Fleeing Europe, Finding Philadelphia: German Atlantic Migrants & the Crisis of 1816-17

Day 1, July 17 – Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street Philadelphia, PA 19107

09:30 - Arrival & Coffee

10:00 - Introduction & Welcome – James Boyd [Cambridge]

10:30 - Marianne Wokeck [Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis] “Weighing the Risks of Relocation in the Face of Crises: How German-speaking Migrants forged Transatlantic Pathways in the 18th century”

11:30 - William O’Reilly [Cambridge] “Selling Souls: Trafficking German migrants, Europe and America, 1648-1780”

Lunch 12:30

13:30 - Andrew Zonderman [Emory] “Sailing Souls: Colonial Philadelphia’s German Merchants and the Development of the Transatlantic Passenger Trade”


Coffee 15:30

16:00 – Konstantin Huber [Enzkreis] “Finding the Migrants: Reconstructing Migrant Stories from Historical Communities”

17:00 – Frank Trommler [UPenn] “Why Philadelphia? Shaping the History of German Americans”

18:00 – Finish

19:00 – Speakers Dinner

‘Fleeing Europe’ is generously supported by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, grant no.30.17.0.036GE
Day 2, July 18 – German Society of Pennsylvania, 611 Spring Garden Street Philadelphia, PA 19123

09:30 – Arrival & Coffee

10:00 - Introduction & The German Society of Pennsylvania – Maria Sturm [GSP]


11:30 – David S. Barnes [UPenn] “Our Misery Was Great: Disease and Despair on the ‘Hope’ at Philadelphia’s Lazaretto, August-October 1817”

12:30 - Lisa Minardi & James Boyd - Carrying the Crisis: Presenting a Contemporary German Memorial of the Year Without a Summer, produced in Württemberg, discovered in the USA, 2014.

Lunch – 13:00

14:00 – Friederike Baer [Penn State Abingdon] The Trial of Frederick Eberle: Language, Patriotism and Citizenship in Philadelphia’s German Community, 1790-1830

15:00 – Claudia Schnurmann [Hamburg] The Immigrant Francis Lieber and his impact on American Education, 1827-1872

16:00 – Coffee

16:30 – Discussion

17:30 – Finish

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Friederike Baer is Associate Professor of History at Pennsylvania State University Abington College. Her research focuses on the experiences of German-speaking people in early America. Her first book *The Trial of Frederick Eberle: Language, Patriotism and Citizenship in Philadelphia’s German Community, 1790-1830* (NYU Press, 2008) won the 2011 St. Paul’s, Biglerville Prize for the best book in Lutheran church history published in the previous three years. Her work has appeared in Early American Studies and the Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies, among others. Baer is currently completing a book project on the estimated 30,000 German soldiers that fought on the British side in the War for American Independence, to be published by Oxford University Press.

David S. Barnes is Associate Professor in the Department of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania. His work examines the history of infectious disease, epidemiology, and public health. He is also currently Vice-President of the Lazaretto Preservation Board, which oversees the oldest maritime quarantine station in the Western Hemisphere, the Philadelphia Lazaretto. Built in 1799, it was the first point of landing for the migrants of 1816 and 1817.

James Boyd is a Research Associate at the University of Cambridge, and a guest scientist of the Leibniz Gemeinschaft. His research considers the economic influences of German-American migration, studied from the micro-level of historical German communities, to the macro-level of Atlantic transport. His recent publication ‘The Rhine Exodus of 1816-17 Within the Developing German Atlantic World’ (*The Historical Journal* 2016) brings together records from the German Southwest and the German Society of Pennsylvania, to explore the 1817 movement from both sides of the Atlantic.

Konstantin Huber is the archive leader of the District Archives, Pforzheim, Germany. Located at the heart of historical emigration to Pennsylvania, the archive and its leader are a focal point within a wide-reaching network of resources that have been pivotal to academic research of both the German-Atlantic World, and German peasant society. A prolific publisher and editor of community and migration studies, Huber’s most recent publication focuses on the village of Dürrn – a source of German-American migrants throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.


William O’Reilly is Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Cambridge. He won the Philip Leverhulme Prize for his work on European and Atlantic History in 2006, was visiting professor and visiting fellow at Harvard University in 2009 and 2015, and his forthcoming book *Selling Souls: Trafficking German migrants, Europe and America, 1648-1780* represents the first major study of migrant recruitment in Early Modern Europe. He also serves as Associate Director for the Centre of History and Economics, Cambridge.

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Claudia Schnurmann is Professor of North American, Caribbean, and Atlantic History at the University Hamburg. She has published widely on commerce, culture, politics, and communication in the Atlantic World from the late 15th to the 21st century, with an especial focus on western Europe (the Netherlands, Belgium, Britain, and Germany) and colonial America. Her Habilitation thesis “Atlantische Welten: Engländer und Niederländer im amerikanisch-atlantischen Raum 1648-1713” (Cologne 1998) was awarded by the OAH as the best book worldwide on American history not written in English. She is also editor of Atlantic Cultural Studies. The series contains 9 volumes and the 10th volume “Off shore: perspectives on transatlantic travels since the 19th century by Birgit Braasch and Claudia Müller is in the making. She is currently preparing an extensive edition of letters by the German couple Francis and Mathilde Lieber exchanged between Hamburg and the USA in 1839-1845, called “A Sea of love”.

Frank Trommler is Professor Emeritus of German at the University of Pennsylvania, where he has been a member of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures since 1970. A Guggenheim Fellow in 1984/85, he was President of the AATG chapter Philadelphia in 1986-1990, President of the German Studies Association in 1991/92, and Director of the Humanities Program at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies in Washington, DC, from 1995-2003. In 2004 he was awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz by the President of the Federal Republic for his work in the field of American-German relations. He has published widely, on diverse topics, including America and the Germans, German studies in the USA, the culture of the German Federal Republic, and German diplomatic relations. In 1983 he co-edited, with Timothy McVeigh, America and the Germans: an Assessment of a Three Hundred Year History which commemorated the tri-centenary of the first German arrivals in North America.

Marianne Wokeck is Chancellor’s Professor of History at IUPUI, and author of Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America. The first historical work to explore the movement of Germans to Colonial North America as a mass migration, Trade remains the standard work for comprehending how German-Speaking Europeans accessed the New World during the eighteenth century. She is also editor of The Papers of William Penn, and from 2012-2016 edited Volume 1 of the major international collaborative programme Immigrant Entrepreneurship, German-American Business Biographies, 1720-Present in conjunction with the German Historical Institute and the Transatlantic Programme of the Federal Republic of Germany. She is also a fellow of the Max Kade Centre, and Adjunct Professor of American Studies, Women's Studies, and University College at IUPUI.

Andrew Zonderman is a doctoral candidate at Emory University. His dissertation topic Embracing Empire: Eighteenth-Century German Migrants and the Development of the British Imperial Project explores how the migrations of German-speaking merchants, missionaries, soldiers, and borderland settlers throughout the eighteenth-century British Empire shaped that project. His research is supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), German Historical Institute in Washington D.C., the Library Company of Pennsylvania, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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