

# THE BALTIMORE GERMANS AND THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE IN 1778

Edited by DIETER CUNZ

The large German immigration into the State of Maryland since 1730 occurred without restraint or check by bureaucratic regulations. This freedom, which on the one hand represents the greatest characteristic of the entire history of American immigration, must, on the other hand, necessarily complicate the work of the historian. We do not have to point out that any kind of immigration running in well-organized bureaucratically determined lines is a much easier subject for historical investigation than the free and uncontrolled influx of huge masses into a vast land.

The immigrants of the eighteenth century did not have to go through the bureaucratic machinery of consulates, visa, quota and similar immigration formalities. Hence it follows that we do not have immigration lists. Scholars who have to deal with German immigration into Pennsylvania have as a priceless substitute the ship lists containing the names of all German immigrants arriving in Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century. It is needless to explain how much these documents—edited in three volumes by Strassburger-Hinke—facilitates any kind of research on the history of Pennsylvania immigration.

For Maryland we do not have anything like that. We know the names of the early immigrants only if they were handed down to posterity by incidental documents. Our main sources are the old church records. Other than from these we learn a name only if its bearer for some reason or other was the subject of an official document. Systematic lists of German immigrants into Maryland do not exist.

A kind of substitute may be found

in the lists which were compiled in the years between 1777 and 1779, especially in 1778,—lists which contain the names of all people in Maryland who took the so-called Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity. The law introducing the oath belonged to the group of Anti-Tory-Laws which were made necessary by repeated Tory-revolts on the Eastern Shore. Since 1777 the General Assembly passed several acts of this kind "to prevent the growth of toryism." Fines and punishment were determined for everyone who showed "by any word, open deed, writing, printing, or other act . . . that the king or parliament of Great Britain hath any authority, power or jurisdiction, in or over the United States . . ." (J. T. Scharf, *History of Maryland*, Baltimore, 1879, Vol. II, p. 304.)

One of these laws requiring the Oath of Allegiance was passed by the General Assembly in the end of 1777. All persons holding any office of profit or trust, including attorneys-at-law, and every person who could cast a vote at an election, were required to take and subscribe to the following oath: "I do swear, that I do not hold myself bound to yield any allegiance or obedience to the king of Great-Britain, his heirs or successors, and that I will be true and faithful to the state of Maryland, and will, to the utmost of my power, support, maintain and defend, the freedom and independence thereof, and the government as now established, against all open enemies, and secret and traitorous conspiracies, and will use my utmost endeavours to disclose and make known to the governor, or some one of the judges or justices thereof, all treasons or traitorous conspiracies, attempts or combinations, against this

state or the government thereof, which may come to my knowledge. So help me God." (*Laws of Maryland*, Annapolis, 1787.) It was said that everybody "shall take, repeat and subscribe to the oath." Quakers, Mennonites, and Dunkards who for religious reasons refused to swear should "solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm." Whoever did not comply with the law within three months, i.e. before March 1, 1778, should lose his office and the right to vote.

The lists of people who took the Oath of Allegiance after that are preserved and may be seen today in the Hall of Records in Annapolis. To be sure, we find in these lists the names of settlers of all nationalities—English, Irish, Scotch, Swedish, and German. To a certain extent, however, it is possible to pick out the German names. It enables us to effect a primitive kind of stock-taking of the Maryland German settlers in 1778. Of course, the nationality is never indicated in these lists. We must be satisfied with selecting the German sounding names, or names whose bearers we can identify as Germans from other sources. We have investigated the lists for Baltimore (that means in 1778: the city and the surrounding county) and by this way we achieved something like a first directory of German settlers in Baltimore. Here are the names:

Ackermann, George	Everhart, George
Bintzil, Balsher	Freymler, Joseph
Blum, Peter	Frolick, Christian
Breitenbach, John	Ganse, Adam
Clauss, William	Gartner, George
Cramer, Peter	Gartner, Michael
Decker, Frederick	Gerer, John Valentin
Delcher, John	Gerrock, Seigfried
Devilbess, George	Graybill, Jacob
Diffendoffer, Daniel	Greeble, Andrew
Dilling, Thomas	Haass, Christian
Distel, Samuel	Haemmerlein, Gerret
Domer, Christian	Hahn, John
Ebbert, John	Hahn, Paul
Eberhard, Martin	Hahn, Peter
Ebert, George	Haller, Frantz
Eckert, Michael	Hausser, William
Ehrman, Johannes	Helm, Leonard
Einsler, Felerious	Hoening, Christopher
Emich, Phillip	Hoffman, William
Enders, Jacob	Hofstatter, Henry

Hubbert, William	Ritter, Thomas
Hulse, R.	Rohrbach, Adam
Jahn, Jochim	Saddler, Joseph
Jahn, John	Sauerbrey, George
Junk, John	Saur, John
Kaller, John	Scarff, William
Keeports, George P.	Schreogly, Michael
Keeports, Jacob	Schwartz, Jacob
Keeples, Joseph	Segesser, Martin
Keplinger, John	Senn, John Michael
Kerhart, Adam	Shaffer, Jacob
Kern, Christopher	Shaffer, John
Kern, Jacob	Shriack, Michael
Kern, Peter	Shriock, John Michael
Kiess, Charles	Siegler, John
Kohl, Friederick	Snider, Henry
Kramer, Adam	Snider, Valentine
Kramer, Bolser	Stahl, George
Kramer, George	Stiger, Andrew
Kraner, Michael	Swoope, Benadict
Krebs, Theodoros	Swoope, Jacob
Kremer, Christoph	Swoope, George
Kremer, Henry	Swoope, John
Lindenberger, George	Uhler, Erasmus
Linder, John	Uhlen, Valentine
Littig, Just	Ullrich, Peter
Littig, Phillip	Wacker, George
Litzinger, George Sr.	Wagener, Henry
Litzinger, Piter	Weber, Daniel
Myers, Adam	Wershler, Morrice
Myers, Frederick	Wertinburger, Ludwich
Myers, George	Widman, George
Myers, Jacob	Wiesenthal, Charles F.
Myers, John	Yeiser, Phillip
Ritter, Anthony	Zeigler, Henry
Ritter, John	Zimmerman, George

To complete this list we must draw from another record. Not all Marylanders actually took the oath. The history of Baltimore and Western Maryland proves that among the German element there were comparatively few Tories. Nevertheless, also among the Germans there were some who refused to subscribe to the required oath. Beside the above mentioned document the Hall of Records has also "An Alphabetical List of Persons Not taken the Oath of Allegiance and Support. . . ." Also here we find German names:

Cramer, John	Ludwick, Richard
Ebbert, Andrew	Myers, Isaacs
Ebbert, Henry	Myers, Lawrence
Ebbert, Philip	Nitser, John Anthony
Frankfurter, John	Rechtecker, Adam
Frick, Peter	Rechtecker, Jacob
Frifogle, Stophel	Renner, Tobias
Fuchs, Robert	Rinehart, Frederick
Gerhart, Adam	Ritter, Lodowick
Graybill, Philip	Ritter, Michael
Keller, Joseph	Rupert, John
Keefer, Vincent	Sadler, William
Kindle, John	Scarff, John

Sense, Adam	Spitler, John
Sense, Christian	Stiner, Jacob
Sense, Christopher	Swartswalter, Jacob
Sense, Peter	Tanner, Christopher
Shriack, Michael Sr.	Tanner, George
Shrier, Lodowick	Tanner, Isaac
Shriver, Jacob	Tyfel, Jacob
Snider, Abram	Winteringer, Barnet
Snider, Frederick	Weber, Bernhard
Snider, Martin	Wettinger, John
Snider, Michael	Winginer, Peter
Spitler, George	

The balance of these two records

shows—what we know already from other sources—that the majority of the Germans in Maryland favored the cause of the American Revolution.

We are well aware that these lists are incomplete and defective. Considering, however, the great lack of systematic records for the early German immigration into Maryland we should not overlook even this modest source.

#### SIDNEY LANIER'S CENTENNIAL CANTATA 1876

Long as thine art shall love true love,  
 Long as thy science truth shall know,  
 Long as thine eagle harms no dove,  
 Long as thy law by law shall grow,  
 Long as thy God is God above,  
 Thy brother every man below,  
 So long, dear land of all my love,  
 Thy name shall shine, thy fame shall glow.

So lange wir von echter Liebe singen,  
 So lange wir um letzte Wahrheit ringen,  
 So lang der Adler nicht die Taube schlägt,  
 So lange Recht durch Recht sich weiterträgt,  
 So lang wir Ehrfurcht vor dem Höchsten nähren  
 Und in dem Niedrigsten den Bruder ehren,  
 So lang, du Land, dem unsre Liebe gilt,  
 Soll stehn in Ruhm und Glanz dein leuchtend Bild.

Sidney Lanier (1842-1881) the great Southern poet and musician, whose hundredth anniversary was celebrated in February, 1942, during his last years in Baltimore had engagements with the orchestras of some German Singing Societies, such as the Germania Maennerchor, the Harmonie, and the Liederkranz Societies.—German translation of the Cantata by Dieter Cunz.