

# THE ELLER MIGRATION TO ROWAN COUNTY

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**Presented at The ELLER FAMILY REUNION  
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The movement of individuals, families, communities, and entire peoples from one place to another has been one of the important human experiences shaping history. It involved leave-taking from one home and one environment in search of another, the crossing of oceans, frontiers, rivers, and mountains.

Dr. Napp-Zinn's beautiful slide show presentation has depicted the villages and landscapes of Germany from which the Eller immigrants are said to have come.

One wonders why anyone would want to leave a place as beautiful as the upper Palatinate, but this was an area that had been devastated by wars and repression. The Thirty Years War, from 1618-1648, left the Palatinate area of Germany a virtual wasteland with more than half the population either killed or starving to death.<sup>2</sup> This devastation was followed by the War of Spanish Succession and religious persecution which had begun during the Reformation in 1517. The people could see no end to the wars, famine, oppressive taxation, and religious persecution, and William Penn's advertisements and the near paradisaical descriptions of what awaited in the colony of Pennsylvania and the Granville District of Carolina brought thousands of German Protestant immigrants to the new world. Most stayed in Pennsylvania for several years before venturing down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road into Rowan.

An unknown writer from the Palatinate on 19 October 1749 wrote a treatise advising those who were leaving for Pennsylvania how they might avoid "on the desperate journey they plan for themselves, the greatest hardships and privations. " He said that the trip from Germany had to be arranged so that the traveler would reach Rotterdam between April and June first when the sloops that sailed from there to London could get him there in 8 to 12 days, at which time ships sailed from England to Pennsylvania and the other colonies. He advised that transportation down the Rhine, if one provided his own food, would be 6 florins, that transportation from Rotterdam to London by sloop would be 5 florins or 10 shillings sterling, that sea-transportation from London, with board on ship, was 64 florins, and expenses in London, if one had to wait there 2 or 3 weeks, would be 9 florins.

He suggested that the immigrant might purchase in London woolen material and fine linen, spices, copper and tin utensils, which he might sell at a profit in the New World to defray his expenses. He advised the immigrants to travel in a group large enough to fill a boat on the Rhine and stressed that they must have contracts for their transportation. He warned that the travelers not let themselves be separated from their chests and baggage and not be dependent upon the ship's food but carry also brandy, dried meat, prunes, vinegar, and medicine to prevent scurvy, dysentery, and fever. He suggested that each head of family and passenger make an inventory and will before departing.<sup>3</sup>

The instructions were necessary. It has been estimated that 12,000 Germans reached Pennsylvania in the year 1749, and that by 1775 there were 110,000 people of German birth or descent, or one-third the total population.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the ships sailed from Cowes, near Southampton; others from London. It was not unusual for the crossing to take three to six weeks on a ship buffeted by high winds, or perhaps becalmed, without

refrigeration, plumbing, any sanitation or privacy, people crowded like animals, many sick, some dying, some giving birth, all strengthened by the hope of a new life in the New World.

## **Philadelphia**

After what had to have been a fearfully difficult voyage, what joy must have arisen in the breasts of the voyagers as the ship sailed up the Delaware River into the port of Philadelphia. We have George Heap's "East Prospect of the City of Philadelphia from the Jersey Shore" in 1754 with ships in the foreground, a panorama that was etched on four copper plates, printed, and distributed in London.<sup>5</sup> This is the scene that the weary immigrants viewed as their ships let in to the port of Philadelphia.

Upon debarkation, the foreigners were required to take the oath of Allegiance in Philadelphia. The process of becoming a citizen during the colonial period was quite simple. The immigrant signed a statement of allegiance as he came off the ship. The naturalization and granting of citizenship, subsequently, could be granted in almost any court. The 1665 Act was enacted:

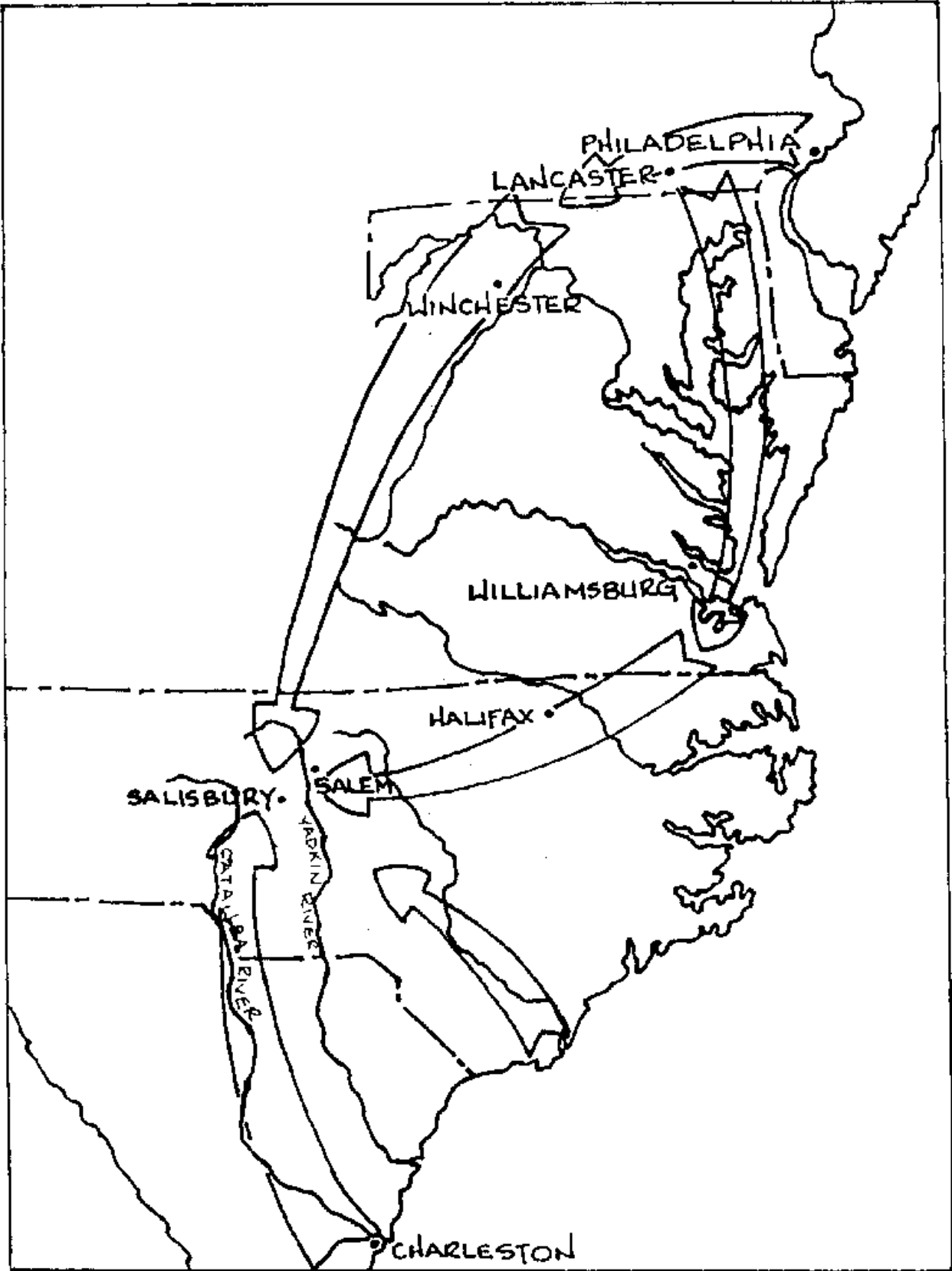
to give unto all strangers as to them shall seeme meete a Naturalization and all such freedoms and priviledges within the sd Caountys as to his Maj[es]ties subjects doe of right belong they swearing or subscribing as aforesd w[hi]ch said strangers soe naturallized and priviledged shall alsoe have the same immunitys from Customes as is granted by the Kinge to us..<sup>6</sup>

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The English Parliamentary statute of 1740 required a residence of seven years, but it did not require that an individual reside continuously for seven years in the colony where he was to apply for citizenship. It would be difficult to determine the extent to which the residency requirement was enforced. The relatively few instances of naturalization recorded in The Colonial Records of North Carolina make no mention of a residency requirement, but they routinely note that the persons seeking naturalization "took the oaths and subscribed the test as required by law." The prospective citizen would take an oath of loyalty to the Crown and colony before having citizenship conferred upon him and would receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper within three months of taking the oath. For every naturalization a payment of two shillings was made.

Most immigrant families remained in their initial home in the new world for several years, learning the new ways, accustoming themselves to a new life, and acquiring worldly goods. When they gained the courage to move again, or the necessary funds, or when the urge to own land overpowered their reluctance to pull up stakes, many migrated from Pennsylvania down the Shenandoah Valley into the Carolinas and Georgia.

## **Four Routes**



While the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road was not the only route that the migrating Scots-Irish, Germans, and Englishmen took, there were geographical and economic reasons why it was the primary one.

Only a few trails cut through the vast forests which spread from New Hampshire to Georgia, for the Appalachian Mountains thrust a stern barrier between the Atlantic plateau and the unknown interior of the continent. The settlers, as they moved inland, usually followed the paths over which the Indians had hunted and traded.

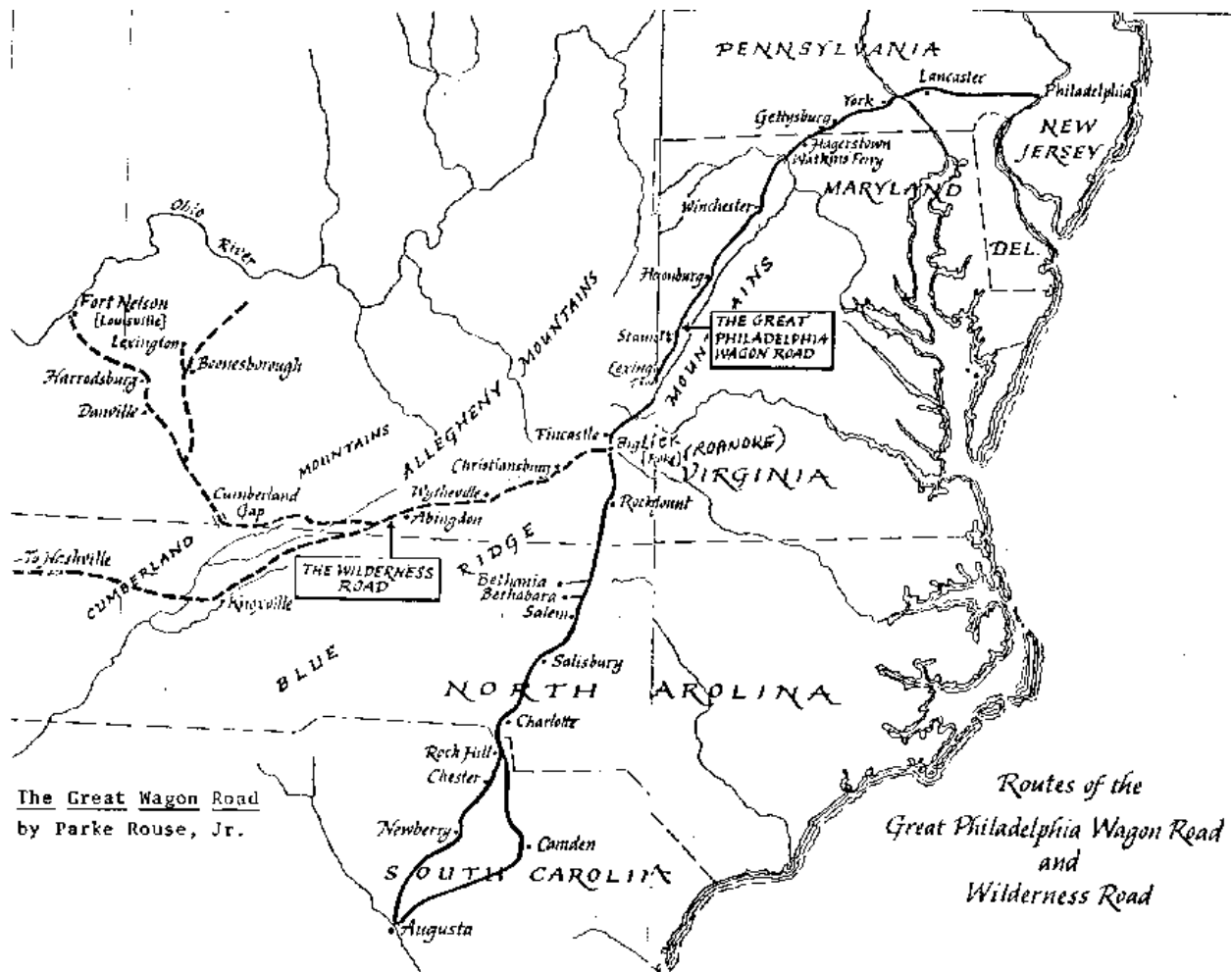
In eighteenth and nineteenth century migrations, few trails in America were more important than the Indian route which extended east of the Appalachians from Pennsylvania to Georgia. After the French and Indian Wars, this path became the principal highway of the colonial back country. Over the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road, vast numbers of English, Scots-Irish, and Germanic settlers entered this continent and claimed lands.

The endless procession of new settlers, Indian traders, soldiers, and missionaries swelled as the Revolution approached. "In the last sixteen years of the Colonial Era," wrote Carl Bridenbaugh, "southbound traffic along the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road was numbered in the tens of thousands. It is the most heavily traveled road in all America and must have had more vehicles jolting along its rough and tortuous way than all the main roads put together."

The chronicle of the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road is the chronicle of infant America, from 1607 until the age of the railway. It is the story of achievement against great odds. Breaking with the European traditions which they brought with them to America, the diverse settlers along the Wagon Road began to create the new American society which changed the nineteenth century history of the world.

The study of migration is particularly valuable to Americans, for all Americans are immigrants. To an amazing degree, we have remained a migratory people, profoundly mobile, moving from city to city, state to state. As Alexis de Toqueville observed of early American society, "The American grows accustomed to change."

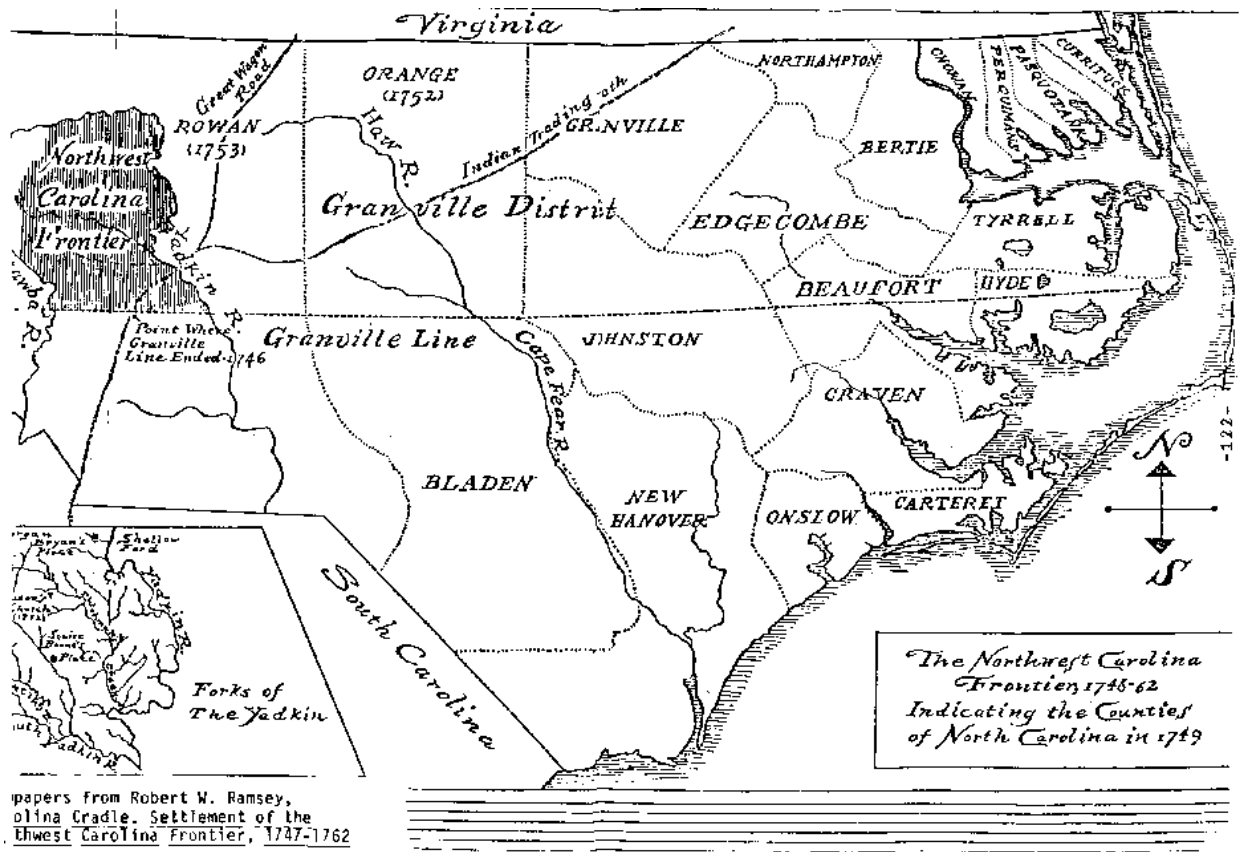
### **Great Philadelphia Wagon Road**



The Great Philadelphia Wagon Road led from the area that became Lancaster and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to York, to Gettysburg, into western Maryland around what is now Hagerstown, across the Potomac River at Evan Watkins' Ferry, following the narrow path across the "back country" or "up country" or "piedmont" to Winchester through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to Harrisonburg, Staunton, Lexington, Roanoke, into Salem, North Carolina, to Salisbury, where it was bisected by the east-west Catawba and Cherokee Indian Trading Path at the Trading Ford across the Yadkin River in Rowan County, thence to Charlotte, Rock Hill, South Carolina, where it branched to take two routes to Augusta and Savannah, Georgia.

The principal cause of migration of people westward and southward from the Delaware Valley and the Chesapeake Bay area was primarily the pressure arising from a natural increase in population. The land was becoming impoverished, and there was not enough of it to support the steadily increasing population. To be considered also was the high price of land in Pennsylvania. In 1750, a fifty-acre farm in Lancaster County would have cost £7.10. In the Granville District of North Carolina, which comprised the upper half of North Carolina, land was selling for five shillings the one hundred acres.

As early as 1754 large tracts of vacant lands could be found only in the back settlements near the mountains. The British were eager to colonize the area, and the then Governor of North Carolina, Arthur Dobbs, wrote a letter to the Board of Trade on 24 August 1755, describing the area that had just been designated Rowan County. He wrote:



The Lands upon the Banks of Uwarry [present Randolph County, North Carolina] are very good, but the hills soon rise beyond it of the same kind of gravel, for 20 miles till I came near Abbotts Creek, which falls into the Yadkin ' here the lands began to improve, and beyond it, to the Yadkin above 7 miles, and all along the Yadkin, is very rich level ground, free from rocks or gravel, but all a rich dark red, and some inclining to yellow of the richest, here they sow barley, wheat, rye, oats, and have yards to stack it in. The Yadkin here is a large beautiful river where is a ferry, It is nearly 300 yards over . . . At 6 miles distance I arrived at Salisbury the County town of Rowan the Town is but just laid out, the Court House built and 7 or 8 log Houses erected . . .<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, the Germn-speaking settlers followed other Palatines down the Wagon Road.

Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg had led a small group of fifteen men from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, down the Wagon Road in October, 1753. After passing south of Augusta Courthouse (later Staunton), spangenberg remarked on the bad condition of the road. But they finally reached North Carolina and bought 98,985 acres of land from Lord Granville's agents, the tract being named Wachavia for the estate of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von zinzendorf, reviver of the Moravian faith in Austria. The land covered about two-thirds of the present-day county of Forsythia in North Carolina, formed from the area that had been Rowan County. Spangenberg regarded the Wachovia tract "as a corner which the Lord has reserved for the Brethren." Within ten days they had cleared three acres of densely forested land and within five months were growing wheat, corn, potatoes, flax, cotton, tobacco, barley, rye, oats, millet, buckwheat, turnips, and pumpkins. Road to Salem, based on the

autobiography of Anna Catharina in 1803 tells the story of the founding of Bethlehem and of Catharinal's life there and in Wachovia.

When the village of Bethabara was complete, they established a second village, named Bethania, and five years later the principal town, Salem, which since 1914 has been known as Winston-Salem. The constant journeys of the Moravians back and forth from Pennsylvania, except for the dangers of attacks by Indians, were considered a pleasant experience; and by 1772 Salem had become a prosperous settlement and a central market town. The Moravian villages of Friedberg and Friedland were soon established.

All of the German immigrants were by no means Moravian, of course; many who came down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road were Lutheran and Reformed. These groups had some similarities -- a common racial origin and language, plus the fact that their increase was largely due to new arrivals from Pennsylvania or Germany-

"They were a motley group, those white Americans," said St. John de Crevecoeur, "composed of English, Scotch, Irish, . . . melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity caused great changes in the world."

It is impossible to state with accuracy the number of German settlers in colonial North Carolina. A. B. Faust, a leading authority, estimates the number in 1775 at 8,000. Governor Dobbs's statement that the frontier families usually had from five to ten each leads one to conclude that the German population of the province was probably as high as 15,000. The 1790 census estimated that only 2.9% of the North Carolina population was German, but it is likely that the "population experts" have been misled by the Anglicizing and shortening of the German names.

A traveler in 1783 described the Germans as "distinguished above the other inhabitants for their industry and diligence in agriculture and the crafts . . . which is recognized by most of their fellow-citizens, but tempts very few to imitate."

Most of the Germans chose fertile farmlands, clustering close together to help each other with their sawing and reaping, their house-raising, and their hog-killing. Reared as farmers, they quickly converted their small holdings into verdant fields of grain and tobacco and truck crops. From the Palatinate, they brought with them a practical knowledge of the use of manure in fertilizing new or worn-out fields. They thriftily used the limestone and fieldstone which they cleared from their acreage to build their homes and fences. Some were skilled craftsmen, mechanics, gunsmiths, shoemakers, papermakers, butchers, wagon makers, cabinetmakers, wheelwrights, and tanners. They made splendid, law-abiding citizens, for the most part. They were not afraid nor ashamed of hard labor, and were soon blessed with an abundance of food which the fertile soil and temperature of North Carolina could furnish them. As they were all agriculturists, they generally avoided settling themselves in towns; uninformed in the ways of the world, ignorant of the English language, and unacquainted with the shrewdness necessary for merchandising. Well-informed in their own language and well read in their Bibles and other books, they remained at their own country homes and churches and enriched themselves spiritually and economically.<sup>8</sup>

On their farms, livestock were allowed to graze on any land not fenced for tillage, but primarily in the woods and upland pastures. Animals were branded or otherwise marked and turned loose to fend for

themselves. The great attraction to this method of stock raising was that it used uncleared land to produce a commercial commodity that transported itself to distant markets. On 17 December 1766. MICKER ELLER recorded his mark, a hole in Each Ear & a BobTail. JACOB HAMM recorded his mark at the same time, a Half Peney Out of the Under Side of Each Year & a Slit in each Year.<sup>9</sup>

The immigrant always took with him something of his ethnic legacy, something of the old culture and life as a gift to the new land. And the new physical environment -- new soil, new climate, new resources -- inexorably shaped the lifestyle of the transplanted people.

When people move, they take with them cultural as well as material baggage, but they cannot take everything. New situations force them to create new tools and new institutions, building upon what they know, to meet the challenges of a new home. To migrate invariably means to gamble, to risk the family welfare as well as its cherished customs and beliefs.<sup>10</sup>

The Lutherans eventually became the largest sect among the Germans in North Carolina, and they settled over a wide area, in the present counties of Rowan, Guilford, Cabarrus, Stanly, and Davidson. Friedan's Lutheran Church was organized on the Haw River in what is now Guilford County, NC, as early as 1745. A Lutheran Congregation was established in the early 1750s in Salisbury, North Carolina. Organ Church in County and St. Johns in Cabarrus County were organized by 1755 and Christopher Rirrtleman and Christopher Layerle were sent to Europe to secure assistance for the North Carolina Lutherans. St. Paul's in Alamance County, Philadelphia in Gaston County, St. Paul's in Catawba, Pilgrim in Davidson, and Cold Water in Cabarrus were probably organized before 1770.

Family names of Lutherans in this section are those of Albright, Bost, Braun, Agner, Propst, Bostain, Klein, Dreschler /Trexler, Seitz/Sides, Reinhardt, Biber/Beaver, Derr/Darr/Dry, Berger/Barrier, Behringer /Barringer, Heilig, Hartman, Cauble, Casper, Overcash, Blackwelder, Verble, and Eller. The Ellers are mentioned in the early records of Organ Lutheran Church.<sup>11</sup>

The German Reformeds usually settled in the same cities as the Lutherans, and the three oldest Reformed churches in North Carolina were Grace Reformed Church (later called Lowerstone) in Rowan, Leonard's Reformed Church (later called Pilgrim) and Beck's Reformed Church in the part of Rowan that became Davidson County. In 1768 the Reverend Samuel Suther, a native of Switzerland, who had been teaching school in Philadelphia since 1739, became pastor of Grace Reformed Church in Rowan County. Many of the early records of Germans in the area are recorded in the Diary of Carl August Gottlieb Storch, published in the North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal.

Their names, corrupted in the court records by the Scots-Irish clerks and registers, pose fascinating problems for the genealogist. For example, one of my husband's Granville County, North Carolina, ancestors, Ludwig Rheitweil, appears later in the Rowan County records as Lewis Redwine. Nicklaus Thommen of Pennsylvania became the Closs Thompson of North Carolina's piedmont. The Wattenbergers of Pennsylvania became the Spargers of Surry County, North Carolina. Lorenz Schoenbacker who served in the Revolutionary War from Pennsylvania was the Lawrence ShImpock of the 1790 Montgomery County, North Carolina, census.

The Scots-Irish spelled these "Dutch" names as they heard them. Karriker became Corriher and then Cawyer. Some names were simply translated into English. Swartz became Black; Zimmerman became



Carpenter; Schneider became Taylor; Weiss became White; Stein became Stone; Vogel became Bird; Freitag became Friday; Gutbread became Goodbread, etc.

Some names were shortened through usage. My friend, Reade Pickler, had difficulty with his lineage until he realized the surname of the immigrant ancestor was Blanketpickler.

Some German names had several English translations. The children of Gotfreid Klein adopted the various surnames of Kline, Cline, Little, Short, and Small.

Most frequently, the Rhinelander adopted an English rendering of his name which closely preserved the original sound but sacrificed the German spelling. Diehl became Deal; Gantzler became Cansler; Friedman became Freernan; Hambrecht became Hambright; Kuhn became Coon; Nantz became Nance, Schuffort- became Shuford; Dotterer became Tutherow.

Many German names were formed from occupations or places. Weber was weaver; Wagner was wagonmaker; Schultz was sheriff; Bauer was farmer; Kramer was shopkeeper; Metzger was butcher; Gerber was leatherworker; Fischer was fisherman; Spengler was tinsmith; Zeigler was maker or user of brick and tile. Baumgartner was an orchard farmer; Brune, a well digger; Myers an overseer or farmer; and Boettger a barrel maker. The suffix "hammer" on German names refers not to a tool, but to a dweller on pasture ground.

Records concerning the Eller family as recorded in Storch's Diary are reproduced here. <sup>12</sup>

#### **ELLER RECORDS IN THE ACCCOUNT BOOK OF PASTOR STORCH**

##### Conf irmations

Eller, An. Marg. Peint	Church	1793
Eller, Catharina Peint	Church	1791
married Friedrich		
Eller, Christ. Peint	Church	1793
Eller, Christian Peint	Church	1791
Eller, Conr. Peint	Church	1796
Eller, Ev. Organ	Church	1794
Eller, Henry Peint	Church	1793
Eller, Jacob Peint	Church	1793
Eller, Mar. Elisabeth.	Peint	Church 1791

##### Marriages

Eller, Barb., married John. Leimberger August 1805

Eller, Christ, wife buried 12 January 1800

Eller, Cbristian, married Maria Elis. Dormeyer Sep 1792

Eller, Christ., buried 4 May 1804

Eller, Jac., buried 16 November 1797

Eller, Johannes, married Anna Maria Barbara Meyer 27 April 1790

Eller, Joh., wife buried November 1791

Ellern, Anna Barbara, married Henrich Hess 6 August 1792

Ellern, Maria Elis., married Peter Triess 20 July 1791

Peint Church is also known as the Dutch Pine Meeting House or Union Lutheran Church. It is located five miles East of Salisbury on the Bringle Ferry Road, state road 1002.

Organ Church is also known as Second Creek Church and is located ten. miles south of Salisbury, west of Rockwell, on the road leading to Mt. Pleasant, state road 1006.

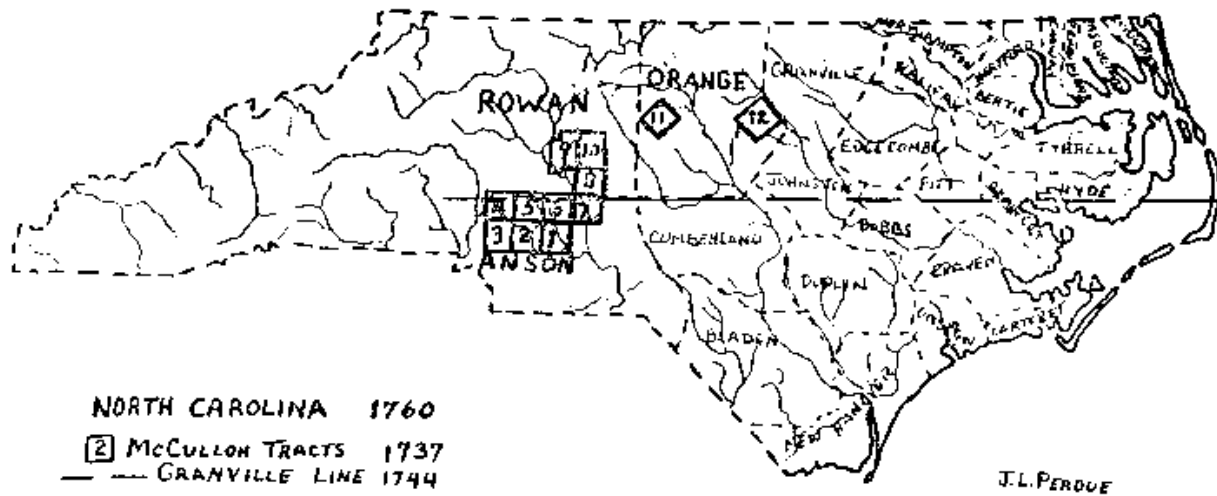
Migration frequently leaves only a sketchy genealogical record. While the great sweep of events may be clear, the details are often lost in the confusion of movement. Many family histories remain incomplete, and often the names of those who came first are lost. Some peoples simply kept better records than others.

Now, just as Augusta County, Virginia, had been created in 1745 to bring government into that area where the population was burgeoning, Rowan County was established from Anson in March 1753 to supply government closer to the populous area that was developing as a result of traffic down the Great Wagon

### **Road into the piedmont section of North Carolina.**

Salisbury, the county seat of Rowan, was for twenty-three years the farthest west county seat in the colonies. twenty-six counties in North Carolina and all of Tennessee were formed from the area that was once Rowan, where exist the earliest extant set of court records for all that area of North Carolina, the records of Anson, Bladen, and New Hanover having been largely destroyed by courthouse fires. Rowan covered the entire northwestern quarter of the state of North Carolina.

### **Granville Proprietary**



In 1728, seven of the eight Lords Proprietors of Carolina sold their lands back to the English Crown. One of the Lords Proprietors declined to sell. John Carteret, known to his intimate friends, familiarly and briefly, as "Right Honourable John Earl Granville, Viscount Carteret and Baron Carteret, of Hawnes, in the County of Bedford, in the Kingdom of Great Britain, Lord President of his Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter" -- Earl Granville was born in 1691 and had inherited as a four-year-old, one-eighth of Carolina, with bounds- on the Virginia line on the north and the southern line of Rowan on the south. The strip of land was about sixty miles in depth, bounded by the Atlantic on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west; it was roughly the upper half of present-day North Carolina. Granville was given the right and title to all vacant lands, and his land agents granted the lands and collected the rents and fees in his name. He died in 1763, having never seen his North Carolina lands. The land office was closed shortly thereafter, and the American Revolution intervened, wiping out all traces of feudalism, soccage, and quitrents. All the Granville properties were confiscated by the state.

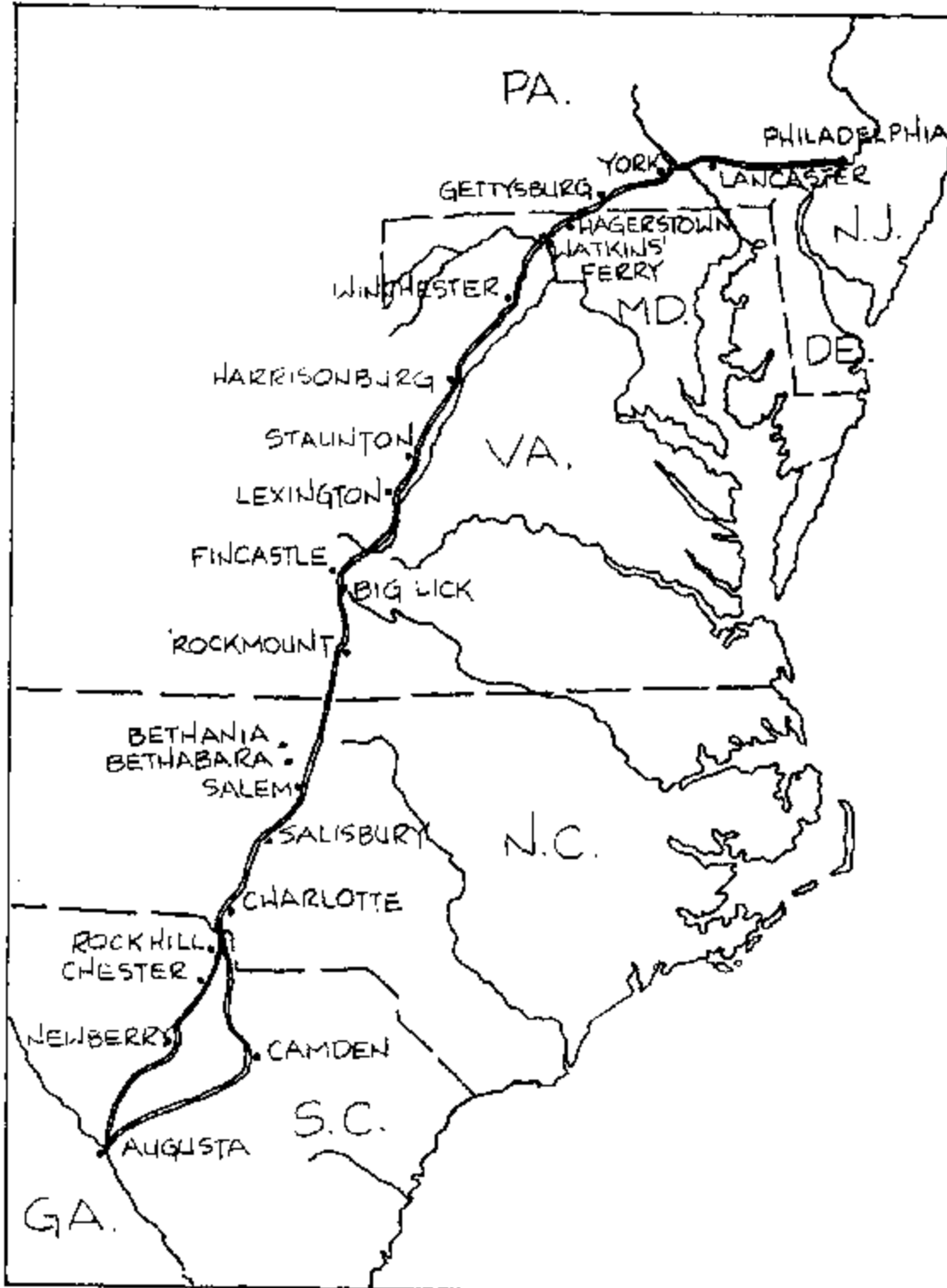
### McCulloh Tracts

To further complicate the matter of real estate in the colony of North Carolina ' Henry McCulloh, a merchant of London, was granted in 1737 some 1,200,000 acres of land, 475,000 of which lay within the Granville proprietary. Ergo: one may expect to find both Granville and McCulloh grants being issued in Rowan County to immigrants who came down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road. McCulloh's grant to George Lanegan and Jacob Eller is dated 31 December 1761, when they paid L20 sterling for 320 acres in Tract #9 on the Yadkin River on Granville's line.<sup>13</sup> Christian Eller's McCulloh grant for 200 acres is dated 1 January 1763 and lay in Tract #9.<sup>14</sup> On 10 April 1764 Jacob Brown and his wife Elizabeth (X) made a deed of 1 ease and release to Melker Eller for 157 acres, part of a grant they had received from Lord Granville's agents in 1761.<sup>15</sup>

The migration down the Great Wagon Road made Salisbury an important trading center almost immediately. Jeremiah Bailey, Edward Hughes, and Isaac Free applied for licenses in September 1753 to keep ferries across the Yadkin River. Edward Hughes was one of the first Justices of Rowan. Originally a Quaker from Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, where he had married Ann Zanes in 1734, Edward Hughes purchased a tract of land in the Valley of Virginia in December 1746 for L25 Pennsylvania money,

on Wallings Creek, a branch of the North Shenandoah. The records of Augusta County, Virginia, show he was still there in 1747, but he removed to the Forks of the Yadkin with the Bryans and Boones in 1748. He was subsequently elected sheriff of Rowan in 1758. He lived to be about 100 years old. But back to the ferries. Ferriage rates, set by the Court, were determined by the number of wheels for coaches, chariots, chaires, and chaises, i.e., eight pence per wheel. Our enterprising Isaac Free was also granted a license to operate a tavern, as were Peter Aron, George Furbush, Benjamin Rounsavel, Jeremiah Baily, Edward Cusick, George Davidson, and many others. Tavern rates were also set by the court. Between 1753 and 1755, ordinary licenses granted in Rowan numbered twenty-four in the county and five in the town of Salisbury. Mind you, the village of Salisbury was then a small place consisting of scarcely more than sixty families, and Rowan County, with all its vast territory, contained little more than five thousand people. With so many ordinaries per capita, one assumes there was a demand on the frontier for strong drink. Edward Cusick landed the license for the ordinary at the Court House. All spirituous liquors were six shillings per gallon. Dinner was eight Pence.<sup>16</sup> No small wonder that on 9 October 1754 Samuel Beeson and Robert Tate fined thirty shillings proclamation money for non-attendance at Court as grand jurors and for being "Drunk after being Qualified for that purpose."<sup>17</sup> Several stores in Salisbury supplied the frontier, and a shoe manufactory, prison, hospital, and armory grew up there before the Revolution. Merchant John Mitchell in 1767 supplied Governor Tryon with a large quantity of goods to trade with the Indians; Mitchell had come from Cecil County, Maryland, down the Great Wagon Road.<sup>18</sup> Another merchant, William Nisbet, sold Daniel Boone the powder, shot, and yellow ribbon which he took on his trading missions to the Indian territories of Tennessee and Kentucky; the Nisbets had come from New Jersey down the Great Wagon Road prior to 1750.

Governor Tryon wrote the Board of Trade in England that more than a Thousand immigrants' wagons had passed through Salisbury in the fall and winter of 1765. 1765 was the year Jacob Eller was naturalized in Rowan County.



Forty

miles to the south, the hamlet of Charlottesville grew as quickly as Salisbury, it being the seat of the frontier county of Mecklenburg, largely settled by Scots-Irish traders, many from Augusta County, Virginia.

As it had done in Pennsylvania, the Great Wagon Road in the Carolinas and Virginia forced the Indians to move farther west. Historian Carl Bridenbaugh has pointed out that on this narrow-rutted, intercolonial thoroughfare coursed a relentless procession of horsemen, footmen, and pioneer families "with horse, wagon, and cattle."

Riding along the Great Wagon Road in the decade before the American Revolution, visitors from Europe expressed amazement at the rapid growth of the interior. Stretched-from Philadelphia to Georgia were endless farms, punctuated by an occasional fort, tavern, or village. By 1765, most of the road was cleared to accommodate horse-drawn vehicles. To maintain the road, county courts appointed "overseers" and "viewers" who were responsible for keeping up segments of the thoroughfare at the county expense. To fill the holes and lay gravel over last year's mud, farmers were employed in the fall, after they had gathered their crops. Christian Eller was appointed as a overseer of the road in Rowan on 7 February 1772; the appointment is recorded in the Rowan County Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions.<sup>19</sup> The same year Christian Eller was appointed Constable for the Grand Jury.<sup>20</sup> He served as the administrator for a number of Rowan County estates. He frequently served on the Rowan County juries.

Besides wagoners and packhorse drivers, the Great Road in summer swarmed with drovers, who smelled of the barnyard, leading and driving livestock to market, aided by vigilant shepherd dogs. The usual traveler went on foot, carrying provisions in a pack over his shoulder.

Entire families sometimes rode horseback along the road to settle a new farm or to found a new church. And as the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road (grew longer and wider, so did the Conestoga wagon, ultimately reaching a length of twenty-six feet and a height of eleven feet.

In the Wagon Road's early days, Philadelphia was the market for most livestock. However, the growth of upland market towns in Virginia and the Carolinas gradually diminished the drovers' journeys to the City of Brotherly Love. The towns that had originally been way stations for travelers eventually became trading centers: Lancaster, Winchester, Salisbury, and Camden.

Few passes cut through the Appalachians, and those that did were obscured the dense growth of pines and hardwoods which covered the mountain faces. The passes were known to the Indians who found them by observing the course the eagles followed across the mountains; the white men were slow to find these gaps.

Many nationalities joined in making the new society on the frontier land of America. The British influence predominated, supplying the language, the law, the religion, the culture, the training in self-government, even the very political theory that led to the overthrow of British rule. Yet everything subtly altered after the transatlantic passage. Nor was the frontier the only agency of Americanization. The new land moved through a series of historic stages; or, rather, history imposed a succession of overlapping tasks on the men and women that settled on the new continent. Each task created its own agendum, its own set of priorities for the evolving nation. Each new agendum determined how the American people allocated their attention, their resources and their hopes during each historic stage. And each agendum further modified old ideas and institutions, and, on occasion, invented new ones, thereby developing a distinctive American order of life.

This process of adaptation widened the American deviation from Europe, fostered impulses of separatism, and thereby led to another historic task: the achievement of nationhood. In the last quarter of the 18th Century, when travel and communication were slow and laborious, Americans faced the challenge of converting thirteen colonies with local concerns and local loyalties into a democratic republic with national identity, national loyalty, and a national government. Two great documents -- the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution -- crystalized the American creed. It would not have been possible without the qualities exemplified in the early American explorers.<sup>21</sup>

After the opening of the Cumberland Gap Road, i.e., the Wilderness Road, and after Daniel Boone penetrated into Kentucky in 1769, later leading the first band of settlers across the Cumberland Gap about the time of the Revolution, creating a new west, the older settlements in Georgia and the Carolinas that once bordered the western frontier were left far behind. Much of the former traffic was deflected, but the Wagon Road continued to grow in importance. The great years of the Deep South's development were yet to come. The ancient path that led through the Carolinas into Georgia would continue to lead to green lands and golden opportunity. The Great Philadelphia Wagon Road would grow with the years, becoming in our lifetimes a part of the interstate highway system.

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1. Jo White Linn, C.G., C.G.L., Box 1948, Salisbury, NC 28144
  2. Ralph Dornfield Owen, "Palatine and Palatinates, 11 in *The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. XXI (1963), No. 4: 231, 32.
  3. "Well Meant Information, As To How The Germans, Who Wish To Travel To Pennsylvania, Should Conduct Themselves," by L.M., *Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. XXII (1961-62), pp. 231-36.
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Rowan County Deed Book 5:347.

14. Rowan County Deed Book 5:463.

16. Rowan County Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Book 1:19, 21 Sept. 1753.

17. Ibid., p. 52.

18. James S. Brawley, The Rowan Story (1953), p.55

19. Rowan County Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Book 3:324.

20. Ibid., p. 337a.

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