

# Directed Reading Activity

## Gottlieb Mittelberger's Journey to Pennsylvania

### A. Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the account dedicated to?
2. From what parts of Germany did the people in his account come from?
3. When did he leave his hometown and when did he arrive in Philadelphia?
4. How many weeks did it take for Mittelberger to get from Rotterdam to Philadelphia?
5. What was his occupation and how long was he in Pennsylvania?
6. What were "newlanders?"
7. What does Mittelberger describe as his purpose for writing his account?
8. What are custom-houses? Why did the ship have to stop at them?
9. Why did travelers have to spend so much money during the trip?
10. Approximately how long did it take to get from Kaupp [Cowes], England to Philadelphia?
11. Describe the causes, symptoms, and treatment for dysentery, constipation, boils, scurvy, and mouth-rot. What does Mittelberger believe caused these illnesses?

12. What made Mittelberger qualified to become the spiritual leader on the journey?
13. Describe what you think happened to the pregnant woman on p. 23.
14. Why were children more likely to die on the voyage than adults?
15. Describe the food and water received on the ship.
16. What was the cost of the journey, including incidentals?
17. Describe the process of indenturing. How were laborers selected? How long did they serve? What determined how long a person served? What happened to children who were indentured? How were the debts of the sick and dead taken care of?
18. What does Mittelberger mean when he says that a person "repented his bargain, so that he would gladly have returned his exorbitantly dear ware, and lost the money besides?"
19. What happens to those who try to runaway from their term of service?

**B. Critical Thinking Questions**

What do you think is Mittelberger's motivation for writing his account? What do you think are his biases? Do you find his account believable? Why or why not?

Describe any inter-ethnic tensions or prejudices that are revealed in Mittelberger's journal. What groups are targeted and how are they depicted?

Do you have a family member or know of a family who immigrated to the United States? Think of how their experiences compare to Gottlieb Mittelberger.

### C. Suggested Areas of Further Research

- Types of Ships
- Medical Conditions on Ships
- German Political Situation (18<sup>th</sup> Century)
- German Religious Groups (Conservative and Dissenters)
- German Principalities
- Experiences of Women and Children
- Contagious Diseases

### D. Research Assignment: "Writing your own journal"

The year is 1750. You are a German immigrant on his/her way to Philadelphia. Write your own journal describing your travels from Germany to Philadelphia. Create your own personality, age, gender, marital status, religion, and occupation. Describe why you are leaving and what you hope to accomplish in the New World. Who is traveling with you? What hardships do you face on your journey? Use information from Mittelberger's Account and the supplementary readings to make your journal as historically accurate as possible. Remember the length of time it took to get from Rotterdam to England and from England to Philadelphia. Describe conditions on the ship and the cities you stop at along the way. Remember to include a description of Philadelphia. Describe people who you encounter on your journey. The purpose of this exercise is for you to be creative while using real historical facts, events, peoples, etc...

- Approximate Length: 10 Journal Entries (One for each week of your journey)
- Each Journal Entry should be ½ to ¾ of a page typed, or 1 full page handwritten.
- Be Creative!!!
- Suggestions: Antique your paper, use calligraphy, and draw pictures.