

The Palatines

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The Story of the Palatines

Introduction

This presentation was given at the Annual General Meeting of the UELAC in June, 2006 by Joan Lucas UE to the Branch Genealogists' Workshop. The presentation was prepared by George Anderson UE and it covered information which he found over the years while researching the Palatines.

It begins by defining what a Palatine is, what is the Palatinate and how the name originated. The presentation then discusses why the Palatines left Germany and will deal with some of their migrations. The final section deals with repositories of Palatine information.

What is a Palatine?

A Palatine is usually defined as someone who came from along the Rhine River in the Palatinate of South Western Germany.

However this term can be a misnomer. Many inhabitants of the Palatinate came from elsewhere. For example, Huguenots (French Protestants) fled from France and Calvinists fled from the Netherlands to the Palatinate. Other Families migrated from Switzerland to the

Palatinate. They all became Palatines.

Also this term was generally applied to all German Immigrants who arrived in America.

What was the Palatinate?

The Palatinate consisted of two small regions in southern Germany near the Rhine River.

The Lower or Rhenish Palatinate which was also called the Pfalz was located in southwest Germany east of Luxembourg along both sides of the Middle Rhine River. The Pfalz included the present German States of Mainz, Treves, Lorraine, Alsace, Baden and Wurtemberg. Heidelberg was its capital. The name "Pfalz" was derived from the Latin word "palatinus" which meant palace or castle.

The Upper (Bavarian) Palatinate was located in northern Bavaria, on both sides of the Naab River as it flows south toward the Danube, and extended eastward to the Bohemian Forest.

The Palatines were ruled by Counts who later became Electors in the 14th century. The boundaries of the Palatinate varied with the military successes and political fortunes of the Counts Palatine. Today the Palatinate land west of the Rhine River is part of France. The rest of the Palatinate has been absorbed into other German states.

Origin of Palatine Name

The name, Palatine is derived from the title of the ruler of the Palatinate which means the Ruler of the Principality of the Palatine. The term Palatine itself goes back to Imperial Rome. The latin name "platinus" meant palace. The palace of the Caesars was situated on the Palatine Hill. The troops guarding the palace were also referred to as the "palatini."

Why did the Palatines leave Germany?

Different sources cite different reasons. Here are a few.

The Palatinate was the centre of a deadly conflict between the Protestant German states and France during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Between 1684 and 1713 there were two wars, the War of the Grand Alliance of England, Holland and the German Protestant States against France, and the War of the Spanish Succession. The War of the Spanish Succession resulted from the death of Charles II of Spain without an heir. Except for four years of relative peace there was almost continuous war between 1684 and 1713.

The troops of the French King Louis XIV ravaged the Palatinate, sacking the major cities, burning homes, stealing property, massacring people, destroying crops and laying waste to farms.

An unexpected cold winter then occurred in 1709. The people had had enough and began to leave even though forbidden to do so upon pain of death by the rulers of the Palatinates. The Palatines fled down the Rhine to Rotterdam, Holland and then to England.

The British Government circulated the "Golden Book" which was written by Reverend Kockerthal, throughout the Palatinate. It described British America as the land of milk and honey.

Early Migrations

There were several formal and informal migrations of Palatines from the Palatinate. We will deal with two informal migrations first. An early group fled in 1705 from persecution at

Wolfenbuttel and Halbestadt in the Palatinate to Holland. They left Holland in 1707 and landed in Philadelphia. They later worked their way overland to Morris County, New Jersey.

Another group of fifty-five Palatines led by Reverend Joshua Kockerthal came to London in 1708. In May, 1708 this group left for New York and settled in New York State along the Hudson River at Quassaick Creek. Today Quassaick Creek is part of the city of Newburgh, New York.

Most of these Palatines later left for Swatara and Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania. All traces of the first Palatine settlement have vanished from Quassaick Creek.

1709 Migration

The British encouraged the Palatines to migrate to England since the English Government wanted the Palatines to go to its North American Colonies to serve as a buffer between the French Colonies in the north and the British Colonies along the Atlantic Seaboard. Queen Anne offered the Palatines sanctuary in England and literally offered to give the Palatines bread until they could produce their own.

The Palatines began to cross from Holland to England in droves. By October, 1709, 13,500 penniless, ragged Palatines were in London. Most were camped in tents on the Surrey side of the Thames River at Blackheath. Others were billeted in the warehouses of Sir Charles Cox. Roman Catholic Palatines who would not swear an oath to become Protestants were sent back to Holland.

From England the Palatines went to different destinations. About thirty-one hundred moved to Limerick in Ireland in 1709 to strengthen the Protestant cause in Ireland and to help develop agriculture and the further the linen industry.

Six to eight hundred were sent to the Carolinas. Some also went to Virginia. However the biggest group was destined for the New York Colony.

About this time, Peter Schuyler, the mayor of Albany brought 5 Mohawk Indian chiefs to London. They saw the plight of the Palatines and offered them land along Schoharie Creek in the Mohawk Valley. Governor Hunter of New York also offered to bring 3000 Palatines to the Hudson Valley to make pitch and tar from the pine trees for the British Navy.

The Irish Palatines

The majority of the Palatines who went to Ireland settled on the Estate of Sir Thomas Southwell at Castle Matrix near Rathkeale, County Limerick . By 1720 one hundred and three Palatine families lived on this estate. Eventually high rents forced many of these same Palatine Families to consider emigrating to America.

Several Palatine families sailed in the Ship Perry for New York City in 1760. During the voyage Barbara Heck broke up a card party on the ship and urged Philip Embury to preach to the immigrants. Philip Embury and Barbara Heck thus became the founders of American Methodism. This group of Palatines petitioned for 25,000 acres of land in 1763 in the Camden Valley where the present town of Cambridge, New York is today. The land grant was signed in 1765. Families such as the Emburys and the Hecks were Loyalists during the American Revolution. Most of these Loyalists came to Ontario. Today a monument honours Barbara Heck in the Blue Church Cemetery just west of Prescott, Ontario.

West Camp and East Camp Palatines

The Palatines who came to England decided to accept Governor Hunter's offer to make naval

stores. Governor Hunter then signed a contract with the Palatines to transport them to America. The contract stipulated that each Palatine family would receive five pounds and forty acres of land after the Palatines had repaid the British Government for their expenses.

On Christmas Day, 1709, three to four thousand Palatines were loaded on the ships. The ships did not sail until the end of January 1710. It took until July before all the ships reached New York City. About one sixth of the emigrants perished at sea. One ship, the Herbert floundered off the east end of Long Island. Most of the Palatines were landed on Nutten Island near New York City. Here they remained five months.

Governor Hunter paid four hundred pounds to Robert Livingston to buy 6,000 acres of land along the Hudson River for the Palatines. The Palatines now established two camps - West and East Camp in the late fall of 1710 on this land. The villages which made up West Camp on the west side of the Hudson River were Elizabeth Town, Georgetown and New Village. Hunterstown, Queensbury, Annsville and Haysbury made up East Camp on the east side of the Hudson River. By now one quarter of the original group which had left England had perished. Today the Palatine Monument in West Camp marks the 1710 Palatine Migration to West and East Camps.

The settlers at West Camp were pretty much left to themselves and allowed to build homes and to develop their farms. However, in East Camp the plan was for the settlers to make tar. The first winter the Palatines suffered from the severe cold, poor food and a food shortage. Some also enlisted in the British forces during the Seven Years War with the French but received no pay for their services. The land in East Camp was not very fertile, so they became discontented and wanted to go to Schoharie. The Palatines claimed that the British Government had originally promised that they could go to Schoharie. There is no documentary proof of this claim.

Governor Hunter got into financial trouble and had to cut back on their rations. The tar project was a failure since little tar was produced. Tar is only made from the pitch of the Southern Georgian Pine. The northern or White Pine contains little pitch from which to make tar. Finally in 1712 Governor Hunter told the Palatines they were free to shift for themselves. So many decided to leave East Camp for Schoharie.

An advance group of a hundred Palatines left East Camp for the Schoharie Valley in 1712, followed by a second group in 1713. At Schoharie, the Palatines organized themselves into seven villages. Some of the names of the villages were Weiser's dorp (present Middleburgh), Fuchs's dorp, Kniskern's dorp and Brunnen dorp. Today on the bluff near Fuchs's drop (Fox Creek) is where the present Old Stone Church stands in Schoharie.

The Palatines at Schoharie had land ownership problems. The land on which they had settled was claimed by absentee landlords. Governor Hunter intervened on the landlords' behalf. The Palatines appealed to the British King George III and lost. Some Palatines now decided to buy their lands from the landlords. Others decided to seek land on the Mohawk River or to go to Pennsylvania.

Some Palatine Mohawk Valley patents were Stone Arabia, Montgomery County, and the Burnetsfield Patent and the Snell-Timmerman Patent which were both in Herkimer County.

Palatine Repositories and On line Sites

We will now deal with where you can find Palatine information. This is just sampling of the information available on line. George Anderson has used most of the sites.

Some are free. Others require a fee.

Each county in New York State usually has a historical society or an on line web site.

Not all historical societies, such as the Herkimer County Historical Society, are on line.

Library and Archives Canada

Loyalist Information

You can use the Library and Archives Canada documents pertaining to the Loyalists to find information on the Palatine Loyalists. Here are a few examples:

- 1) The Palatine Loyalists who came to Canada filed for petitions for land which are found in Upper Canada Land Petitions collection (RG1 L3).
- 2) Palatine Loyalists served in the British forces during the American Revolution. A researcher can look in the British Military and Naval Records Collection (RG 8, C Series).
- 3) The Haldimand papers (NA MG 21 G2) contain correspondence and records pertaining to Loyalists.

Palatine Sources

Library and Archives Canada also has 161 sources which refer specifically to the Palatines. These are books, microfilms, etc. Some sources are also in German.

Here are a few examples of the topics which are covered:

Story and History of Palatines

- 1) The Irish Palatines
 - a) Names of 1709 Palatine Immigrants to New York State
 - b) -North Carolina Palatines
- 2) 300 Years of Palatine Queries
 - a) Palatine Family Genealogies
 - b) Palatine Pennsylvania tombstones.

A more detailed list of Palatine sources will appear in the handout.

Map Collection

There is also a map collection which shows the exact locations where many Palatine Loyalists settled in Ontario. For example the 1786 McNiff survey maps for the Royal Townships show each lot with its number and the name of the settler on the lot.

The Library and National Archives is available at: www.collectionscanada.ca/genealogy.

Palatines in America National Library, Columbus, Ohio

This American National Library is a major resource for researching Palatine family history. Its collection contains over 5000 books, journals, etc on German Family History and Genealogy.

Subjects which are covered include:

- 1) Palatines in America
- 2) Palatines in London, England
- 3) Palatines in Europe
- 4) Palatines in New York State
- 5) Palatines in Ireland
- 6) Palatines in Maine
- 7) Palatine Immigration and Emigration

You can find the London, England church records for the 1709 Emigration to England by looking at Palatines in London, England under: London church books and the German emigration of 1709. Die Deutsche Auswanderung von 1709 in den Londoner Kirchenbuchern by John Phillip.

The collection also includes The Immigrant Ancestor Register. This register is genealogical research submitted by members on their immigrant ancestors.

The Library is open to non-members for a nominal fee. Its catalogue can be searched online at: <http://www.planam.org>

New York State Archives and Library, Albany, New York

The New York State Archives and Library is a valuable source of genealogical information. It has family genealogies, original manuscripts, Bibles, newspapers, church records, county and local histories and vital records. You can search its records on line by surnames or by subject, etc. Among these records you will find a lot of information on the Palatines.

You can also obtain detailed information on the various manors such as Livingston and Van Cortlandt Manors. For example, it has:

- 1) The Manor of Cortlandt and its tenants, 1667-1783 by Sung Bok Kim. 1975.
- 2) Maps and papers 1763-1903 Livingston Manor.
- 3) Confirmation Patent of Livingston Manor by Robert Hunter. 1715

Files from the New York State Archives and Library can be borrowed through interlibrary loan. The site can be reached on line at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/gengen.htm>

Olive Tree Genealogy

Olive Tree Genealogy is an online site which has a lot of Palatine information. Some sources are free. Most require paid subscriptions. Usually each subscription has a free trial period.

Examples of Information on this site are:

- 1) 1708 English Palatine Naturalization Records
- 2) Pennsylvania Founding Families
- 3) 1727 to 1775 and 1777 to 1789 Pennsylvania Foreign Oaths of Allegiance
- 4) Pennsylvania 1740-73 Naturalization records
- 5) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Indentures 1771-73
- 6) Swiss Emigrants in the 18th Century Ship Passenger Lists
- 7) Pennsylvania German Pioneers 1727-1808
- 8) Philadelphia German Immigration 1700-75
- 9) Palatine Ships' Lists to New York and Pennsylvania
- 10) Palatine Child Apprentices 1710-14

This site can be reached on line at <http://olivetreegenealogy.com/pal/index.shtml>

World Genealogical Web Project

The World Genealogical Web Project is a non-profit online website which provides universal genealogical and historical records and resources. A researcher can go into a country, then a state, a county, and a town to search for genealogical information, much of which will pertain to the Palatines. A search can also be made by surname. Queries can be posted on this site. Examples of subjects available for Rensselaer County, New York State are:

- 1) Bibles
- 2) Pre 1776 Van Rensselaer County records
- 3) Rensselaerwyck Settlers
- 4) Cemeteries for Albany County
- 5) First Settlers of Albany County
- 6) Church records
- 7) Surname registry.

The following subjects are available for the Upper Palatinate (Bavaria) when you search the Palatinate in Germany:

- 1) Emigration and Immigration records
- 2) Records and Archives
- 3) Surnames
- 4) Maps
- 5) Surnames

This site can be reached on line at: <http://www.worldgenweb.org/countryindex.html>

Church of Latter Day Saints

The Church of the Latter Day Saints has the International Genealogical Index and the Ancestry File which are useful as guides to Palatine ancestry.

Its computerized library is a more valuable source. You can search its catalogue by place name to locate microfilmed copies or extracts of original church records.

For example if you search for Stone Arabia under New York you will come up with several types of records pertaining to Stone Arabia including the history, cemetery and church records.

If you now key on church records, you will find twelve different sources pertaining to Stone Arabia Church records. For example you will find the baptismal records for Trinity Lutheran Church. You will see a list of other records available for Stone Arabia in your handout.

The Latter Day Saints maintain Family History Centres throughout Canada. You can go to a Family History Centre and order a church record microfilm. Once it comes into the Family History Centre you can view it and make prints of pertinent information.

You can also use the same method to search for a place in Germany to determine what microfilms pertaining to a locality are available in the library

You can access the Latter Day Saints Family History Centre on line at:
<http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Home/Welcome/welcome.asp>

Cyndi's List

This is another online site which contains a lot of Palatine information. Examples are:

- 1) Palatine Ships and Passengers Lists 1727-1808
- 2) List of other online Huguenot, Walloon, Ontario Loyalists, Mennonite, Palatine and Dutch sites
- 3) South Carolina Palatine surname database
- 4) 1709 Palatine list
- 5) German and Swiss Palatine passenger list for Ship Friendship which arrived in Philadelphia in 1727.
- 6) Irish Palatines
- 7) Nellis genealogy

This site can be reached at: www.cyndisList.com

Schenectady Digital History Archive

This site is maintained by the Schenectady Historical Society. It is useful for Palatine Loyalists whose ancestors came from the Mohawk and Hudson Valleys since it contains family genealogies for most counties along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. It also contains Pearson's records of the Early Settlers of Schenectady. You can key in on a specific county to look for information on its local history, cemeteries, family genealogies, etc. The site also contains links to other sites such as the New York State Archives and Library which has valuable genealogical information such as the original documents pertaining to Loyalist Lt Col John Peters.

The Schenectady Digital Historical Archives site can be reached at:
<http://www.schenectadyhistory.org/index.html>

Montgomery County Department of History & Archives, Fonda, NY

These archives are not specifically oriented to Palatine Research. However if you have Palatine ancestors who settled in early Tryon County, you should be able to find information on those ancestors since these archives contain one of the largest collections of genealogical data from 34 different New York State counties. All of these 34 counties were once part of Montgomery County.

Montgomery County was called Tryon County before the Revolution. This repository also has many New York State cemetery, church, civil, military, probate records and original county court records. There are also family historical and genealogical folders along with a vast array of genealogical books.

It can be reached online at: <http://www.amsterdam-ny.com/mcha/>

Three Rivers

This online site is maintained and operated by Joyce Berry, a local historian in Montgomery County, New York. It contains a lot of useful information regarding the Palatines in the Mohawk Valley. Some of this information is:

- 1) Genealogies
- 2) Mohawk Valley Maps
- 3) Palatine Patent Maps
- 4) Church Histories

5) Wills.

This site can be reached at <http://www.fortlock.com/Contents.htm> (This site is going to be moved soon. So you may have to search for it under “Three Rivers.”)

State Archives (Landesarchivv)

Otto-Mayer-Str. 9
67347 Speyer, Germany

For the Palatines these archives contain:

- 1) tax lists
- 2) military records
- 3) notarial documents
- 4) marriage contracts

You must know which town your Palatine ancestor came from to use this archive. The language of the site is only German. Its website: www.landeshauptarchiv.de/speyer

Ludwigshafen Family History Society

This Society contains information on the Southern Palatinate (Rheinland Pfalz). It gives you the names of other German genealogical and historical associations and societies. It has church and civil registration records. It also has emigration, land and military records. The site also has historical maps. The language of the site is German. It can be found at: <http://www.genealogienetz.de/reg/RHE-PFA/rhein-p.html>

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