By The Same Authors

Denny Genealogy: 1944
Denny Genealogy: Second Book
Denny Genealogy: Third Book
Brumback-Hotsinpiller Genealogy

By Margaret Denny Dixon

Historical novels about Jamestown, Virginia

Pocahontas: The Princess of the Old Dominion
The Numbered Years: Five Decades at James City
German groups arriving in America during the latter part of the 17th century settled in several different colonies. The first German colony to settle in Virginia came in 1714. They lived first at Germanna, a peninsula jutting into the Rapidan River and four years later they moved to Germantown in Fauquier Co. The story of these now extinct colonial villages is an important part of Virginia's colonial history.

The Germanna chapter of this book is a reprint of the first chapter of the BRUMBACK-HOTSINPILLER GENEALOGY published in July 1961. The Germantown chapter has been re-written.

In much which has been written about the first Germanna colony, the men are called “miners.” This is a misnomer. They were “iron-workers” whose talents were used to smelt and process the raw product. For several generations many of them continued in the occupations of iron working. They were blacksmiths (not farriers) who forged the iron for heavy wagons and farm tools, wheelrights who built their many mills and gunsmiths who helped win our independence from England.

Research in Germany, England and many archival deposits in this country forms the basis for this book. We suggest for further reading:


Genealogies of Germanna Families, all of which have historical material:

Brumback Family—Elizabeth Vann and Margaret Dixon. 1961. Englewood, N. J.
Fishback Family—Willis M. Kemper. 1929. Cincinnati, O.
Kemper Family—W. M. Kemper and H. L. Wright. 1899. Chicago, Ill.


LANDMARKS OF OLD PRINCE WILLIAM, Fairfax Harrison. 1924. Richmond, Va.


*Va. Magazine of History and Biography*. Consult Swem’s Index for references.

Detailed bibliographies are in above mentioned GERMANNA—Outpost of Adventure and IRON WORKS AT TUBAL.

The involved history of Naussau-Siegen and its iron industry is taken from manuscript articles written by Mr. Ernst Flender of New York City, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Germanna Foundation.

(Reference to the “Germanna Foundation” is an abbreviation of The Memorial Foundation of Germanna Colonies in Virginia, Inc.)

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VIRGINIA’S FIRST GERMAN COLONY
LT. GOVERNOR ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD (1676-1740)
GERMANNA

The Lieut. Governor of Virginia, the Hon. Alexander Spotswood, must have made an early start on a bright April morning of 1714. He had received word that a long anticipated ship had arrived. Contemporary records are silent about the definite landing place. Williamsburg, Va. had two “ports” at that time: College Landing on College Creek, which flows into the James and Capitol Landing on Queen Creek, which flows into the York. Years later, Gov. Spotswood’s grandson said his grandfather went to Tappahannock on the Rappahannock River. A settlement called Hobb’s Hole was begun there in 1680 and 30 years later the town was a landing place of some consequence.

Around this ship centered all Spotswood’s plans and dreams for the future. Officially, his four years in Virginia had been fruitful, for he was an efficient administrator. The commerce of the Colony was no longer threatened by pirates; a treaty, however uneasy, had been concluded, in 1712, with the Indians of the five “Long Houses”; he was on friendly terms with the Council. Now at last he could devote some time to his private concerns.

Alexander Spotswood arrived in Virginia June 20, 1710. He was born in Tangier, Africa, in 1676, son of an English Army doctor. He fought in the Continental wars, was wounded at Blenheim and retired to civil life. He was young, unmarried and ambitious. He eagerly accepted the position offered to him in Virginia.

A few years before, a thriving Swiss and German settlement had been started in the Colony of North Carolina by a Swiss Baron, Christopher von Graffenried, who called the place New Bern. Suddenly, in 1711, Indians massacred most of the colony and took the Baron prisoner. Spotswood secured his release. The impoverished Baron, a refugee in Virginia, told the Governor of silver mines in the Massanutton Mountains, in the legendary Shenandoah Valley, which had been discovered in 1709, by his associate Franz Louis Michel, for which Graffenried secured a land grant from the Privy Council. Michel returned to Switzerland and summoned Johann Justus Albrecht, “chief miner in the service of Queen Anne,” from Siegen, Germany for a conference.
He suggested that Albrecht make a reconnaissance at Massanutton, then changed the plan, gave Albrecht money for tools and authorized him to recruit miners, so Albrecht had returned to Siegen.

The principality of Nassau-Siegen was the natural place to turn for this purpose. In Celtic times it was already a center of mining and iron making. In historic times it was a political unit as early as the 13th century. The Sieg River flows west into the Rhine between Bonn and Cologne. The ancient walled city of Siegen lies on a big bend of this river, about 45 miles from the Rhine. The region is mountainous. The iron industry took on a new impetus in the 14th century with the invention of the blast furnace. Everything needed for the making of iron was available here in abundance; iron ore which cropped out to the surface, extensive forests to furnish charcoal for the smelting process and water power to move the bellows. By the end of the 17th century this region supplied the need for iron in all western Europe.

Albrecht was well embarked on the manufacture of tools by April 1711. It was now time to think about iron workers. He sought aid from the ministers of the churches in the villages near Siegen. A formal document was drawn up and signed by Albrecht and the ministers, by which the ministers agreed to recruit workmen, in return for which, once iron was in production, annual contributions would be paid to the churches. Now, why would skilled workmen agree to leave their homes for a wilderness inhabited by uncivilized Indians and full of other unknown terrors? The explanation can be found, as is usual in human affairs, in a variety of causes.

The prime cause was religious turmoil. The Reformed faith (Protestant) was brought to Nassau-Siegen by its ruler, Count William of Nassau, in the 1530s. Count William was succeeded by his son Johan VI and later by his grandson Johann VII. Both these rulers continued to support the Reformed faith. Johann VII had four sons. The eldest died at an early age. Under ordinary circumstances the second son, Johann the Younger, would have inherited the entire principality. This prince, who had been educated in Italy and married a Catholic princess, had become a Catholic. This determined Johann VII to divide Nassau-Siegen among his three sons: Johann the Younger, Johann Moritz and
William. His father made Johann the Younger pledge that there would be no change in church worship.

Conditions brought about by religious wars were the second reason which turned men's minds to emigration. Johann the Younger was an officer in the Spanish army in the Netherlands during the Thirty Year War, which began in 1618. On his father's death in 1623, with the aid of Spanish troops, he took control of almost all Nassau-Siegen and re-established the Roman Catholic faith. He seized the churches and expelled the Reformed ministers. Prince Johann Moritz reconquered Nassau-Siegen in 1632, with the help of Swedish and Dutch soldiers, and restored the Reformed faith, overthrown again in 1635 and again restored in 1645. After the close of the Thirty Years War, in 1648, freedom of religion was agreed upon by the Reformed and Catholic princes of Nassau-Siegen. The Nicolai church in Siegen was returned to the Reformed congregation. When Johann Moritz died in 1677, he left his lands to the line of Reformed princes of Nassau-Siegen. But the son of Johann the Younger, Johann Franz Desideratus, who governed the part of Nassau-Siegen inherited from his father, continued Catholic coercion of his subjects. He was succeeded, in 1699, by his son William Hyacinth, a man of furious ambition for wealth and power. Taxes were increased, until the people were impoverished, which was a third cause for dissatisfaction. Some of their churches were taken for Catholic worship. There was an increase of Catholic teachers. In 1707, William Hyacinth arrested some of the recalcitrants and created a martyr for the Reformed faith by the execution of one of them.

Both during and after the religious wars the country had been overrun by troops, who exacted their living from the land. There was neither physical nor financial security and with the close of the war there came a depression in the iron industry. Crops and cattle, raised with so much labor, vanished. Even the winters grew colder.

It was just at this time that the English settlements in the New World, established a century before, were greatly in need of increased population. Not nearly enough settlers could be secured from England. William Penn was sending agents to Germany, advertising the wonders of his "woods," which he offered
on most profitable terms. Queen Anne authorized the distribution of a booklet which gave exaggerated accounts of the freedom, land and even opportunity to mine gold, which awaited colonists across the sea. Albrecht spoke largely of mines of gold, silver and iron. Naturalization laws were enacted in Oct. 1705 in Virginia to encourage foreigners to come to America. Undoubtedly these publications found their way into Nassau-Siegen and stirred the imagination of every young man wishing to escape the harassment of his present lot. Only opportunity for the journey and for employment had to present itself to be eagerly grasped, and this opportunity was at hand.

The group recruited by the ministers were no unlettered, unskilled peasants. Compulsory education had existed in the region for several hundred years. They could read and they wrote "copperplate signatures." They were skilled farmers as well as iron workers. Records of their families go back in some cases to the early 15th century. Their past fitted them, albeit unwittingly, to undertake the hardships of settlement in a wilderness in a strange land, as free men and as skilled workers. The women were accustomed to help on the farm. They also had the housewifely skills of spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing and cooking, as well as the arts which traditionally supply the amenities of home life.

Conversations with the Baron inflamed Spotswood’s imagination. He had quickly learned that the basis of a fortune in Virginia was to acquire large tracts of undeveloped land. His predecessors had pre-empted the land along the James and York Rivers. He began to explore the land along the Rappahannock. By every legal means open to him he came into possession of many thousand acres along that river and now he was ready to apply his keen mind to the development of his land.

Here he encountered difficulty. England considered the colonies as a source of revenue. Strict laws controlled the development of industry. Colonists must buy manufactured goods from England and pay for them with raw materials. Lumber and tobacco were prime articles of trade. Permission must be had to mine gold or silver. As early as the fall of 1710, Spotswood was writing to the Board of Trade about an iron industry, which was opposed by the Burgesses, “who were only interested in self benefits.” After
talking with the Baron he renewed his pleas, asking what proportion the Queen would require. He knew he had iron ore beds, forests and water on his Rappahannock land, a combination of all the elements necessary for a successful iron industry. The Baron convinced him that Albrecht was just the man needed for the development of his iron mines, who "had been engaged by hereditary contract" and the Baron had spent large sums on the tools. He could no longer finance the enterprise but the Governor was ready to step in and take over what had been so well begun. The Baron considered himself a partner with the Governor, but Spotswood's view of their arrangement was different. No formal contract seems to have been made. Spotswood must have felt that silver mines on Massanutton were one thing and iron mines on his Rappahannock land quite a different business.

Graffenried wrote Albrecht on no account to set out at that time for he could no longer finance the undertaking. Albrecht either did not receive the letter or disregarded the order. So in 1713, the Siegerlanders set out on their journey. From a 20th century point of view the entire scheme seems foolhardy. No record exists to show that the churches ever received a penny, even though the ministers fulfilled their part of the bargain. The spirit of adventure was then strong in Europe. Since life could not be worse, it undoubtedly would be better in some far away place. Not one of these emigrants left a statement as to the motives which prompted him to this amazing step. It was one of the times in history when men's minds and emotions moved them to take great risks in the hope of achieving great rewards. The group was knit by ties of blood and marriage, a pattern followed by their descendants in the New World as they moved westward. One just did not venture into a strange environment without the support of close relatives.

Their way led them from their native hills down the valley of the Sieg to its confluence with the Rhine, where a river boat would carry them to a Dutch port. There they could take a vessel to England. Greedy custom houses in each principality along the Rhine took their customary tolls. Ship passengers had to provide their own food, even on the Atlantic crossing. No matter how provident their preparation, most European emigrants arrived in
England in an impoverished state. Much as Queen Anne wanted colonists for America, the royal purse was sorely tried by the necessity of supporting these refugees. But our intrepid band was not in such desperate straits. They were going to employment where their skills were a guarantee of a good living. They reached England in the late summer of 1713.

It was at exactly this time that the Baron also arrived in London, poverty-stricken and certainly with no plan to embark a group to America, whose passage he would have to pay and whom he would have to provision. Consternation followed hard on the hopes of our travelers. The Baron firmly advised them to return to their homes at once. This they resolutely refused to do. Others of the party secured their passports with a minimum of difficulty but the young men of Muesen, Melchior Brumback, John Kemper and John Joseph Martin, were not so fortunate. Eventually they must have slipped away under the greatest secrecy. The authorities decreed that whatever inheritance Melchior Brumback would have received from his parents was forfeit to the state. His brother, Caspar, appealed for a remission of the fine since Melchior had “wandered off to the Island of Carolina” and they knew nothing of his whereabouts. The outcome of this appeal is not known.

They announced a determination to sell themselves into servitude if necessary, in return for their passage to America. The compassionate Baron then sought aid in every direction to mitigate their lot. They were settled during the winter by the Queen’s agents on a heath outside London, among thousands of others in like predicament. The dismayed Baron continued his efforts. He finally wrote Governor Spotswood that certain merchants would advance 150 pounds for their passage, provided Spotswood would reimburse them. Certainly at this point the Baron and the Governor were acting together. In July, Spotswood wrote to the Board of Trade in London that he had induced a number of Germans to enter his service.

Immediately on Spotswood’s arrival in Virginia in 1710, he perceived that security on the frontiers was essential for the orderly development of the Colony. With characteristic vigor he set this goal as his first objective. Over the opposition of some of the Burgesses, who did not like the expense of such measures, four
months after his arrival he secured the passage of an Act which he hoped would accomplish his purpose. This Act set forth that "Whereas a great number of barbarous, disorderly and lawless persons of Indian nations . . . have resided in the frontiers of this colony, and after the most horrid and notorious crimes . . . escape and avoid the hand of justice: For the prevention whereof, be it enacted . . . the Lieut. Governor is empowered, with the advice of the Council to appoint . . . commanders of the rangers for said frontiers, . . . 11 able bodied men with horses . . . residing as near as may be to the frontier station . . . if he cannot find a sufficient number to serve voluntarily . . . to order and impress out of the militia of that county enough to make up the number." After enumerating how the Indians were to be dealt with, and the term of service, pay, etc., the Act concluded by declaring the Rangers exempt from payment of parish taxes. Spotswood had already built one blockhouse under this Act and may have been building another on the Rapidan at the time his colony of Germans arrived. Rangers were active in that section. They lived mostly by hunting. The colony supplied them with arms and other necessities. Spotswood saw at once how his colony could be fitted into this plan.

On March 14, 1714, the Agent of Virginia in London, wrote the Governor his Germans were on their way. They were now employees of the Governor. With this new patron their hearts must have rejoiced and hope revived. No tidy list of their company survives. How many left Siegen is not known. Spotswood told the Council he was expecting about 42 persons. Obedient to his wishes, the Council passed an Act dated April 28, 1714, which provided that these German Protestants, by then already arrived and settled on the Rapidan, should be free of taxes for seven years and receive the benefits established for the Rangers. This Act also set up for them an administrative Parish of St. George, extending on either side of their settlement for five miles.

Governor Spotswood had picked his site carefully, in the old county of Essex (later Spotsylvania and now Orange County), on the south bank of the Rapidan, on his own property, and far enough beyond any settlement to be entitled to the services of Rangers, who may already have constructed a fort, palisade and
The Palisaded Settlement at Germanna, drawn by Dr. Charles Herbert Huffman from the description written in 1715 by John Fontaine.

GERMANN 1714

LEGEND
1. Blockhouse - Church
2. Home, Rev. Henry Maeger
3. Street
4. Community Wall
5. Community Gardens

Courtesy Germanna Foundation
habitations in accordance with the intent of the Act of the Assembly. To this blockhouse the Governor sent the new arrivals, the first German colony to enter Virginia. The method of transportation from their port of entry to the Falls of the Rappahannock is unknown. The remaining distance, some thirty miles, must have been over the old Indian Trail, now called “Germanna Highway” (Va. Rt. 3). This wilderness settlement was placed on a peninsula of some several thousand acres jutting into the Rapidan River. John Fontaine, the earliest visitor who wrote of the place, said it was “thirty miles above the Falls.” Hugh Jones wrote some years later that it was “in sight of the mountains.” Another site closer to the furnace has been suggested as a possibility by a few persons. But all historians agree on the site near the ford as the spot chosen by the Governor, even though the logs have long since rotted away and the exact site of the fort on the peninsula has never been determined. John Fontaine visited the fort twice, in 1715 and again in 1716. He described a five sided blockhouse, which also served as a church, a palisade, pentagonal in shape, within which was a row of nine houses, faced by nine pigsties, forming a sort of street. Spotswood called the settlement “Germanna” in honor of his Queen and the homeland of his settlers. Nearby, within a few years, Spotswood was to build his “enchanted castle” so splendidly described by William Byrd, after his visit there in 1732.

The exact nature of the dwellings within the fort is not recorded. In Siegen they lived in half-timbered houses, such as are still seen there today. It is probable their Germanna homes were built of logs in the style introduced into the colonies some years earlier by the Swedes and Finns. The high bluff of the peninsula made an excellent defensive site.

Unfortunately for Spotswood, his enemies sent formal complaints to England about his activities. His spirited replies survive and may be summarized as follows:

To criticism of the building of the fort, he replied there was a fort with five bastions on the Meherrin River and a fortified settlement with a blockhouse and palisade on the Rapidan, both designed as places of rendezvous for people living beyond the settlements in case of Indian attack. But neither fort had cost one
pound of tobacco levied on the people more than is provided by Act of Assembly for the ordinary charges of the Rangers for 1714. Moreover, no person has been killed or carried off by the Indians since 1713.

To get complete knowledge of the situation the Governor had made personal trips, 40 days together, into the woods. His German colonists, bitterly disappointed by Graffenried’s failure to keep his engagement with them, arrived just as the Tuscaroras broke their treaty. Out of compassion and for the safety of the country, he had placed them several miles beyond the other inhabitants, built them habitations and subsisted them until they could provide for themselves by their own labor and, without crime, had put them in the way to pay their just debts.

In defense of having acquired his land, he replied that a Governor was not excluded from taking up land as any other subject could, and the remainder of his holdings had been yielded to him voluntarily by the purchasers. Certainly it was no breach of duty to settle a number of indigent people for the security of the frontier. On arrival the Germans could not afford to take up land or provide for their own living. After two years they were still indebted to the Governor for subsistence. They were tenants, not servants, as they might have been. He had paid 150 pounds for their transportation. His terms of settlement were not oppressive. There had been no rent. In the future they were to give 12 days work a year for each household, which is not as much as the rent of a house, without land, would have cost elsewhere. He had built them houses, advanced money for travel and living, and had not sold them into servitude. The persons making the complaints could have the place by reimbursing him for his expense. Thus the exasperated Governor struck back at his critics. Needless to say, no one came forward to take over the settlement.

Even under the Governor’s protection, the lot of the Siegelanders during their first year must have been very hard. John Fontaine found little there to eat a year after their arrival. Game was plentiful but they were accustomed to a grain diet. There is no evidence that their courage faltered. Pastor Haeger, their aged, devoted and learned minister, whose bevy of daughters furnished more than one colonist with a wife, gave them the same spiritual
consolation, according to the Reformed faith, which they had received at home. The fort was their church, the first Reformed Church in America. Prayers were said there daily and there were two preaching services on Sunday, at which they sang the psalms lustily. Ministers of that time usually doubled as physicians, administering the simple remedies then known, healing both their souls and their bodies. The women needed to be skilled midwives for there was a veritable population explosion. Their schoolmaster, Jacob Holtzclaw, also served as their interpreter and man of business. During that first year, they made a road, built a bridge over a stream flowing into the river and completed their settlement, but there was no organized industry. Probably the Governor was awaiting royal assent before opening his mines, for which he again asked permission on Jan. 27, 1715.

Queen Anne died Aug. 1, 1714. King George I was a German, and the Governor’s plea made it evident he expected even more sympathetic royal consideration because his colonists were Germans. There seems to be no record of official permission to open the iron works, but Spotswood began the work in the spring of 1715.

There was some doubt that Albrecht came with the colonists until the discovery in the Essex Co. Deed and Will Book, Vol. 16, of an affidavit executed by John Justine Albright on May 17, 1720, saying that 11 laboring men had been put under his command by the Governor to work in mines or quarries, at or near Germanna, and they had begun to work Mar. 2, 1715 and so continued until 1718. Jacob Holtzclaw added to Albrecht’s statement: “I kept the accounts for him and was one of the men.”

These iron works were a milestone in the history of American metallurgy. Two previous attempts in the colonies to create an iron industry had failed. The first was at Falling Creek, Va., in 1622, and the second at Hammersmith (now Saugus), Mass., in 1643, where their methods were old fashioned, and the bog ore used was of poor quality. This enterprise ceased to exist about 1688. Spotswood’s blast furnace was built on the pattern which had made Nassau-Siegen the leader in the iron industry of Western Europe. Col. William Byrd wrote of his trip to “Tubal Works” in 1732, “the furnace is built of rough stone, having been the first of
The following eight pictures depict the Ironworks at Hammersmith (now Saugus), Mass. about 1647. The Ironworks was restored and is maintained by the iron and steel industry of the United States, through the American Iron and Steel Institute, through whose courtesy these pictures are reproduced.

These processes were similar, though not identical, to the processes used at Spotswood's Furnace.
Top: Wood needed for operating the ironworks was cut by nearby farmers and indentured Scots. Bottom: Logs were converted into charcoal in sod-covered kilns. The skilled "colliers" were highly paid.
Top: Bog iron ore was dug from marshes and old stream beds. It was carried by ox carts to Hammersmith furnace. Bottom: A dense rock ore was quarried nearby to be used as fluxing material to rid the iron ore of impurities.
Layers of Bog Ore, Charcoal and Rock Ore were dumped into the furnace top. As the charged settled more layers were added. The Ger­mann Furnace was a more modern and efficient blast furnace. Several times a day the slag was drawn off and the tap plug broken. The molten iron was made into "sow" bars or was poured into molds to produce castware.
TOP: After a series of reheating in the forge hearths the iron was reduced to the finished shape of "merchant bars" under the blows of a giant hammer. BOTTOM: Some of the wrought iron bars were then brought to the rolling and slitting mill to be reheated and run through rollers and slitters to produce flats and rods.
that kind erected in this country." Many others were soon to follow.

Since 11 workers could not possibly operate a paying iron works, Spotswood rescued a group of Germans from Alsace, cast ashore in Virginia, in 1717. They indentured themselves in return for payment of their passage. These 20 additional families were not housed in the fort. They were Lutherans and there is no evidence of intimacy between the two colonies. Spotswood brought a lawsuit against this second group about the terms of indenture. When they were free to leave, they established a settlement in what is now Madison Co., Va.

There must have been excitement at the fort in late August of 1716, when the Governor arrived with a company of gentlemen, Rangers and servants on an expedition to cross the Blue Ridge Mountains. They paused at Germanna to shoe some of their horses. John Fontaine kept a meticulous journal of the trip. The party completed the crossing to the Valley, watered their horses in the Shenandoah and then returned to Germanna. Later the Governor gave golden horseshoes to all his gentlemen companions, who continued on their way home, while he remained another day to talk business with his Germans. Our Siegerlanders may even have broached the subject of purchase of their own land, although without avail.

Unable to secure land from the Governor the Germans sought an opportunity elsewhere. Only citizens could own land and it cost 50 shillings to naturalize. Resourcefully, they pooled their small funds and paid for the naturalization of three of the colony, who could then secure a land grant and lease land to the others for a term of 99 years. The law permitted each immigrant 50 acres. So Jacob Holtzclaw, John Hoffman and John Fishback were naturalized. In 1715, they secured a grant from the Fairfax estates for 1800 acres. They were to pay an annual rent of one shilling sterling for each 50 acres. Later the naturalization laws were liberalized and a poll book of 1741 of Fauquier Co. shows that those then living there were all naturalized citizens. The land patent was dated Aug. 22, 1724, but they were living on their own land long before that date. To complete the necessary legal steps 12 heads of families appeared at court on Apr. 7, 1724. Here, for the first time, is an official list of the colony. These 12 men are memorial-
ized on the monument erected by the Reformed Church at Germanna: Melchior Brumback, John Kemper, Joseph Cuntz, Harmon Fishback, John Fishback, Peter Hitt, John Hoffman, Jacob Holtzclaw, John Joseph Martin, John Jacob Rector, John Spillman and Tillman Weaver. Counting wives and children, the list still does not number the 42 persons reported by the Governor to the Council. Many writers have attempted to identify the remaining colonists but their suggestions have not won wide acceptance. Now Dr. B.C. Holtzclaw, Dean of the Graduate School of the Univ. of Richmond, Va., who has spent years in research on Germanna families, has come forward with a most persuasive list. It has long been known that other Siegerlanders were very early with the colonists. The list recorded in Spotsylvania County, together with women and children, accounts for 30 persons. After study of available records in Germany and this country, Dr. Holtzclaw believes he has found the twelve missing persons.

The Pastor, Henry Haeger and his wife, certainly were at the Fort. Recently discovered German records prove that Philip Fishback and his wife Elizabeth Heimbach and a relative Hans Jacob Fishback were in 1713 also granted permission to come. Jacob Weaver, whose widow and young son were in the group moving to Germantown, must certainly have started the journey. He may have died soon after arrival. The first wife of Joseph Cuntz, mother of the three children for whom he asked land at Germantown, must have been in the original party. Dr. Holtzclaw feels that these additions are justified by known facts. This would bring the number of colonists to 37. The Rev. James Kemper, grandson of the colonist John Kemper, whose youth was spent at Germantown, states that Hermann Otterbach, his wife Elizabeth Heimbach and their two sons, Philip and John were in the original group. Their two daughters were wives of Jacob Holtzclaw and John Kemper. Add one more person known to have come, John Justus Albrecht, the master miner, and we reach the magic number of 42.

John Fontaine, the only person to leave a written description of the grounds inside the palisade, wrote there were nine houses. The effort to partition 12 families among the nine houses has been a puzzle to students of the colony. Dr. Holtzclaw has a suggestion
to resolve this puzzle. Records found in Germany show that five of the colonists were married there: Cuntz (1st wife), Hitt, Holtzclaw, Rector and Spillman. Tillman Weaver arrived as a youth and married Ann Elizabeth Cuntz at Germantown. Dr. Holtzclaw believes that the remaining six men were bachelors. It is known that three of them married daughters of the other colonists. The maiden surnames of the wives of the three remaining young men have been unknown and subject to much surmise. These three were John Joseph Martin, his half-brother Melchior Brumbach and Harmon Fishback. Philip Fishback and Hermann Otterbach now thought to have come with the others, in 1714, had three unmarried daughters whose given names correspond to the names of the wives of these three young men. Dr. Holtzclaw suggests that Otterbach’s two youngest daughters became the wives of J. J. Martin and Harmon Fishback and that Philip Fishback’s youngest daughter, Mary Elizabeth, married Melchior Brumbach. Dr. Holtzclaw ties his whole story into a neat bundle by apportioning the nine houses to the five men known to have married in Germany and he gives the other four houses to the Weaver’s the Rev. Dr. Haeger, Philip Fishback and Hermann Otterbach. The six young bachelors would have been partitioned around, where they could do their courting undisturbed.

This theory is elaborated by Dr. Holtzclaw in a paper printed in the annual report of the “Memorial Foundation of the Germanna Colonies in Virginia,” 1960. This summary is reproduced here with his kind permission.

Between 1718 and 1721, the Germans left Germanna for their own land. Our personal concern with the future of Germanna ends here, but since this was the cradle of our colony, its growth, decline and disappearance must be mentioned.

Spotswood was displaced as Governor in 1722, and went to England to face the allegations of his detractors. He was exonerated of wrong doing, married and returned to Virginia as a private citizen. He built his “enchanted castle” at Germanna, where he lived in state. In 1729, his title to his lands was confirmed by Act of Council. In 1719, he had secured another indentured colony of forty German families and an English colony in 1724, which settled around Germanna. He was credited, in 1728, by the
Board of Trade, with having imported 300 white persons into the colony. Spotsylvania County was set up in 1721 and Germanna was made the county seat. A large sum was appropriated for public buildings and a church. The German Parish of St. George was wiped out and an English Parish of the same name was created. The site proved inconvenient and the court was transferred to Fredericksburg in 1732. This began the decline of Germanna. Spotswood prosecuted his iron making with vigor and success. He began to use "slaves and women" as laborers. His foundry at New Post, on the Massaponax, another forgotten colonial village, was busy with the manufacture and export of his iron products. He was appointed postmaster and lived at New Post in 1729. He had four children, two sons and two daughters, all of whom spent their lives in Virginia.

In 1740, Spotswood was again summoned to serve England. He was commissioned as Major General to raise a regiment to fight in the war with Spain, but he fell ill and died June 7, 1740. Lady Spotswood married Rev. John Thompson, rector of St. Mark's Parish, from which, in 1714, the old German Parish of St. George had been taken.

Gradually Germanna was abandoned and became only a memory. The whole area was fought over in the 1860's. Trenches dug by soldiers at that time are still evident on the Germanna peninsula. Of buildings, all that remains are two tottering stone chimneys, a few foundations and some traces of the terraces of Spotswood's gardens. The site of the furnace is well known, but almost inaccessible, on Mott's Creek, near where it flows into the Rappahannock, 12 miles downstream from Germanna. Some of the stone work and slag piles remain. Neighbors and descendants began, only a few years ago to rescue the memory of Germanna and its colonists from oblivion. They organized "The Memorial Foundation of the Germanna Colonies in Virginia." Two hundred and seventy acres of Spotswood's original holdings on the peninsula at the Rapidan River now belong to the Foundation. It is called "Siegen Forest" in memory of the homeland of the 1714 colony. Germanna the cradle has vanished but its contribution to life in America lives on.
SITE OF SIEGEN FOREST
ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

now owned by

THE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION OF THE GERMANNA COLONIES IN VIRGINIA, INC.

The Germanna Foundation owns 270 acres, "Siegen Forest", of the original Germanna tract. The acquisition of this property was made possible by the generosity of one of the trustees of the Foundation.

By authority of the Virginia State Highway Commission, issued March 26, 1959, Virginia Route 3 from Culpeper to Fredericksburg has been designated GERMANNA HIGHWAY. This highway borders Siegen Forest and traverses the area where the first colony of 1714 was settled by Governor Spottswood.

Courtesy of the "Germanna Foundation."
A Portion of "Siegen Forest" at Old Germanna, Showing the Remains of Chimneys Standing on the Bluff Above the Rapidan River.
Plat of Germantown, based on the outline in the Fishback Genealogy. Recent search discloses that the tract exceeds this plat in size and that there were actually 20 strips, one of which was the glebe.
GERMANTOWN

The decision of the colonists to leave Germanna and to rely in future solely on their own efforts required almost as much courage and resolution as did the original decision to emigrate. At Germanna, primitive and comfortless as was their life, they had the patronage of one of the most powerful men in Virginia, safety behind their palisade and assured jobs. These benefits must have been well weighed and fully discussed before the desire prevailed to own their own land and fashion their own futures.

THREE VIRGINIA FRONTIERS, by T. P. Abernathy, emphasizes that more than virgin forest is necessary for a successful pioneer settlement. Cheap and free land must be accessible. This land must be suitable for subsistence farming. The colonists themselves must possess the crafts and skills necessary to maintain life on the frontier. The Germanna colonists met these three conditions in the place they chose. It is presumed that some of their number had a hand in selecting the site for their new home. They picked an excellent location similar in topography to their German homeland. It lay in what was then Stafford Co., Va., later Prince William and now Fauquier. There were no neighbors to the east and south for at least 10 miles and to the north and west only unbroken wilderness. They called their new home Germantown. The hills to the northwest are still called the Germantown Hills. The land on their north, east and west was soon patented by the famous Virginian, Robert "King" Carter.

The grant ran in a north-westerly, south-easterly quadrangle on both sides of Licking Run, being roughly 2 1/2 miles in length and 1 1/2 miles in width. It is north of the village of Midland and between state routes 643 on the north and 649 on the south. The tract is crossed by the Southern railroad and by state routes 28 and 602. Almost all traces showing that this was a thriving community from 1720 till after the Revolutionary War have disappeared.

Possibly all the families did not move at the same time, though for safety's sake the larger part must have gone together as early as the summer of 1719. A cluster of small foundations on the western side of the tract may be the site of their first settle-
ment. When they could feel secure from Indian attack they built their permanent homes, usually south of the Run. The date carved on the Weaver house was 1721 and it was certainly not built immediately on arrival. By 1724 all were assembled.

Willis Kemper, 50 years ago, published an outline drawing of the tract based on his research and family tradition. (See illustration.) The grant from the Fairfax Estate was dated 1718. The patent was not issued until 1724. The tract proved to be wider and longer than the original grant of 1805 acres when the final survey was made in 1729. The deeds were recorded in Stafford Co. Though the Record Book has been destroyed its Index still exists. Dr. B. C. Holtzclaw, of the Univ. of Richmond has prepared a paper on the geography and ownership of the tract, after study of all available records, which is to be published in a future number of The Germanna Record. The tract was divided into 20 strips of about 100 acres each, for which the twelve men who came to work for Gov. Spotswood drew lots for 150 acres. Each strip had high and low ground and water, for Licking Run crossed the entire tract lengthwise. One strip was the Glebe.

To reach Germantown the colonists had to march 19 miles north by the old Shenandoah Hunting Path and then cut a road west through the forest from Elk Run, which deeds of adjacent grants call the “German Path” or the “German Rolling Road.” Probably their possessions were not too great. What they did own they carried on their heads. The women bore their share of the loads. It must have been a rugged journey for the old pastor, to say nothing of the babies and toddlers. These were indeed a resolute people.

Their greatest necessity was communication with the settlement at Falmouth, from which they must get their supplies and where they must market their produce. They continued the Rolling Road across the tract from the southeastern border to the northwest corner. For many years this Rolling Road was the main route north of the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg to Winchester. The road crossed the Run by the mill. At this point it turned north and a short section of route 602 now follows the path of the old Rolling Road. Blacksmith shops and grist mills
A Rolling Road from King's "The Great South," 1875.
were necessities in every pioneer community. It is known where the mill was but the location of the smithy is not recorded.

They turned like veterans from industry to agriculture. Their first crops were raised with hand hoes, men and women working together. Their staple crops were corn and tobacco. The women tended the gardens. They had huge patches of cabbage out of which they made sauerkraut, both for their own use in winter and also to send to market. They lived mostly on pork, vegetables, milk and butter. By their industry and hard work they became prosperous. Soon they had herds of large cattle. Half-wild horses ran in the woods to be tamed at need. Tobacco was their money crop. Hogsheads were packed, shafts were affixed and the tobacco rolled to Falmouth for export.

A matter of urgent concern at Germantown was need for a church building. In the division of land each family gave 10 acres from its allotment of 150 for a Glebe, where a church, schoolhouse and parsonage could be built. Having no funds, the colonists asked a merchant named Zollicoffer who was returning to Europe in 1719, to present their plea for aid, signed by Elders Martin and Rector, to the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. This aid the Society refused because the colonists were not of the Anglican faith. They did promise a few copies of the Book of Common Prayer, translated into German, which was scarcely a substitute for a church. Next Zollicoffer, in 1721, inserted advertisements in German newspapers asking contributions for this infant colony of the Reformed faith at Germantown, which “supports itself in all quietness by agriculture and cattle,” and he got some money for them.

By 1743, chiefly by their own efforts, they built a small church and parsonage. After the death of Pastor Haeger in 1737, they had no regular minister and had to depend on visiting divines and and traveling missionaries. They assembled for their daily prayers and Sunday services. Jacob Holtzclaw was “reader” and received 30 pounds of tobacco from each family for this service. They did not relax their efforts to secure a resident pastor, but were never successful. The County Records show that, having lost hope of securing a regular minister, the Glebe was broken up in 1754. By this time Germantown was surrounded on all sides by families of
English origin, and Hamilton Parish of the Anglican faith was set up. The Hamilton Parish Trustees eventually acquired about 300 acres at the north-west corner of the Germantown tract.

If there were a cemetery on the glebe property no proof survives, unless the large number of flat stones which have been ploughed up on the glebe strip be considered evidence. There seems to have been a family cemetery on the Martin land and remains of a cemetery on the Weaver land can still be seen. Though there is no definite record about the location of a school, it is known there was one taught by Jacob Holtzclaw. Most likely it was on the glebe near the parsonage and church.

Fifteen families made up this tight little community, composed of twelve former iron workers and three older couples. They deserve individual mention. Intermarriages among their children and grandchildren became frequent. As English colonists settled on "King" Carter's and other surrounding property, mixed marriages soon were taking place. In 1765, some of the Germantown land was sold to Thomas Marshall and so Germantown became the birthplace of Chief Justice John Marshall.

JACOB HOLTZCLAW, aged 31 on arrival in Virginia, appears to have been the natural leader of the colony. Spotswood used him as clerk at the furnace and he also served as interpreter. He was a schoolmaster in Germany and continued this position in Virginia, teaching in both English and German. He set up a tobacco warehouse at Falmouth and must have conducted the export business for the colony. When a freshet destroyed the warehouse, he was reimbursed by Stafford County. He married Anna Margaret Otterbach in Germany. They brought two young sons with them. He was one of three men chosen to be naturalized when the colonists secured their grant from the Fairfax Estate and he became a Trustee of the Germantown tract. After the death of his first wife, he married Catherine —, who predeceased him. He had ten children. His son-in-law, Jeremiah Darnell, gradually acquired 700 acres south of the Run within Germantown, as well as much land south of the tract. Holtzclaw also secured 1300 acres in the Little Fork of the Rappahannock, which he sold to Germantown descendants and later emigrants.
and where the “Little Fork Colony” began to develop in 1748. He died in 1760, aged 77. After the Revolution many of his descendants moved south and west and are now widely scattered.

Happily the Bible Record of JOHN HOFFMAN survives in the hands of the Virginia historian, Dr. J. W. Wayland. Hoffman was 32 years old and unmarried on arrival in Virginia. He also was chosen to be naturalized and to become a trustee. He married in Germany, Anna Catherine, daughter of Pastor Haeger. She had five children and died when the youngest was born. He married second, Maria Sabina Folg, who had twelve children. After ten years in Germantown they moved to that part of Culpeper Co., which later became Madison Co., and patented land on Robinson River. There he built Hoffman’s Chapel on his own land. He died in 1772, aged 80. He had become very prosperous and left a large amount of land to each child. His brother, on the death of their father in Germany, sent him the huge family Bible and he got another German Bible also. In his will he provided that these two Bibles should circulate, one year each, among his sons, till they were worn out. Such Bibles often weighed 40 pounds and were kept in large wooden boxes. A Hoffman daughter married a Spilman and a son, a Fishback.

The third Trustee, JOHN FISHBACK, aged 23 on arrival, married in Germany 17-year-old Agnes, daughter of Pastor Haeger. Two children were likely born at Germanna and two at Germantown. She died before 1729. He married second, Mary Daugherty. Of his eight children, daughters married a Rector and a Kemper and a son first married a Holtzclaw and then a Martin. Fishback secured much land outside of Germantown in Fauquier and Culpeper Cos. He was not living in Germantown at the time of his death in 1733, aged only 42. All his children married and left descendants, now widely scattered.

JOHN JACOB RECTOR, aged 35 on arrival, was the oldest of the twelve iron workers. He was an Elder of the Germantown church. Facts have recently been discovered by Dr. B. C. Holtzclaw which correct some errors in Dr. Salmans’ HISTORY OF THE RECTOR FAMILY. Salmans found two Rector sons when actually there were four, John, Harmon,
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY “HALF-TIMBERED” HOUSES STILL STANDING IN HATZENBÜHL, THE PALATINATE, GERMANY, WHICH PROBABLY WAS THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE ANCESTORS OF STEPHEN HOTSPILLER, WHO CAME TO AMERICA IN 1728, AND WHO MARRIED ELIZABETH BRUMBACK. SHE WAS BORN AT GERMANNA, DAUGHTER OF MELCHIOR BRUMBACK.
Henry and Jacob. It was Henry the son, not Henry son of Harmon, who was ancestor of the Rectors of Pickaway Co., O. These discoveries of Dr. Holtzclaw will be published in a future number of The Germanna Record. John Jacob Rector married in Germany, Elizabeth, daughter of Philip Fishback and they brought their infant son, John, to America. This son later married Catherine, daughter of John Fishback, and was the developer of "the first municipal venture promoted in Fauquier Co." The village of Rectortown was once a cross-roads of importance and is now a small village near which Rectors still live. Rector's son Jacob married Mary, daughter of Peter Hitt and they inherited part of the Germantown tract. Rector descendants now live in every part of this country.

JOHN JOSEPH MARTIN, aged 23 on arrival, was a native of Muesen, Germany. He was one of the church Elders at Germantown. He probably married Maria Katharina Otterbach at Germanna. His second wife was Eve -. He certainly had four sons and may have had others. There were three daughters, one of whom married a Fishback and another an Otterbach. One son probably married a Holtzclaw and another a Rector. Intermarriages in later generations with Germanna descendants also occurred. Martin died between 1757 and 1759.

MELCHIOR BRUMBACK, the youngest of the iron-workers, was a half brother of John Joseph Martin and a native of Muesen. He was 18 when he left home, in 1713, for his long journey to America. The Muesen authorities refused permission to emigrate to Martin, Brumback and Kemper. Local records tell of a fine levied on Brumback for the amount he would inherit from his parents, because of his secret departure. His brother appealed for a remission of the fine since Melchior had "wandered off to the Island of Carolina and they knew nothing of his whereabouts." The outcome of the appeal was not found. For a long time the name of Melchior's wife was uncertain. It now seems likely that she was Mary Elizabeth (b. 1696), daughter of Philip Fishback, whom he married at Germanna. No sons are recorded. Of the four daughters, Elizabeth, the eldest, married Stephen Hotsinpiller, who arrived from the Palatinate in 1728. They
THE TOWN OF MUSEN, NINE MILES NORTH OF SIEGEN, BIRTHPLACE OF MELCHIOR BRUMBACK, JOHN KEMPER AND JOHN JOSEPH MARTIN. NOTE THE "HALF TIMBERED" HOUSES STILL IN USE.
received the second deed in the Joist Hite colony on the Opeckon in Frederick Co. Two other daughters married J. J. Neuschwanger and Christopher Windle, Shenandoah Valley men. After Melchior’s death, these three sisters gave, in 1741, his 100 acres at Germantown to their sister Agnes Otterbach, wife of Henry, a grandson of Hermann Otterbach. Melchior’s remaining 40 acres, for ten went to the Glebe, were disposed of before 1729. State route 28 now crosses the old Brumback property from north to south.

JOHN KEMPER, also from Muesen, arrived aged 22 and was probably related to Martin and Brumback. In Germanna he married Alice Katherine Otterbach. He was a man of “some learning, serious piety and penetrating mind.” He eased the burdens of all by inventing the shovel plow soon after arrival in Germantown. Much of what is recorded about the daily lives and surroundings of the people at Germantown was written by his grandson, the Rev. James Kemper, who spent his youth there. Kemper secured large grants outside the tract in the names of his native born children, for he was not yet naturalized. Seven of his nine children married into English colonial families. Two sons married into the Fishback and Weaver families. Most of the Kemper descendants moved to Kentucky and the west shortly after the Revolution, leaving only two grandsons in Virginia. It was estimated many years ago that he had thousands of descendants. He died about 1758 or 1759.

JOSEPH CUNTZ was 30 on arrival. He married in Germany, Anna Gertrude Reinschmidt, who died before their arrival in Virginia. Three children were born in Germany. His second wife was Katherine —, who had four children. Her oldest son, Tillman, later owned part of his father’s property at Germantown. A daughter married a Kemper. Joseph Cuntz moved to Culpeper Co., and died in 1731.

HARMAN FISHBACK, brother of John, was aged 21 on arrival. He married first at Germanna, Katherine, who appears to have been a daughter of Hermann Otterbach. His second wife was Mrs. Mary Noe. He moved to Culpeper Co. after 1745. Of his six children two married Hoffmans. He is said to have been
THE WEAVER HOUSE AT GERMANTOWN, VIRGINIA, DATED 1721, TORN DOWN 1924. THE WEAVER CEMETERY WAS NEAR THE HOUSE AND ILLEGIBLE STONES ARE STILL IN PLACE.
the last of the colonists to die, being 90 at the time. He wrote his will in 1776. It was probated in 1786.

PETER HITT was 30 years old when he reached Virginia. Records in Germany indicate the Hitts were related to others of the 1714 group. He married in Germany, Mary Elizabeth Freundenberg. Four of their six children, all born in Virginia, continued the intermarriages. Sons married a Cuntz, a Holtzclaw and a Weaver and the daughter married Jacob Rector. Peter Hitt died in 1772, aged 89. His will left his estate to his widow and to the children after her death.

JOHN SPILMAN married in 1707 in Germany, Mary Gertrude, daughter of an Arnold Holtzclaw. They had at least two sons. Spilman died in 1724 soon after Rector’s death, and the deed to his Germantown tract was made in 1729 to his widow. She sold 50 acres of it to John Jacob Rector because it was “distant from her plantation” and was poor land. He gave her a beef for it. She married second, a man named Gent, who “ran away” after several children were born. A law suit was won by her grandson when he discovered she was about to sell Spilman’s land, which legally would descend to his father’s estate.

JOSEPH WEAVER apparently left Germany with the others and died in England or at sea. His lot was assigned to his widow ANN, who had a teen-age son TILLMAN. The Weaver house, built in 1721, with the date and customary verse of Scripture over the door, stood until 1924. The Weavers were the last of the original families to remain at Germantown. Tillman married Ann Elizabeth Cuntz. When he died about 1780, he left his “plantation” to his wife and then to Tillman II, who became a Captain in the Revolutionary Army. He had a large family. Daughters married into the Kemper and Hitt families and later there was a Holtzclaw intermarriage. The two Tillmans acquired much property outside Germantown as well as eventual ownership of at least 600 acres of the original grant.

Three families, who received no allotment of land, were members of the colony. Even though they may not have arrived on the ship bringing the colony to Virginia in April 1714 they are a part of the original 42 colonists, as shown in the previous chap-
Hermann Otterbach was a "driver" in the iron mines at Truppbach, Germany. He married Elizabeth Heimbach. They were past 50 in 1714 and probably did not expect to work for Gov. Spotswood but came to be with their daughter, Anna Margaret, wife of Jacob Holtzclaw. Probably there were budding romances between daughters Alice Katherine and John Kemper, Mary Catherine, who seems to have married John Joseph Martin, and Anna Catherine, who was probably the first wife of Harman Fishback. They also brought with them two sons, John Jacob and John Philip. At Germantown, they must have lived with a daughter and son-in-law.

Philip Fishback's wife was also an Elizabeth Heimbach. They got permission in 1713 to emigrate. They are mentioned as living at Germanna, but it does not appear he worked for Gov. Spotswood. They were the parents of the young colonists John and Harman Fishback. Their daughter, Mary Elizabeth, b. 1687, married John Jacob Rector in Germany, and another daughter, also Mary Elizabeth, b. 1696, is identified by Dr. Holtzclaw as the wife of Melchior Brumback. The elder couple probably lived with one of their children at Germantown. Hans Jacob Fishback, a school master in Truppbach, Germany, recorded as emigrating with Philip Fishback in 1714, appears to have returned to Germany some years later to recruit new colonists. He returned in 1734 with five other men and two boys. Since three of these men were named Hoffman, Rector and Otterbach, it is a fair guess they were related to the other colonists. All these men, except the one called John Rector, settled in the "Little Fork Colony" which Dr. Holtzclaw calls the "second colony from Nassau-Siegen."

The truly outstanding member of the Germanna Colony was Pastor Henry Haeger. He received no personal allotment at Germantown since he naturally would have occupied the parsonage on the glebe. His advanced age prevented this and they spent their last years on the property of their son-in-law, cared for by a granddaughter. He was born in 1644 near Siegen, Germany. He was a University graduate and had a distinguished career as pastor, teacher and translator. By 1713, he was living in retire-
ment. He was well informed about the American colonies because one of his sons had come as pastor with a colony which settled up the Hudson River several years earlier. This colony suffered greatly from illness and neglect, for they were reduced to boiling grass for food, and their experience could not have been very inspiring for a second colonial venture. Nevertheless when his son-in-law and young daughter, John and Agnes Fishback, decided to join the colony headed for Virginia, the old minister and his wife, Anna Catherine Friesenhagen, accompanied them, together with a younger daughter who married John Hoffman in Virginia. He served the Reformed congregation both at Germanna and Germantown till his death at 89, in 1737. Since both daughters died before him, he left his small property to his wife and then to his seven Virginia grandchildren. The rest of his large family had remained in Germany. The success in launching two pioneer communities within less than ten years must surely be credited in large part to the wise counsel and spiritual guidance of this aged minister.

It is apparent that Germantown had become too small for the ambition of the colonists as shown by the large tracts they secured elsewhere. As they mingled more with the English colonial families the use of German was discontinued and they were absorbed into the stream of American life. Many of their descendants are not aware of their German origin, though they exhibit characteristics passed on to them by these forefathers. They now number into the hundreds of thousands. Many of them have achieved great distinction. As late as the Revolutionary War Germantown was considered a thriving place. After the War it rapidly decreased in population and importance. The last discovered reference to Germantown, as a village, is in the journal of a Tidewater family migrating in 1817 over the Winchester Road to Ohio. They recorded they were poorly lodged by a man named Verone at the only house left in Germantown. He gave them bread and cheese for food. (Court records show at least one marriage between a Weaver and a Verone.)

This pioneer group was too strong to be contained east of the mountains. They moved to the Valley, then beyond the
Alleghenies, across the Ohio and the Mississippi. Wherever there was land and opportunity they joined the tide moving west. They showed a preference for limestone soil, such as they found in the Shenandoah Valley. They did not hesitate to take up land in the mountainous parts of western Virginia. They improved their land and built sturdy houses and huge barns. On every available stream they built grist and saw mills. In the great wagons, which they built themselves, they were willing to haul their produce and to drive their cattle to markets which other farmers considered too distant or too difficult to reach. No phase of American life is foreign to them. To every state they have contributed the peculiarly rich inheritance their forefathers brought across the seas.
THE GERMANNA HIGHWAY MARKER


The Germanna highway marker is located on the south side of the GERMANNA HIGHWAY at the brow of the bluff near the Rapidan River bridge. The handsome frame — deep-red heart of native Siegen Forest cedar — stands right-angled to the highway, and hence its message can be read by tourists approaching from either direction. Recently the metal plate suspended from the center has had a face-lifting — some blemishes and many old lines have vanished, and the rusty-brown background has been changed to a gleaming white enamel. And the metal plate now bears two messages. Approaching from the east, the tourist reads: THE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION SEEKS INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE GERMANNA COLONIES OF 1714, 1717, 1719, THE LITTLE FORK COLONIES, AND ALL RELATED FAMILIES. LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN ISSUED; OTHERS WILL APPEAR AS FACTS AND MEANS ARE AVAILABLE. THE COOPERATION OF ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IS INVITED. Approaching from the west, he reads: 270 ACRES OF THE ORIGINAL HISTORICAL GERMANNA TRACT OF 1714, NOW HELD FOR PUBLIC INTEREST BY THE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION OF THE GERMANNA COLONIES. GOV. SPOTSWOOD, JOHN FONTAINE, AND OTHERS, WHO WERE KNOWN AS "KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE" STARTED FROM HERE IN 1716 ON THAT NOTED JOURNEY ACROSS THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS.