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German Communities in 18th-Century Europe and North America

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ABSTRACT

Building upon recent developments in historical migration research which focus on migrant networks and the role of information and rational choice, this chapter takes a comparative look at three kinds of community that evolved as a consequence of German long-distance migration in the 18th century. First, German merchant communities emerged in western European centres of overseas trade like Cádiz, Bordeaux and London. Second, German settlement on the Bóly manorial estate in Hungary illustrates migration to feudal landed estates in east and south-east Europe. Third, German-speaking transatlantic migrants in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, exemplify community building in 18th-century North America.

Taken together, these cases demonstrate the heterogeneity of German diaspora communities. Merchants and entrepreneurs from the Hanseatic ports and proto-industrial regions in Cádiz, Bordeaux and London pursued conscious strategies of integration into their host societies while simultaneously retaining strong business and personal ties to their native regions. The cosmopolitan character of these merchant communities stands in marked contrast to the localism and ethnic consciousness of the peasants and rural craftsmen who settled in villages on the Bóly estate in Hungary. The earlier Slavic population of these villages had been forcibly removed to make room for German newcomers, and relationships between German peasants, their Serbian neighbours and their feudal lords were often marked by conflict. The German communities in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, combined aspects of localism and cosmopolitanism. German immigrants preferred to settle among countrymen, they married among themselves and consciously preserved their religious identity, but enterprising migrants in the town of Lancaster also cultivated ties to their home communities beyond the Atlantic while engaging in cooperation with their English-speaking neighbours. Depending on the composition of the migrant groups, their social environment, their interactions with other ethnic groups, and the strength of their ties to their regions of origin, early modern German migration resulted in a wide range of communities.

Ausgehend von neueren Tendenzen der historischen Migrationsforschung, welche die Bedeutung von Migrantennetzwerken Information und rationalem Handeln im Wanderungsprozess betonen, betrachtet der vorliegende Aufsatz drei unterschiedliche Formen von Gemeinschaften, die als Folge deutscher Fernwanderungen im 18. Jahrhundert entstanden. Das erste Fallbeispiel bilden die deutschen Kaufmannsgemeinden, die in westeuropäischen Zentren des Überseehandels wie Cádiz, Bordeaux und London entstanden. Zweitens wird die deutsche Besiedlung der Grundherrschaft Bóly in Ungarn als Beispiel für Auswanderung nach Ost- und Südosteuropa vorgestellt, und drittens werden die deutschen Siedlungen in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, exemplarisch für die transatlantische Auswanderung behandelt.

Zusammengenommen illustrieren diese Fallbeispiele die Heterogenität deutscher Diasporagemeinden. Kaufleute und Unternehmer aus den Hansestädten und aus proto-industriellen Regionen in westeuropäischen Hafenstädten verfolgten eine bewusste Strategie der Integration in ihre Gastgesellschaften, während sie gleichzeitig enge Beziehungen zu ihren Heimatregionen aufrecht erhielten. Der kosmopolitische Charakter dieser Kaufmannsgemeinden steht in starkem Kontrast zum Lokalismus und der ausgeprägten ethnischen Identität der Bauern und Landhandwerker, die Dörfer in der ungarischen Herrschaft Bóly besiedelten. Die frühere slawische Bevölkerung dieser Dörfer war zwangsweise ausgesiedelt worden, um Platz für die deutschen Siedler zu schaffen, und die Beziehungen zwischen deutschen Bauern, ihren serbischstämmigen Nachbarn und der Grundherrschaft waren von heftigen Auseinandersetzungen geprägt. In Lancaster County ließen sich deutsche Siedler bevorzugt unter Landsleuten nieder, heirateten zumeist untereinander und bewahrten ihre religiöse Identität, aber Händler und Gewerbetreibende in der Stadt Lancaster pflegten auch geschäftliche und persönliche Kontakte zu ihren Heimatgemeinden jenseits des Atlantik, während sie zugleich mit ihren englischsprachigen Nachbarn kooperierten. Je nach Zusammensetzung der Migrantengruppen, ihrer sozialen Umgebung, dem Charakter ihrer Beziehungen zu anderen ethnischen Gruppen und der Stärke ihrer Verbindungen zu ihren Heimatregionen entwickelten sich demnach sehr unterschiedliche deutsche Gemeinden.

MIGRATION FROM PRE-INDUSTRIAL GERMANY

In 1980, the historian Hans Fenske gave a survey of long-distance migration from Germany in the 18th century. By Germany he understood “that area which in 1871 formed the renewed German Empire, including Alsace and Lorraine”. The time period he looked at was a “long” 18th century that extended from 1683 – the year when German settlers founded the community of Germantown in Pennsylvania and when imperial and Polish armies repelled the Turkish siege of Vienna – to 1812, when the Napoleonic wars brought German migration to a temporary halt. Fenske traced the transition from a 17th-century period of immigration, when large numbers of Swiss and Tyrolian labour migrants as well as Protestant refugees from the Austrian lands, Bohemia and France flocked to a Holy

Roman Empire that was recovering from the population losses of the Thirty Years' War, to an 18th-century period of emigration when hundreds of thousands left the Empire. Based on the older literature and published sources, Fenske estimated total international migration from Germany between 1683 and 1812 at over half a million people. He emphasized that most migrants came from regions in the German west and south-west, and he pointed out the predominance of continental European over transatlantic destinations. Whereas no more than 125,000 Germans went to America during the long 18th century, state-sponsored and private settlement projects in historical Hungary attracted at least 350,000 settlers. After 1763, some 37,000 Germans migrated to Russia and settled in the Volga and Black Sea Regions, and 50,000 went to Poland. Other destinations – Ireland, Spain, or Denmark – were less important but still received several thousand migrants. To these international migrations should be added an estimated 300,000 settlers who went to Brandenburg-Prussia. Finally, while he pointed to “push” factors like harvest failures, growing population pressure, declining economic opportunity, warfare, and the demands of feudal lords and princely states on their subjects as causes for emigration, Fenske viewed the “pull” factors of active recruitment and propaganda for new regions of settlement as more important. “The outflow of individuals to foreign countries,” he wrote, “did not start on its own, but was incited by those who had an interest in German emigration and who advertised it in Germany. ... For the most part the emigrants did not flee an unbearable situation, but followed the promises of the propaganda”¹.

A more recent overview of German migration in the 17th and 18th centuries, written by Georg Fertig in 1994, refined Fenske's picture in several respects. Fertig mainly explained transatlantic migration in terms of the generally high geographical mobility that characterized pre-industrial Germany. According to his estimate, “roughly every third adult individual in 17th- and 18th-century Germany changed his or her place of residence during their lives”. Long-distance migrants made up but a small fraction of the total migrant population. The estimated 516,000 adult migrants to Eastern Europe in the 18th century may have constituted a mere 1.1 percent and the 70,000 adults who went to North America during the same period no more than 0.2 percent of all German migrants. Fertig identified various “channels” of spatial mobility – the movements of servants, professional specialists, vagrants, religious minorities, soldiers, and colonists – and interpreted transatlantic migration “as an extension and modification of the traditional ‘channels’ of mobility”. He further argued that the reasons for leaving given in official records – high taxes, limited resources, poverty, the system of partible inheritance and so on – should not be taken as objective “causes” but rather as manifestations of an 18th-century discourse that viewed emigration in mercantilist terms. Instead, German overseas migration was sustained by “a network of information and communication” in which migrants' letters and travellers played an essential role².

Over the past decade and a half, research on German migration has made further advances. Three developments deserve to be singled out. First, the dichotomy of “push”

and “pull” factors still employed by Fenske has been supplemented by approaches that emphasize migrants’ capacity for rational choice, the role of information, and interpersonal networks linking migrant communities to their regions of origin and to one another³. Second, several studies have illuminated the ways in which long-distance migration in the early modern period was actually organized. They have examined the role of merchants, shippers and agents, the business aspects of transporting migrants and the role of states in the channelling of migration streams⁴. Third, the extraordinary varieties of migrant groups and experiences have been explored in more depth. An encyclopaedia of European migrations compiled by an international group of scholars thus contains entries not only on such well-known groups as the Huguenots or the Volga Germans, but on German furniture-makers in 18th-century Paris, foreign sailors in the Dutch merchant marine, brick-makers from the county of Lippe in Northern and Western Europe, and central European miners in early modern Scandinavia⁵.

Building upon these recent developments in historical migration research, this chapter takes a comparative look at three distinct kinds of community that evolved as a consequence of German long-distance migration in the 18th century. To begin with, trade diasporas emerged in commercial centres where groups of merchants from specific backgrounds coalesced⁶. In the German case, the mercantile groups in the west European commercial centres of Cádiz, Bordeaux and London, which have recently been studied in detail, highlight important features of this type of community. Furthermore, German settlement on the manorial estate of Bóly in Hungary will serve to illustrate crucial aspects of migration to east and south-east Europe. Finally, the settlements which German-speaking transatlantic migrants formed in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, exemplify community building in 18th-century North America.

MERCHANT COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN EUROPE: CÁDIZ, BORDEAUX AND LONDON

In the course of the 18th century, the burgeoning colonial trade of Spain, France and Great Britain brought increasing wealth to the port cities of Cádiz, Bordeaux and London. As these countries pursued mercantilist policies and sought to channel the trade of their colonies through their own ports, foreign merchant companies wishing to enter the Atlantic trade had a strong enticement to establish branches there. In the city of Cádiz, the monopoly port for most sectors of Spanish-American trade for much of the 18th century, 244 of the 529 commercial firms enumerated in a 1773 tax list were operated by foreigners. While French, English and Irish merchants predominated, Germans also formed a significant foreign merchant community. According to Klaus Weber, some 240 merchants of central European origin settled in Cádiz between 1680 and 1830. Until 1730, men from the Hanseatic cities of Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck predominated within the German community in Cádiz, but in the following half century – a period when commercial relations between Germany and Spain were particu-

larly flourishing – merchants from Westphalia, the Rhineland, southwest Germany and Bohemia came to play a larger role, and even traders from Bavaria and the Tyrol found their way to the Spanish port city. Characteristically, many German merchants in Cádiz came from proto-industrial regions where rural and small-town craftsmen produced large quantities of textiles, metal wares, glass, and devotional objects for export. Low labour costs in central Europe gave the producers of these labour-intensive export goods, which were in high demand throughout the Atlantic world, a comparative advantage over western European competitors. By marketing the products of their native regions and purchasing colonial consumer goods that were in growing demand in central Europe – coffee, sugar, tobacco, cocoa, dyestuffs – the German merchants in Cádiz linked central European production regions to the Atlantic economy⁷.

Some individuals immersed themselves deeply in Spanish culture and lifestyle: the merchant Johann Nikolaus Böhl (1770-1842), for example, collected classical books and manuscripts and published studies and anthologies of Spanish literature. While a few prominent members of the German community married into families of the local elite and integrated themselves into Spanish society by converting to Catholicism, most cultivated close ties among each other and to their home region, and few obtained Spanish citizenship. Although they shared the Catholicism of their host society, the attachment of Bohemian glass merchants to their region of origin was especially strong. They frequently travelled back and forth between Bohemia and Spain, and they maintained close personal and financial ties to their compatriots in other European cities. In contrast to many other German merchants, who left Cádiz during the economically difficult and politically turbulent years between 1800 and 1830, the Bohemian trading companies continued their presence there and even extended their operations as far as Mexico City and Lima. A particularly striking example of entrepreneurial success and persistence is the Ellermann family from Venne in Westphalia, which was continuously present in Cádiz from the 1720s to the 1860s, and also had branches in Hamburg and Amsterdam. In the middle decades of the 18th century, Hermann Ellermann even represented the family business in the New World. In addition to a supply of marketable export goods, far-flung networks of kin and countrymen clearly were an important factor in commercial success⁸. In the unstable and risk-prone commercial world of the early modern period, kinship networks generated vital social capital of trust and support⁹.

In Bordeaux, which was important both for its re-export of colonial products and for the marketing of regionally produced wines, Weber identified 225 German merchants during the period from 1680 to 1830. Twenty German trading firms had established themselves in the city on the Garonne by 1715, and their number rose to sixty by the 1770s. As German manufactured goods were less in demand in France than in Spain, fewer traders from central European manufacturing and proto-industrial regions settled in Bordeaux. On the other hand Hanseatic merchants, who enjoyed extensive commercial privileges and exported French colonial goods and wine to Hamburg, and

businessmen from the financial centre Frankfurt am Main occupied prominent positions within the German community. In comparison with Cádiz, the integration of the mostly Protestant German merchants into local society was helped by the presence of a Huguenot minority in Bordeaux. As marriage into a French family made it easier to obtain commercial privileges like the right to trade directly with the French colonies in America, a significant number of Germans took this opportunity. Of the 63 German men who are known to have married in 18th-century Bordeaux, 38 chose a French, but only 15 a German spouse. German migration to Bordeaux reached its climax during the 1770s and 1780s, when French Atlantic trade was in its most flourishing phase. After the outbreak of the French Revolution, however, political turmoil and international warfare drove Bordeaux's foreign trade into crisis. While several prominent commercial houses went bankrupt, some of the most successful German merchants weathered the politically and economically turbulent period of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars by reinvesting their capital into rural estates and the lucrative wine trade¹⁰.

As in the case of Cádiz, contacts between German production regions, the French port city, and American plantation colonies were established and cultivated through kinship and business networks. Thus the establishment of the Frankfurt-born Johann Jakob Bethmann (1717-1792) in Bordeaux was aided by a substantial inheritance from a childless uncle as well as by marriage into the wealthy Desclaux family. The firm of "Bethmann & Imbert", which Bethmann had formed with a Huguenot partner in 1741, began to fit out ships for the colonial trade in the late 1740s and established commercial links with the French Antilles and Canada. While he was married to a French woman and formed companies with French partners, Bethmann did not obtain French citizenship. Instead, he became imperial consul in Bordeaux and was knighted by Emperor Joseph II in 1776. The entrepreneur Friedrich Romberg, a native of Sundwig near Iserlohn, moved to Brussels in 1756. He formed companies in Ostend, Bruges, Gent and Bordeaux and integrated an international freight business, the manufacturing of printed cotton in the Austrian Netherlands, maritime insurance, the Atlantic slave trade, and the management of indigo, sugar, cotton and coffee plantations in the French Caribbean. The Bordeaux-based company of "Romberg, Bapst & Cie", which was formed in 1783, had business transactions with some 50 Caribbean plantations, 20 of which it managed directly. The firm had already overextended its credit operations in the late 1780s, however, and the outbreak of political unrest and slave revolt in the colony of Saint-Domingue speeded up its downfall: "Romberg, Bapst & Cie" went bankrupt in 1793¹¹.

Margrit Schulte Beerbühl's study of the German merchant community in London from the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660 to the end of the Napoleonic wars in many ways parallels the work of Klaus Weber. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, hundreds of Germans obtained rights of naturalization or denization in the English capital, and 475 Germans became citizens there between 1715 and 1800. The mercan-

tile character of this German community is underscored by the fact that two thirds of the German men who were naturalized in London during the 18th century were merchants, bankers and entrepreneurs. Hamburg and Bremen figured prominently among the cities of origin of these migrants, but as in Cádiz, a significant group also came from centres of proto-industrial production in northwest Germany like Elberfeld, Herford and Osnabrück. Chain migration, which sometimes spanned several generations, kinship ties and business cooperation, linked German textile-producing regions, the Hanseatic port towns and the British commercial world. Thus the de Smeth family of Hamburg had branches in Amsterdam, London and Livorno in the early 18th century, and its commercial relations extended to the Levant, Russia, the Iberian Peninsula and the British colonies in America. Around 1740 the firm of Abraham Korten, a native of Elberfeld who had become naturalized in London in 1718, traded with Russia, North America and the Caribbean. In his extensive operations, Korten cooperated closely with relatives in Elberfeld as well as with naturalized Germans and Dutchmen in London. The Hamburg merchant John Anthony Rucker (1719-1804), who obtained British citizenship in 1745, was the first of nine members of his family to move to London during the 18th century. His nephew, John Peter, settled in New York in 1774, and when John Anthony died in 1804, he left several Caribbean plantations to another nephew, Daniel Henry. In the early 19th century, members of the Rucker family went as far as Montevideo and Sydney. By acquiring British citizenship, German merchants were able to evade the mercantilist restrictions placed on trade within the British Empire by the Navigation Acts and could directly participate in overseas trade as well as benefit from the advantageous commercial treaties which Great Britain had concluded with Portugal, Spain and Russia. German merchants invested in regulated companies like the Eastland and Levant Companies, bought stock of the Bank of England as well as shares in the East India and South Sea Companies, and played an especially prominent role in the British-Russian trade¹².

The career of Peter Hasenclever (1716-1793), a native of Remscheid in Westphalia, in many ways epitomizes the opportunities as well as the risks that German merchants and entrepreneurs who ventured into the west European and overseas trades confronted. Hasenclever initially worked for his cousin, a cloth and needle manufacturer in the Rhenish town of Burtscheid, and forged a Europe-wide network of contacts on extensive business trips to France, England, Russia, Poland, Silesia and the Iberian Peninsula. In 1755, Hasenclever and two countrymen, Karl Weerkamp from Hopsten in Westphalia and Heinrich Böhl from Stralsund on the Baltic Sea, formed a trading company in Cádiz that exported large consignments of linen to South America during the Seven Years' War. In 1758, Hasenclever and his wife, the daughter of an English captain, settled near London. Six years later, he won two English investors for a company that was endowed with a capital stock of £21,000 and was to produce iron, potash, flax and hemp in America. Hasenclever hired 500 German and English miners, ironworkers,

colliers, labourers and their families to build a complex of five iron furnaces and seven forges in the hills of northern New Jersey. Due to poor planning and the unreliability of his financial backers, the venture failed after a few years. After lengthy legal disputes in England, Hasenclever eventually went to Silesia in 1773. There he became engaged in various industrial enterprises and worked for closer commercial and diplomatic relations between Prussia and Spain¹³.

GERMAN SETTLEMENTS IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE: BÓLY, HUNGARY

From the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683 to the Peace of Passarowitz in 1718, the Habsburg Empire wrested huge territories in southeast Europe from the Ottoman Empire. In order to secure these newly-conquered territories and increase their economic value, both the Habsburg rulers and private landowners actively recruited German migrants for settlement in Hungary and present-day Romania¹⁴. The formation of a German community in Hungary is the subject of a recent case study by Karl-Peter Krauss, who has scrutinized the recruitment of migrants and changing settlement patterns on the manorial estate of Bóly, a fertile area to the southeast of Pécs¹⁵.

In 1700, the estate of Bóly was conferred upon one of the most powerful Hungarian magnate families, the Batthyánys. This family had long supported the Habsburg dynasty in its military conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, and Count Adam II of Batthyány (1662-1703) had rendered valuable military service to Emperor Leopold I during the Habsburg-Ottoman wars of the late 17th century. After his early death, Batthyány's estates were governed first by his widow, Countess Eleonora of Batthyány-Strattmann (1672-1741) and then by his son, Karl Joseph Prince of Batthyány-Strattmann (1697-1772). When the family obtained Bóly, its 29 villages were partially deserted and the whole area but thinly populated by Hungarian peasants and migrants from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia. There were 291 taxables in 1715, the majority of them Serbs, and the local situation in the early 18th century was highly unstable on account of banditry and warfare between Hungarians and Serbs. In 1720, the Batthyánys began to recruit German settlers for Bóly. The first migrants were settled in the deserted villages of Nyomja and Pécsvecser, while others moved into villages inhabited by Hungarians and Slavic migrants. Correspondence between Countess Eleonora and her administrators leaves no doubt that economic and fiscal considerations were paramount: the Countess clearly expected the estate to return higher profits. Initially, however, these recruitment efforts were not very successful. Just 82 taxable subjects in 1738 – 12.5 % of all taxables counted in that year – were of German origin, while 459 were ethnic Serbs and Croatians. A number of early German settlers seem to have moved on after a brief stay; evidently a major reason for their dissatisfaction was their conflicts with the local Serbian population¹⁶.

In the decade after 1738, the German population of Bóly increased substantially for two reasons. First, the manorial lords made a sustained effort to recruit settlers from

central Europe – especially from the prince-bishopric of Fulda – as well as from neighbouring estates and from the Banat. Significantly, this recruitment effort came at a time when prices for grain and wine were rising throughout Europe and the Habsburg rulers required large amounts of grain to supply their armies. The predominance of economic motives is underscored by the fact that a significant minority of the Germans whom the Batthyánys accepted on their estate were Protestants. Second, the Serbian population was forcibly removed from a number of villages in order to make room for the newcomers. By 1744, the central village of Bóly had become entirely German-speaking, and over the next two years the process of replacement repeated itself in half a dozen villages. As a consequence, by the mid-1740s German-speaking colonists already accounted for 20% of Bóly's population, and two decades later the majority of taxables were German. The German settlers, therefore, did not come to a wasteland, and only some of them actually occupied vacant farmsteads in deserted villages that entitled them to a three-year tax exemption. Nevertheless, the Germans did introduce sweeping changes in Bóly's settlement pattern: they divided up the land among themselves and laid out their settlements as compact villages. While the Serbian population had mainly practised animal husbandry, the Germans focused on grain production and viticulture. Tillage of the land was organized along the principles of the traditional three-field-system. In 1751, there were 524 householders in seven German-speaking villages; while the majority were farmers, 193 (37%) were identified as small cottagers. The relationship between farmers and small cottagers remained essentially stable over the following decades: in 1791, there were 684 householders, 247 (36%) of them small cottagers. Despite a high mortality rate among the new arrivals, the recruitment of German settlers proved highly profitable for the manorial lords in the long run. By 1770, the estate yielded about 27,000 florins annually in the form of lease payments and various feudal dues. The income from Bóly both supported the Batthyány family's lavish lifestyle in the imperial capital of Vienna and financed various improvements and building projects on the manorial estate itself⁷.

The image of an economically successful settlement project has to be balanced against the high level of ethnic and social conflict that marked 18th-century Bóly. The forced replacement of Serb migrants to make room for Germans in the 1740s inevitably caused ethnic resentment. The process of replacement continued on a smaller scale when successful German farmers bought up land in neighbouring Serbian villages, and the semi-nomadic way of life of the Serbian herdsmen resulted in further friction with German peasants who wished to keep the Serbs' herds off their fields. Moreover, the presence of marauding bands was an endemic problem on the former Habsburg-Ottoman military frontier in the Krajina, and German villagers continued to complain about attacks on their settlements. Some of the displaced Serbs may have joined or supported the marauding bands in the 1740s and 1750s. In any case, local administrators and German settlers came to view Serbs as "thieves", "bandits" and destroyers of property. In-

deed, conflicts with the Serb population seem to have intensified the peasants' sense of identity, for they consciously identified themselves as "German peasants" in documents pertaining to these local disputes. Finally, the growing presence of local officials and increasing administrative interference also caused conflicts between the settlers and their manorial lords. When Karl Joseph Prince of Batthyány-Strattmann issued an ordinance in 1764 that restricted the use of the local forests, his subjects protested against this measure and also complained against increasing feudal labour demands. When a complaint of the subjects of the Batthyány estates to the patrimonial court brought no improvement, the settlers of Bóly began to withhold feudal dues in 1766. The arrest of several resistance leaders led to a full-scale peasant uprising: several thousand peasants marched on Siklós, the administrative centre of the Batthyány estates, and a dozen died in clashes with armed troops. Subsequent investigations before the patrimonial courts, but especially the 1767 feudal reform (*Urbarialregulierung*) of Queen Maria Theresa, which moderated some feudal dues, gradually deflected the peasants' dissatisfaction, but conflict – especially in the form of border disputes with neighbouring manorial estates – was by no means absent in the late 18th century¹⁸.

SETTLEMENT COMMUNITIES IN NORTH AMERICA: LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

The 100,000 to 125,000 Rhinelanders and German-speakers from Switzerland who migrated to North America in the 18th century formed a string of German-speaking communities on the Atlantic coast that extended from Nova Scotia and present-day Maine in the north to Georgia in the south. By far the most sustained and numerically most important transatlantic flow of German migrants, however, led through the port of Philadelphia to the Pennsylvania backcountry. Letters and reports about the successful establishment of German pioneers and the organisational efforts of merchants, agents and ship captains, generated a momentum that led the majority of 18th-century transatlantic migrants from central Europe to Penn's colony. German migration to Pennsylvania peaked around mid-century, but then was interrupted by the Seven Years' War and continued on a smaller scale after 1763¹⁹.

Around 1710, the first German and Swiss immigrants settled in the fertile Conestoga Valley, the centre of an area west of Philadelphia and east of the Susquehanna River that became Lancaster County in 1729. Both the county and the town of Lancaster, which was founded as the county seat in 1730, had a predominantly German-speaking population throughout the 18th century²⁰. German-speaking settlers came from villages and small towns in southwest Germany (the Palatinate, Baden, Württemberg, parts of Hesse and Franconia) and northern Switzerland and established farms in the rural parts of the county. In contrast to their home regions, they did not settle in compact village communities but on individual farmsteads in a dispersed pattern of settle-

ment. Although this settlement pattern may indicate an individualistic attitude, recent research has clearly established that these immigrants valued kinship and community. Thus families and individuals who had migrated together from Germany often settled close to one another, and German-speakers preferred members of their own ethnic group as neighbours, marriage partners and godparents of their children. Moreover, the German Lutheran and Reformed congregations that were formed in the Pennsylvania backcountry, often on the initiative of pious lay people, became focal points of community, ethnic and confessional identity²¹.

The sense of common identity was especially strong among the members of Anabaptist and radical pietist groups who came to Pennsylvania to escape religious persecution and practise their particular forms of worship free from outside interference. Lancaster County became a centre of settlement for German and Swiss Mennonites and Amish, and the Moravian Brethren founded the community of Lititz there in the early 1750s²². Some pietistic groups even entered into idiosyncratic communal experiments: thus Conrad Beissel (1691-1768), a baker and religious dissenter from Eberbach in the Electoral Palatinate, and his followers formed the monastic community of Ephrata in the late 1720s. The members of the Ephrata community practised adult baptism by immersion, they honoured Saturday as the Godly-appointed day of rest and worship, and some members lived a life of celibacy and asceticism. During its peak period in the mid-18th century, the community probably numbered over 300 people. Its members wrote numerous religious hymns and mystical poems, developed a style of choir singing that profoundly impressed visitors, and left a rich legacy of illuminated manuscripts. They also constructed large monastic buildings whose architecture is thought to reflect religious symbolism. For some time, Ephrata was also a successful economic enterprise that included mills, workshops and a printing press. But while Conrad Beissel's charismatic personality attracted numerous people, his autocratic and occasionally erratic demeanour also caused conflict with other members of the community. His final years were overshadowed by legal conflicts over property rights and challenges to his authority. After Beissel's death in 1768, Peter Miller became the leader of the celibates, but the community was already in decline by then, and the last celibate woman died in 1813²³.

In marked contrast to the secluded rural community of Ephrata, where life was structured around communal religious ritual, the county seat of Lancaster developed into a thriving commercial and administrative centre that linked the colonial metropolis of Philadelphia to Pennsylvania's rapidly expanding hinterland. The town already had about 2,800 inhabitants in 1770, just four decades after its foundation, and the population grew to about 4,000 by the end of the 18th century. A majority of Lancaster's inhabitants were German-speakers, and while immigrants from the Kraichgau region around Heilbronn and from the duchy of Württemberg were conspicuous among the early residents, the mingling of German-speakers from a variety of geographical and cultural backgrounds came to characterize the town's German-American community

in the second half of the 18th century. While English-speakers constituted a minority of the town's population, they were overrepresented in the mercantile and professional group, and their knowledge of the legal system and connections to the Philadelphia elite gave some English-speakers disproportionate political and economic influence within the community²⁴.

Both English and German speakers in Lancaster engaged in profitable pursuits like land speculation and Indian trade. Members of both groups purchased the labour of indentured servants and slaves, and both participated in town government. They regularly did business with one another, occasionally formed commercial partnerships, met in taverns and social circles, and cooperated in civic projects such as the establishment of a library company. In other respects, however, "Lancaster was still, essentially, two ethnic communities at the end of the 18th century". Inter-marriage between German- and English-speaking residents, for example, was rare throughout the century, and the few marriages that cut across ethnic lines usually involved either wealthy families of German origin that gradually became anglicized or poor transient persons²⁵.

Besides marrying within their own community, German-speakers maintained strong ties to their regions of origin. They frequently mentioned relatives in Germany in their wills, and ten residents of Lancaster are known to have returned to Germany and Switzerland at least once between the 1730s and the 1770s. Their business trips were often undertaken to claim inheritances, but transatlantic travellers also used the opportunity to carry letters and purchase German goods for export to North America. They advertised their business trips in the Pennsylvania newspapers, giving detailed information about the routes they planned to travel and offering their services to anyone who had claims to settle or letters to deliver. Upon their return to America, they published advertisements in which they offered a variety of German goods for sale, indicating that these goods – textiles, Rhine wines, agricultural implements, books, clocks, guns, musical instruments – were in demand among German settlers²⁶.

The fact that German-speaking residents of 18th-century Lancaster maintained a strong sense of identity is particularly evident from their involvement in religious congregations. The vast majority of German and Swiss town dwellers belonged to one of three Protestant groups: the German Reformed and Lutheran congregations, both formed in the 1730s, and the Moravian congregation, which broke away from the Lutherans in 1746. During the first decades of their existence, these congregations had to accommodate large numbers of newly-arrived immigrants, and they experienced repeated conflicts over the pastorates of controversial and incompetent ministers, clashes between proponents of confessional orthodoxy and pietism, and disputes over pastors' and lay people's competing claims to the control of congregational affairs. At the same time, however, all three congregations experienced long-term growth, expressed in rising numbers of members and communicants. In time, they replaced their initial crude log and stone churches with more elaborate brick structures, purchased bells and or-

gans, and began to derive regular incomes from pew rents. An increasing number of members expressed their attachment to their congregations by testamentary bequests, and the initial conflicts between pastors and people were eventually solved in written charters and church constitutions²⁷.

Throughout the 18th century, the German-speaking inhabitants of Lancaster thus maintained a strong sense of community and ethnic identity. German-speakers married almost exclusively within their own ethnic group and were bound by ties of kinship, business and inheritance to their homeland. The Reformed, Lutheran and Moravian congregations were focal points of group identity and community life. At the same time, Germans regularly interacted with their English neighbours in the market-place, on the streets, in the court house and in the town's many taverns. The economic pursuits of the successful German traders, innkeepers and craftsmen resembled those of their English neighbours. The organization of congregations as well as participation in local and provincial elections, moreover, provided German-speakers with experience in self-government. In the final analysis, it appears that the secret of success in the New World lay in the combination of reliance on networks of kinsmen, fellow countrymen and congregation members on the one hand and adaptation to English legal and business practices on the other²⁸.

CONCLUSION

The cases presented in this chapter represent several different kinds of German diaspora communities in the 18th century. On the one hand, merchants and entrepreneurs from the Hanseatic ports and German proto-industrial regions formed thriving communities in several western European port cities. As the goals of these migrants were primarily commercial, they pursued a conscious strategy of integration into their host societies while simultaneously building their business operations upon kinship networks of trust and support and retaining strong personal ties to their native regions. As a result, these German merchant communities took on a decidedly cosmopolitan character²⁹.

German settlers on the Batthyány estate of Bóly in Hungary, on the other hand, were peasants and rural craftsmen who prospered in villages from which the earlier Serbian population had been forcibly removed. The localism of these settlers is revealed in ethnic clashes with their Serbian neighbours as well as in resistance to the increasing demands of their feudal lords. Finally, the German communities in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, combined aspects of localism and cosmopolitanism. While German immigrants preferred to settle among countrymen, married among themselves and consciously preserved their religious identity, enterprising residents of the town of Lancaster cultivated personal and business ties to their home country while at the same time engaging in economic and political cooperation with their English-speaking neighbours. To sum up, the history of German diaspora communities in 18th-century Europe and North

America defies easy generalizations and national stereotypes. Depending on the regional and social composition of the migrant groups, the environment into which they moved, their interactions with other ethnic groups, and the strength and character of their ties to their regions of origin, the migration of Germans in the early modern period resulted in a wide variety of community experiences.

NOTES

- ¹ H. Fenske, *International Migration: Germany in the 18th Century*, in "Central European History", 1980, 13, pp. 332, 337-338.
- ² G. Fertig, *Transatlantic Migration from the German-Speaking Parts of Central Europe, 1600-1800: Proportions, Structures, and Explanations*, in N. Canny (ed.), *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500-1800*, Oxford 1994, pp. 192-235, quotes on pp. 195, 210, 231.
- ³ See J. Lucassen, L. Lucassen (eds.), *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, Bern 1997; H. Wellenreuther, *Contexts for Migration in the Early Modern World: Public Policy, European Migrating Experiences, Transatlantic Migration, and the Genesis of American Culture*, in H. Lehmann, H. Wellenreuther, R. Wilson (eds.), *In Search of Peace and Prosperity: New German Settlements in 18th-Century Europe and America*, University Park, Pa. 2000, pp. 3-35; G. Fertig, *Lokales Leben, atlantische Welt. Die Entscheidung zur Auswanderung vom Rhein nach Nordamerika im 18. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück 2000; W. O'Reilly, *Bridging the Atlantic: Opportunity, Information and Choice in Long-Range German Migration in the 18th Century*, in W.G. Rödel, H. Schmahl (eds.), *Menschen zwischen zwei Welten: Auswanderung, Ansiedlung, Akkulturation*, Trier 2002, pp. 25-43; W. O'Reilly, *Knowledge and Power: Systemising Migration in the Atlantic World, c. 1700-1900*, in S. Heerwart, C. Schnurmann (eds.), *Atlantic Migrations: Regions and Movements in Germany and North America/USA during the 18th and 19th Century*, Münster 2007, pp. 61-82.
- ⁴ See M.S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America*, University Park, Pa. 2000; M. Schulte Beerbühl, *Frühneuzeitliche Flüchtlingshilfe in Großbritannien und das Schicksal der Pfälzer Auswanderer von 1709*, in M. Beer, D. Dahmann (eds.), *Über die trockene Grenze und über das offene Meer. Binneneuropäische und transatlantische Migrationen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, Essen 2004, pp. 303-328; R. Beiler, *Immigrant and Entrepreneur: The Atlantic World of Caspar Wistar, 1650-1750*, University Park, Pa. 2008.
- ⁵ K.J. Bade, P.C. Emmer, L. Lucassen, J. Oltmer (eds.), *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, Paderborn - Munich - Vienna - Zürich 2007.
- ⁶ On the concept of trade diasporas, see P.D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Cambridge 1984, and I. Baghdiantz McCabe, G. Harlaftis, I. Peplasis Minoglou (eds.), *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History*, Oxford 2005.
- ⁷ K. Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute im Atlantikhandel 1680-1830. Unternehmen und Familien in Hamburg, Cádiz und Bordeaux*, Munich 2004, pp. 37-116, 275-286.
- ⁸ Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute* cit., pp. 117-153, 266-275.
- ⁹ On the idea of networks as social capital, see L.A. Lomnitz, M. Pérez-Lizaur, *The Origins of the Mexican Bourgeoisie: Networks as Social Capital*, in T. Schweizer (ed.), *Netzwerkanalyse: Ethnologische Perspektiven*, Berlin 1989, pp. 35-46.
- ¹⁰ Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute* cit., pp. 154-224.
- ¹¹ W. Henninger, *Johann Jakob von Bethmann 1717-1792. Kaufmann, Reeder und kaiserlicher Konsul in Bordeaux*, 2 vols., Bochum 1973; F. Thésée, *Négociants bordelais et colons de Saint-Domingue. Liai-*

- sons d'habitation. Le maison de Henry Romberg, Babst & Cie. 1783-1793*, Paris 1972; Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute* cit., pp. 190-204, 284-285.
- ¹² M. Schulte Beerbühl, *Deutsche Kaufleute in London. Welthandel und Einbürgerung (1660-1818)*, Munich 2007 (for the case of the Rücker family, see pp. 176-178, 198-199; for Kortten, cf. pp. 338-345; for the de Smeth family, see pp. 193-195, 331).
- ¹³ A. Hasenclever, *Peter Hasenclever aus Remscheid-Ehringhausen, ein deutscher Kaufmann des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Gotha 1922; B. Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution*, New York 1986, pp. 249-250; Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute* cit., pp. 73, 128, 130-131, 279-280; Schulte Beerbühl, *Deutsche Kaufleute* cit., pp. 146, 166, 182, 382, 385.
- ¹⁴ For general aspects of this migration, see I.N. Kiss, *Die deutsche Auswanderung aus Ungarn aus neuer Sicht*, Cologne 1979, and the essays in M. Beer, D. Dahlmann (eds.), *Migration nach Ost- und Südosteuropa vom 18. bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts. Ursachen, Formen, Verlauf, Ergebnis*, Stuttgart 1999.
- ¹⁵ K.-P. Krauss, *Deutsche Auswanderer in Ungarn. Ansiedlung in der Herrschaft Bóly im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 2003
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-94.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-171.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-238.
- ¹⁹ Fertig, *Transatlantic Migration* cit., pp. 210-216; Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers* cit.; A.G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America*, Baltimore 1993.
- ²⁰ J.T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographic Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania*, Baltimore 1972.
- ²¹ M. Häberlein, *Vom Oberrhein zum Susquehanna: Studien zur badischen Auswanderung nach Pennsylvania im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1993, pp. 131-205; A.S. Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775*, Philadelphia 1996, pp. 69-99.
- ²² R.K. MacMaster, *Land, Piety, Peoplehood: The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790*, Scottsdale, Pa. 1985, pp. 50-110; Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys* cit., p. 107.
- ²³ J. Bach, *Voices of the Turtledoves: The Sacred World of Ephrata*, University Park, Pa. 2003.
- ²⁴ J.H. Wood, Jr., *Conestoga Crossroads: Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1730-1790*, Harrisburg, Pa. 1979.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, quote on p. 215; M. Häberlein, *The Integration of German Immigrants in 18th-Century North America: The Case of Lancaster, Pennsylvania*, in S. Heerwart, C. Schnurmann (eds.), *Atlantic Migrations: Regions and Movements in Germany and North America/USA during the 18th and 19th Century*, Münster 2007, pp. 135-164, esp. 145-150.
- ²⁶ M. Häberlein, *Transatlantische Beziehungen im 18. Jahrhundert. Die Kontakte südwestdeutscher und Schweizer Einwanderer in Pennsylvania zu ihren Heimatregionen*, in W.G. Rödel, H. Schmahl (eds.), *Menschen zwischen zwei Welten. Auswanderung, Ansiedlung, Akkulturation*, Trier 2002, pp. 45-60. See also Roeber, *Palatines* cit., pp. 114-131; Fertig, *Lokales Leben* cit., pp. 113-135.
- ²⁷ Wood, *Conestoga Crossroads* cit., chapter 9; Häberlein, *Integration* cit., pp. 150-164.
- ²⁸ Cf. M.S. Wokeck, *German Settlements in the British North American Colonies: A Patchwork of Cultural Assimilation and Persistence*, in H. Lehmann, H. Wellenreuther, R. Wilson (eds.), *In Search of Peace and Prosperity: New German Settlements in 18th-Century Europe and America*, University Park, Pa. 2000, pp. 191-216, and Fertig, *Transatlantic Migration* cit., pp. 217-218.
- ²⁹ Cf. Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute* cit., pp. 304, 306.

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