

Early Palatine Families of New York

By Marian S. Henry

After the death of Charles II of Spain in 1700, Philip V, grandson of King Louis XIV of France, was named to succeed him. Louis refused to keep his grandson from the line of succession to the French throne, which prompted fears of expansion. These actions led to the War of the Spanish Succession, which moved into America in 1702, where it was known as Queen Anne's War. The conflict, which lasted from 1702 to 1713, pitted France and Spain against England, Austria, the Netherlands, and Portugal. The armies of Louis XIV invaded the Palatinate region of Germany, forcing residents to flee first to Holland, then by boat from Rotterdam to London. As they were victims of Britain's enemy, these German-speaking Protestants were at first welcomed in London, and in 1709 the government issued sixteen hundred tents for Palatine encampments in Blackheath and elsewhere. The flood of immigrants that followed, estimated to be ten to thirty thousand (or two to five percent of the city's population in 1710), became unsupportable. [Boston today has roughly the same population as London of 1710. Imagine the same number of immigrants sailing into Boston harbor and setting up a tent city on the Commons.] This situation led Her Majesty's government to formulate a plan in which refugees needing aid could be transformed into colonists producing profit. The government proceeded to send several thousand of these German families to New York to produce naval supplies needed for the war by the Royal Navy. In return for passage to New York and maintenance, the Germans were to produce tar, turpentine, and ship's masts. When the debt was repaid, each family would receive forty acres of land free from taxes or quit rents for seven years. Some three thousand people set sail for New York in 1710. They labored for about three years, but the project was an economic disaster and much ill will was generated. Finally, in 1713, the project was terminated, leaving the Palatines still in debt to the crown. Without permission, the Palatines left for the land that they claimed Queen Anne had promised them, in the Schoharie Valley where the Schoharie Creek flows into the Mohawk River. Their claim was not recognized in Albany, and in 1723, after a decade of violent dispute, this settlement disbanded, and many of the settlers moved south into Pennsylvania.

II. Arrival of Palatines into New York, 1709-1710

These Palatines were not the first group of German-speaking settlers to arrive in New York. An earlier group of forty-one persons (ten men, ten women, and twenty-one children) led by Evangelical minister Joshua Kockerthal, was sent to New York by royal order on May 10, 1708. Filby[1] lists the arrival in 1709 of Joshua Kockerthal, age 39, his wife Sibylla Charlotta, 39, and children Benigna Sibylla, 10, Christian Joshua, 7, and Susanna Sibylla, 3. Rupp[2] lists the names, ages, and occupations of "Those Who Accompanied Rev. Joshua Kocherthal, who settled on lands on Quassick Creek, then Dutchess County, NY in the Spring of 1709." in his Appendix No. IV. This group was not part of the Naval Stores project described in the preceding paragraph. They were given five hundred acres of land to form the town of Quassic, now Newburg (near the junction of interstates 84 and 87) and remained there.

The main group of about three thousand distressed Germans sailed for New York in ten ships, arriving on June 13, 1710, with newly appointed royal governor, Robert Hunter. The passengers experienced much sickness during the voyage, and nearly five hundred were lost at sea. Upon arrival they were quarantined for several months on Nutten (now Governor's) Island due to typhus on board. Thus they could not begin work until the spring of 1711.

Genealogical information on over eight hundred of these families is available in Henry Jones' two-volume work *The Palatine Families of New York: a study of the German immigrants who arrived in colonial New York in 1710*. [3] His primary sources (original sources, not published transcriptions) include Rotterdam Sailing Lists of 1709, London Census of Palatines of 1709, Hunter Subsistence Lists 1710-1712, West Camp Census 1710-11, and the Simmendiger Register.

III. Naval Stores Project, 1709-1712

As early as 1699, the Earl of Bellomont, appointed governor of New York, Massachusetts Bay and New Hampshire, had proposed that the colony of New York be used for the production of naval supplies. He also suggested using garrisoned soldiers as the labor force in this initiative. Colonel Robert Hunter, who himself would later become governor of New York, coupled this suggestion with the exploding refugee problem and substituted the Palatines as the labor force. As described in this excerpt from a report by the Board of Trade dated December 5, 1709, the settlement

was to be located along the Mohawk River.

“...we have considered the proposals made to us by Colonel Hunter for settling 3000 Palatines at New York, and Employing them in the Production of Naval stores, and thereupon humbly Represent to your Majesty ... the most proper Places for the seating them in that Province, so as they may be of benefit to this Kingdom by the Production of Naval Stores, are on the Mohaques River, and on the Hudsons River ... A Tract of land lying on the Mohaques River containing about 50 miles in length and four miles in breadth, and a Tract of land lying upon a creek [Schoharie Creek] which runs into the said River, containing between 24 and 30 Miles in length. This land mentioned, land of which your majesty has the possession, is claimed by the Mohaques, but that claim may be satisfied on very easy terms... We therefore humbly offer that the governor or commander in chief be Directed upon their Arrival... to grant under the Seal of that Province, without fee or Reward, 40 acres per head to each family, after they shall have repaid by the produce of their Labour, the charges the publick shall be at in setting and subsisting them there.... As these people are very necessitous, they will not be able to maintain themselves there, till they can reap the benefit of their labour which will not be till after one year at the soonest... Lastly, we humbly offer that the said Palatines upon their arrival there, be naturalized... that they may enjoy all such privileges and advantages as are Enjoyed by the present Inhabitants of that province.”[4]

For whatever reason, Governor Hunter decided against a settlement on Crown land. The Germans were then settled not on the banks of the Mohawk River, but on land along the Hudson River sold to the province by Robert Livingston, commissioner of Indian affairs. Four villages made up East Camp, located on the east side of the river at the present site of Germantown, in Columbia County. Three villages comprised West Camp, on the west side of the river at the present site of Saugerties. Governor Hunter also awarded to Livingston the contract for providing food and supplies to the Germans. At least two sources claim that Livingston cheated them. The reason is not clear. It may have been simple politics. Hunter was a Tory, Livingston a Whig. The Whigs, who had taken over the government while Hunter was en route to New York, ceased funding the project. For some reason Hunter continued to pay for the Germans' supplies until he'd emptied his purse. In any case, the Germans knew they were being cheated and blamed the governor.

In the spring of 1711 they began work. Nearly one hundred thousand trees were felled and prepared. Roads were constructed to bring tar to the banks of the river. Coopers made barrels and cauldrons were made ready. However, the work did not prosper. Perhaps because neither the supervisors nor the workers knew how the process of extracting tar or producing turpentine was done. Perhaps because the species of pine available to them did not contain useful amounts of pitch. The best pine for tar and turpentine is the longleaf pine (*pinus palustris*), found only in the south. The best source colonists in New York had would have been the pitch pine (*pinus rigida*), found from southern Maine to northern Georgia.[5] Wallace[6] explains the failure thus: “Sackett was a local farmer who had persuaded the Governor (who understood nothing about the tar business) that he (Sackett) understood everything; and who, having been put in charge of production, had proceeded with great energy and confidence to have his hundred thousand trees barked in the wrong way.”

By the autumn of 1712 Hunter could no longer afford the expense and the Germans were left to fend for themselves, still in debt to the crown. Disgusted, they left for the land along the Schoharie Creek, which they claimed had been promised to them by Queen Anne.

IV. Schoharie Interlude, 1712-1723

In the winter of 1712-13 about fifty families walked to the Schoharie Valley. The remainder joined them in the spring, making a total of between five and seven hundred people. They founded seven “dorfs,” or farming villages, along the Schoharie Creek[7]. The southernmost, Weiser’s Dorf, named for Conrad Weiser, was at the site of present-day Middleburgh and contained about forty dwellings. Hartman’s Dorf, named after Hartmen Winteker, was between Middleburgh and Schoharie, and contained sixty-five dwellings. Brunnen Dorf, at the site of present-day Schoharie Village, translates to Fountain Town, and was named for a large spring located near the current courthouse. Smith’s Dorf, named after Johannes George Smidt, was located about one mile north of Brunnen Dorf. Next to Smith’s Dorf were Fox’s Dorf and Fox’s Creek, both named for William Fox. Garlock’s Dorf, named for Elias Garlock, was between Schoharie and Central Bridge. Kneiskern’s Dorf, the most northerly settlement, and named for John Peter Kneiskern, was on the east side of the Schoharie River opposite the mouth of Cobel’s kill.

Because the settlers were viewed in Albany as squatters, conflict was inevitable. On November 3, 1714, the Huntersfield Patent was sold by Governor Hunter to a group of businessmen[8] known as the “Seven Partners of Schoharie.” [The names of these men were Myndert Schuyler, Peter Van Brugh, Robert Livingston, Jr., John Schuyler, Henry Wileman, Lewis Morris, Jr., and Andrus Coeman.] Earlier, on August 26, 1714, Adam Vrooman obtained a patent to four hundred acres in the area. Vrooman, then aged seventy-five, apparently bought the land for his son Peter, who occupied it the same year with his own eldest son Bartholomew. Peter Vrooman was not well received by the Palatines, as his subsequent complaint makes clear.

“I have mannured a great part of the Land and Sowed Considerable grain thereon they still drove their horses on in by night, I then hired my sones to go with me and build me a house... but on the 4th day of this Instant In ye night following they had a Contryvance to tie bells about the horses necks and drive them too and fro In which time they pulled my house Stones and all to the Ground the next day I spok with some of them and they used such Rebelious Expressions that was never heard off... John Conradus Wiser has been the Ring Leader of all factions for he has had his son some time to Live among the Indians and now he is turn’d their Interpreter... I am no wayes secure of my Life their for after I came away they went and pulld my son off of the wagon and beat him and said they would kill him or his father or anybody Else that came their... John Conradus Wiser & 2 or 3 more has made their Escape by way of Boston and have said they will go for England but has left his son which is their Interpreter to the Indians and every day tells the Indians many Lyes... I am well Informed who are their Chiefes : for those that are good Subjects among them and will not Joyn with them are afraid the others will Burn their houses down by their threatening words...”[9]

When the sheriff was sent to intervene, he was mobbed by a group of determined Palatine women.

“When the sheriff began to meddle with the first man, a mob of women rose, of which Magdalene Zee was captain. He [Sheriff Adams] was knocked down, and dragged through every mud-pool in the street; then hung on a rail and carried four miles, thrown down on a bridge, where the captain took a stake out of the fence, and struck him in the side, that she broke two of his ribs and lost one eye; then she pissed in his face, let him lie and went off.

"Knowing that discretion is the better part of valor, the wounded Adams made off for Albany. For a good time to come, the men of Schoharie stayed away from that city, sending women instead, but not forever. After things cooled, the partners had a sheriff's posse waiting and a group of visiting Palatines, including Weiser junior, was seized and jailed." [10]

At this time (1718) an enumeration was made of the German families in New York. A total of 394 families was tallied, included 170 in the "Seven Townships" in Schoharie and seven in "Wessels pretended land." One of the signers of the account was Joshua Kocherthal. This is presumably the same Rev. Joshua Kocherthal who led the first group of Palatines.

An Account of the families of Germans settled on Hudson's River in the Province of New York, 1718. [11]

On the East side of Hudson's River	Location	Families	Persons
	Hunterstown	25	109
	Kingsberry	33	104
	Annberry	17	71
	Haysberry	16	75
	Rheinbeck	35	140
In Schohare	Seven Townships	170	680
On the West Side	New Town	14	56
	George Town	13	52
	Eliz: Town	9	36
	Kingstown	15	60
	Wessels pretended land	7	28
	Kingstown Sopes	10	40
	At New York & places adjacent	30	150
		394	1601

The widows & orphans are not included in this list.

This to the best of our knowledge is the Acc^{ot} of those people settled, amounting to 394 families, containing about 1601 persons.

[signed] Joshua Kocherthal and John Fred. Hager

[endorsed] "New York, List of the Palatines settled in New York Province Rec^d wth Brig. Hunters L^r of 7 Aug 1718"

Although there were signs of division amongst the families, the majority agreed to send a committee to London to plead their cause before King George I (Queen Anne had died on August 1, 1714). In 1718 the elder Conrad Weiser, William Scheff, and Gerhardt Walrath set forth on an ill-fated journey. They were waylaid and robbed by pirates. When they finally reached London they were jailed for debt. Both Scheff and Walrath died in London. In 1723 Conrad Weiser returned empty-handed to find that the group had fragmented. Some had stayed in the area, while others had

moved west or to the south.

V. Dispersal from Schoharie

In 1719 Governor Hunter became the governor of Jamaica and a new governor, William Burnet, was installed. In 1721 Conrad Weiser, Jr., petitioned the new governor for redress of their grievances. As a result, those who wished to stay in the area were able to purchase land from the “Seven Partners” at reasonable terms at Stone Arabia in the Mohawk Valley. An account of these families may be found in the records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Stone Arabia[12]. The published records contain two volumes of baptisms: volume I contains entries from 1740 to 1795 and volume II from 1796 to 1824. There is an index. The earliest surnames are Lauks, Sutz, Dilleback, and Allstein.

Other Palatine families obtained land in the Burnetsfield Patent in 1722. They founded the town of Herkimer near Utica. The table below[13] lists those settlers who formed the Herkimer Church (north side) and the Fort Herkimer Church (south side). Each person, not each family, received one hundred acres, and at least three acres was to be cultivated in three years.

Patentees on North Side	Patentees on South Side
Eva Staring (wife of John Adam [Staring])	Jacob Bowman
John Jost Temouth	Christopher Fox
Mary Beerman	Johannes Reslaer
Augustines Hess	Nicolas Kaslaer
Johannes Poenradt	Anna Dacksteder (wife of Jurgh Dacksteder)
Gertruy Poenradt (wife of Johannes [Poenradt])	Johannes Miller
Henry Heger	Nicholas Staring
Elisabeth Hellmer (wife of Lendert Hellmer)	Joseph Staring
Hendrick Spoon, Jr.	Conradt Orendorf
Johan Adam Staring	Hendrick Orendorf
Lodwick Pares	Peter Spels
Johannis Beerman	Lawrence Herter
Philip Helmer	Ffderick Bellinger
Frederick Pell	Conrady Ryckert
Anna Mary Pell	John Mitchall Edigh
Mary Catherine Koens (widow)	Hendrick Spoon
Melgert Ffols	Johannes Hess
Johan Veldelant	Nicholas Weileven
Adam Michael Smith	Ludolph Korsing
Johan Jurgh Kast, Jr.	Anna Mayor
John Adam Helmer	Catharine Pears
Nicholas Ffeller	Margared Bellinger (wife of Johannes Bellinger)
Jacob Wever	Jacob Edich

Johan Jurgh Smith	Michael Editch
Johan Jost Petre	Hans Conradt Ffelmore
Hendrick Mayer	Christina Ffelmore
Thos. Shoemaker	Ludolph Shomaker
Anna Catherena Lant (widow)	Mary Ffeller (wife of Nicholas Ffeller)
Johan Adam Bowman	Jacob Wever, Junr.
Godfree Reece	Mark Petrie
Nicholas Wever	Odelia Koring (wife of Ludolph Koring)
Tedrigh Temouth	Anna Margaret Helmer (wife of Johan Adam Helmer)
Jurgh Dacksteder	Andries Wever
Ledwick Rickert	Godfrey Reece, Junr.
Johannes Bellinger	Ephraim Smith
Lendert Helmer	Elisabeth Spels (wife of Peter Spels)
Johan Jurgh Kast	Appolone Herter
Peter Bellinger	Mark Rykert
Frederick Staring	Marte Smith
Gertruyt Petrie (wife of Johan Jost Petrie)	Jacob Ffols
Johannes Velden Staring	Ludwick Kones
Ellizabeth Edigh	John Velde Staring, Junr.
Margaret Bellinger (wife of Peter Bellinger)	
Catharrine Rickert	
Anna Veldelant	
Frederick Helmer	

The younger Conrad Weiser persuaded approximately sixty families to move south with him into Tulpehocken, Berks County, Pennsylvania. An account of that settlement may be found in any of the several published biographies of Conrad Weiser, Jr.,^[14] or from the Tulpehocken Settlement Historical Society in Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania. According to Peter Kalm, as quoted in Rupp^[15], these German settlers related their side of their experiences in New York to their friends and relations. They advised against settling in New York and directed the newcomers to Pennsylvania. Thus in the eighteenth century, areas like Bucks County and Lancaster County experienced a large influx of German farmers who might otherwise have settled in the Mohawk Valley.

[1] *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*, Edited by P. William Filby, Detroit, 1981, Vol. II, p. 1123

[2] I. D. Rupp, *Thirty Thousand Names*, 1927, Appendix VII.

[3] *The Palatine Families of New York: a study of the German immigrants who arrived in colonial New York in 1710*, Henry Z. Jones, Universal City, Calif. : H.Z. Jones, 1985

[4] *The Sloughers' History of Schoharie County*, Compiled and Edited by Lester E. & Anne Whitbeck Hendrix,

Schoharie, NY, 1995, p. 30.

[5] *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees* , Eastern Region, Elbert L. Little, Knopf, New York, 1980.

[6] *Conrad Weiser 1696-1760, Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* , Paul A. W. Wallace, Phila., 1945, p. 12.

[7] *History of Schoharie County*, Jephtha R. Simms, Albany, 1845, p. 48.

[8] *Ibid*, p. 62.

[9] Hendrix, *Sloughers' History*, 1995, p. 37

[10] *Ibid*, pp. 37-8.

[11] *The Documentary History of the State of New York* , arranged under direction of the Hon. Christopher Morgan, Secretary of State, by E. B. O'Callaghan, M. D., Vol. I, Albany, 1849, pp. 692-3.

[12] *Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Stone Arabia in the town of Palatine, Montgomery County, New York* , transcribed by the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, published by Schenectady Genealogical Society, 1941.

[13] *History of the Old Fort Herkimer Church, German Flats Reformed Church, 1723* , W. N. P. Dailey, St. Johnsville, no date, NY, p. 3.

[14] For example, Wallace, *op. cit.*

[15] Rupp, *Thirty Thousand Names*, 1927., Appendix X, p. 452.