

THREE LETTERS

Frederick and Conococheague

When you open the first Church Book of the Reformed Church of Frederick in Western Maryland you find pasted on the inside cover a letter which is one of the oldest existing documents relating to the German settlers of Maryland. The first resident minister of the Reformed Congregation, Theodore Frankenfeld, wrote this letter on May 4, 1753, the day of his arrival. Frankenfeld, born in Western Germany, in 1752 had followed an urgent appeal of Michael Schlatter, father of the Reformed Church in America, who tried to secure ministers for German settlements in the American colonies. Frankenfeld served as minister in Frederick until his death which must have occurred in 1756. Since no translation can render the quaintness of Frankenfeld's style, we reproduce the German original and add an English translation. Abbreviations are written out, distorted words are completed; added letters are set off in parentheses. Canogogick, or Conococheague, is the region about 25 miles west of Frederick, around what is today Hagerstown, Md.

Friedrichstown den 4ten May 175(3). Auf heute dato d 4ten kam H (err) Pf(arrer) Sla(tter) (mit) mir hierher um mich in meinem Amt zu befestigen; weilen wir aber durch das Wasser in unserer reise abgehalten, (und) die predigt nicht zu rechter Zeit konte (be) stellet werden, so ist dieses Bis auf ein(e) andere Zeit verschoben, doch aber Beschlos(sen) worden, dass ich auf den Sonntag die Eintr(itts) predigt halten soll. Es wurde zugleich von H(ern) Pfarrer Slatt(er) vorge-tragen wie dass es nothwendig se(y), dass ich noch die gemeinde Canewago (nebst) dieser und Canogogick Bedienen solle, mit dem Versprechen das (s) wann noch ein Pfarrer ins land käme, Er über die Susquehanna solle versetzt werden, und mir als dan die gemeinde Canewage wiederum solle abgeno(men) werden.

(Transl.) Today, the fourth, the Reverend Schlatter came here with me to confirm me in my office; however, since through the water we were held up in our journey and since the sermon could not be delivered at the scheduled time, this was postponed until another time, yet it was resolved that this Sun-

day I should hold my first sermon.— At the same time it was explained by Rev. Schlatter that it would be necessary that I would have to take care of the Conewago and Conococheague congregations, besides this one here, with the promise, if another minister would come into the country, that then he would be installed into the Susquehanna congregation and that then that congregation again should be taken away from me.

Baltimore and Ohio

Christian Mayer (born in Ulm 1763, died in Baltimore 1842), was a successful businessman in Baltimore; for many years he served as the first Württemberg consul in the United States. Copies of the many letters he wrote to his relatives in his German hometown are preserved at the Maryland Historical Society. The Bavarian railroad he refers to in his letter is probably the one between Nürnberg and Fürth; plans for this railroad obviously were discussed as early as 1827, although the railroad itself was not opened until 1835. The following letter is translated from German.

Baltimore, April 2, 1827.—The people of this city are at the present time in a state of great commotion, on account of the activities of a company for the construction of a railroad from here to the Ohio; this company was chartered by the States of Maryland and Virginia. The railroad is supposed to cost five million dollars. Much more than this sum has already been subscribed to. People hope to make piles of gold in this astonishingly big undertaking; it is expected to increase the wealth and commerce of this city, not ten but a hundred fold. One of the most influential and most active members of this board who is at the same time also director of my poor insurance company, tells me he had heard that there is an important railroad in Bavaria; since the board members want to be informed as much as possible of anything that falls into this line, he requested me to secure for him if possible a detailed, scientific description of this Bavarian railroad. Therefore, the main purpose of this letter is, my dearest cousin, to

ask you for this favor, even if I would have to spend some gulden for it.

Antietam and Fredericksburg

Ferdinand Cunz, son of a Protestant minister in Niederkleen, Hessa, emigrated to the United States as a young man shortly before the Civil War; he joined the Union army and fought in the famous Steuben Regiment during the hottest years of the war. Cf. other letters of his, published in *The American German Review*, XI, i (Oct. 1944), 30-33. The original letters, all directed to his parents in Germany, are in the possession of the descendants of the letter writer, living at New York.

Camp near Fredericks, Virginia, on Rappahannock River, December 17, 1862.—After two days' rest at Alexandria we marched to Centreville, to cover the retreat of our army. Here we were, in fact, three days without food, and three days and three nights without sleep. Then back again to Georgetown, where we remained again two days and a half, then Jackson into Maryland and over Rockville, Frederick, Middletown, Md. Our corps arrived near Antietam Creek on September 15. Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock, Sept. 17th, we arrived on the battlefield and took part in the terrible battle of Antietam, where our regiment captured some flags. My dear ones, how awful is war! Thousands were killed all around us. On the third day we were still burying dead. I saw fifty of them in one grave. Theodore and I came through unscathed, God be thanked! But right next to me the bullets tore five men to pieces.

Here on the battlefield, I received my rank of Second Lieutenant, to take effect from July 8th, 1862.

From Sharpsburg we marched to Harper's Ferry and were in hopes of going into winter quarters, but over

Key's Gap, Ashby's Gap, Manassias' Gap, Paris, etc., we came opposite Fredericksburg, Va. McClellan was relieved of command here and Burnside took the helm. Here I received my commission as First Lieutenant and Adjutant.

On Saturday, December 13th, 1862, Theodore and I once more with drawn sword and cocked gun went forward into the fire of battle for our dear country, for which we are always ready to give our lives. I can scarcely believe it, but again God be thanked, Theodore and I were spared. Theodore received a wound on his foot, and I got some holes in my coat. Oh, how many thousands fell here! We alone lost eight officers dead, 194 wounded. Our regiment is now only a small group. A German report I shall send later. At Antietam it was awful, but here much worse. We lost so many men! We were ordered to take a battery, attacked from 12 to 6.30 in the evening without success, and the cries and the moaning of the thousands of wounded through the night,—awful! Oh, war is terrible! We hope it will be over soon. We await indeed intervention by France and England. This thing can never be fought out with arms; both sides are too strong and too big. I was with Col. Von Schack on the battlefield until nightfall and saw more than my great-grandfather ever saw and went through things that I pray my children and children's children never will have to endure. War is terrible. Three of our officers lived a few days ago happily together in one tent; all three are dead now; one was decapitated by a bullet; the other was cut to pieces, and the third was shot dead in his mouth. Pray that none of us ever will have to go through another war.—Your loving son, Ferdinand Cunz.