**Reading 5: Gottlieb Mittelberger (1750)**

Mittelberger paid for his own voyage from Germany to Pennsylvania. He worked as a school teacher and organist for three years before returning to Germany.

Source: Gottlieb Mittelberger, *Journey to Pennsylvania in the Year 1750 and Return to Germany in the Year 1754* (Philadelphia, 1898), excerpts from 20-3, 25-8, 31-2, 37-8, 54-9, 82-6, 91-3, 112-13.

When the ships leave England, the real misery begins with the long voyage. The ships must often sail eight or twelve weeks before they reach Philadelphia. During the voyage there is terrible misery, stench, fumes, horror, vomiting, many kinds of seasickness, fever, boils, scurvy, and mouth rot, which come from old food and meat and also from very bad water, so that many die miserably.

Few women who give birth to children on the ship escape with their lives and many a mother is cast into the water with her child as soon as she is dead. Children from one to seven years rarely survive the voyage; and parents are compelled to see their children miserably suffer and die from hunger, thirst, and sickness and then see them cast into the water. I saw such misery in no less than thirty-two children in our ship, all of whom were thrown into the sea.

When the ships landed, no one is permitted to leave except those who pay for their passage. The others, who cannot pay, must remain on board till they are purchased and released from the ships by their purchasers. The sick always fare the worst, for the healthy are preferred and purchased first; the sick and wretched must often remain on board for 2 or 3 weeks, and frequently die.

The sale of human beings in the market on board the ship is carried on thus: Every day people come from Philadelphia and other places and go on board the ship that has brought and offers passengers for sale. When they come to an agreement, adult persons usually bind themselves from 3-6 years according to their age and strength. But very young people, from ten to fifteen years, must serve till they are twenty-one years old. Many parents must sell and trade away their children like head of cattle, for if their children take the debt upon themselves, the parents can leave the ship free and unrestrained but as the parents often do not know where and to what people their children are going, it often happens that parents and children, after leaving the ship, do not see each other again for many years, perhaps no more in all their lives.