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A Smith-Wayland Connection?

Who Was Barbara Smith?

By John Blankenbaker

Barbara Smith appears several times in the second half of the eighteenth century in the Hebron Lutheran Church in Culpeper County, Virginia, in the records of baptisms and communicants. It is safe to assume that she was German, but the spellings used here are the common English spellings of their names. Of the two prominent German Smith families in the community, the patriarch of one was Matthew Smith and the patriarch of the other was his brother, John Michael. The family of Isaac Smith and Margaret Rucker also lived in the community though their orientation emphasized the English language even there were Rucker, Fleshman, Yager, Böhme, and Yowell marriages.

Four baptisms are very telling for placing Barbara Smith in the community and they are, without naming the children:

| <u>Parents</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Sponsors</u> | <u>Relationship to parents</u> |
|---|-------------|---|--|
| John Wayland, Jr. w. Rosina <i>Willheit</i> | 1776 | Adam Wayland w. Mary <i>Finks</i> Barbara Smith Matthew Weaver | his father his stepmother ? his cousin-in-law |
| Morton Christopher w. Elizabeth <i>Wayland</i> | 1776 | Adam Wayland w. Mary <i>Finks</i> Barbara Smith | her father her stepmother ? |
| John Wayland, Jr. w. Rosina <i>Willheit</i> | 1777 | Godfrey Yager w. Mary <i>Wayland</i> Barbara Smith | his brother-in-law his sister ? |
| Mary | 1775 | Adam Wayland Barbara Smith | Owner of Mary ? |

(Continued on page 2)

Also See:

The Adventures of Young Alexander Spotswood, by Suzanne Collins Matson, p. 6

The Schwaigern Witchcraft Trials of 1713-1716, by Virginia Nuta, p. 9

German Witchcraft Beliefs in North Carolina, by Patsy Nesbit, p. 13

Thank You, Betty Johnson, p. 5

(A Barbara Smith in 1782 was probably English since her name was written in English script, a technique used to denote nationality.) The italicized names above are inferred or appear in a variety of sources.

In this church in this time period, the sponsors chosen by the parents were nearly always near relatives or their spouses. In every one of the baptisms above, the family name which is present is Wayland. There is one simple possibility for how Barbara Smith could have been related to the Wayland family. John Michael Smith, Sr., the patriarch of one of the Smith families, had a son of the same name. The wife of this son might have been Catherine Wayland, the daughter of Thomas Wayland. John Michael Smith, Jr. and Catherine had one daughter, Barbara, before Catherine died. John Michael Smith, Jr. then married Anna Magdalena Thomas and later Catherine Unknown.

In this scenario, Barbara Smith's mother was Catherine Wayland. In the first and third baptism above, Barbara would have been the cousin of John Wayland. In the second baptism, Barbara would have been the half-sister of Elizabeth Wayland Christopher. In the fourth baptism, Barbara was the niece of Adam Wayland.

John Michael Smith, Jr., was born in 1712. Catherine Wayland was born in 1715. These ages are more than satisfactory for an eventual marriage. The first farms of the Michael Smith family and the Thomas Wayland family were just about one mile apart. Physically and psychologically, there can be no objection to a marriage. Although Catherine Wayland has been suggested as the wife of several other Germanna men, there has been no evidence presented to support the assignments. On the contrary, the evidence here strongly supports the marriage of Catherine Wayland to J. Michael Smith, Jr.



In the communion lists, Barbara Smith is always with women without a spouse, which suggests that Barbara was not married. Very often, the people within two of Barbara are other Smiths on the seven occasions from 1775 to 1783 when she is recorded as attending. The one in 1783 is it extremely important, as I believe on this occasion the minister was John Michael Smith, Jr. The last four consecutive names in this list are Barbara Smith, A. Margaret Smith, A. Catharine Smith, and J. Michael Smith. The next to the last is the then wife of J. Michael Smith. The classification of A. Margaret Smith is uncertain and Barbara could have been a daughter.

In the baptisms, sponsors were chosen by the parents because they were relatives. In the communion lists, a person often chooses with whom they will sit. Thus, when chosen as a sponsor, the emphasis was on the Wayland family. In the

communion lists, Barbara Smith very often chose other Smiths. She is a link between the Wayland and the Smith families.

A civil record supports the ideas above. On 28 July 1737 Thomas Weyland/Wayland, blacksmith, sold 120 acres of land to Michael Smith/Schmid for 20 pounds. This would have been J. Michael Smith, Jr., since his father had not returned from the fund raising trip to Germany. According to the outline above this would have been a sale of land to a son-in-law, which is a certainly a common event. According to the German church records, J. Michael Smith, Jr., would have been 25 and Catharine Wayland would have been 21 at this time. It might be presumed that the marriage took place shortly before the sale of the land.

There are some alternatives:

Alternative Scenario 1: J. Michael Smith, Sr. might have had another son born in Virginia since he and his wife were young enough. This son might have married an unspecified woman by whom he had a daughter, Barbara. The father of Barbara died. This, however, leaves unexplained the presence of Barbara Smith at four Wayland baptisms.

Alternative Scenario 2: J. Michael Smith, Jr. might have married an unknown woman and they had a daughter, Barbara. At the birth of Barbara, the mother died and Barbara was raised by the Wayland family and hence she had a strong association with the Wayland family though it would be doubtful that she would have a strong association with the Smith family.

(Continued on page 5)



38/29/23N, 78/19/15W

Wayland property in blue, Smith property in green.
 Reprinted with permission from *Beyond Germanna*, Vol. 10, No. 6, Nov. 1998, p. 597. Key to all properties on next page.

Key to Map of Land Division in Vicinity of Madison County, Virginia

(map on preceding page)

1. John England, 1728, 1000a, 2. William Duff, 1728, 358a, 3. John Shotwell, 1763, 542a, inc. 408a in Stonehouse of 28 Sep 1728, 4. Rachel Evans, 1728, 1000a, 5. James Maxwell, 1750, 634a, inc. 507a in Stonehouse of 28 Sep 1730, 6. John Malden, 1728, 1000a, 7. Richard Malden, 1728, 813a, 8. Nicholas Copeland, 1734, 350a, plot is incorrect, location is uncertain, 9. Christopher Yowell, 1728, 400a, uncertain location, 10. Christopher Yowell, 1733, 124a, uncertain location, 11. Ralph Banks, 1734, 400a, uncertain location, 12. Samuel Hennings, 1756, 400a, 13. George Martin, 1734, 400a, 14. John Towles, 1748, 300a, 15. John Kilby, 1748, 400a, 16. Joseph Bloodworth, 700a, inc. 400a of Bloodworth of 1733, plot has many uncertainties, 17. Anthony Strother, 1735, 50a, 18. Benjamin Rush, 1726, 387a, 19. Michael and John Clore, 1728, 698a, 20. William Vinegunt, 1728, 500a, 21. Michael Clore, 1726, 400a, 22. John Thomas, 1728, 400a, 23. William Banks, 1728, 400a, 24. Jacob Broyles, 1728, 400a, 25. Cyriacus and Peter Fleshman, 1728, 400a, 26. John Thomas, 1735, 400a, 27. Robert Hutchinson, 1761, 254a, 28. John McKenzie, 1748, 400a, 29. Jacob Manspile, 1734, 400a, 30. Conrad Amberger, 1733, 400a, 31. Robert Coleman, 1734, 400a, 32. Joseph Bloodworth and Conrad Amberger, 1736, 400a, very incomplete plot, line in common with with Coleman, #31, 33. Thomas Kennerley, 1748, 499a, 34. Francis Thornton, 1748, 785a, 35. John Zimmerman, 1748, 556a, overlaps #36, 36. John Zimmerman, 1748, 400a, overlaps #35, 37. John Zimmerman, 1756, 805a, inc. 400a of Zimmerman of 1734, 38. John Butler & Nicholas Gunnell, 1734, 400a, 39. Edward Ballenger, 1733, 400a, 40. John Kains, 1736, 400a, 41. John Paul Vaught, 1736, 640a, 42. Christian Clemans, 1734, 600a, 43. Thomas Phillips, 1727, 1000a, 44. William Rush, 1726, 400a, 45. Benjamin Walker, 1733, 1000a, was Downs of 1727, 46. Not used, 47. William Banks, 1728, 590a, 48. Edward Southall, 1727, 500a, conflict with #45, 49. Jacob Crigler, 1728, 400a, 50. Robert Brooke, 1736, 378a, repatent of Thomas Taylor, 1728, 378a, 51. Richard Burdyne, 1749, 266a, inc. 216a of 1728 Tanner, 52. Robert Tanner, 1735, 200a, 53. Henry Aylor, 1753, 34a, description in error, location generally correct, 54. Henry Snider, 1726, 78a, 55. Matthew Blankenbaker, 1728, 320a, 56. Balthasar Blankenbaker, 1728, 360a, 57. Balthasar Blankenbaker, 1733, 160a, location not proven, 58. Andrew Garr, 1734, 250a description uncertain, location generally correct, 59. Michael Cook, 1732, 224a, 60. John Carpenter, 1733, 150a, 61. Michael Cook and Jacob Crigler, 1726, 400a, 62. Cyriacus Fleshman, 1726, 390a, 63. George Sheible, 1726, 78a, 64. John Hoffman, see article in *Beyond Germanna*: 10:3, 65. John Snider, 1748, 368a, 66. Nicholas Blankenbaker, 1728, 400a, 67. Nicholas Yager, 1726, 400a, 68. Nicholas Blankenbaker, 1733, 400a, 69. William Carpenter, 1726, 400a, 70. John and Michael Thomas, 1726, 156a, 71. Nicholas Blankenbaker, 1726, 156a, 72. Matthew Blankenbaker, 1726, 156a, 73. Balthasar Blankenbaker, 1726, 157a, 74. Michael Willheit, 1728, 289a, 75. Baumgardner brothers, 1766, 993a, inc. 400a of 1736 Baumgardner, 76. Matthew Smith & Matthew Barlow, 1726, 400a, 77. William Carpenter, 1728, 193a, 78. John Carpenter, 1760, 1245a, inc. 850a from Kirker of 1728, 79. George Utz, 1764, 472a, inc. two patents of 1726 minus sale to Hoffman, 80. George Moyer, 1728, 498a before selling 189a to Weaver #81, 81. Peter Weaver, 1763, 1295a inc. 400a 1736 Weaver, purchase of 189 a from Moyer, #80, 82. Tobias Willheit and Martin Walk, 1736, 400a, 83. William Beverley, 1728, 3300a, 84. Michael Smith, 1726, 400a, 85. John Motz & John Harnsberger, 1726, 400a, 86. Adam Yager, 1737, 100a, 87. George Moyer, 1726, 400a, 88. George Long, 1731, 300a, 89. Matthew Castler, 1728, 406a, 90. George Slaughter (Schlater), 1734, 300a, 91. John Michael Stoltz, 1732, 291a, 91.5. Lawrence Crees, 1732, 200a, 92. Dr. William Lynn, 1749, 378a, 93. Richard Malden, 1735, 800a, 94. Richard Malden, 1735, 800a, 95. James King, 1728, 300a, 96. Michael Kaifer, 1726, 400a, 96.5. Richard Malden, 1728, 100a, 97. Thomas Wayland, 1728, 504a but lost 384 in disputed lands, 98. John Broyles, 1726, 400a, 99. William Eddings, 1734, 1725a, (325a from Rouse 1728 patent, 400a from Eddings 1731 patent, balance new land), 100. John Rouse, 1728, 610a but not showing 325a sold to Eddings, 101. Edward & John Dougharty, 1735, 400a, 102. not used, 103. John Bruce, 1735, 400a, 104. John Eddings, 1728, 525a, 105. William Eddings, 1731, 400a, 106. Michael Holt, 1728, 245a, 107. John Rucker, 1727, 977a, 108. Michael Holt, 1726, 400a, 109. Elizabeth Batteley, 1733, 500a, 110. Mary & Elizabeth Taliaferro, 1733, 1482a, 111. Robert Cave & David Philips, 1735, 400a, 112. William Rice, 1736, 400a.

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Alternative Scenario 3: Barbara was a Wayland daughter born in Virginia. She married an unspecified Smith and thus became Barbara Smith.

In these alternatives, though they are possible, people are involved who have no proven existence. The solution that is proposed has the advantage that no new people are necessary. It also explains the known facts in a very logical way. The people who are invoked did exist. By Occam's Razor the suggested solution is certainly preferable. Occam's Razor is the principle urging one to select among competing hypotheses that which makes the fewest assumptions and thereby offers the simplest explanation of the effect. Bertrand Russell offers a particular version of Occam's Razor: "Whenever possible, substitute constructions out of known entities for inferences to unknown entities."

My involvement in this question originated with comments posed by Nancy Dodge. We did discuss alternatives and the solution here is the one which I favor. I do wish to say that Nancy is a positive source of ideas and she should never be ignored.

Some people question the value of church records and they are correct to do so. However, after a long and detailed study of the church records at the German Lutheran Church in Culpeper County in the last half of the eighteenth century, I do say that they are a source of information which can be used to solve some puzzling problems. I have found the wife of Peter Weaver, of Michael Yager, and of Michael Utz, and the two wives of Henry Wayman. They strongly support that Mark Finks had two wives even though Mark Finks never appears in the church records. The records confirm many marriages which were known but which lacked documentation.

For more reading, see:

1. Blankenbaker, John, "Hebron" *Baptismal Register*, privately printed, 3rd edition, 2009.
2. Mielke, Andreas & Blankenbaker, John, "Hebron" *Communion Lists*, privately printed, 2nd edition, 2nd printing with corrections, 2003.
3. Blankenbaker, John, "The Baptismal Register of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Culpeper County," *Beyond Germanna*, v.11, n.6, p.651.
4. Blankenbaker, John, "Communion Lists of the Hebron Church," *Beyond Germanna*, v. 13, n.5, p.764.
5. Blankenbaker, John, "Who Was J. Michael Schmitt," *Beyond Germanna*, v. 15, n.2, p. 862.

John Blankenbaker of Chadds Ford, PA, has been a Germanna researcher and writer for more than 25 years. His transcriptions and analyses of the baptismal and confirmation records of the Hebron Lutheran Church are available from his website, www.germanna.com, as well as his publication regarding the Culpeper Classes. His historical and genealogy notes, published on-line for many years, are available on www.germannacolony.org and <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~george/searchthesenotes.html>.

Thank You, Betty Johnson

I was having trouble proving my line through Abijah Yeager, son of John, son of Michael, son of Adam Sr. was the correct lineage to DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) Patriots, Michael and Adam Yeager, Sr.

Many years earlier DAR had accepted a lineage for Jacob Yeager, Son of John Pineywoods Yeager, son of Michael, son of Adam Sr. as correct.

Using your research in the two articles in the Germanna Research Journal, I was able to:

1. Prove that our John Yeager and John Pineywoods Yeager were not the same person. And that our John, not John Pineywoods, is the correct link to Michael and Adam Sr.

2. Prove that Abijah was the son of our John, son of Michael, son of Adam, Sr. even though no direct birth records exist.

Using your work with the tax rolls, DAR has made the corrections showing the John Pineywoods link is not the correct link to Michael and Adam, Sr. and used it to provide additional information to sort out the various John Yeagers involved in the Revolutionary War.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Your work in getting the line of Adam, Sr. through Michael through our John correct should open paths for anyone wanting to join DAR on Michael Yeager or Adam Yeager, Sr.

—Elaine Wells, Albany, OR

ED. NOTE: One of our goals is to disseminate accurate Germanna genealogy research, so we were happy that our publication of the work of Betty Johnson (Elizabeth Yates Johnson) made a difference to Elaine Wells' pursuit of admission to the DAR.

From the Shores of Africa to the Battlefields of the Danube:

The Adventures of Young Alexander Spotswood

By Suzanne Collins Matson

A cloud of smoke hovered over the ground, wounded men cried, horse hoofs furiously pounded the ground, the scream of a cannon ball pierced the air, and suddenly a British officer reels in pain as the hurtling cannon ball grazes his flesh. The young officer scrambles back up, finds safe cover and eyes the now still cannon ball which he would later pick up to keep as a souvenir. The battlefield was Blenheim and the young officer was Alexander Spotswood. That cannon ball would later accompany the young officer to America where he would serve as Lt. Governor of colonial Virginia.

Alexander Spotswood's life offers a colorful view of the world of England and Colonial America marking many significant milestones in the growth of what we now know as the United States of America. This is the first in a series of articles which will reveal Spotswood to be a complex and fascinating individual whose life will entertain as well as inform. A man who shaped the course of American destiny in ways that will surprise, particularly in light of the scant attention Spotswood garners in most histories of colonial America.

Who was this man and where did he come from?



*A. Cavilla, "Tangier from the ruins of the English mole," in Photographic Archive of A.Cavilla, Item #55, <http://aphdigital.org/projects/cavilla/items/show/55> (accessed July 16, 2012). Source, Budgett, Meakin. *The Land of the Moors: a Comprehensive Description*. London: Swann Sonnenschein & Co. 1901. "This panoramic view in a cloudy day shows the frontal line of the town. Leaning on the hill on the right we can see the Casbah, the closest part to the old English Mole. The ruins are a mere sequence of black stones."*

Born in 1676 in Tangier Garrison, Alexander Spotswood, son of Robert Spotswood and Catherine Maxwell, began his life in a place under frequent attack by the aggressive Moors. The port of Tangier became a British territory in 1662 as part of the dowry received by Charles II when he married Catharine of Braganza of Portugal. Tangier is situated on the northern tip of modern day Morocco at the western end of the Straits of Gibraltar making it a strategic location for the British Navy.

Imagine the bustle of activity at such a port as young Alexander Spotswood grew up, surrounded by constant naval

activity with the intermittent periods of war with the Moors. Action followed Alexander Spotswood throughout his life.

Robert Spotswood, Alexander's father, was no stranger to action either, serving as the assistant surgeon of the Tangier Garrison, later becoming the surgeon of Tangier upon the death of surgeon George Elliott, in 1668. Alexander's mother, nee Catherine Maxwell, was the widow of surgeon George Elliott before she married Robert Spotswood on February 22, 1670 at the Tangier Garrison. Robert Spotswood died in 1680 when Alexander was only four years old. After Robert Spotswood's

death, Alexander's mother married the Rev. Dr. George Mercer, the schoolmaster for the Tangier garrison.

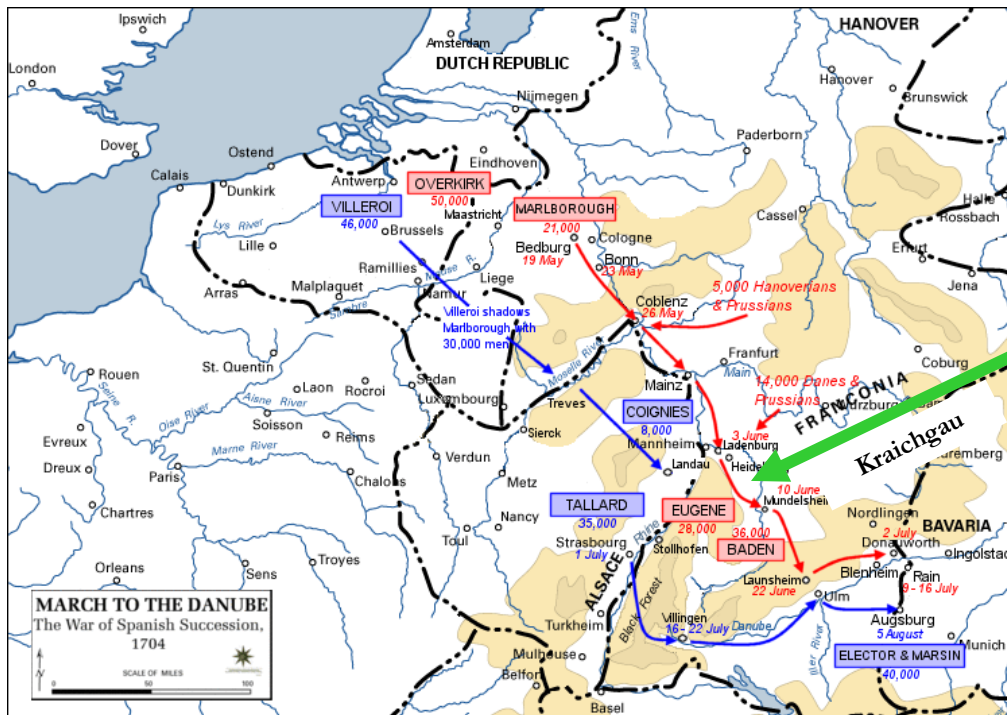
The British constructed a mole to improve Tangier's service as a British naval port. A mole is a stone wall constructed in the sea, used as a breakwater to protect the harbor. While growing up in Tangier Garrison, Alexander witnessed regular attacks on the garrison by the Sultan of Morocco which were all successfully repulsed by the British. Notwithstanding the tremendous cost of building the mole at Tangier, the British determined that the constant fighting with and blockade by the Sultan of Morocco made Tangier too costly to maintain.

In October 1683, Tangier Garrison was evacuated by the British causing the departure of all the soldiers, officers, and their families. The costly mole was destroyed by the British before the last

man left to prevent their enemies from benefitting from the structure. The destruction of the mole at Tangier is viewed as a sad chapter in British history.

In late 1683, Alexander left Tangier and the memories of his childhood. Traveling with his mother, he arrived in England for the first time. What a change that must have been for him. Having known only the North African coast and life within a garrison, often besieged, he must have looked in wonder and awe at the large, sprawling city of London. One can imagine the young man's excitement as he explored that capital city which previously was the subject of many stories told to him as a young boy living in the Tangier Garrison. Alexander Spotswood was now in London!

Alexander's youth in Tangier apparently whetted his appetite for things military as he joined the Earl of Bath's Regiment of Foot as an Ensign on May 20, 1693, when 17 years old. Since positions as officers were usually purchased, Alexander Spotswood (or someone in his family) had enough money



The Battle of Blenheim (referred to in some countries as the Second Battle of Höchstädt), fought on 13 August 1704, was a major battle of the War of Spanish Succession, in which England, Denmark, the Dutch Republic, Portugal, the Duchy of Savoy and the Holy Roman Emperor formed the Grand Alliance against France, Spain, and Bavaria. When Louis XIV of France threatened Vienna, capital of the Hapsburgs of the Holy Roman Empire, the Duke of Marlborough resolved to march from Bedburg, near Cologne, to protect Emperor Leopold in Vienna. The Duke's route went down the east side of the Rhine, as the French occupied the west bank. Between June 6 and June 10, 1704, the Duke of Marlborough—and Spotswood—travelled from Wiesloch, south of Heidelberg, across the Kraichgau area populated by most of the future German Second Colony, to Mundelsheim, just south and across the Neckar River from Heilbronn.

Map by Rebel Redcoat (Engelsk wikipedia) [GFDL (www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html) or CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons.

to pay for the position of Ensign. He received a commission in 1698 and was made a Lt. Colonel in 1703. Before arriving at his first military posting in Ireland, he was ordered to Flanders as part of the Duke of Marlborough's army, serving as the lieutenant quartermaster.

European conflict erupted at this time in the form of The War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714). The possibility of uniting the Spanish and French thrones threatened the balance of power in Europe compelling England and other countries (The Grand Alliance) opposed to the Spanish and French unification to go to war against Spain, France and their allies. One of the critical battles of this war was the Battle of Blenheim on August 13, 1704.

The city of Vienna was under pressure from Spanish and French forces. The Duke of Marlborough resolved to meet this threat and in what is recognized as a brilliant military campaign using deception and superb execution, Marlborough met the opposition army on the banks of the Danube

in and around the small village of Blenheim. Marlborough's victory at Blenheim saved Vienna and the Grand Alliance, ensuring fame to the victorious participants, including one Alexander Spotswood.

Recovering from his wounds received at the Battle of Blenheim, Spotswood returned to London. During this period he traveled to Aix-la-Chapelle (now Aachen, Germany) in April 1705 for treatment to recover the use of his left shoulder. His left shoulder, collarbone, and upper rib had all been fractured at the Battle of Blenheim. Alexander Spotswood's heroics at Blenheim helped propel him into national fame in England as well as garner him the favor of Queen Anne. Note – The War of Spanish Succession was known as Queen Anne's War in North America.



*The Battle of Blenheim : the village of Blenheim
(scene from a tapestry at Blenheim palace in the United Kingdom)*

Alexander Spotswood, now recovered from his injuries, sailed for Holland in April 1706 and rejoined the Duke of Marlborough's army. 1707 and 1708 were difficult and disappointing years for the Duke of Marlborough and his army because of a number of setbacks in Spain and along the Rhine in Southern Germany. But the Duke of Marlborough's army and allies prevailed at the Battle of Oudenaarde on July 11, 1708. As a result, Philip V remained King of Spain but was removed from the French line of succession, averting a union of the two kingdoms. The Austrians gained most of the Spanish territories in Italy and the Netherlands.

Spotswood returned home to London and in a letter to his cousin, John Spotswood, dated December 24, 1709, he stated that he had "just return'd home with my health & Limbs from Campaigning it in Flanders, being as yet in the same station as formerly." Others have written that Spotswood was captured at the Battle of Oudenaarde; if true, he didn't feel it worth mentioning in the letter to his cousin.

Some have also written he was wounded again at the Battle

of Oudenaarde, but Spotswood does not mention any injuries allegedly received at Oudenaarde.

Events in Spotswood's life continued to take exciting turns. What comes next for Alexander Spotswood? Stay tuned for this continuing series on the life of Alexander Spotswood.

© Suzanne Collins Matson and Michael L. Oddenino

Suzanne Collins Matson is a Germanna descendant and a noted Germanna researcher. Specializing in genealogical and historical research with a particular expertise on the upstate area of South Carolina, she works with clients who are researching their roots there or other areas of colonial America. She continues to serve as a Genealogy Consultant for the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and as such helps with solutions to some of the thornier problems relating to "proving the line" for prospective members. She attends several genealogical conferences every year to stay current with the latest information presented. She is a founding member of the Germanna Research Group and a frequent contributor of articles on history and genealogy.

Read "John Fishback: Revolutionary War Soldier" In the Summer Issue of "Kentucky Ancestors"

Suzanne Collins Matson has written the story of Germanna descendant John Fishback for the summer issue of the Journal of the Kentucky Historical Society, "Kentucky Ancestors." The article relates his family's quest to obtain a pension for his service. His widow was denied a pension because the pension office said he never served where he served or for the proper length of time. He was the grandson of the immigrant, Johannes Fischbach and moved from VA to KY.

You can order a copy, \$5 members, \$7 non-members, from Leslie Miller, Membership Coordinator, Kentucky Historical Society, 100 W. Broadway, Frankfort, KY 40601. (502) 564-1792 ext.4490. E-mail leslie.miller@ky.gov.

The Schwaigern Witch Trials of 1713-1716

By Virginia Rhodes Nuta

Witch hunts in Europe grew out of the persecution of heretics and are thought to have begun in the 15th century. They were not a medieval phenomenon as is often believed, but one that appeared contemporaneously with the Reformation when witchcraft was criminalized and peaked with the Counter-Reformation in the first half of the 17th century. The concept of witches as heretics and thus criminals was brought to the laity of Germany by both Catholic and Protestant churchmen.¹ Alleged witches were persecuted by both Catholics and Protestants, although in Germany, the worst witch hunts in Europe took place in cities controlled by Catholic archbishops in Trier, Fulda, Bamberg, Mainz, Cologne and Wurzburg where obsessed archbishops intensified the witchhunt.²



Hexenszene (witch scene), in the style of David Teniers, (1610-1690), by 1700, Berlin, Deutsches Historisches Museum.

Due to the political fragmentation of the Holy Roman Empire, however, most of those executed as witches in Germany were the result of scattered local trials, with a few victims in each trial.³ Germany is said to have executed more witches than any other country, more than three thousand in southwest Germany between 1561 and 1670.⁴ Some of the most serious outbreaks of witch-hunting took place in what are now the states of Württemberg and Bavaria.⁵

Scholars agree that witch trials declined in the later 17th century, when churchmen, mayors and town councils began to believe the witchcraft accusations to be overblown. But some scattered trials continued. There appears to be disagreement as to exactly when the last executions took place and some have stated 1732, 1748, 1752, 1779. What can be said with certainty is that our ancestors who emigrated from 18th century Germany came from a place where a belief in witchcraft was not only still in existence but also where their neighbors could be executed for that crime.

In the market town of Schwaigern, in the Kraichgau region of today's Baden-Württemberg, a witch trial was held quite late in the witchhunting era, in 1713. Seven Germanna families came from Schwaigern and an adjacent village, Stetten Am Heuchelberg. The Koch (Cook) and Holt families came to Virginia in 1717 on the ship *Captain Scott*.⁶ The Wilheit family arrived about two years later,⁷ while two more families who had intermarried with the Wilheits, the Baumgardners and Reiners, came in 1732,⁸ and 1750,⁹ respectively.

- 1 H.R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, and Other Essays* (New York, Harper & Rowe, 1969(c)1967).
- 2 Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Content of European Witchcraft* (Viking, 1996): 196.
- 3 Briggs, *ibid*.
- 4 H.C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwest Germany, 1562-1684* (Stanford University Press: 1972): 31-32.
- 5 Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (Yale University Press, 2004): 19.
- 6 John Blankenbaker, *The Second Germanna Colony and Other Pioneers* (Memorial Foundation of the Germanna Colonies in Virginia: 2008), 24. Robert Nicholson *et al.* "Michael Holt and Elizabeth Scheible," *Beyond Germanna*, vol. 14:3. That the Cook and Holt families were on the ship *Captain Scott* is inferred from Lieutenant Governor Spotswood's suits against Michael Holt and Michael Cook in 1724, and other evidence.
- 7 There is no record suggesting the father, Johann Michael Wilheit, arrived on the *Captain Scott*. Although there is no doubt that he was from Schwaigern, two older sons stated they were from Mainz, Germany, in their naturalization petitions. A third son, Adam, born in Virginia, bought land in 1744. John C. Wilhite, Jr., "Blankenbaker, Weaver, Wilhoit" *Germanna Record 13* (Memorial Foundation of the Germanna Colonies in Virginia: 1971, repr. 1982): 46, 51. Since a person younger than age 21 could not own land, this suggests the family arrived in Virginia by 1722-23.

The family of Johann George Teter (Dieter) arrived in Philadelphia in 1727¹⁰ before coming to Virginia, and Johann Paulus Lederer (Leathers) arrived in 1733.¹¹

Without a doubt these Germanna families witnessed this sorry episode in Schwaigern history, the burning at the stake of Anna Maria Heinrich and her daughter Catherine, and the beating of a younger daughter, recounted in a history of Schwaigern.¹²

It is said that accused witches were not practicing pagan rites or herbal medicine, as some have suggested, or doing wrong intentionally, but were merely at odds with neighbors, whose accusations would start the process in a village environment where it was not easy to avoid your neighbors.¹³ The



Engraving of Schwaigern, about 1680, by Andreas Kieser.
Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart.

accused were usually although not always women, often older midwives, spinsters or widows of low station. After accusation, villagers would sometimes beg their leaders to prosecute the alleged witch, credulously believing the accused responsible for assorted ills. What prosecution would mean for their neighbors was horrible; but the accusers and those responsible for the process that would then follow believed that “the apocalyptic battle between God and Satan, man and the Devil, was taking place in their very own villages, that witches were dancing in the woods where they gathered their firewood, or holding Sabbaths on the hills, or congregating under the very streets of the towns.”¹⁴

Anna Maria Heinrich’s story may have been somewhat different. Her accusation involved a son of the Von Neipperg family, nobles who ruled Schwaigern and its near vicinity. The father and ruling knight was Eberhard Frie-

drich von Neipperg (1665-1725), who inherited the title in about 1682, and had gained high rank in the Hapsburg empire and was often fighting the Turks or the French.¹⁵ The son was Frederick William von Neipperg, age 14, who supposedly became possessed of some type of mad behavior that caused him to fly into rages and dance about, perhaps similar to St. Vitus’ dance. The story goes that the skull of a small animal, roots, a broomstick, and lumps of earth were found in his bed.¹⁶

Anna Maria Heinrich was the wife of a locksmith, Andreas Heinrich, and had at least one son and two daughters. The son had previously been accused of stealing from the Von Neipperg palace and had been banned. When the Heinrichs were told that the son would not be punished, supposedly Frederick William von Neipperg’s malady ceased. Anna Maria and her two daughters were accused and, as was the usual way such charges were handled in Europe, they were tortured.¹⁷

Although the account in Schwaigern’s *Heimatsbuch* does not say how they were tortured, the normal modes of torture in Germany were the rack or *strappado*, thumbscrews, a “boot” that would crush the calf of the leg, and whipping. With the *strappado*, the accused’s wrists would be bound behind her back and above her head and she would be suspended, often with weights on her legs. Torture was used in all criminal cases at the time. In witchcraft cases, because there were normally no witnesses to the act that caused harm, it was required that there be a confession that was believed to be true, so there must be a confession, also, without torture, after it had been elicited by torture. So

8 Ardys V. Hurt, “Johann Frederick Baumgartner,” *Beyond Germanna*, Vol. 1, n. 5.

9 John Blankenbaker, *Beyond Germanna*, Vol. 3, No. 5, p. 165.

10 Franklin H. Cochran, “George Teter of the Robinson River Settlement in Virginia,” *Beyond Germanna*, Vol. 9, No. 5, p. 525.

11 Blankenbaker, *The Second Germanna Colony*, op. cit.: 98.

12 Hermann Ehmer, “Die Geschichte der Stadt Schwaigern von 1500 bis 1900,” *Heimatsbuch der Stadt Schwaigern mit den Teilorten Massenbach, Stetten am Heuchelberg und Niederhofen*, Werner Clement, Ed. (Schwaigern: Stadtverwaltung, 1994): 166.

13 Briggs, op. cit.: 4-6.

14 Roper: 19.

15 Immo Eberl, “Die Entwicklung des Hauses Neipperg im 18. Jahrhundert,” : *Heimatsbuch der Stadt Schwaigern mit den Teilorten Massenbach, Stetten am Heuchelberg und Niederhofen*, Werner Clement, Ed. (Schwaigern: Stadtverwaltung, 1994): 411-412.

16 Ehmer, *ibid.*

17 Ehmer, *ibid.*

there were often alternating periods of torture, augmented by keeping the accused in a dark cell, and intensive interrogation,¹⁸ with notaries writing down the questions and answers.¹⁹ The accused witch would often be stripped naked or dressed in special clothes designed to humiliate her.²⁰ Professional torturers, interrogators, notaries, gaolers, executioners, witchhunters, lawyers, judges, and executioners comprised an integrated set of professions where expertise in breaking down the witch was shared by correspondence, networking, and even conferences.²¹

As was usual when torture occurred, Anna and her daughters confessed. Their confessions were similar to all such confessions in Germany at that time. Anna Maria admitted to a Devil's

League, which sounds like admitting participation in a witch's Sabbath. She also appears to admit fornication with a small devil called Poppele or Jockele. There is a suggestion that Anna Maria confessed having been taken by the devil in her youth or bewitching the *freiherrn* (barons) in her youth, and apparently this was confirmed by the *freiherrn*.²² The "witch's Sabbath," (attendance would then elicit interrogation on who else was there) and sexual relations with the devil, were features of almost all witch confessions in Germany, and interrogations were designed to elicit minute details that only the witch could know. But since details of confessions were widely disseminated, the accused could easily copy details given by others.²³

The case was sent for advice from the law faculty at the University of Tübingen.²⁴ This again was a normal happening. Under the Im-



Drawing from leaflet on the incineration of Anna Eberlebrin in Augsburg, 1669
Source: *Catalog witches*, 1979, p. 71. From Wikimedia Commons.

perial Law Code promulgated in 1532 by Charles V, called the *Carolina*, local customs were given priority in witchcraft prosecutions, but under Article 219 local courts were to consult experts, preferably a law faculty.²⁵ The law faculty at Tübingen consulted by the Schwaigern officials had been thought to be unusually lenient, when in 1672 citizens of Balingen, disappointed that Tübingen would not agree their witch should be executed, asked the town council to try a different law faculty. Sometimes the town worthies, intimidated by local fury, would shop for a different verdict at a different university.²⁶

It has been said that the faculty at Tübingen became more harsh after 1672.²⁷ Certainly that appears to be the case with Anna Maria, since the faculty ruled that she would be burned at the stake.²⁸ But Anna Maria's situation was a little different from what has been described as a normal case. She was not an elderly spinster on the fringe of society but rather a married woman with children. She was not accused by her neighbors, but rather by a member of the ruling noble family. It

18 Roper: 44, 48.

19 Roper: 30.

20 Roper: 54.

21 Roper: 23.

22 Ehmer, 167.

23 Briggs: 25; Roper: 52.

24 Ehmer: 167.

25 Briggs: 336.

26 Briggs: 337.

27 Midelfort: 54.

28 Ehmer: 167.

does not seem to fit the run-of-the-mill case. One wonders what was really going on. It seems doubtful that Anna Maria ever had any chance with the faculty at Tübingen. Once she was sentenced, she would have been separated from the community, taken to the place of execution, her crimes would have been read to the assembled crowd, probably including our ancestors, and she would have been burned alive, witnessed by her daughters.²⁹

This probably occurred in September, 1713. It is not clear of what Anna Maria's daughters, Catherine and Margaret, were accused, but it was not necessary for them to have done anything as long as they were thought to be witches like their mother. Both of them "repented."³⁰ This was also standard procedure where, if one repented, one might be promised mercy or at least a less painful death,³¹ usually strangulation before burning. The case of the daughters was sent back to Tübingen and confirmed on 6 September 1713. Evidently there was an appeal, as the case in 1714 went to the

University of Giessen and the University of Mainz. The ruling in the end was that the elder daughter, Catherine, would be killed by the sword, and then burnt, on 3 August 1716. The younger daughter, Margaret, was beaten with sticks.³² It is not clear whether she was actually killed.

The years following the witch trial saw the emigration of many families from Schwaigern, and one cannot help but wonder if the witch trial, begun by an accusation from the Von Neipperg family, was the straw that broke the camel's back, when added to the other usual reasons for emigration. Historian Aaron Fogleman speculates, in his book about emigration from Germany, that the earliest migrants from Schwaigern may have been related to Anna Maria, mentioning Hans Heinrich and Hans Michael Heinrich, who migrated to Pennsylvania in 1716.³³

The supposedly bewitched son of the Baron von Neipperg, Friedrich Wilhelm, recovered sufficiently to become a soldier, and died of wounds received in battle in Belgrade while fighting with a Hapsburg army in 1723.³⁴

In 1724, Hans Michael Dieter was made major of Schwaigern. He had been the First Magistrate and Deputy Mayor during the witch trials and ranked third among the local officials after the Eberhard Friedrich Von Neipperg and attorney Johann Baltasar Muller. He probably played a part in Anna Maria's prosecution; his subservient position to von Neipperg was surely difficult. His son, Johann George Dieter (Teter), migrated in 1727 to Philadelphia and eventually made his way to the Germanna settlement in the Robinson River Valley of Virginia.³⁵

In 1725, Eberhard Wilhelm von Neipperg died, and was succeeded by his other son, the Catholic Wilhelm Reinhard von Neipperg.³⁶ Interestingly, Wilhelm Reinhard also accused a person for bewitching him, and that person was executed in 1737.³⁷

Our ancestors did escape the entanglements of Europe's village life and its legal apparatus for torture and death. But this was a world they must have well remembered, especially, perhaps, the women who had so many reasons to fear a village witchhunt. In fact, any discussion of the lives of Germanna women should include this subject. Historian Robin Briggs writes, "Historians who are aware of the extensive references to witchcraft in literary and judicial sources for the early modern period have concluded that people must have spent a good deal of their time worrying or talking about witches."³⁸ Our ancestors probably did worry and talk; but we know of no witchcraft allegations among our German ancestors in Virginia.



Eberhard Wilhelm von Neipperg

29 Roper: 65, Ehmer: 167.

30 Ehmer: 167.

31 Midelfort: 144.

32 Ehmer: 167.

33 Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press: 61 and 193, fn 28; [Table 2.1, p. 62, shows one family emigrating in 1713, five in 1716, and two, likely the Koch/Cook and Wilheit families, in 1717.]

34 Eberl: 413.

35 Eva Ann Teter Winfield, Compiler, *Teter Descendants of Hans Jorg and Maria Dieter*, (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1992): 1. Also see Hill - Jordan- Klages Families <family trees at rootsweb.ancestry.com> quoting "The Henckel Genealogical Bulletin", page 172.

36 Eberl: 413.

37 Midelfort: 196.

38 Briggs: 164.

Witches of the Carolina Backcountry: German Folk Beliefs That Crossed the Atlantic

By Patsy Nesbit

While researching eighteenth century German settlements in the North Carolina Piedmont backcountry, I kept tripping over “bits and pieces” about witches. I took a few notes and promised to return to learn more about these unseen creatures who played a simple role in the lives of isolated German settlers in Piedmont North Carolina.

The early German settlers carried their customs across the ocean to Pennsylvania and eventually brought their folklore and their language down the Wagon Road into North Carolina backcountry. They were clannish people and their tales were passed by word of mouth from generation to generation. Sources given were “He said, she said.”

Witches, usually women, existed in the stories and beliefs of the German immigrants. As late as the 1930’s, collectors of area folklore were told of many witch beliefs and learned how they differed from those brought by English settlers to the North Carolina coastal areas.

As a child, I loved to be entertained with a handed-down witch story. My city grandmother appeared to be on good terms with witches and enjoyed repeating tales heard in her youth with the grandchildren of my generation. My country grandmother was appalled that any person could place belief in these fantasy tales. For the simple farmers and tradesmen

in my rural area, the witch stories told and retold, were about good witches who had helped the first German settlers survive on the backcountry frontier around Alamance and Stinking

Creeks in Guilford County or around Abbott’s Creek along the Yadkin River in old Rowan that became Davidson County.

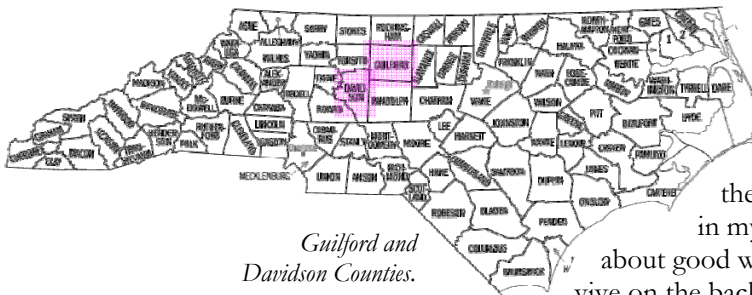
William Penn, who founded the colony of Pennsylvania for members of the Society of Friends (Quakers), invited Germans in the Palatine area, who faced religious persecution and starvation in their war-torn homeland, to migrate to his Pennsylvania colony where they could farm fertile land and enjoy religious freedom.

The first German settlers, often Amish or Mennonite, were honest, simple people, who welcomed the opportunity to worship their God as they chose, and better their lives through the cultivation of low cost land. By 1750, German immigration numbers reached new highs and the best land in Pennsylvania was being farmed by those who had come a generation or two earlier. New settlers learned a bit of the English language, worked to save some money to buy the cheaper land in the Carolinas and moved their families down the Great Wagon Road. Some of my German people settled along the Guilford/Alamance County line. Others continued to the Abbott’s Creek area of the Yadkin River in Rowan County. Both rural areas are still populated with farmers who share the surnames these first Germans brought with them.

The folklore of these German settlers had grown out of the Middle Ages and passed down by word of mouth -- mother to daughter, father to son. Some traditions dated back to the early Romans and were a bit pagan in origin. The Catholic Church tried unsuccessfully to discourage such beliefs, but eventually it accommodated to their celebrations and stories as they brought a bit of happiness to otherwise hard and dreary lives in late medieval Europe.

Following the Reformation and the Thirty Years War, local customs were occasionally accepted by the Princes and Electors who controlled the land and the people who worked the land. Many farmers, in southwestern Germany, left the Catholic Church to follow the Protestant beliefs of Martin Luther and John Calvin.

Freedom of worship was not always observed by the Catholic Princes who controlled their land. When the Amish and Mennonites accepted arrived in the New World, they and their other Protestant neighbors brought their religious beliefs. They also brought their customs and heritage.



*Guilford and
Davidson Counties.*

Several of their early churches are found along a 16 mile stretch of Highway 61 from Frieden's German Reformed Church in the North to Cobles' Lutheran Church in the South, in Guilford County, North Carolina. Lutheran and Reformed Church members often attended a Union church they came together to build, attend and support choosing different times for their individual worship and sometimes used the same minister for both services. Beck's Church in Davidson County is a good example and I believe the two faiths shared the facility and cemetery until the 1920's when the Lutheran Church withdrew to build a separate church. Coble's Lutheran and The Brick Church (Reformed) remain strong in their Guilford communities along the Alamance County line.

Because of their backcountry isolation, most ministers had no desire to preach in the early North Carolina backcountry. Moravian ministers made a point to visit the areas once a year to perform marriages and baptize children as this service. Only clergy of the Church of England or a

Moravian minister were recognized by the Royal colony to perform these services. Most Church of England clergy did not choose to venture into the backcountry. The German, Scots-Irish and English mid-Atlantic and Southern settlers held a few passed down beliefs in witchcraft, ghost-seeing, and fortune-telling. Their views of witches, differed greatly from those associated with beliefs held in Puritan New England. The witches of these backcountry settlers were never visible, and less than real. There was no need to criminalize them.

Backcountry settlers attributed "wonderful" powers to these creatures of their imaginations...witches. They believed that a witch, usually a she, could transform herself into any animal she chose, whether beast or bird. They also attributed to a witch, the power to shift shapes in order to creep through a key-hole, and, by the magic of a certain bridle, called a witch's bridle...she could change

any person on whom she placed it, into a horse; and then, what is still more remarkable, both could come out through a key hole and, she could ride this remarkable horse where ever she chose until the bridle was removed.

Witches were credited with many things. They entered a house or cabin through little holes in the cinch and were believed to injure the minds and bodies of women and men, stunt the growth of children, and render fire arms useless. If a cow went dry, a witch might be given the credit.

The power of the evil eye is still passed down by the generations through something like a proverb. "Hot tempers and Pepper are alike in that both are hot." The "talking out" fire on a burn might be practiced by both men and women witches. The fire conjurer would hold his or her hand over the burns and say some words, remove the hand and blow the burn three times. These words, thought to be said in German, were delivered in a sing-song monotone. Without belief, witchcraft just could not work. Some of their cures were seen as marvelous and others believed to be wholesale poisoning.

For every person who could create a spell, there was another person blessed with the ability to break the spell, but nothing could be done without first paying a small amount of silver. Mostly these backcountry shape changers were just exaggerated tales that grew with each telling. I've concluded that it was a bit of fun, in a time and place where life was drab and people entertained each other by enhancing stories brought from the Old Country. Witches provided an answer to topics they could not otherwise explain. Their common beliefs are enjoyed and mostly undocumented.

There was also a group, known as cunning or wise people, who came across the Atlantic with



these German settlers. They were called Hedge Witches in Germany. They resided in their communities and were practitioners of folk magic for positive, curative and preventive ends. Many services performed by the Hedge witches in Europe were against church teaching, but in Medieval Europe, it was sometimes the isolated village priest who lifted the spell or provided the cure.

Hedge witches considered their talents as a gift and charged a fee for their services. When they were successful enough to be talked about, others would seek their services. Their achievements could be purely psychological, “supernatural”, or a blend of the two. One elderly lady, of German descent, insisted that her wicked step-mother held psychic powers to tell about the future. These powers were attributed to the fact that she was the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter and born with a veil over her face. I came across several references about powers associated with being born with a “veil over the face.” (caul) A young man who appeared at the breakfast table without proper grooming might be teased by those present for having spend the night being ridden by a witch.

Most services requested of hedge witches in Germany dealt with healing humans and animals, protection against evil, attracting abundance and love, finding treasure or recovering that which was lost or stolen, forestalling the future and removing a spell. Most people at the time walked barefooted and some believed that witches used foot prints found in a dirt path to work their magic. Their German Lutheran and Reformed churches taught against witch belief and most followed the church unless nothing else worked and then they gave the imagined power of witches a chance. Belief in superstitions is associated, but not specifically covered in this article. Witchcraft is as old as history, but is also built on superstitions practiced at any given time and place.



The more educated classes deemed the Hedge Witches as hoaxers, tricksters and frauds who made money from deceiving people, just as con artists do today.

Brantley York, an early 19th century North Carolina Methodist minister and the founder of Trinity College, which became Duke University., wrote in his Autobiography: “As a child, I sat and listened to witch and ghost stories till it seemed to me that each hair upon my head resembled the quill of a porcupine. I was afraid to go out of doors, afraid to go to bed alone and almost afraid of my own shadow. Witches could shape-shift and raise storms. They were ALWAYS figments of others’ imagination and hysteria.” As a child I heard these same handed down stories shared on a

hot summer evening on the large front neighborhood porches and reacted with my own set of fears. One has to admire the many things these witches professed to be able to do.

Brantley York tells about a man named Bass who came to his Guilford County community claiming to be a great fortune teller with the additional power to solve the mystery of stolen or lost property. He professed the power of breaking spells on people or animals. The news spread quickly and the entire day was spent in fortune-telling and removing spells. Late in the evening, Brantley’s parents brought him to have his fortune told. Bass said “This is no ordinary boy; he will be a ring-leader, but a leader in all kinds of wickedness and he will end his career on the gallows.”

Throughout his growing up years, whenever he did something mischievous, his parents would say, “There, old Bass’ predictions are coming true.” Instead Brantley York became a highly respected teacher, college founder and Methodist minister. His papers are preserved in a collection at Yale Uni-

versity and provide primary source reference to life during his growing up and preaching time in the North Carolina backcountry. His autobiography is found free of charge on the internet.

Brantley York wrote and preached, "Witches are the twin sisters of ignorance."

I found no documentation of harmful events resulting from their actions in Piedmont North Carolina Lore. These Germans were clannish people and did not mingle with their English or Scots Irish neighbors for two or three generations. They provided schools for their children and lessons were given in German. I am told that many people living in the Alamance area were still speaking German when World War II started and young men were drafted into military service. They seldom involved themselves in politics and almost never ran for political office. The current Guilford County member of the House of Representative, is an exception. We share a common German heritage with the last name "Coble" coming from Kobel or Gobble as written by English Clerks who wrote what they thought they heard.

The immigrants practiced some of their old world customs in their new homeland. Examples include burning large bonfires the last night of April to rid their world of evil spirits before May Day, a major day of celebration, ushering in a new growing season. This holiday is named Walpurgesnacht. It comes exactly six months before All Hallows' Eve.

At the Walpurgia Night Fest, held each year in Heidelberg, Germany, author Przemyslaw Grudnik describes a time when witches changed their shape, flew through the air and abused Christian sacraments. Children in the areas of German settlement might be told that the wind devil travels in the whirlwind as the manifestation of witches' powers. Some insist witches can only be killed by a silver bullet. Many settlers carried a silver coin in their shoe for protection. Others drilled a hole in the coin and tied it around their neck against witch spells. To this day, if I spill a bit of salt, without even thinking, I will throw some of that salt over my left shoulder to ward off whatever... a witch spell? This custom was practiced by most German grandmothers, who shared the technique with her grandchildren.

Every school boy at my rural school carried a rabbit's foot in his pocket for good luck. The North Carolina Folklore Society recommends the use of the right hind foot for this talisman to insure good luck, but some say it must be the left hind foot to work. This only proves that belief is a bit of fun nonsense.

In the Palatine area of Germany, on the three Thursday nights before Christmas, children would go from house to house saying rhymes beginning with knock. — all meant to drive away evil spirits. This custom didn't survive in the sparsely settled North Carolina back country, but their descendant children continue to enjoy the "knock, knock" jokes that grew out of this custom.

I've concluded that tales of witches brought color and entertainment to the otherwise drab existence of settlers in the N.C. backcountry. While establishing the numerous Lutheran and Reformed churches that remain strong and active today, the German settlers used the witch stories, brought from their homeland, as a crutch for the times when things seem to happen that could not be otherwise be explained. Their beliefs in forms of diabolical magic, highly materialist, experimental and

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In the Next Issue...

FACT, NOT FICTION: *The true story of where the Germanna Second Colony lived and worked before their move to the Robinson River Valley.*

empirical in nature, helped the people as they struggled to understand and control their lives in the midst of the uncertainties found in their new world. Their witch beliefs appear very different from those which flourished almost a century earlier among the Puritans in New England and among English settlers in Virginia and along the North Carolina coast.

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I have provided the reader with a general list of books. Most of the information is general and repeated in the various references. Some came from scholarly journals and not from books. Slaves, introduced into the backcountry years later, quickly took to the practice and their belief in witchcraft helped to keep the idea alive in the N.C. Piedmont.

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Editorial Goal: To disseminate knowledge about our ancestors of the First and Second Germanna Colonies, and Alexander Spotswood. Contact vrnuta@verizon.net if you wish to submit.

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