

***The Palatine or German Immigration to New York and Pennsylvania***

***by***

***Rev. Sanford H. Cobb, Albany N.Y, 1897***

*This Paper, prepared and read the request of the Wyoming Historical and Geographical Society, is a Brief statement of the more important Facts contained in a much larger Manuscript, entitled " The Story of the Palatines, An Episode in Colonial History", which the author hopes soon to publish in book form, with maps and numerous quotations from original documents and authorities.*

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*Albany, N.Y. 1897*

*That influx to the American colonies, in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which is spoken of under the name of the Palatine Immigration, has so many features of unique experience and so many worthy of record and memory, that one acquainted with its story can but wonder that so little of it is generally known.*

*Most of the historians of our colonial period make no mention of it at all. Some refer to it in very brief terms, as though unworthy of extended notice. Others make bold to add to such brief mention remarks of very disparaging nature, as though these Palatines were of miserably and low character. Thus Mrs. Lamb, in her history of the city of New York, gives to them but a short half page, in which she yet finds room to say that they bore the same relations to the other colonists of that day, as the Chinese of our time bear to the Americans on the Pacific slope. The co-temporary English historians, Burnet and Mortimer, speak of them in far more respectful terms. Indeed Mortimer attributes to their sturdy and thrifty virtues the superior condition of the province of Pennsylvania. Macaulay, in our own time, describes them as worthy burghers of Rhenish towns, whom undeserved calamity had reduced to poverty and exile, and whose stalwart virtues blessed every land which afforded them asylum. Miserable indeed they were, in the earlier years of the exodus, but by no default of character of their own, but by an excess of afflictions such as few people have been called to endure.*

*Their home across the sea was the Lower Palatinate, or the Palatinate of the Rhine.*

*Situated on both sides of that noble river, between Bavaria and Alsace, and extended from above the City of Spires northward to near Cologne, the Palatinate was as fair a land as all Europe can show.*

*The burghers of its cities were wealthy merchants. Its fertile fields and vine-clad hills, brought competence and comfort to its people, and sent abundance of corn and wine to other countries of Europe. Religion and knowledge were so well diffused that there was no other people of their day, to whom in these respects the Palatines stood second.*

*The situation of the Palatinate, the highway of France into the heart of Germany, together with its beauty and fertility, made it Naboth's vineyard to Louis XIV, whose ambition was colossal, whose absolutism could ill brook denial, and whose rapacity recoiled from no extreme of cruelty. His schemes and plots made life a burden to the Electors Palatine, Charles and his son Charles Louis.*

*The death of the latter in 1685 without issue, ended the Zimmern line of the Electorate, and succession passed to Frederick, of the house of Newburgh. The moment of transition seemed Louis auspicious to his plans. He at once laid claim to the Palatinate in the name of his brother,*

*who had married the sister of Charles Louis. The claim was opposed by Holland, Austria, Bavaria, Prussia and other smaller German states, which, under the leadership of the great William, organized the Grand Alliance and prepared for war. Louis to be beforehand, with the double purpose of wreaking vengeance on the Palatinate – a vengeance made more bitter by the asylum there given to the Huguenots, whom the Revolution of Nantes had driven into exile, - and also of making the country untenable by its foes, sent an army of 50.000 men, with orders to its commander to ravage the province with fire and sword and to make the land desert. The invasion took place in winter. The French went through the length and breadth of the country, destroying cities, burning villages, stripping people of their possessions, compelling them either to pull down their walls, to stand by and see their wealth perish in the flames, killing such as endeavored to save anything from the ruins, and then driving them into the fields to there perish with hunger and cold.*

*In the following spring the peasants were forced to plow under their crops.*

*The whole land was filled with mourning. Many thousands were killed. Many were starved or frozen to death. In one day, the Elector, standing on the wall of Mannheim, counted twenty three villages in flames. The ferocity of the war and the sufferings of the people cannot adequately described. To this day remains their monuments in the ivy covered ruins, which give so much beauty and charm to the hills among which flows the Rhine. It is needless to follow course of the war. For a few years the people had rest, and then 1693 another invasion brought another wave of widespread misery. Then it was that the great castle of Heidelberg was reduced to that condition which makes it the greatest and most picturesque ruin in Europe.*

*But a few years had elapsed, far too few for the Palatines to retrieve their losses, when the outbreak of the war of the Spanish Succession dragged them once more between the upper and nether mill stones. This war, brought on by Louis, in prosecution of the claim to the Spanish Crown for his Grandson Philip,- a claim opposed by the same Alliance with the addition of England,- was begun in 1701 and drew out its miseries and cruelties for thirteen long years. Most of the fighting was done in Spain and Germany, but the Palatine came in for a full share of tribulation. It furnished both armies a pathway. Many times they went back and forth, leaving wretchedness in their trail. At length 1707 Louis dispatched a army to repeat, so far as possible, the rapine of 20 years before. With this the cup of misery was full, and at once began that remarkable exodus, which in the next four decades brought so many thousands of the Palatines to America.*

*It needs to be noted, also that to these afflictions by war was added an expelling power, a religious trouble, which in some instances amounted to the dignity of persecution. Early in the*

*Reformation period the Elector Palatine gave in his adhesion to the doctrine of Geneva, his country became a stronghold of the Reformed Faith, and under his patronage was published that best of all symbols of the Reformation, the Heidelberg Catechism. There was however, a strange variation in the Electoral faith. Lutheran and Reformed princes succeeded each other in regular alternation; and, according to the spirit of the age, each prince desired to bring his people into that communion which had secured his own adhesion.*

*The court religion was constantly changing from Geneva to Wirtemberg, and back again, while many annoyances and distresses to the people were the consequences. Finally, John William, the second prince of the house of Newburgh, the Elector at the time of the Spanish war, deserted both Reformed and Lutheran, and adopted the ancient faith of the church of Rome. A man of devoted piety, but narrowness of mind, with a stern and saturnine disposition, he endeavored to constrain his people towards the Roman communion. Thus were added to the miseries of war the afflictions of religious tyranny. Because of both, many of the people looked about for a way of escape, and for a land of peace and freedom.*

*There is not space to discuss the mooted question to what turned their eyes to America. It is sufficient to note that in 1708, the year after the last French invasion, the movement began. Its first record is found, not in the Palatinate, but in the minutes of the British Board of Trade in London. This minute is a communication from the Lords of Trade to the Queen, setting forth that certain “distressed Palatines, who had been driven out of the Palatinate by the cruelties of the French, “forty in number, with one Joshua Kockerthal, a Lutheran minister, for their leader, had made application to the Board for transportation to America”. Shortly after fourteen others were added, and it would appear that the entire fifty-four constituted a pioneer band, on whose fortune and report depended the action of thousands of their country men.*

*The Queen and the council were pleased to receive the petition graciously, and order was taken both to relieve the necessities of the poor people, and to send them to New York in the same ship that carried Lord Lovelace to the government of that Province; the new Governor being charged by the Queen to do all in his power “for the comfort of the poor Palatines”. Arriving in New York in late summer of 1708, the Palatines, the composition of whose number had been very wisely chosen, as to the ability and trades, for the founding of a new settlement, were planted sixty miles up the Hudson, at the place where the Quassaic, now Chambers, creek empties into that river. This is the site of the present city of Newburgh, to which it may be supposed, in the absence of contrary proof, that the family name reigning house of the Palatinate furnished the name. Here were given to the Palatines 2000 acre of land, and the community by patent from Governor Hunter was erected into the Palatine Parish of Quassaic. There is here no space to recount their fortunes, save that to the next 30 years, being crowded*

*by English and Scottish settlers, and thinking that more fertile lands were to found in Pennsylvania, a large number sold their holdings on the Hudson, and joined their countrymen in the Province of Penn.*

*Kockerthal, having settled this pioneer band at Newburgh, returned once to the old country, that he might report as to their favorable fortunes and the gracious disposition of the English government, and might organize a much larger emigration of the people on the Rhine. The success of his efforts was very soon made evident to the astonished English government and the people of London. The roads leading northward from the Palatinate swarmed with the moving multitudes. Thousands of them arrested their journey to Holland, and there settled to add their numbers and virtues to those of that sturdy little republic. Other thousands crowded across the channel and flocked in upon London like an invading horde, in effect saying to the English people, "Here we are. What are you going to do with us?". It was a most embarrassing question, which, be it said, received an answer not less noble, than in our times we have seen given by Christian philanthropy to the cries of starving Ireland and slaughtered Armenia.*

*This emigration began in the early spring of 1709, and before the end of April about 5000 reached London. Each month of the following summer brought additions to their number, until October the aggregate had amounted to no less than fifteen thousand. The incoming of this large number of people was to the London of that day a most serious matter.*

*The mere question of accommodation was a grave one. There were not inns enough to lodge them, and had these been found, the people had no money to pay the reckoning. The government had to take active measures.*

*A thousand tents from the army stores were pitched on Blackheath and the Surrey side of the Thames for the shelter of a large number. Others were lodged in empty warehouses and barns. In some of the suburbs houses were built for them, and to this day, or until very recently, four such houses have remained, known to the vicinage as the Palatine houses. Besides the matter of lodgment, the authorities had to take order for the subsistence of this army.*

*With few exceptions the people were abjectly poor, having lost their all by the ravages of the French. Unless fed by the English charity they would starve to death in London streets.*

*The Queen in council allowed from public purse six pence per day to each Palatine, and issued briefs to the church in many parts of the kingdom, calling for offerings to the support of this benevolence. It is estimated that this Palatine business for subsistence in London, for transportation to America, and for the maintenance of many of them in this country during the following two years, cost the English Government and people the, for that day, the enormous*

*sum of 135.000 pound. Considering the state of Christian culture of the time, and the prevalent ideas as to the claims of humanity, the records of history may be challenged to produce an instance of charity more munificent than that.*

*Meanwhile, a committee composed of the highest personages of the realm, among them the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor, was charged with the question of the future disposition of these people and the supervision of whatever measures should be devised. Confessedly, the people could not maintained in London for any great length of time.*

*Beyond doubt the objective of all emigrants was America, but fully one-third of the number did not get beyond England. The pressure of their poverty, and opening opportunities for work and service caused at least five thousand to give up their original purpose. Many enlisted in the English army and others distributed themselves throughout the kingdom.*

*In August of 1709 twenty-eight hundred, at the suggestion of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, were transported over St. George's channel and settled north of Munster, founding there a settlement, which is to this day of marked virtue, thrift and prosperity.*

*In the following September the Lords of trade received a proposition from two Swiss adventurers, Baron de Graffenried and Louis Michell, to settle seven hundred of the palatines upon the lands between Cape Fear and the Neuse, to which they had obtained a patent from the proprietaries of Carolina. The authorities eagerly embraced the offer and made a contract with the Swiss leaders, for the transportation and the care of the Palatines, which was very advantageous on paper to that people, and rather onerous to the adventurers. In October this company, with a smaller number of Swiss emigrants, embarked for Carolina, and after a prosperous voyage reached the Neuse, and not many miles from its mouth founded their first settlement, to which was given the name of New Berne, from the native city of their leaders. The fortune of this settlement need not be detailed. An Indian massacre destroyed about one hundred of their number. The terms of the contract giving them land were not fulfilled by de Graffenreid, who in some way had ousted Michell and seems to have designed founding a barony or manor, with emigrants as serfs or tenants. He called himself Landgrave and, to the Indian, King of Palatines. But his tenure was short-lived. Not realizing his hopes, he mortgaged the great estate and retired either to Virginia or Europe. Some years afterwards the Palatines received their titles from the Legislature of Carolina.*

*Later in Autumn of 1709 another detachment of Palatines, but how large in numbers is not known, was sent over to Virginia with Spotswood, when he came to assume the governorship of that Province. He settled them on the upper reaches of the Rappahannock, giving to the settlement the name of Germanna. As suggested to Spotswood by the Lords of Trade that he*

*might make the Palatines useful to manufacture wine from the wild grapes, with which Her Majesty's province of Virginia was said to abound, and thus " a trade be established which might be very beneficial to this kingdom". We hear nothing of attempts to follow out this suggestion. Spotswood seems to have regarded these Palatines as his special wards. He opened iron mines for their employment and built among them a lordly mansion, to which he retired at the end of his term in office, and there spent the rest of his days. The history and topography of Virginia have abundant testimony of the permanent and sturdy qualities, which these people brought to the regions of the Blue Ridge and the Shenandoah.*

*Meanwhile, the government and London were growing weary of the burden imposed by Palatines. The times were hard, work was scarce and bread was high, circumstances which caused much discontent and murmur among the poor in London, who accentuated their outcries with the bitter complaint that charities, which ought to alleviate the wretchedness of English poor, were diverted to a horde of lazy and worthless foreigners.*

*In the following year these murmurs got into Parliament with certain disastrous and disgraceful results, which soon shall be noted. For the present, it is evident that the added urgency to the desire and inventive genius of the government to find some proper disposition for the balance of Palatines. Hence also probably came the thought that whatsoever was done for this remainder should be with a purpose to, not only relieve the Palatines, but also ensure some return to the government for its outlay.*

*The apparently happy solution of the perplexing problem was suggested by Col. Robert Hunter, who in November, 1709, had been appointed Governor of New York, to succeed Lovelace, the latter's tenure of office having been cut short by death after a few month. In some respects Hunter was the best of all the royal Governors in the colonies, and certainly superior to any other sent by the crown to the government of New York. Intelligent, loyal and strict honesty, with much executive ability, ready to sacrifice himself in the discharge of his difficult duties, and for the most part actuated by principles of exact justice, he so acquitted himself in this office, that the only blemish upon his administration is found in his conduct towards the Palatines, after the experiment he proposed and instituted with them proved to be disastrous.*

*The proposition made by Hunter to the Lords of Trade was to the effect that he should take with him the balance of the Palatines, and employ them in the manufacture of naval stores –tar, pitch, turpentine and rosin,- in the vast pine forest of that province. It had long been both a great expense and a humiliation to the English government, that for such supplies its navy, which affected to be mistress of the seas, should be dependent upon the forests of Russia and Scandinavia. The papers of the Board of Trade abound in urgencies upon the colonial governors*

*to do their utmost towards the production of such stores in America. It was taken for granted that the pines of the colonies were full of resinous gums, needing only sufficient number of workmen with ax, bucket and kiln, to not only make the royal navy independent on foreign supplies, but even to make London to the chief market of such stores to all the rest of the world. Care was ordered to be taken that these interests should be conserved, and that the colonial forests should not be despoiled of such trees as were fit for masts, spars and knees for use use of the Queen's ships.*

*The proposition of Hunter was welcomed with enthusiasm by the Lords of Trade, who at once represented the Queen the immense advantage it promised. Steps were at once taken to put the scheme into effect and, what was a new thing in the experience of the Palatines, a formal contract for the business was made between them and the Board of Trade. In the shipment of the Carolina company of Palatines the contract was between the government and two Swiss adventurers, who were explicitly bound to consult the comfort and do all things for the interests of the "poor Palatines", while the Palatines themselves were bound to no service and only required to repay, after seven years, the money advanced for the stocking of their farms.*

*But in the contract with Hunter the Palatines themselves were the party of the second part, and bound themselves to service among the American pines in the production of naval stores, under the direction of the Governor. They were to be fed and clothed by the government, and should labor at the stipulated work until they had repaid the expenses of transportation and maintenance. Each man was to receive 5 pounds and forty acres of land at the time of the settlement, and was not to leave the place on which the Governor should settle them or fail to labor faithfully, without his consent. Meanwhile, another circumstance occurred, of which the government made but little, but which the Palatines considered of great importance, and which exercised upon their after-fortunes a great and determining influence. While these people were in London, waiting the disposition of the government, there arrived notable embassy from America. The people of the Province New York, esteeming that the mother country did not use all proper energies to protect the Province from the inroads of the French from Canada and the hostile Indians, sent Col. Peter Schuyler, Mayor of Albany, and Col. Nicholson of the provincial army, to represent their needs in person, as it was thought, more effectively than could be done by any written appeal. Col Schuyler, in planning his mission, conceived the happy thought that, if he could induce some Indians to accompany the embassy, their presence would arouse public interest and have influence towards the success of his errand.*

*With some difficulties he persuaded five Mohawk chiefs to go to England with himself and Nicholson and found that he had not rashly discounted the influence of his dusky companions.*

*Both government and people were intensely interested, and the former engaged to furnish all the assistance asked, a promise not fulfilled.*

*The story runs that these Indians observed the poor Palatines in London and, being moved with pity for their destitute condition, gave to the Queen 20.000 acres in their valley of Schoharie, on which to settle them. Of this offer there is no record in the official documents, the report coming to us only through the avenue of Palatine statement. It is certain however, that either this gift, or one similar was made; that before the Palatines left London it was understood that Schoharie was their destination, that the authorities entertained the intention at first, of settling them in that valley, and that in the midst of all the tribulations of the people, during their first three years in America, Schoharie was the goal of their hopes, and the watchword of their rebellion.*

*About the first of January, 1710, the expedition left England. The number of Palatines was about 3000, the largest single shipment to this country in the colonial period. They were embarked in ten ships, two or three were war vessels, and on one of which was Gov. Hunter.*

*The voyage was stormy and of long duration. The ships were separated and driven about adverse winds, so that the first to reach New York, the ship "Lyon", did not enter that port until the middle of June. The whole list was not accounted for until a month later.*

*As a consequence of this tedious voyage, in crowded quarters, with foul air and insufficient food, a dreadful mortality seized upon the wretched emigrants. Before they reached port one out of every six of their company had been buried at sea.*

*All the ships arrived safely New York, with the exception of the frigate Herbert, which was cast ashore on either Long – or Block Island. The wreck of this ship is undoubtedly the origin of the Block Island Legend, which Whittier has embalmed in his charming little poem, "The Palatine", By a curious heterophony the legend, losing all sight of the people, has given their name to the ship, which is described as a merchantman laden with goodly cargo, which the wreckers have decoyed ashore false beacons, have rifled and burned. But the spirit of the lost ship remains and at times appears upon the sea, the phantom of a full rigged ship on fire:*

*"Behold, again, with shimmer and shine,*

*Over the rocks and seething brine*

*The flaming wreck of the Palatine*

*Now low and dim, now clear and higher,*

*Leaps up the terrible ghost of fire,*

*Then, slowly sinking, the flames expire.  
And the wise Sound Skippers, tho skies be fine,  
Reef their sails when they see the sign  
Of the blazing wreck of the Palatine”*

*By the middle of July, 1710, all the survivors of the Palatines, about 2400 in number were encamped on that island in the harbor of New York, which is now called Governor’s Island, but was then named Nutten. Here they remained about four month, and for their regulation the Governor appointed from their own number seven magistrates, the chief of whom in influence, if not in rank, was John Conrad Weiser, who for ten years thereafter proved to be their ruling spirit. Having settled the Palatines on Nutten Island, Hunter once dispatched a commission tom discover a proper place for settlement, in which the people could be employed at the destined occupation, and it is significant that this commission went at once, under the Governor’s order, to inspect the valley of the Schoharie.*

*Pending the return of the prospectors, the Governor was compelled to resort to a measure which, however proper and just, entailed much bitterness of feeling among the Palatines. This was the apprenticing of Palatine children. Many children had been left orphans by the mortality at sea, and the measure adopted was the only thing possible. It is probable that some harshness was used, as was the case with the family of Weiser, from which was taken a son, of whom from the day of his indenture the family had no knowledge whatsoever. One of these apprenticed children afterwards became famous and conferred upon his adopted country a blessing, the value of which cannot be over-estimated. This was John Peter Zenger, who was apprentices to William Bradford , the New York printer.*

*Twenty years later, Zenger had set up in the printing business himself, and in 1733, during one period of quarrels between the royal governor, at that time Governor Cosby, and the Assembly, he started a newspaper in the interest of the Assembly of the people. He used great freedom of discussion, with no little caustic comment on the Governor’s party, with the result that he was thrown into prison.*

*When the grand jury refused to indict him, a criminal information was filed against him by the Attorney General. The two New York lawyers, who undertook his defense, were thrown out of the court by an angry and biased bench, and friends of Zenger brought from Philadelphia the famous Andrew Hamilton, than over eighty years old, but in the full possession of all his noble*

*powers. The result of Hamilton's plea was, in the teeth of an adverse charge, the triumphal acquittal of Zenger, since whose day the freedom of the press in America has never been seriously called in question. It is interesting to note that the foundation for this great bulwark of liberty was thus laid for our country by the hand of a Palatine.*

*When the prospectors returned from their trip to the north, they reported to Hunter that, while there was plenty land and of pine in Schoharie, yet the difficulty of carriage of the hoped for naval stores was such as to forbid the settlement of the people in that valley. So the Governor was perplexed, until he fell in with Robert Livingstone of the Manor,, who proposed him the purchase of 6000 acres of his own lands on the Hudson, about one hundred miles up the river.*

*The Earl of Clarendon, formerly Lord Cornbury and Governor of New York, comments Hunters bargain with Livingston, that the Governor "fell into very ill hands". History compels the verdict that, despite the Earl's personal rancor against the Patron, his judgment in this matter was just. Livingston was one of the ablest, shrewdest, most ambitious, covetous and unscrupulous men in the colony. He came rarely out of a transaction with clean hands, but always brought them full. He was the only person who took any advantage by this Palatine business, adding much to an already large fortune; while the poor Palatines were reduced to indescribable misery, and the over credulous Governor to bankruptcy and disgrace. Hunter accepted Livingston's offer and before the winter closed in, settled the Palatines, except 200 who remained in New York, some 1200 on the Manor, and the balance of them on the opposite side of the river in the bounds of the present town of Saugerties. For a while the two settlements were known as the East and West Camps, names which still survive.*

*There is not time to dilate on the details of Palatine experience on the Manor. Their woes began promptly. An inclement winter fell upon them unhoused and ill-clad. Livingston, who had taken the contract for their sustenance, was more particular about his percentages than about the quality of food and clothes supplied. For two years the people suffered miserably, and were in a perpetual state of revolt against those whom they regarded oppressors. The dream of Schoharie, which had charmed them in London, reasserted its attractive invitations. They demanded to be sent to the lands given to the Queen for them, and on which the Queen meant that they should settle. They complained their treatment as slaves, a of the folly of making tar where no tar could be made. On two occasions the Governor sent soldiers to put down the turbulence, and adopted such measures as reduced them to a state of serfdom. In two years came the collapse, the complete break-down of the enterprise. From the beginning it was doomed to failure. Hunter brought with him 8000 pound as the first installment of the government's investment. When this sum was exhausted and remittance from London was delayed, the Governor pledged his personal fortune, drawing bills upon London in his own name.*

*His wife's fortune also was sunk in the same sea. He had a child-like confidence that his English employers would make good these advances. But, because of the objections in the parliament, no another penny beyond that first installment would the government bestow upon the palatines, and the Governor, whose advances had been the amount of 25000 pounds, was left in such penury and debt that his office alone protected him from arrest and prison.*

*So the funds failed and the work had no cease. But had money been plentiful, it soon was demonstrated that the effort was useless.*

*The northern pine of America are not sufficient resinous to make the work remunerative. The whole outlay of the government and Hunter in this business resulted in less than sixty barrels of tar.*

*When the funds thus failed the Governor sent orders to arrest the work and to tell the Palatines to seek work for themselves from other sources, but still hopeful that the Board of Trade would yet take up his paper and permit renewal, he charged them to remain within call, on the possibility of such resumption. But this they were unwilling to do. They were weary of both starving and villeinage and had no faith in tar making. The moment was opportune for seeking their promised land of Schoharie.*

*About one third of their number on the Manor settled permanently in the neighborhood, progenitors of the citizens of Germantown and contiguous villages.*

*Some of this third went south of the Manor, because Livingston refused titles to their lands, wishing to keep them in tenancy, and founded the town of Rhinebeck. The others on the Manor, about two thirds of all, determined for Schoharie. They first sent a delegation of their so-called "chiefs", of whom John Conrad Weiser was the leader, to visit the valley of their choice and bring back a report. This mission was accomplished in the fall of 1712, and the chiefs returned with enthusiastic descriptions of a spot, which for beauty and fertility is not surpassed by any region in the state of New York. They reported also that the Indians of the neighborhood had received them kindly, and had given a deed for the land.*

*At once preparations for the removal were begun, and the journey through deep snows and over forest-covered mountains undertaken.*

*Early in March 1713, the two companies into which the emigrants had been divided, were united again in the valley of their hope. There is much that is pathetic in the accounts preserved of their experience in Manor, and of the disappointment which overwhelmed them, when in Schoharie they found that afflictions had not ceased.*

*For this disappointment they had to thank Gov. Hunter, whose attitude towards them had already begun to be that of an oppressor. The Governor was intensely angry when he learned that people had taken their way to Schoharie, to which for months they had been clamoring he should send them. He allowed his anger to obscure his usual sense of justice. Seeing the departure from the field of the workers by whom alone he could hope, by a possible resumption of work, to retrieve from the English ministry, whom he could not touch, he determined to revenge himself upon the poor palatines, who equally with himself were victims of the government's broken faith. Unable to bring them back by proclamation or by force, he was resolved that, wherever else they went, the beloved Schoharie should not be theirs.*

*The method pursued was as cruel as it was perfidious. It must be noted that when the Palatines entered the valley not a claim was made by any white man to a single acre of its upland and meadow. Obtaining a deed from the only owner, the Indian, they set themselves to building houses and breaking the soil. But by reason of their entrance there had gone aboard a rumor of the great beauty of these fertile flats, and there were men of sufficient cupidity to seek from the Governor patents for the valley. He was all too ready to grant them.*

*Six months later after the Palatine occupancy, one Adam Vrooman of Schenectady received a large section by patent, and within the next four years two patents were granted to five gentlemen of Albany and two of New York, covering all the rest of the land which the Palatines had occupied, or to which they had laid claim through their own purchase from the Indians. The grantees of these two patents entered into an agreement of union and were spoken of as "the seven partners". This action on the part of these gentlemen was simply a land speculation to force rent or purchase money from the poor people already in possession. On the part of the Governor it was pure vindictiveness, to distress who were in no wise responsible for the ruin of his scheme. Afterwards he showed no relenting, and had the duplicity in reports to London to represent, that the palatines had gone from the Manor in a tumultuous fashion and taken possession of lands "already granted to certain gentlemen of Albany".*

*The story of the struggle between the Palatines and the Patentees, with many amusing and many pathetic Passages is too long for recital here. It continued for ten years, a constantly losing battle for the people with all the power of the Governor and all the authority of the courts against them. No opening for escape appeared until, after 1720, Hunter left the province and was succeeded by Gov. Burnet.*

*The new Governor set himself to appease the difficulties, but found that the legal rights of the patentees and the stubborn sense of wrong in the palatine breast admitted, for the most of them, of removal to a new location as the only remedy. For this purpose he issued a grant,*

*buttressed by an India deed, to lands upon the Mohawk, stretching for twenty miles westward from Canajoharie and reaching north and south of the river "as far as the settlers wished".*

*About the same time as the issuance of this grant there occurred in Albany a great council with the chiefs of six Nations and the Governors of New York and Pennsylvania. Gov. Keith of Pennsylvania, while attending this council, learned of the troubles of the palatines and offered them an asylum in his Province, assuring them of secure houses and kindly treatment, instancing also the happy fortunes of a small band of Germans, who had recently come to Philadelphia and had settled about 60 miles west of Philadelphia. Thus two avenues were opened. But each involved a third removal and the surrender of all the labor of ten years.*

*About one-third of the people, concluding that to compound their oppressors was better than such removal, made terms either to lease or purchase of the lands which already were their own. The remainder were about equally divided, one part for the Mohawk and the rest for Pennsylvania. The former settled them along the river and for years constituted a strong frontier against Indian and French attack, and founded flourishing communities, whose names, such as Herkimer, Palatine and German Flats still preserve memory of those sturdy pioneers, who loved liberty, and refused to submit to wrong. Out of their number Sir William Johnson organized nine military companies, known as the Palatine companies, which rendered invaluable service in the defense of the province.*

*Afterwards, when the Revolution began, Sir Guy Johnson endeavored to swing these Palatines to the side of the crown. But they were not to be seduced from their love of freedom. They constituted a large portion of the force which General Herkimer, himself a son of a palatine emigrant, led to the battle of Oriskany, a battle characterized by Fiske as "the most obstinate and murderous of the Revolution". It was a technical defeat indeed, but yet a defeat that was equal to victory, demolishing the plans of the British campaign, sending St. Leger back to Oswego and delivering Burgoyne into the hands of Gates.*

*Of those who made choice of Pennsylvania, Conrad Weiser was easily the chief. During the Schoharie struggle his father, John Conrad, had gone to England to make a fruitless appeal to the crown. He returned after five years of much suffering, broken health and spirit, and the son Conrad succeeded leadership. Young Conrad was twelve years old when the Palatines left their native land, was educated by his father, who had been a magistrate in the Palatinate, and early showed the possessions of qualities of a high order, quick intelligence, a deep religious sense, a logical mind, a strong will, sound judgment and great executive ability. In his youth at Schoharie he spent much time with the Indians, learned their language and secured their friendship. This familiarity proved afterwards of immense benefit in Pennsylvania, where he became intimately*

*associated with provincial affairs, and in all dealings with the Indians was the counselor and agent of the Governor. He was also associated with Franklin in educational and other colonial interests, and took a leading part in the founding and extension of the Lutheran church in Pennsylvania. There are indeed few names in the colonial history of that province more worthy of honor than that of Weiser.*

*The Pennsylvania contingent left Schoharie in two parties, one in 1722 and the other in the following year. Following up the stream southward a few miles, they struck an Indian trail over the mountains to the upper waters of the Susquehanna. They constructed canoes and bateaux for the carriage of the most of the company and their goods, while some of the men keeping near the river drove before their horses and cattle. A Schoharie legend recited that, in the following year, twelve of these horses found their own way back to Schoharie, their souls lusting after the rich clover of its meadows. Having made their boats, the greater portion of the company embarked upon the peaceful river and quietly floated down its course through the wilderness of lower New York, unpopulated, save by wandering Mohawks and Delaware, through the beautiful Wyoming Valley, forty years before Connecticut made its first token of occupation and settlement; until just beyond the site of the present city of Harrisburg, they entered the Swatara, and so upward to Tulpehocken and the lands secured from the Indians Sassouan. Here they founded Womelsdorf and Heidelberg, and in the next two decades, with their children and thousands of their kinsmen from the Fatherland, spread themselves abroad through the counties of Lebanon and Berks.*

*It must be noted that previous to this emigration from Schoharie, several companies of Germans had come to Pennsylvania. Most of them – indeed so far as appears, all save one – were small bands of religionists, whose peculiar views made live a burden in the old country. As early as 1685 a company of Mennonites settled at Germantown, giving the spot its name. About the same time Labadists from Friesland settled in New Castle, Delaware, then a part in Pennsylvania. Ten years after, Kelpins brought a band of Pietists and planted them on the banks of Wissahickon: while a company of dunkers settled in Germantown besides the Mennonites. About 1712 another company of Germans came to Philadelphia and passed over into New Jersey, having New York as their objective, but were so charmed of the lands of Morris county that they quietly took possession. Other religious sects were afterwards added – the New-born, the disciples of Ephrata, and the Schwenkfelders – closing the list with the large incoming of the Moravians which began in 1735.*

*It is impossible to connect any of these companies, unless we may except that which settled in New Jersey, with the Palatines. They came from other parts of Germany and for diverse motives. At the same time it is reasonably clear that the immense tide of German immigration after 1720*

*set into Pennsylvania, was largely Palatine and was controlled as to its destination by the reports of kindly treatment received by its forerunners at the hand of the Quakers. The movement was organized on a large scale. A committee on transportation was formed at Rotterdam, between which Port and Philadelphia the ships bringing constantly increasing numbers plied with almost the regularity of a ferry, through nearly every summer down to 1750. It is amusing to observe that they avoided New York as though it was the home of pestilence. Over that province, in Palatine imagination, hung a cloud of cruelty and sorrow. In all the period noted but one of their ships, compelled by storm, entered the mouth of the Hudson; on which vessel it needs to be mentioned, was the emigrant Herghimer, who gave his son Nicholas Herkimer to New York and the Nation.*

*So great and continuous was the stream of people from the Palatinate that the Elector became alarmed lest his dominions should be de-populated, and denounced death on any who should attempt migration, a threat of small effect. The people stole away as in the night.*

*So great also was the influx to Philadelphia that the authorities became alarmed, lest so large numbers of foreigners would corrupt the manners of the people of the colony, and perhaps "steal the province from beneath the scepter of His Sacred Majesty King George". The subject caused much and heated debate in the colonial assembly, till finally a bill was passed forbidding the immigration. This bill the Governor vetoed on the ground of cruelty. A sort of safe-guard a measure was adopted quite unique in colonial legislation. As every Palatine ship arrived, the names and members of its passengers were reported to the clerk of the assembly, and every one of them was required to subscribe the oath of allegiance to King George. To no other immigrants to America was accorded such a precautionary welcome, and of no others exists in the public archives the record of their coming. The original list containing over 30000 names are still preserved at Harrisburg, and have been published in the Pennsylvania archives, 2d series, vol. XVII, and also by Rupp.*

*There is here no time to dwell on the influence exerted by these people on the State of their adoption. It goes without saying that with their industry, thrift, tenacity of purpose and religious habitude, such influence could not be otherwise than beneficent. Many names, such as Weiser, Muhlenburg, Heister, Heinzleman, and others, suggest something of what strain of quality existed in the Palatine blood. Benjamin Franklin testified before the House of Commons that no people in Pennsylvania had wrought more than these Germans for the prosperity of the province.*