

EARLY WESTERN SETTLEMENTS.

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THE reader of American history describing the first settlements of Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee will be under the impression, that these States were exclusively settled by people of English and Irish origin. As a matter of fact they were largely settled by people of German descent or German birth. The whole upland or hilly region east of the Alleghanies from the northeastern boundary of the State of New York extending southeast to and including Georgia were first settled and inhabited by Germans. They increased rapidly by raising large numerous families and their descendants were the main immigration over the Alleghanies into the new territories wrested from France and the aboriginal Indians. We know that the names of these early settlers have been anglesized by the English historians so that we don't recognize in the name of Daniel Boone the German Bohn, and in Hunter the German Family of Jäger. Among the large mass of material gathered by our Society bearing on these historical researches I will add to-night a few extracts from letters and reports of early German missionaries who visited these States in the beginning of this century. Rev. Paulus Henkel of New Market, W. Va., writes on January 19th 1812: „I made last October a trip from New Market to the banks of the Ohio, above the conflux of that river with the great Kanawha. As the winter came in great severity I could travel but twenty miles from home, where I gathered a small German congregation; I instructed the young people, and at Easter I confirmed 22 of them, they took part together with 35 others in the holy communion. We have also opened a German School, which is instructed by an honest clever teacher. At the distance of

seven miles from there I gathered last winter another German congregation, and about 60 took part in the holy communion; among them 21 who had been instructed and on the preceding day had been confirmed by me. In both places these religious acts made a deep impression among young and old. On April 14th I crossed the Ohio river and travelled to New Lancaster, I found there many Germans, from Virginia as well as from Pennsylvania. I remained there 14 days. I confirmed there 14 young people who had been instructed by an excellent teacher, Johannes Kemp. The day we celebrated communion was a grand affair and will long live in the memory of the inhabitants. I did not have time or else I would have visited several congregations, as it was, I preached only in one of the Churches of the neighborhood. From there I travelled to Chillicothe, 34 miles; then to Highland County 30 miles, from there to Springfield 75 miles, from there 20 miles up the so-called Mad river. This was the utmost limit where white people live. I there had only 20 miles to the first Indian town.

I found many Germans there, with whom I had been acquainted for many years. I preached most every day to the people, sometimes in German, and sometimes in English, often in both languages the same day. The people were in great anxiety and fear of an expected invasion by the Indians and were building forts and manned them with soldiers; notwithstanding this, they attended in large numbers our religious meetings. The so-called Church people suffer a great deal from the German as well as English sects. The people are too indifferent about German schools. Some of my old acquaintances from the old settlements appeared indifferent in religious matters. After I had remained in this neighborhood eight days I went 50 miles down the Miami river. Here I remained 14 days in a congregation and gave instructions to a number of young people. The young people were all children of German parents and in part raised in that way, but their schooling was entirely English, and so I had to speak to them in part German and in part English; I noticed however, that they understood more of the German than of the English language, as their parents at home conversed entirely in German. From there I returned home again. The missionary

intimates that he expects to make a tour through North and South Carolina the same year.

The German Lutheran Synod of North Carolina, in the year 1811, send a travelling preacher by the name of Robert Johnson Miller to the western country, "we have his report to the Synod. On the 18th of June 1811 he left Burke County his home, preached twice in Wilkes County, twice in Surrey, twice in Stokes County, to large congregations. From the 21st to the 30th, he travelled through a wilderness, there were different sects, but only three lutheran families. Near Fincastle he met six German congregations, each consisting of 25 to 30 families. He crossed the natural bridge and arrived on the 4th of July in Staunton. Here he complains that the Germans are losing their language and religion. There were two German lutheran congregations in Augusta County near Staunton. In New Market he found a large congregation. He preached twice to the people living on Sugar Creek. He then went into the Mountains and preached every day from the 18th to the 29th to devout hearers; he found everywhere Germans. On the 2nd of August he had crossed the Alleghanies and preached near Lewisburg, the County seat of Greenbrier County, about 600 to 700 persons there attended his sermon. He passed through Bendleton, Bath, Greenbrier, Monroe, Montgomery, and Wythe Counties. He found a small lutheran congregation on the Jackson River. Six congregations in Wythe County. He then, passed through Abingdon, Washington County to Sullivan County in Tennessee, where he found several German congregations. He preached in Blountsville, on the 15th of September he preached to a large attentive congregation in Love creek, Tennessee. He then returned home and on the 4th of November 1811 started on a tour to the South, he preached on the third day in Rutherford County at the Court house, on the 7th he crossed Broad and Green river and arrived at Spartanburg, S. C. On the next day he passed the Congaree and on the 9th the Saluda river and arrived in the evening at Hard Labor creek. Here he preached on the 10th in a church which was formerly German Lutheran which had turned into a English methodist congregation. He found many Germans on the Saluda river and Falls creek, on the 13th he preached 13

miles from Savannah, on the 18th he was on Falls creek, on the 29th he went 40 miles south to the first German lutheran church in South Carolina and found that they had all turned into English. He returned to Saluda and preached on the 1st of December to a very large German congregation. He preached every day in that part of the country until the 9th of December when he closed his mission. He deplores that every place he visited, the German language was being lost, and with it the Lutheran religion and ascribes it to want of German preachers and teachers.
