove in or about 1760 or earlier. One of them, Jacob Neff, built a mill about 1765 at present Roaring Spring. Indians burned the mill, but Mr. Neff rebuilt it. The Dunkards owned much of the farmland in the Cove.¹⁰ More than a century after those Dunkards came to Morrisons Cove their descendants founded Juniata College at Huntingdon, in 1876, and still later one of their own, Martin Grove Brumbaugh, served as Governor of Pennsylvania, 1915-1919.

It seems that in the early 1760's a number of Pennsylvania Germans, Dunkards, settled in the vicinity of Berlin in present Somerset County. They called the vicinity Brothers Valley. Later their English-speaking neighbors called it Stony Creek Glades. Martin Grove Brumbaugh describes this early settlement as follows:

STONY CREEK CONGREGATION.

The first movement of Brethren across the Allegheny Mountains in Pennsylvania was to *Bruederthal*, Brothers Valley, in what is now Somerset county, Pennsylvania. About 1762 this congregation began under George Adam Martin. He was, at this time, a Seventh Day Baptist, and the congregation at the beginning held to the same doctrine. They soon, however, returned to the practice

10 George A. Wolf, Editor-in-Chief, *Blair County's First Hundred Years, 1846-1946* (Altoona, 1945), 181-182.

and faith of the Brethren church. The number of members, in 1770, was seventeen. Elder George Adam Martin and wife, Henry Roth and wife and daughter, Henry Roth, Jr. and wife, George Newmoyer, Philip Aswald and wife and daughter, Abraham Gebel and wife, Philip Kimmel and wife, . . . Wildebarger and wife.¹¹

The *Mennonite Encyclopedia* states that there were Dunkards in the Berlin vicinity in 1762.¹²

We know definitely that a German named Philip Wagerlein lived in the vicinity in 1771, Harmon Husband having visited Wagerlein on June 5 of that year and leaving for us an account of the visit.¹³

The Mennonites and Amish came early to present southern Somerset County. By 1783 there were more than thirty Amish and Mennonite names listed as taxpayers in Brothersvalley Township, then including the Glades and the settlements on the Casselman River.¹⁴

The town of Berlin dates back to a curious indenture of March 21, 1788, in the German language, witnessed by seventeen men with distinctly Pennsylvania German names. The indenture was found in Bedford County records.¹⁵

By 1800 there were two distinct Amish settlements in Somerset County — in the Glades near Berlin, and along the Casselman from present Meyersdale to the Mason and Dixon Line and on to Grantsville, Maryland. About 1800 an Amish settlement was made in Cone-maugh Township, near the north border of Somerset County, and extending into Cambria County¹⁶ to and including the site of present Johnstown. Joseph Schantz (Johns), an Amishman, moved to that north area from the Glades. He began to sell lots from his farm about 1800, and thus founded the city of Johnstown.¹⁷ Many Mennonites and Amish are still living in Somerset and southern Cambria Counties.

In the 1750's the French and Indians beyond the Alleghenies were increasingly becoming a menace to the interest of the King of England, the proprietary government of Pennsylvania, and the white settlers on the frontier. The clash of interests produced the French and

11 Martin Grove Brumbaugh, *A History of The German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Elgin, Illinois, 1899), 329-330.

12 *The Mennonite Encyclopedia, A Comprehensive Reference Work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement*. Edited by C. Henry Smith and Harold S. Bender (Scottsdale, Pa., 1959), IV, 573.

13 *Berlin, Pennsylvania, 1837-1937, Souvenir Book of the Centennial of the Incorporation of the Borough of Berlin* [1937?], 3.

14 *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV, 573.

15 Indenture reproduced in full in *Berlin, Pennsylvania, 1837-1937, Centennial Book* (see note 13), 5.

16 *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV, 573.

17 *Ibid.*, 574.

Indian Wars and Pontiac's Conspiracy in the period 1755-1763. There were some German soldiers with Braddock in 1755, many with Forbes in 1758 and many with Bouquet in 1763. After the Braddock and Forbes expeditions and the Battle of Bushy Run a considerable number of these Pennsylvania Germans settled along and south of the Forbes Road, from Ligonier to Fort Pitt, because of being favorably impressed with the land and climate of that part of Pennsylvania. William Arter Zundel, who was familiar with original records concerning settlements in southwestern Pennsylvania for the period before the Revolution, maintains firmly but without detailed documentation that at the time of the beginning of the Revolution one-half of Pennsylvania's population west of the mountains was of German descent,¹⁸ and that from 1750 to 1770 "more than half of the settlers west of the mountains were Germans."¹⁹ Zundel states:

The early settlers from 1750 to 1770 in what is now Westmoreland and Allegheny counties were very largely Germans. In the south in Fayette and Washington counties there were more settlers of other nationalities but the Germans still seemed to have a majority. The Scotch-Irish migrations were not strong until the land was officially opened for settlement, from 1770 to 1780.²⁰

In 1768 Friedrich Pfoersching located on a site several miles south of present Latrobe in Westmoreland County. He had come to York County in 1749, married Elizabeth Weygandt, and settled in what was then York County. This particular Pennsylvania German migration is of great interest, for it delineates the path of one German family from Europe to the colonial port of Philadelphia, thence westward to Missouri, and unfolds the family tree of General John J. Pershing, the top military figure in World War I. Friedrich and Elizabeth W. Pfoersching's son, the Rev. Daniel Pershing (1769-1838), was born in present Westmoreland County. The Rev. Mr. Pershing married Christena Milliron. Their son, Joseph M. Pershing (1810-1871), was born in Westmoreland County. He married Elizabeth Davis. Their son, John F. Pershing (1834-1905), removed from Westmoreland County to the great west, finally settling in Missouri. He married Ann E. Thompson, and their son, John Joseph Pershing, born in Linn County, Missouri, September 13, 1860, became General of the Armies.²¹

Land in southwestern Pennsylvania was opened to settlement by

18 *Proceedings and Addresses*, Pennsylvania German Society, XXXIII, 1923, "Fort Allen, in Westmoreland County, Pa.," page 22, Part II.

19 *Ibid.*, 26.

20 *Ibid.*, 27.

21 Homer T. Rosenberger, 440.

whites on April 3, 1769, following the Indian treaty of Fort Stanwix, made on November 5 of the preceding year. In accord with the treaty of Fort Stanwix the part of southwestern Pennsylvania opened on April 3, 1769, included all the land west and southwest of present Bedford, Blair, and southern Centre Counties, and parts of present Beaver, Allegheny, Armstrong, Indiana, and Clearfield Counties, and also much of northeastern Pennsylvania. A treaty and deed of 1784 opened the remainder of Western Pennsylvania, and northcentral as well, to white settlement, except the Erie Triangle which was opened for white settlement in 1792.²²

On that first day, April 3, 1769, that southwestern and much of northeastern Pennsylvania was opened for settlement by the whites, application was made for several thousand warrants. From *History of the Pittsburgh Synod of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, by Ellis R. Burgess, we learn the following:

Fully two hundred families of Pennsylvania Germans, chiefly from the counties of Northampton, Berks, Lehigh, Franklin, Lancaster, Adams, and York, crossed the mountains, from 1769 to 1772, and took up lands. Some of these Germans were from Maryland and Virginia, and a few came direct from the Fatherland. The great majority of these earliest settlers located in Westmoreland, Fayette and Allegheny counties. The first settlements were Fort Pitt in Allegheny county; Harold's, Brush Creek and Ligonier Valley in Westmoreland county; and German township in Fayette county. Other settlements effected soon after were Ridge, Schwab's, Kündig's, Hoffman's, Seanor's, Greensburg, Manor, and Beamer's, in Westmoreland county; Bethlehem and Stecher's, in Washington county; West Salem in Allegheny county; Buechle's in Butler county; Rupp's and Crooked Creek in Armstrong county, and Brush Valley, Germany and Indiana, in Indiana county. The German settlements of Clarion, Mercer, Crawford, and Erie counties were made at a still later period.²³

At about this time the Germans were already settled in present Bedford County. The German Reformed and the Trinity Lutheran congregations of Bedford town date back at least to June 21, 1769, when John Penn, grandson of the Founder, was Governor of Pennsylvania. On that date Penn authorized the collection of charitable contributions in the amount of six hundred pounds to help those two congregations erect a church on their enclosed lot of ground.²⁴ The Bedford German Reformed Church on West John Street built its first

²² *Genealogical Map of the Counties*, 1933, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Internal Affairs. A detailed and useful map with fourteen inset maps together with chronological tables, on a sheet approximately twelve inches by seventeen inches.

²³ Pages 9-10.

²⁴ W. H. Bruce Carney, *History of the Alleghany Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Together with a Topical Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Its Ancestry, Origin and Development* (Philadelphia, 1918), 252-253.

edifice, on West John Street, in 1770, the first church structure in the county.²⁵ Zion Lutheran Church in present Colerain Township, Bedford County, dates, perhaps, to 1777.²⁶ Messiah Lutheran Church in the same county dates back to 1778 or to 1789.²⁷ The Schellsburg Union Church, on the Lincoln Highway, a half-mile west of Schellsburg and approximately nine miles west of Bedford, was built in 1806 and was used by Lutheran and Reformed congregations for a number of years.²⁸

Farther west, the Germans had already penetrated what is now Fayette County. Jacobs Lutheran Church, approximately a mile and a half north of Masontown, was known as the "Old Dutch Church" and was built at least by 1773.²⁹

In each of five places in his history of Westmoreland County, George Dallas Albert spoke of the county's Pennsylvania Germans. After discussing the Scotch-Irish residents he wrote:

The next largest class — speaking in reference to their nationality — was of German origin, the offspring of the early settlers of the Berks, Lancaster, and Cumberland region, although some were emigrants from the Palatinate or Rhine provinces, and from Württemberg. Of these many chose the most dreary slopes of the Chestnut Ridge, and they were the farthest back from the main (Forbes') road, although there was quite a settlement in Hempfield township, and around the Harrold and Byerly locations, between Greensburg and Irwin. These people were not so aggressive as the former [the Scotch-Irish], and, as a rule, they laid out a life-work devoted to labor.³⁰

In speaking of the Pennsylvania Germans who had already migrated to what is now Westmoreland County, before the county was erected in 1773, Albert said the following:

In point of numbers, next to the Scotch-Irish were the Germans; but in no place, with the exception of their settlement in Hempfield and in Huntingdon townships, had these collected so thickly as the former. This particular settlement, however, has retained the distinctive traits of its German origin even to our own day. The Germans lived more isolated than the Scotch-Irish, and they were found scattered all over the county, where effective traces of their presence are still to be discerned. If we compare the names of those of an undoubted German origin who signed the petitions to Governor John Penn in 1774, we find that the German element in some districts, especially in the one to which we have alluded, predominated over the Irish element. And although these were always a strong body in our county, yet, owing to their detached locations and

25 Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey, *Guidebook to Historic Places in Western Pennsylvania*, 1938, 41.

26 W. H. Bruce Carney, 314.

27 *Ibid.*, 336.

28 *Ibid.*, 326, and *Guidebook*, 41.

29 *Guidebook*, 75.

30 *History of the County of Westmoreland, Pennsylvania, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*, 1882 (Philadelphia), 44.

their characteristics in not meddling in public affairs to the detriment or disparagement of their private interests, the whole controlling of affairs in the first years of our history was monopolized by the Scotch-Irish and the Americans of English descent. By and by these two elements began to coalesce, and towards the end of the Revolution there were at the head of county affairs, along with Cook and Jack, Huffnagle and Truby.

The German settlers of Westmoreland were not all of them emigrants from Germany. The major part of them were descendants of settlers in the eastern portion of the Province.³¹

Albert mentioned the Lutheran influence:

... Lutheran families came from eastern counties and from their fatherland to this part of our State before Westmoreland County was erected. The Detars, the Rughs, the Millers, the Gangawares, the Harrolds, the Altmans, and Longs settled in Hempfield township between 1762 and 1770. There were also settlements of Lutheran families in several other localities soon after the county was formed, namely, Brush Creek, Manor, Kintigs, Ridge, Brandts; *and the history of the Lutheran Church runs parallel with the history of the county itself.* [Italics are mine. H.T.R.]³²

Albert speaks of the Scotch-Irish (apparently about the summer of 1769) who took up land in present Westmoreland County to live on it and then speaks about the German Reformed influence. He states that the congregation at Harrold was the first German Reformed congregation in the county and that the Rev. Johann Wilhelm Weber in June 1783 was serving four German Reformed congregations in Westmoreland County — Harrold's and Brush Creek in Hempfield Township, Kintig's in Mount Pleasant Township, and the Ridge Church, approximately a mile south of Pleasant Unity in Unity Township, and that he preached in addition in Pittsburgh. Albert also states that Weber "held services and gave instruction in Ligonier Valley, and to scattered Germans of both his own church and the Lutheran Church all over the southern part of the county in nearly every locality where later has been a congregation." ³³

Weber's baptismal register, in translation, is available in the library of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, as are also, in German script, the manuscript diaries of Gabriel Adam Reichert, a Lutheran missionary pastor in Western Pennsylvania. In those diaries Reichert frequently gave short biographies of persons he buried, thus shedding light on early Pennsylvania German settlers in Western Pennsylvania.

Speaking of the Mennonites, Albert wrote in 1882:

In this county the sect is on the decline. At one time their communicants

³¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

³² *Ibid.*, 247.

³³ *Ibid.*, 242.

were here numbered by hundreds, while now there are less than forty, and not one of these under the age of forty. . . . Since their settlement here the Mennonites have been distinguished for their moral worth, thrift, industry, and intelligence, and no portion of the county excels the part originally settled by them. . . .³⁴

In Volume I of his history John N. Boucher states: "Westmoreland county as it now [1906] exists in territory was settled largely by Scotch-Irish and Pennsylvania Dutch [Germans]." He continues: "There were Pennsylvania Dutch [Germans] scattered all over Westmoreland county, but they settled mostly in Hempfield and Huntingdon townships. There were also a great many on Chestnut Ridge bordering Somerset county, where they were very numerous." (*History of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania*, The Lewis Publishing Company, New York, 1906, pages 116 and 118.)

The Pennsylvania Germans who settled at Herold's (Harrold's) in Hempfield Township, Westmoreland County, erected Fort Allen in 1774, three miles northwest of present Greensburg. This was at the time John Connolly, representing the Earl of Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, attempted to seize southwestern Pennsylvania in the name of the Governor of Virginia. Westmoreland County inhabitants were alarmed. They met at Fort Allen and petitioned Governor John Penn in Philadelphia, asking for assistance. Many of the signatures on the petition are the names of Pennsylvania Germans — Frantz Raupp, Stofel Uhrich, Heinrich Schmit, Jacob Schmit, Jacob Hauser, Jacob Schreber, Peter Schelhammer, Knicklas Souer, and the like.³⁵

Zundel's history of Zion Lutheran Church at Herold's includes a list of names of children in the Zion Church Settlement who were baptized during the period August 2, 1772, to June 4, 1792, together with names of their parents.³⁶ Names of communicants for various dates, 1791-1862,³⁷ and full lists of confirmants, 1792-1862,³⁸ are also given. These names are unmistakably Pennsylvania German.

Following the contour of the land the Pennsylvania Germans flowed into the wilderness of western Maryland in the mid-1700's, in the area near present Frederick and Hagerstown.³⁹ From western Maryland many Pennsylvania Germans journeyed to Cumberland and

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 262-263.

³⁵ "Fort Allen, in Westmoreland County, Pa.," 32-33.

³⁶ William Arter Zundel, *History of Old Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hempfield Township, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Near Harrold's*, 1922, published by the Church Council, 187-230.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 231-247.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 247-256.

³⁹ Daniel Wunderlich Nead, "The Pennsylvania-German in the Settlement of Maryland," *third section of Proceedings and Addresses*, Pennsylvania German Society, XXII, 1913, 50-65.

then to southwestern Pennsylvania on a route that has been known during most of the 20th century as United States Highway 40. Martin Grove Brumbaugh tells about an early group in Fayette County arriving from eastern Pennsylvania, presumably via Maryland, as follows:

About 1787 Elder George Wolfe removed from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Fayette County. There was a settlement of the Brethren in Fayette County immediately after the Revolutionary War. This body of emigrants forced an open gateway to the west over the route formerly taken by Braddock's army, a route that later became known as the "Old Pike," or Great National Road, the first highway constructed into the Ohio Valley by the government.⁴⁰

Four Mennonite families acquired land in Fayette County 1789-1791. Abraham Stauffer came from Lancaster County in 1790 and bought 278 acres of land in Tyrone Township in northern Fayette. He was the first minister and bishop of the Fayette County Mennonites. Other settlers came from Lancaster County, and from Washington County, Maryland. The Masontown Mennonite Church, in southern Fayette, is thought to be the second oldest Mennonite congregation west of the Alleghenies. Mennonites settled that area before 1800, perhaps before 1790.⁴¹ They settled in Westmoreland County in the 1790-1800 period and they came from Bucks, Chester, Berks, Lancaster, Northampton, and Bedford Counties.⁴² George Mumma, who purchased land near Scottdale in 1794 is the earliest known Mennonite settler in Westmoreland County.⁴³ Almost a century later, after about 1893, the Scottdale vicinity, in Westmoreland and Fayette Counties, became an increasingly important Mennonite center and its large publishing house is located there.

On the heels of the early German migration to Western Pennsylvania there followed a rather steady stream of German migration after the Revolution. When these people settled in a valley or at the forks of a stream they established a congregation, often meeting in homes and later building a church edifice. There was a migration of German Lutherans, probably about 1786, to the vicinity of Water Street, at the line between present Blair and Huntingdon Counties. Some of these settlers went to Fort Loudon, thence to Fort Littleton, and on to Frankstown. A larger group came up the Susquehanna and Juniata Rivers.⁴⁴ The church which those Germans founded at Water Street has long been known as Trinity Lutheran.⁴⁵

40 Martin Grove Brumbaugh, 533-534.

41 *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II, 318.

42 *Ibid.*, IV, 935.

43 *Ibid.*, IV, 935.

44 George A. Wolf, 204.

45 W. H. Bruce Carney, 307.

Many of the early residents of Williamsburg, Blair County, were Lutheran and many were German Reformed. A tract of land was deeded to the two denominations on November 20, 1798.⁴⁶ The German Reformed Church of Williamsburg probably came into being as early as 1798.⁴⁷ A detailed chronology of the town, by W. Ray Metz (not French!), states that the German Reformed congregation erected a stone church on East Second Street in 1822 and that the Zion Evangelical Lutheran stone church on Plum Street, costing three thousand dollars, was dedicated in 1827.⁴⁸

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Martinsburg, Blair County, dates back to at least 1785. From 1832 to 1842 the Lutherans in that town worshipped in a church building belonging to the Reformed congregation.⁴⁹ The Lutheran Church in Newry, Blair County, probably dates back to 1785. A "considerable number of German Lutherans had settled in this community, coming from Centre and other eastern counties."⁵⁰ The Lutheran Church of Marklesburg, near St. James Post Office, Huntingdon County, dates from August 17, 1794.⁵¹

In present Somerset County the church book of the union Lutheran and German Reformed in Berlin begins in 1777.⁵² The union church book of the Lutheran and German Reformed in Salisbury starts in 1788.⁵³ Early German settlers in what is now Friedens had the following names: Frederick and John Mostoller, Andrew Woy, Casper, Jacob, and Thomas Swank, Henry Shaffer, Joseph Miller, Michael Mowry, and Benjamin Zerfoss. Lutheran and German Reformed church activity at Friedens dates back to the period 1780-1787.⁵⁴ The Lutheran Church at Stoyestown is believed to date to 1788.^{54a}

The Lutheran Church was somewhat active among Pennsylvania Germans in Westmoreland and Fayette Counties before 1790, and in Washington, Greene, and Allegheny Counties by 1806.⁵⁵

Creigh speaks of the "German Evangelical Lutheran and Re-

46 *Ibid.*, 526.

47 George A. Wolf, 197.

48 *Ibid.*, 83.

49 W. H. Bruce Carney, 462-463.

50 *Ibid.*, 470.

51 *Ibid.*, 299.

52 *Ibid.*, 255.

53 *Ibid.*, 255.

54 *Ibid.*, 603.

54a *Ibid.*, 753.

55 Ellis B. Burgess, table, 37.

formed Church" of Washington⁵⁶ and the Ginger Hill Lutheran Church and the nearby United Brethren Church.⁵⁷

Leland D. Baldwin points out that German immigration into the Pittsburgh region increased "perceptibly" during the Revolution⁵⁸ and that the Germans contributed substantially to the "broadening of Pittsburgh culture."⁵⁹ He states that many of the early Germans in Pittsburgh were mechanics, prosperous farmers, and merchants.⁶⁰ In 1782 the German Evangelical Protestant Church held services in a log building at present Wood and Diamond Streets in Pittsburgh. The Rev. Johann Wilhelm Weber was the pastor, and this was the first organized religious group in the town. Neville B. Craig said that Pittsburgh had two clergymen in the summer of 1786, one of the Calvinistic faith and the other a German Lutheran who preached there occasionally.⁶¹

(To be continued)

56 Alfred Creigh, *History of Washington County from Its First Settlement to the Present Time . . .*, Second Edition, Revised and Corrected (Harrisburg, 1871), 187-188.

57 *Ibid.*, 242.

58 *Pittsburgh, The Story of a City*, 1937, 115.

59 *Ibid.*, 162.

60 *Ibid.*, 162.

61 Neville B. Craig, *The History of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh, 1917), IX, 190.