

# THE SHIP OLIVER



**No matter what you have heard...  
No matter what The Back-Bach Genealogical Society claimed...  
No matter what The Germanna Foundation continues to claim...  
Harman Back from Freudenberg, Germany  
did not sail to America on the ship *Oliver*.**

**Both of those organizations simply claimed  
that Harman Back was on that ship,  
in order to help sell their genealogy books,  
because the ship *Oliver* was such an interesting story.**

**This report provides the true story of the ship *Oliver*.**

The true story begins with a man named William Byrd II. He was born on March 28, 1674, in Charles City County, Virginia, to an extremely wealthy and prominent family. His parents were William Byrd I and Maria Horsmanden.

When he was seventeen years old, his parents sent him over to London, England, for his education. But he ended up staying there for about fourteen years. He studied the classics, as well as law. A few years later, he became a member of "The Royal Society of London." When he was thirty years old, his father died, in 1704. William then returned to Virginia, to take care of the family estate.



William Byrd II

**This PDF may be uploaded to the Internet—please spread the truth about the ship *Oliver***

In 1706, he married Lucy Parke, and they had four children. But sadly, Lucy died of smallpox, in 1716. William later got remarried to Maria Taylor, in 1724, and they also had four children.

In 1730, William started building a large, three-story brick home, to replace the small, wooden house in which his parents had lived, on the 1,200-acre plantation that he had inherited from them. The home was completed in 1735, and he named it, "Westover."

That magnificent home is still standing today. It's located about seven miles southwest of Charles City, Virginia, in between Richmond and Williamsburg, and it overlooks the James River. It truly is one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture, in the country.



While William had been married to his first wife, her father, Colonel Daniel Parke II, had died, back in 1711. William took over his property in Virginia, in order to keep it in the family. He was required to assume the debts that were associated with it, but he was not aware of just how large those debts actually were.

As time went by, William often became short of money, particularly while he was building Westover, as he was trying to pay off all of the debts of his prior father-in-law.

He sold some of his own land, to satisfy the creditors, but when that still wasn't enough, in 1734, he came up with an idea to make some money. He decided to colonize some land, specifically with Swiss immigrants.

### **Byrd's land along the Roanoke River**

In June of 1735, William received a patent for 100,000 acres, along the Roanoke River, in the far southeastern part of Virginia, which was right along the North Carolina border (see the map on the next page).

He received that land, on the condition that, within two years, he brought in at least one family to settle there, for every 1,000 acres. That meant he needed to bring in 100 families. He later got an extension of time, until October of 1738, to bring in 100 families to settle on his land.



William Byrd's land was located along the Roanoke River, in the far southeastern part of Virginia, right along the North Carolina border

William only wanted to bring Swiss immigrants, over to his land, not only because they were hard workers, but because they were highly skilled in "diversified farming." In addition, he only wanted Protestants, because he believed that, "there were already too many Catholics" in the New World.

### **Byrd only wanted Swiss settlers**

In order to attract the attention of Swiss settlers, William wrote a book titled, *William Byrd's Natural History of Virginia -- the Newly Discovered Eden*. In it, he described his land along the Roanoke River, in the far southeastern part of Virginia, in glorious detail. He wrote about the weather, the people, the animals, the plants, the trees, the flowers, and the herbs. He made it seem as if southeastern Virginia truly was, "The Land of Eden."

William then needed to get his book into the hands of Swiss people who wanted to immigrate to America, so that they would settle on his land. He contacted "The Helvetian Society," in Bern, Switzerland, which often made arrangements for ships to transport Swiss immigrants to America. One of their members, Samuel Jenner, translated William's book into German, because most Swiss people speak German (known as, "Swiss German").

The Helvetian Society published William's book, in 1737. They then used that book to persuade groups of Swiss immigrants to sail to America, and to settle on William Byrd's land, in the far southeastern part of Virginia.

The first ship of their Swiss immigrants sailed to America, in the early fall of 1737. Records show that the ship was headed for Virginia, but it somehow landed in South Carolina, where it shipwrecked. It was said that there was a second ship, but no information exists as to what happened to it.

By early 1738, William was getting concerned, because his deadline of October of 1738, to settle his land, was fast approaching, and he still had not brought over any settlers. And so, in the spring of 1738, he actually sold 33,400 acres of his land along the Roanoke River to a group of three hundred Swiss people, for 3,000 pounds. That way, he knew that they would have to settle on his land. Those people were soon scheduled to sail on the ship *Oliver*.

#### **The last voyage of the ship *Oliver***

The *Oliver* had been built in Boston, in 1720. The ship had been initially called, the *Eagle*, but its name was changed, in 1736, to the *Oliver*, for unknown reasons. The ship was owned by three brothers who lived in the Netherlands: Archibald Hope, Jr., Isaac Hope, and Zachary Hope. Their company was called, "The Hope Brothers." The ship *Oliver* was a 100-ton vessel, and it had eight guns. It was a sturdy and trusted ship. By 1738, it had crossed the ocean safely, between Europe and America, many times. Nobody had any idea that this voyage, in the mid-summer of 1738, would be its last voyage.

Old records from The Hope Brothers, and old articles from a newspaper in Rotterdam called, *The Courant*, indicate that the ship *Oliver*, along with four other ships (the *Thistle*, the *Winter Galley*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Queen Elizabeth*), arrived in Rotterdam, in mid-June of 1738. All five ships were then loaded with passengers and cargo.

The captain of the ship *Oliver* was Captain William Walker, and he had a crew of fourteen men. The old records show that the ship *Oliver* was loaded with about 300 passengers, and that they were specifically described as being, "Protestant Switzers." But, some of the passengers were concerned that the ship was not built to carry that many people.



Old records also show that the five ships were ready to sail to England, on June 22, 1738. (Back then, all ships sailing to America had to stop at a port in England, before setting sail across the ocean, in order to have their final inspections performed, and to pay the required fees.)

All five ships left Rotterdam, either on June 22, or June 23, of 1738. On the evening of June 23, 1738, a bad storm forced the five ships to dock at Hellevoetsluis, which is a small coastal town that is just across from the Goeree-Overflakke Island, and south of the city of Rotterdam. This was reported in the June 24, 1738 edition of *The Courant* newspaper. That newspaper article was later included in a book titled, *The Perkiomen Region, Past and Present*, which was published in 1900 (see below).

152
THE PERKIOMEN REGION,

ter. I beg you to give my best love to my Aunt and Cousins and all my relations when you see them, and to believe me, very truly,  
Your affectionate Nephew,  
Benja. Henry Latrobe.  
Superscription:  
Colonel Frederic Antes,  
Northumberland County,  
Pennsylvania.

**An Old Scrap of Paper.**

Thomas Addis was a farmer of Frederick township as early as 1732, in which year he died. He owned a plantation, which was appraised at £160 Pennsylvania currency, but where it was located remains to be found out. He had planted twelve acres of winter grain, and owned three old horses, one mare and two colts, five cows and two heifers, one riding horse, sixteen sheep, one Negro girl—showing that he was a considerable farmer for those times. That he was a worthy man is proven by his bequest of a small sum of money to St. James Episcopal church, at Perkiomen (Evansburg). A fuller account of his property may be seen in the Schwenksville Item, April 3, 1885, in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania rooms, Philadelphia.

Among the papers of this estate was a scrap—a mere memorandum without heading or explanation, probably a list of his creditors—of which this is a copy.

**Old-Time News.**

SAILING OF EMIGRANT SHIPS.

Rotterdamse Dingsdaegse Courant, No. 19. June 24, 1738: Gistern avond arriveerde in Goeree . . . de Koningin Elisabeth, de Tressel, de Olivier, de Winter, en de Glasgow, alle vijf na Pensilvanien.

[Last evening arrived at Goeree (near Rotterdam), the Queen Elizabeth, the Thistle, the Oliver, the Winter, and the Glasgow, all for Pennsylvania.]

The passengers of the Winter Galley qualified at Philadelphia September 5, 1738; the Glasgow, September 9, 1738; the Queen Elizabeth, September 16, 1738; the Thistle, September 19, 1738.

Rotterdamse Saturdaegse Courant, July 19, 1738: Rotterdam, den 18. July. Uijt Goeree was gezeld Charles Wheare en George Rodgson na Pensilvanien.

[Rotterdam, July 18. Sailed from Goeree, Charles Ware and George Hodgson for Pennsylvania.]

The passengers on Captain Charles Ware's Snow Fox qualified at Philadelphia October 12, 1738, and those on Captain Hodgson's ship Elizabeth, October 30, 1738.

**Gleanings in Old Fields.**

The Wochentliche Franckfurter Frag- und Anzeigen Nachrichten, 1791 and

*The Perkiomen Region, Past and Present*, Volume 2,  
by Henry Sassaman Dotterer, p. 152.  
Published by Perkiomen Creek and Valley, 1900

While the ship *Oliver* was docked at Hellevoetsluis, for a few days, several of its passengers got off the ship, and they refused to reboard, because of the overcrowding. Many other passengers were also concerned, but they were so anxious to get to America that they remained onboard.

Captain William Walker was also very concerned about the overcrowding, as well as the excessive amount of cargo, both of which were creating too much weight. He also got off the ship, but he refused to reboard. However, he was soon replaced with a captain who agreed to sail the ship. His name was Captain William Wright.

It should be noted that, the following year, in 1739, one of the passengers from the ship *Oliver*, Carlo Toriano, stated that he had arrived in Rotterdam, in June of 1738, and that he had boarded the ship in June. His statements clearly aligned with what was reported in *The Courant* newspaper. He further stated that the ship *Oliver* had docked in Hellevoetsluis for a few days, and it did not leave there until "early July of 1738." The ship *Oliver* did, in fact, leave Hellevoetsluis, in early July of 1738. It then headed for England, where it pulled into the port at Cowes, for its final inspections and to pay the required fees. But it was not able to depart from there, for a few weeks, because the winds were not favorable.

Shortly after the ship left Cowes, another bad storm came up that caused quite a bit of damage to the vessel. The ship was then forced to pull into the port at Plymouth, in order to obtain the needed repairs. Those repairs took several weeks to complete.

Finally, in early August of 1738, the ship *Oliver* headed out across the ocean, towards America. However, by that time, it was nearly two months behind schedule.

Old records indicate that the ship *Oliver* was hit by thirteen bad storms, as it crossed the ocean, one right after the other. A mast even fell off, during one of the storms. At some point, during the voyage, both the captain and the first mate died. A man named Francis Sinclair was then made the captain.

Since the voyage took much longer than planned, the food and the fresh water began to run out. During the voyage, about fifty passengers died, from either starvation, dehydration, or disease. Most of them were children. Their bodies were thrown overboard, as their family and friends wept.

The November 24, 1738 edition of *The Virginia Gazette* newspaper (see below) featured a small article about the ship *Oliver*. Apparently, another ship had passed by the *Oliver*, out in the ocean, and the crews of each ship had shouted information back and forth, to each other. Information about the ship *Oliver* was then reported to that newspaper.

By a Ship lately arrived at Hampton, from Philadelphia, we have Advice, That a Ship sail'd about 13 Weeks ago, from Plymouth, with a considerable Number of Switzers on board, who are bound for this Colony, to settle here, on the back Lands; for which Purpose Foreign Protestants have great Encouragement from this Government.

*The Virginia Gazette*, November 24, 1738  
Courtesy The Virginia Historical Society

The newspaper article described the passengers onboard the ship *Oliver* as being Swiss (called, "Switzers"), and that they were going to settle on the "back lands." In early America, "back lands" referred to land that was inland, and "in back of," the coast. Obviously, this was referring to William Byrd's land along the Roanoke River.

By the end of December, 1738, the food and water on the ship *Oliver* had run out, and so the passengers became hysterical. On January 3, 1739, land was finally spotted. The ship dropped anchor, near Lynnhaven Bay, Virginia, at the south end of the Chesapeake Bay (see the map below).



Lynnhaven Bay, along the Virginia coast, where the ship *Oliver* landed

Suddenly, several of the passengers drew pistols and rifles, and they started a mutiny.

They threatened to kill the captain, unless he, some of the crew, and some of the passengers, quickly went ashore on a small boat, located some fresh water and food, and then brought it all back to the ship. So they did.

But when the men got to the shore, they were not able to find any fresh water or food, right away. As they continued to search, the weather took a turn for the worse. Before they could return to the ship, a bad storm came up. As the men watched in horror, from the shore, strong winds dragged the ship *Oliver* over onto a sandbar. The bottom of the ship became damaged, and so the hull quickly filled with water. About fifty passengers were trapped down there, and they drowned. But about two hundred passengers were able to get off the ship, and they began to swim towards the shore.

However, it was January, and so it was bitterly cold. The water was also bitterly cold. It was late in the afternoon, and so it was also nearly dark.

Of the two hundred people who tried to swim to the shore, about forty of them drowned.

And of the ones who finally made it to the shore, seventy of them later froze to death that night, on the beach, and in the nearby marshes. Early the next morning, some of the residents from a nearby village found about ninety survivors. They took them into their homes, and they cared for them, until they recovered.

So, of the three hundred Swiss passengers who started the voyage, only about ninety of them survived. It was a terrible tragedy. The voyage was written about, in *The Virginia Gazette* newspaper, in both the January 12, 1739 edition, and the January 19, 1739 edition (see the next two pages).

This voyage of the ship *Oliver* was reported in several other newspapers, in 1739: *The New York Gazette* (Jan. 22-29); *The American Weekly Mercury* (Jan. 23-30); *The Pennsylvania Gazette* (Jan. 25-Feb. 1); *The Boston News-Letter* (Feb. 15-22); *The Boston Post-Boy* (Feb. 19); *The Boston Evening Post* (Feb. 19); *The New England Weekly Journal* (Feb. 20); and also in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* (March 22-29).

And in April and May of 1739, this voyage of the ship *Oliver* was reported in three European publications: *The Daily Gazetteer*, *The Belfast News-Letter*, and *The Gentleman's Magazine*.



WILLIAMSBURG, January 12.

We have for several Weeks past, been in Expectation of the Arrival of a Ship, with about 300 *Protestant* *Swissers*, who were coming to settle on the *Southern* Boundaries of this Colony; and who sail'd from *England* about the Beginning of *August*. By Vessels that have arriv'd here, we have had several Accounts of their being seen and spoken to, at Sea; and by one lately, who gave an Account, that they had lost the Captain, Mate, and 50 or 60 Passengers, most of them Children, who dy'd; and that the rest were in great Distress for want of Provisions, occasion'd by the Tedioufness of their Voiage. From these Circumstances of the poor People, who had sold their All, and left their Native Country, to come and settle in This, they were much pitied, by many here, on Account of their Miteries. At last, we have an Account of their Arrival; with the following melancholly Circumstances, which we gather from Two Letters sent hither from *Prince's Anne* County, and *Hampton*, and from some current Reports: That the said Ship arriv'd within the Capes of *Chesapeake*-Bay, on *Wednesday* the 3d Instant, and came to Anchor in *Lynnhaven*-Bay; that the Wind blew very hard that Afternoon and Night, at *North-West*, which 'tis suppos'd drove her from her Anchor, and she was the next Morning discover'd stranded on the Shore in the said Bay, with Water in her to her Upper Decks; and a great Number of the People, who were before almost famish'd with Hunger, had the Misfortune to loose their Lives. These Letters do not particularly mention, in what Manner they lost their Lives, whether by attempting to get ashore, when the Ship stranded; or whether the whole Number said to be lost, were drowned in the Ship, by the Waters flowing in upon them, they being in a weak, sickly Condition, and perishing that way, being unable to help themselves; and especially as it was one of the coldest Nights we have felt this Winter. One of these Letters says, That Two Thirds of the People were destroyed by the Wet and Cold, and most

of their Treasure lost: And the other, That 50 of them were drowned between Decks. From these, and the various Reports relating to them, we can collect, That out of about 300 Souls that enter'd on board this Ship, there are not above 60 alive; and those in so low a Condition, that its much doubted, whether some of them will recover. Among this Number is a Daughter of *Col. Brown's*, (a Gentleman of Fortune, the Chief of this new Colony, who happened to take his Passage another Way, and arriv'd here about a Month ago;) this young Gentlewoman it seems was Speechless, and her Life in great Danger: Three other of his Children who came in the Ship, are like to do well. This Gentleman was waiting at *Hampton* for their Arrival, and upon the News of their being at Anchor in *Lynnhaven Bay*, immediately procur'd a Vessel and Provisions, and went to their Relief; but to his unspeakable Grief, found them in this Distress. This Ship was reckon'd one of the richest, that has come to this Colony for many Years; and 'tis fear'd that much of her Treasure is lost. However, That is but a Trifle in Comparison to the Loss of so many Lives, and this Loss the Colony may sustain, by this Disaster's discouraging some Thousands of the same Country People from coming hither to settle our back Lands, (which are very rich, and capable of great Improvements) who it seems intended it; unless their Terror be in some Measure mitigated, by the kind, hospitable Treatment they met with in their Distresses. As soon as the Gentlemen and other Inhabitants of *Prince's Anne*, saw the deplorable Condition of the People, they immediately took them to their Houses, gave them all the Comfort and Sustainance they cou'd; and contributed as much as lay in their Power, to their Preservation. And our good Governor, upon receiving Advice of their Misfortune, forthwith sent Orders, That every thing shou'd be done for them, that was convenient and necessary for the Preservation of their Lives and Effects; which must undoubtedly be very grateful to those poor Souls, who have been so many Months at Sea, have suffer'd so much Hardship by Famine, and at last, (coming within Sight of their desir'd Port,) but very narrowly escaped the Jaws of Death.

The Virginia Gazette, January 12, 1739  
Courtesy The Virginia Historical Society

### Colonel Brown

These two articles from *The Virginia Gazette* newspaper mention a man named, "Colonel Brown," who had four children onboard the ship *Oliver*. (All four of them survived.) But "Colonel Brown" was actually an imposter and a thief. His real name was Joseph Braun. Four years earlier, in 1735, he had embezzled a great deal of money from the vineyard where he worked, in Bern, Switzerland. He then fled to Holland, to avoid prosecution.

In the spring of 1738, his wife Catharina, and their five children (their son Louis; and their four daughters, Rosina, Catharina, Marianne, and Lisette) left Bern, and they headed to Rotterdam.

*Williamsburg, January 19.* Since our last, we have the following Particulars relating to the *Switzers*, That when the Ship came within the Capes, the Wind was so fair, that if they had kept under Sail, instead of anchoring at *Lynnhaven-Bay*, they might have been safe at *Hampton* in about 2 Hours; but the People being almost famish'd, having nothing to eat for several Days, insisted on the Captain's coming to Anchor there, and going ashore to get Provisions. Accordingly the Captain and some of the Passengers went ashore, but it being an Island, and no Houe upon it, they walk'd about a long Time in vain; mean time the Wind rose, and blew violently at *Norwest*, stove their Boat ashore, parted the Ship from one Anchor, and the other dragg'd, so that she was drove so near ashore, as to strike on the Ground, whereby her Bottom was so injur'd, that she fill'd with Water in a very short Time, and between 40 and 50 were drowned between Decks; and had it not been for the Assistance of Two Ships that lay near them at Anchor, who put as many of the People ashore as they cou'd with Safety to themselves, they must most of them been drown'd: And after they were put ashore, receiving no Shelter, from the Inclemency of the Weather, about 70 of them were frozen to Death, some on the Beach, and others in the Marshes, as they were scattered about, in Search for Houses. Those who surviv'd, amounting to about 90, were taken Care of by the Gentlemen and other Inhabitants of that Neighbourhood, and they are all like to do well. Col. *Brown's* Daughter is pretty well recovered, as are also his Three other Children. The Ship lies in a bad Condition at the same Place where she struck, full of Water, so that they have got but little, out of her yet; however, proper Methods are taking to get their Money, which is said to be very considerable, and Goods, out of her; and then they purpose to go to their intended Settlement.

*The Virginia Gazette*, January 19, 1739  
 Courtesy The Virginia Historical Society

They planned on meeting up with Joseph there, and then booking passage on a ship bound for America. They hoped to escape from their troubles in Europe, and start a new life in America.

In June of 1738, Joseph put his wife Catharina and their five children on the ship *Oliver*. He then went to Lisbon, Portugal, and booked his passage on another ship, just in case someone had recognized him, while he had been in Rotterdam.

But when the ship *Oliver* pulled into the port at Plymouth, England, Joseph's wife Catharina, and their daughter Marianne, got off the ship, for some reason, and then they boarded another ship that was headed for America. (Perhaps they had become concerned about the overcrowding.) Catharina and Marianne arrived in America first, and so they waited in Williamsburg for the rest of the family to arrive. Joseph's ship arrived shortly thereafter.

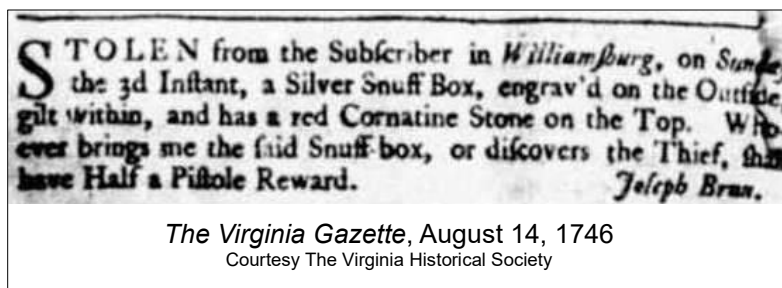
Then, the three of them waited in Williamsburg for the rest of the children to arrive, on the ship *Oliver*.

When Joseph heard that the *Oliver* had shipwrecked near Lynnhaven Bay, he quickly went there, looking for his four children. He discovered that one of the people who had frozen to death on the beach was Joachim Lorenz Haeberline, who was the leader of the Swiss people from Bern, and an extremely wealthy man. Seeing an opportunity to make some quick money, Joseph attempted to claim the cargo that was still out in the bay, on the shipwrecked *Oliver*, knowing that it contained valuables. But when he tried to take possession of a large number of trunks, beyond what his children owned, people became suspicious.

Those suspicions were reported to a local merchant firm called, "John Taylor, Campbell & Sproul." They had been hired by The Hope Brothers, to handle the unloading of the ship *Oliver*, in America. So, they knew that everything on the ship, besides the personal belongings of the passengers, belonged to Joachim Lorenz Haeberline. (Mr. Haeberline's brother, and his "cousin Fischer," also died.) The merchant firm had no idea who "Colonel Brown" was, and he was soon exposed as an imposter. Joseph Braun ("Colonel Brown") then fled the area. He actually deserted his own family.

William Byrd II then took care of Joseph's wife Catharina and their five children, for a period of time. Catharina died, just a few years later, in 1745. At the time of her death, she owed money to several people, including William Byrd II.

On August 14, 1746, Joseph Braun placed an ad in *The Virginia Gazette* newspaper, offering a reward for the return of his stolen silver snuff box (see below). By that time, his wife was dead, and all of his children had returned to Switzerland. It was said that Joseph Braun had "supported himself with instrumental music which he understood well." But nothing else is known about him, or his children.



### **Carlo Toriano**

Another survivor of the ship *Oliver* was a man named Carlo Toriano. He and his family were originally from northern Italy, but they had moved to Soglio, Switzerland, when he was a child. So, he grew up in Switzerland.

Several months after the shipwreck, on July 31, 1739, The Hope Brothers asked Carlo to make a positive statement about his voyage. They were trying to "build a case," in case anyone tried to sue them. They wanted to be able to claim that they were not responsible for what had happened on the *Oliver*. In his statement, Carlo glossed over all of the bad things that happened, including the overcrowding, and the lack of food and water. In fact, he wrote that, "...we sailed happily..." But he only said that, because The Hope Brothers had paid for his return trip back to Switzerland.

It is highly probable that six of Carlo Toriano's relatives were also onboard the ship *Oliver*. This included a man named Schertorio "Sher" Toriano (born in 1695, in Soglio, Switzerland), his wife Luna, and their four children (Peter, Andrew, Schertorio Jr., and Mary). Sher's wife Luna had died, sometime during the voyage, but he and his children had survived, and then they swam to the shore, after the shipwreck.

Sher later changed the spelling of his name to "Scher Torian," but many records show his last name as "DeToriano." On May 5, 1740, he bought 200 acres of land in what was then Brunswick County, Virginia (it's now Lunenburg County), for 25 pounds. The land was along the Dan River, and about two miles east of the present-day town of South Boston, Virginia. His land was near (or part of) William Byrd II's land patent.

Sher later remarried a woman whose first name was Anne. He wrote his will, on May 16, 1748. He left his land to his sons, and he named his friend, Sylvestor Galvanol, as the executor of his estate. It was said that Sylvestor was also onboard the ship *Oliver*, but this hasn't been confirmed. (Strangely, Sylvestor's last name was later spelled as, "Juniors" and "Juniels.")

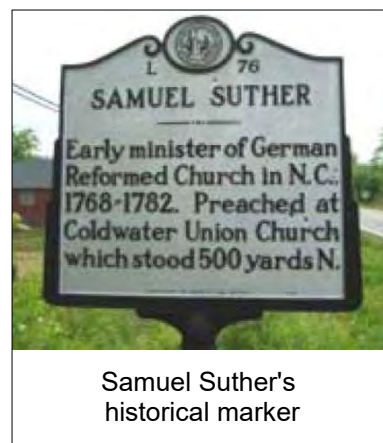
### **Samuel Suther**

Another known survivor of the ship *Oliver* was Samuel Suther. He was born on May 18, 1722, in Switzerland. So, he was just sixteen years old, when he boarded the ship, along with his father and his twelve siblings.

Samuel's father and two of his sisters had somehow died, while the repairs were being done to the ship, while it was docked in Plymouth, England. The rest of his siblings had died, sometime during the voyage. He was actually the only member of his family to survive the voyage. He had swum to the shore, after the shipwreck. He was also one of the people who were found, still alive, on the beach, the next morning. He later said that he had been taken care of by the "kind attention of an Englishman."

When Samuel got older, he moved to Philadelphia, where he taught school. He later moved to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, where he founded several German Reformed churches. He preached at those churches for many years.

He died on September 28, 1788, in Orangeburg County, South Carolina. He had documented what had happened on his voyage of the *Oliver*, in his diary. That information was included with the obituary of his son, David Suther, who died years later, on April 21, 1843. David Suther's obituary was published in *The Reformed Church Messenger*, on May 10, 1843.



A historical marker was erected in 1975, to honor Samuel Suther, near The Gilead Reformed Church, in Concord, North Carolina. He had preached at several of the churches that were located nearby.

### **Other survivors**

The only other known survivors of the ship *Oliver* were two members of the crew: Francis Sinclair (who had taken over as captain); and James Russell (who actually later sued Mr. Sinclair). There were also reports of a man named Hans Devauld Vonderberg being onboard, but no information can be found about him. The names of all the other survivors have been lost to time. There is no known passenger list for this final voyage of the *Oliver*.

### **The William and Mary Quarterly**

In October of 1952, this final voyage of the ship *Oliver* was featured in a four-page article titled, *The Tragic Shipwreck of the Protestant Switzers*, in a prestigious scholarly journal called, *The William and Mary Quarterly* (see the next four pages).



This article was written by Lloyd Haynes Williams. The article is shown here, through the courtesy of "The Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture," and the digital library, "JSTOR."

I  
*The Tragic Shipwreck  
of the  
Protestant Switzers*

For stark, sheer tragedy, no recorded Virginia shipwreck can approach that which occurred more than two centuries ago on the cold, bleak Lynnhaven shore of Princess Anne County. Here was tragedy at its worst, for the stranding followed a wretched voyage of five months from England for upwards of three hundred Protestant Switzers, bound for the lands of William Byrd, II, on the Roanoke River where they planned to settle on the Southern boundaries of the Virginia Colony.

But on January 3, 1739, their dreams of a home in the New World were shattered, as their vessel drove hard onto the lee shore before a violent Northwest storm, bilging and drowning 'tween decks many of her company. Of some three hundred souls who took passage for the "New Found Eden in Virginia," barely ninety survived the wreck, which came on one of the coldest nights of winter.

For several years, William Byrd, II, of Westover, had been seeking to settle lands granted him on the South Branch of the Roanoke River and had been in correspondence with a group of Swiss who sought permission to settle in the Valley of Virginia. The Executive Council of Virginia, at a meeting held June 11, 1735, at Williamsburg, granted Byrd one hundred thousand acres of land, upon the condition that within two years at least one family was settled upon every thousand acres. Byrd was later granted an extension of time for the seating of his lands.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, IV (October 25, 1721-October 28, 1739) (Richmond, 1930), 355, 426.

*The William and Mary Quarterly*,  
Third series, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Oct., 1952), p. 539

*"This book is of the same order of importance as Douglas Southall Freeman's George Washington. . . It has dynamite in it."*

—CARL BRIDENBAUGH

**EDMUND  
PENDLETON,  
1721—1803**

*by David John Mays*

This splendid biography presents new and startling material about one of the most versatile and influential leaders of Colonial and Revolutionary history. As Administrator of the Robinson Estate, Pendleton investigated the extraordinary financial scandal of 1766 (here fully revealed for the first time) and his list of the gentry who owed the estate money is one of the great bibliographical discoveries of the 20th century. Leader of the House of Burgesses and President of the Virginia Convention of 1788, he was a key figure in the Colony and the Republic. "In every way worthy of the Founding Father whom it portrays."—*Julian Boyd*, editor of *THE PAPERS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON*

Two volumes, illustrated, \$15.00

*At your bookseller, or*



**Harvard University  
Press**

Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

*Neu-Gefundenes Eden*, a promotion book about the area, was published in Switzerland in 1737 by Byrd, in an effort to attract settlers from that country. Written in German, the *New Found Eden* described the advantages of the soil and the climate enjoyed by that particular section of Virginia in which Byrd was interested.<sup>2</sup>

In his correspondence with John Ochs, one of the leaders of a group of Swiss desiring to settle in Virginia, Byrd pointed out that the Swiss Protestants should come over and "seat themselves in the valleys of those mountains which are exceedingly rich and the air perfectly wholesome." The colonists could plant vineyards, flax for linen manufacture, and hemp for cordage and might procure nuts from trees and sugar from the "sugar tree."

"Provisions of every kind which may be produced with little labour in the greatest plenty" might be grown in Virginia, Byrd wrote, adding that the land was a fine place for cattle and hogs, sheep and goats, "and particularly there is a large creature of the beef kind, but much larger, called a Buffalo, which may be bred up tame and is good both for food and labour."

Byrd wrote Ochs that the ground

<sup>2</sup> Charles E. Kemper, ed., "The Early Westward Movement of Virginia, 1722-1734," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XIII (1906), 282n.

will produce "any grain you please with a surprising increase," besides potatoes and peas and fruit. The water, he declared, was "clear as crystal" and there were streams for any kinds of mills. The Virginian wrote further that he hoped Ochs would not defer bringing over his little colony for "I had had much rather to do with the honest industrious Switzers than the mixt people that come from Pennsylvania."<sup>3</sup>

Following several years of effort to induce the Swiss to settle on his lands, Byrd sold a group of "Switzers and Germans" a tract of thirty-three thousand acres, and in early August, 1738, a band of three hundred sailed from Plymouth, England, for Virginia.

The overcrowded little vessel made a slow voyage to Virginia, for it was spoken at sea by several ships, one of which brought word to America that the expected settlers were in great difficulty. In addition to losing both the captain and mate as well as nearly sixty passengers, most of whom were children, the remainder were in great distress for want of provisions, "occasioned by the tediousness of their Voiage."<sup>4</sup>

In the *Virginia Gazette* of November 24, 1738, it was noted that, by a ship "lately arrived at Hampton, from Philadelphia, we have advice, that a Ship sail'd about thirteen weeks ago, from Plymouth, with a considerable Number of Switzers on board, who are bound for this Colony, to settle here, on the Back Lands; for which Purpose Foreign Protestants have great Encouragement from this Government."

On Wednesday, January 3, 1739, the vessel sighted land, entered the Capes of Virginia and came to anchor in Lynnhaven Bay. Having had nothing to eat for several days and being almost famished, the passengers insisted that the captain anchor his vessel. The captain and a number of people went ashore, walking about for some time without coming upon any sign of habitation and coming to the conclusion that they were on an island.

Meanwhile, the wind, which had been fair from the East, rose, and, shifting to the Northwest, blew violently that afternoon and night. The surf stove in the boat ashore, and those on board the ship found themselves in a precarious position.

The ship parted from one anchor and the other dragged so that she was driven hard ashore, bilging and soon filling with water to her upper decks. Upwards of fifty persons died between decks, and others drowned

<sup>3</sup> "Letters of William Byrd, 2d, of Westover, Va.," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, IX (1902), 225-28.

<sup>4</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, Williamsburg, Va., Jan. 12, 1739.

while attempting to gain shore. Two vessels lying at anchor nearby put out boats and ferried as many of the people ashore as they could; otherwise, many more would have probably drowned.

Those who gained shore, already in a weakened condition from lack of food, were unable to find shelter from the bitter cold and about seventy froze to death, some on the beach and others in the marshes, as they scattered about seeking some dwelling place.

The next morning, their plight was discovered by the people of Princess Anne. About ninety were given succour in that general neighborhood, and many later recovered. Meanwhile, their vessel became a total wreck, full of water, and the survivors were able to salvage but little from her hulk.

On leaving Switzerland, the settlers had sold all their property and, in addition to their personal effects and other goods, brought with them considerable money, much of which was lost with the ship. Byrd, in writing of the loss of the ship, said the cause to be "either by the villany or stupidity of the master."<sup>2</sup>

Many a ship has been lured ashore or purposely wrecked for the value in her hold, and this particular vessel was said to have been one of the richest to have entered this Colony for some years. However, it seems unlikely that this particular ship was lost by this means, for the *Virginia Gazette* of January 19, 1739, related that the passengers "insisted on the Captain's coming to anchor there, going ashore to get Provisions."

Those gentlemen of fortune who were leading the little colony perished in the wreck, but a few of the unhappy wretches who survived later made their way to make a new start on Byrd's "New Found Eden."

Virginians, always ready to respond to the needs of others, did all in their power to aid the shipwrecked mariners. Governor William Gooch issued orders that everything possible should be done for the survivors who, after suffering hardships and famine at sea and coming at last to their adopted country, so narrowly escaped the jaws of death.

Yet, the tragedy might have been avoided, had the passengers not insisted on their vessel coming to anchor, for they were within sight of their intended port of Hampton. Had the wind been fair, and had the ship been kept under sail, they might have been safe in Hampton River in about two hours.

Williamsburg, Virginia

LLOYD HAYNES WILLIAMS

→ William Byrd, II, to John Bartram, March 23, 1738-9, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2d ser., VI (1926), 313.

*The William and Mary Quarterly*,  
Third series, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Oct., 1952), p. 542

This four-page article in *The William and Mary Quarterly* clearly proves that the overwhelming majority of the passengers on the *Oliver* were Swiss, and that they had sailed to America, in order to settle on land, which they had just purchased from William Byrd II. It described the passengers as being, "...upwards of three hundred Protestant Switzers..." **If there had been 53 Germans onboard, especially from the same town, or area, that would have most certainly have been mentioned in the article.**

The article also stated that the ship had been chartered by The Helevetian Society, in Bern, Switzerland, for the sole purpose of transporting those Swiss settlers to William Byrd's land along the Roanoke River.

To be clear, the article did state that William Byrd had "...sold a group of Switzers and Germans a tract of thirty-three thousand acres..." But the article also stated that, "On leaving Switzerland, the settlers had sold all their property..." This means that those few Germans in the group, who had bought some of William Byrd's land, had been living in Switzerland (and were "Switzers"), before they boarded the *Oliver*. In fact, there have always been Germans living in Switzerland, because they share a border, and a common language, which is called, "Swiss German." (Swiss German is also spoken in parts of Northern Italy, where Carlo Toriano had lived.)

### **Some redemptioners**

Other articles mentioned that there were "a few Germans onboard the ship *Oliver*," who were identified as being "redemptioners." Those were people who sailed, from Europe to America, for free, but when they arrived in America, a colonist then "bought them," by paying for their voyage.

The redemptioner then had to work, for free, for the man who had paid for his voyage, for seven years. The work usually involved hard labor, such as chopping down trees or general farm work, but many redemptioners also worked as store clerks. Also, during their indenture, the redemptioner was not permitted to marry. At the end of the seven years, the redemptioner was given a new suit of clothes, and then he was free to do as he wanted.

Most ships that sailed from Europe to America, back at that time, often carried a very small number of redemptioners (around five or so), to fill up any last, remaining seats. But no ship carried very more than that. It just wasn't profitable to do so.



### The biggest lie about the ship *Oliver*

In 1984, a highly respected German historian named Klaus Wust wrote a research paper titled, *William Byrd II and the Shipwreck of the Oliver*. On page 14 of his paper, Mr. Wust wrote that the 53 people from Freudenberg, including Harman Back, sailed to America on the ship *Oliver* (see below). However, Mr. Wust was tricked into writing that. It wasn't true.

Besides those mentioned in Toriano's account and young Samuel Suther whose memoirs were preserved for many years, the only other survivors of the *Oliver* known by name were people of the Nassau-Siegen group. These were simply passengers on the ship who had no intention to settle on Byrd's land. They were led by Tilmanus Hirschal who had gone to America in 1736 but returned to fetch his son and other relatives. The pastor of the Freudenberg parish listed all adult males and their families in the register as having left on March 13, 1738 "with the knowledge and consent of the authorities of this our land." [34] The following ones on the pastor's list seem to have survived both voyage and shipwreck and settled at the Little Fork of Rappahannock: Hermann Bach, Johannes Hoffman, Hermanus Muller, Johann Friedrich Muller, and Georg Weidmann. [35]

*William Byrd II and the Shipwreck of the Oliver*, by Klaus Wust  
Copyright © 1984 The Swiss-American Historical Society

Please notice that, at the end of that paragraph, is "[35]," which is the reference to Mr. Wust's source for that information, on his List of Sources, at the end of his paper. Source #35 was a book that had been written in 1964, by Dr. B.C. Holtsclaw, titled, *Ancestry and Descendants of the Nassau-Siegen Immigrants to Virginia 1714-1750* (see below).

35. B. C. Holtsclaw, *Ancestry and Descendants of the Nassau-Siegen Immigrants to Virginia 1714-1750* (Harrisonburg, VA, 1964), 12-13.

*William Byrd II and the Shipwreck of the Oliver*, by Klaus Wust  
Copyright © 1984 The Swiss-American Historical Society

**The problem was...Dr. B.C. Holtsclaw never wrote that the 53 people from Freudenberg were on the ship *Oliver*, in his book, *Ancestry and Descendants of the Nassau-Siegen Immigrants to Virginia 1714-1750*, or in any other book.**

In fact, Dr. Holtsclaw wrote in his book that he didn't know the name of the ship that the 53 people from Freudenberg had sailed on, but he did know that their ship had landed in Georgia, in the fall of 1738 (see the next two pages). In contrast, the *Oliver* had landed in Virginia, in January of 1739.

### The 1738 Immigrants to Virginia from Nassau-Siegen

A colony of about 50 persons left Freudenberg, in the western part of Nassau-Siegen in March, 1738, to settle in Georgia, and their names were inscribed by the pastor at the end of the Freudenberg Death Register in the church. This colony is described in Dr. Wilhelm Guethling's history of Freudenberg, published in 1956, and a list of the names is given in the "Siegener Zeitung" of March 16, 1961. Dr. Guethling states (p. 73): "The travelers went down the Rhine to Rotterdam and on to England. On May 8 the emigrants put to sea from Southampton and after a voyage of 134 days reached Savannah in Georgia. When further news meets us, because of the unhealthy climate they had later moved north, where they settled in the place Bethlehem" (i.e., Bethlehem, Pa.). There may be some confusion in the above statement about this colony, with a Moravian colony which went to Georgia in 1735, and moved almost immediately to Bethlehem, Pa. However, it is practically certain that this 1738 colony, too, moved away from Georgia almost at once and joined their fellow-countrymen in North Carolina, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. I have corresponded with several experts on the German settlements in Georgia, and they have been able to find no trace there of any permanent settlement of this 1738 colony from Nassau-Siegen, indicating that they followed the example of the 1735 colony. The transitory stay of the Georgia settlers was known to the people at Germantown, Virginia, who in 1743 told the Moravian missionaries. Schnell and Hussey, about a group of very pious

From page 11, *Ancestry and Descendants of the Nassau-Siegen Immigrants to Virginia 1714-1750*, by Dr. B.C. Holtsclaw

Copyright © 1964 The Memorial Foundation of the  
Germanna Colonies of Virginia, Inc.

Strangely, Mr. Wust wrote that a man named Tillmann Hirnschal had "led" those 53 people from Freudenberg, on their immigration to America. That was somewhat true, but Mr. Hirnschal had actually just signed them up to settle in Savannah, Georgia, along with a group of Moravian missionaries. They actually sailed on the *Union Galley*, which had departed Rotterdam on April 28, 1738, and landed in Georgia, on September 29, 1738.

Dr. Holtsclaw was one of the founders of, and the longtime historian for, "The Germanna Foundation," which is a genealogical organization in Virginia. It was established in 1956, and its members are some of the descendants of a few small groups of Germans, who had immigrated to America in the early 1700s, and settled into the little villages of Germanna and Little Fork, in northern Virginia.

people who moved to Georgia with their minister, Mr. Spangenberg, but had not liked the place and had removed to Pennsylvania "to Zinzendorf" (Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 13, pp. 376-8). This probably refers to the 1735 colony of Moravians, but may also have some reference to the 1738 colony from Nassau-Siegen to Georgia. At any rate, the 1738 colony disappeared completely from the Georgia records, and most of them probably moved to Pennsylvania. However, the names of 5 of the 1738 colonists appear only a year or two later among the group from Nassau-Siegen who were settled at the Little Fork in Culpeper Co., Va., making it practically certain that they had not gone on to Pennsylvania, but had stopped in Virginia. Henry Huffman, who was a member of the 1734 group from Nassau-Siegen, was also from the Freudenberg parish, and it may have been due to his influence that these five men settled permanently in Virginia. The names of the five men were as follows:

(1) Hermann Bach, b. 1708, his wife Anna Margaret Hausmann, b. 1712, and their daughter Anna Ella, b. 1737.

(2) Johann Friedrich Mueller, b. 1711, his wife Anna Maria Arnd, and their son Matthias, b. 1738.

(3) Hermann Mueller, b. 1716, brother of Johann Friedrich, came over as a bachelor. He later married Elizabeth, daughter of Jacob Holtzclaw, the 1714 immigrant. The Muellers or Millers were descended from the Fischbach family.

(4) Georg Weidmann, bachelor, b. 1703, almost certainly identical with George Wayman of the Little Fork group. Weidmann or Wayman was a cousin of Hermann Bach.

(5) Johannes Hofmann of Dirlenbach, bachelor, son of Johannes Hofmann. This John Huffman was probably a cousin of Henry Huffman of the 1734 group. He moved to the Little Fork community and died there, apparently still unmarried, in 1741, Henry Huffman being the administrator of the estate.

From page 12, *Ancestry and Descendants of the Nassau-Siegen Immigrants to Virginia 1714-1750*, by Dr. B.C. Holtsclaw

Copyright © 1964 The Memorial Foundation of the  
Germanna Colonies of Virginia, Inc.

Since 1956, The Germanna Foundation has researched the ancestors, and the descendants, of those Germans. The organization makes a tremendous amount of money, selling genealogy books and genealogy-related products, as well as holding conferences and sponsoring trips.

Most of the information from The Germanna Foundation is accurate, except for their information about Harman Back, who was one of those 53 people from Freudenberg. There is a reason for that...they make a huge amount of money by telling their stories about Harman Back.

*In fact, in 1963, Troy Lee Back had told numerous lies about Harman Back to Dr. Holtsclaw, who, unfortunately, included those lies in his 1964 book, *Ancestry and Descendants of the Nassau-Siegen Immigrants to Virginia 1714-1750* (pages 38-47). However, Dr. Holtsclaw was suspicious of what Troy had told him, and he even stated so, in his book.*

*Years later, Troy Lee Back, and some of his cousins, started a club they called, "The Back-Bach Genealogical Society." However, not one of them was a genealogist. In 1994, they published a fraudulent genealogy book about their family, falsely claiming that they descend from Harman Back. Their book was full of the same lies that Troy had told to Dr. Holtsclaw. They hoped to make a great deal of money from that book, because it had a connection to Harman Back, who was one of the immigrants that the highly-profitable Germanna Foundation was researching. They did.*

In 1986, Klaus Wust wrote a research paper titled, *The Emigration Season of 1738--Year of the Destroying Angels*. In that paper, he also stated that those 53 people from Freudenberg, including Harman Back, were on the *Oliver*. But, he did not cite his "source" (Dr. Holtsclaw's book), because he had already "cited that source," in his 1984 paper. **That 1986 paper was really the beginning of the "biggest lie" about the *Oliver*, because it didn't reveal that Dr. Holtsclaw's book had been the so-called "source" of the invalid information. It just stated that those people were on the *Oliver*. And so, because Klaus Wust was so respected, people just accepted that as being true.**

So, shortly after Klaus Wust published his 1986 paper, both The Germanna Foundation, and The Back-Bach Genealogical Society, started claiming that it was "the proof" that Harman Back had sailed to America on the *Oliver*! Nobody at either organization ever cared that there was no "source" for that information. They were just excited to link a "fascinating voyage" to one of their ancestors, so they could sell books. After all...good stories sell books!

To repeat...Klaus Wust had cited Dr. Holtzclaw's book as being the source for his claim that those 53 people from Freudenberg were on the *Oliver*, **but yet, nowhere in Dr. Holtsclaw's book did Dr. Holtsclaw write that, or even imply that.** In fact, Dr. Holtsclaw stated that those 53 people from Freudenberg had sailed to Georgia, but he just didn't know the name of the ship. He also stated that they had landed in Georgia, in 1738; and that they had later left Georgia, and walked north, to Little Fork.



It is not known how Klaus Wust could have made such a serious mistake. (He died in 2003.) But, it is believed that someone from The Germanna Foundation had simply told Mr. Wust that Dr. Holtsclaw had written that in his book, and Klaus trusted him that it was true. **Klaus Wust simply failed to verify the "source." He obviously never read Dr. Holtsclaw's book.**

Some people believe that the person who told Mr. Wust that Dr. Holtsclaw had supposedly written that, in his 1964 book, was John Blankenbaker, because he was the only person who later benefited, and actually, financially benefited, from it. In addition, John Blankenbaker knew Klaus Wust, and he was "friends" with him, during this period of time.

John Blankenbaker had joined The Germanna Foundation, around 1983, shortly before Dr. Holtsclaw had retired. Mr. Blankenbaker was a retired engineer who liked to brag that he had invented the computer (not Steve Jobs), even though what he built was just a box with some wires and knobs.

John Blankenbaker was extremely jealous of Dr. Holtsclaw, and so, after Dr. Holtsclaw retired, in 1986, Mr. Blankenbaker simply appointed himself to be the new historian for the organization, even though he had absolutely no education or experience, in history or genealogy.

Ever since then, Mr. Blankenbaker has told people that Dr. Holtsclaw had made "lots of mistakes," and so he had to appoint himself to "fix those mistakes." Strangely, Mr. Blankenbaker likes to joke around and tell people that he is now the "unofficial" historian for The Germanna Foundation, as if that is somehow funny.

Ever since Mr. Wust published his 1986 paper, Mr. Blankenbaker refers to that paper as being the "proof" that those 53 people from Freudenberg, including Harman Back, were on the *Oliver*. **He gets away with it, simply because Mr. Wust did not include a "source," in his 1986 paper.**

However, it is important to note that John Blankenbaker never refers to Mr. Wust's 1984 paper, because his 1984 paper included Dr. Holtsclaw's book as being the "source" for that information. And anyone who has ever read Dr. Holtsclaw's book knows full well that he never even mentioned the ship *Oliver* in his book, and that he specifically wrote that those 53 people from Freudenberg, including Harman Back, had sailed to Georgia, in the fall of 1738, but that he just didn't know the name of the ship that they were on.



John Blankenbaker has made a name for himself, and lots of money, by telling his stories about the *Oliver*, and how those people from Freudenberg were allegedly onboard. He has made money from selling his newsletters, which not only contain his stories about the *Oliver*, they are also packed full of his wordy, repetitive, and generally undocumented little tales about history and genealogy (most of which he copied from other places).

John Blankenbaker has worked very hard, over the years, desperately trying to portray himself as being an expert on history and genealogy, and an expert on the German immigrant ships, especially the ship *Oliver*.

He has also been giving speeches about the *Oliver*, for The Germanna Foundation (and getting paid for them), for many years. And every time he talks about that "tragic voyage" of the *Oliver*, the story becomes more and more dramatic. It's to the point of absurdity now.

John Blankenbaker has brought in a tremendous amount of money for The Germanna Foundation, by telling his stories about the ship *Oliver*, which is why they fawn all over him, give him silly awards, and worship him as if he is a hero. For example, after one of the more recent Germanna Foundation conferences, they printed a brochure that stated, "Next on the agenda was the always captivating remarks of John Blankenbaker on the mysterious ship *Oliver*. With the skills of a great storyteller, John transfixed the listeners with the amazing tale of the *Oliver* and the Germanna ancestors who survived the ill-fated history of that ship." It is particularly nauseating, when you know that John Blankenbaker, who is a smart man, knows that those people from Freudenberg, including Harman Back, were not onboard the ship *Oliver*.

John Blankenbaker has made up all sorts of other stories, to cover up his big story about the 53 people from Freudenberg being on the ship *Oliver*.

For example, whenever John Blankenbaker is asked why the pastor at The Freudenberg Church wrote down, in the church records, that the people from Freudenberg were going to Georgia, and not to Virginia (where the *Oliver* landed), he simply says, "they didn't know where they were going." But that is absurd! Of course they knew where they were going! They were leaving their homeland forever, and taking a very dangerous trip across the ocean, to a new and foreign land. Of course they knew where they were going! Mr. Blankenbaker apparently thinks that, if he simply says something, no matter how absurd it is, that somehow makes it true.

However, John Blankenbaker has a difficult time explaining how Harman Back's infant son, and Johann Friedrich Mueller's infant son (who also settled in Little Fork), could have possibly swum all the way to the shore, in those cold, dark waters of Lynnhaven Bay, from the shipwrecked *Oliver*.

And he also has a difficult time explaining what all of those people from Freudenberg were doing, in Rotterdam, for two long months, in between the time they got there (in mid-April) and the time that the *Oliver* boarded passengers (on June 22nd). They didn't have the money to "hang around" Rotterdam. Why didn't they board a ship, shortly after they arrived there? There were ships leaving for America, every other day or so.

If you ask John Blankenbaker these kinds of pertinent questions, he either changes the subject, or he calls you a demeaning name and walks away. He knows full well that all those people from Freudenberg were not on the *Oliver*, but he will never admit it. He has "too much invested" in that story.

Yet, it gets worse. In 1998, John Blankenbaker even took parts of Mr. Wust's 1986 paper, and then he re-wrote it, under his name. Then he posted it on his own website, claiming that he wrote it! He claimed that it established him, as the expert on the immigration ships of 1738!

In fact, John Blankenbaker has created lots of articles, by using Mr. Wust's published work. He simply adds his name, as an author, to Mr. Wust's articles, to make it appear as if both of them wrote the articles together!

John Blankenbaker has manipulated, and used, Mr. Wust's work, for many years. He tries to make it seem as if he is just as knowledgeable as Mr. Wust was. John Blankenbaker is a smart man, but Mr. Wust was the true expert, concerning the German immigrant ships.

In 2010, John Blankenbaker published a new article on The Germanna Foundation's website that was titled, *The Last Voyage of the Oliver*. He claimed that he wrote it with Mr. Wust (see the next page). **But, Mr. Wust had been dead for seven years!**

Mr. Wust's family was very upset about that, and they finally decided to speak up and do something, about all the years of John Blankenbaker's plagiarism. They contacted The Germanna Foundation and demanded that the article be taken down. It finally was.

### *The Last Voyage of the Oliver*

by Klaus Wust and John Blankenbaker



The literature on European emigration of the eighteenth century is filled with horror stories of sufferings and death. Notwithstanding the heart-rending images of unsuccessful voyages, the total German and Swiss migration to America during the eighteenth century reveals a surprisingly successful operation in which more than one hundred thousand souls arrived safely on the shores of the New World. These travelers overcame much, including the lack of funds to pay for their ocean passage.

The first part of the article that John Blankenbaker wrote, making it appear that he wrote it with Klaus Wust. However, Mr. Wust had been dead for seven years.

But a short time later, John Blankenbaker simply put that article on his own website, which was a website that Mr. Wust's family knew nothing about.

It's quite strange that The Germanna Foundation pretends not to realize that Dr. Holtsclaw never actually wrote in his book that those people from Freudenberg were on the ship *Oliver*, especially since they were the ones who published Dr. Holtsclaw's book!

It's very difficult to believe that The Germanna Foundation allows John Blankenbaker to tell his stories about the ship *Oliver*, just to make Harman Back's life more interesting, in order to increase the sales of their books, conferences, etc. But that is exactly what they have done.