

Pioneers in Service

The German Society of Maryland

1783 - 1981

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DEDICATION

To the countless descendants of those immigrants from German lands who have come to Maryland during the last two centuries:

to inspire them with the spirit of responsibility towards their fellowmen so clearly expressed in the pages of this book; and further,

to inspire them to carry onward the traditions of The German Society of Maryland, "that in the future we may not do injustice to our record of the past."

FOREWORD

All records relating to the early phase of the German Society between 1783 and 1817 were lost prior to the reorganization. For many years the date of the reorganization of 1817 was considered the actual founding year. Even in 1888, Louis P. Hennighausen, when writing his article, "The Redemptioners and the German Society" (SHGM, II (1888), 31-54), was unaware of the earlier existence of the Society. Later, while searching for additional material on the redemptioner system, Hennighausen found mention of the German Society in the *Maryland Journal* of August 10, 1784. He also discovered an entry in Griffith's *Annals of Baltimore* (p. 703) saying that in 1783 "A Society for the Aid of the Germans" was founded. Upon this scanty but reliable evidence, the German Society founded its official recognition of the year 1783 as the time of its inception. Ever since 1909 this date appears in its publications.

These were the premises upon which the present author embarked on a systematic search through all contemporary sources in this country and in Germany in order to locate more precise information. Accounts of clergymen and travelers as well as numerous volumes of magazines and newspapers of the period were carefully scrutinized. A footnote in Dr. John David Schoepf's *Travels in the Confederation*, 1783-1794, finally gave the clue: the earliest account of the founding of the German Society including the Articles of Organization of 1783 as published in Baltimore at that time were found reprinted in full in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* of November 1786. In the present book both are being published for the first time in an English translation. The German Society of Maryland and its objectives were also mentioned by the Rev. Just H. Helmuth in a letter of August 30, 1785, reprinted in the *Hallesche Nachrichten* in 1787. Several articles of Christian Mayer, member of the Society since 1785 and its first president after the reorganization, were found in German magazines and among his papers in the collections of the Maryland Historical Society. Thus it was possible for the first time to present a full account of the origins of The German Society of Maryland.

The late Louis P. Hennighausen published the first comprehensive history of the Society in 1909. The author is deeply indebted to the scholarly findings of this great president of the Society. The chapters covering the period from 1817 until 1908 rely heavily on Hennighausen's work, particularly the section on the oyster dredgers in whose defense Hennighausen took such a prominent part. Much information has been gleaned from other sources, some unpublished. The minutes of the Society from 1817 to 1861 were destroyed in the great fire of 1904. Only the minutes of the meetings of the officers are in existence for the entire time from 1817 to the present. Likewise the Society minutes from 1861 on are preserved. A complete file of all printed annual reports is in the archives of the Society.

The writing of the present history was made possible through a generous fellowship grant from The German Society of Maryland. During the eleven months of research and preparations the assistance of numerous individuals was sought and cheerfully given. The president of the German Society, Mr. O.H. Franke, was untiringly concerned with the project throughout all phases. My friend, Dr. Dieter Cunz, author of the brilliant work, *The Maryland Germans*, was ever ready to lend help and encouragement. Mrs. Hildegard Stein, agent of the Society, facilitated the research in the records and files. Special thanks are due to Dr. Heinz Kloss of the Institut fuer Auslandsbeziehungen in Stuttgart for furnishing microfilms and transcripts of records from German sources. Mr. Fred Shelly, Librarian of the Maryland Historical Society, Miss Elizabeth Litsinger of the Maryland Room of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and Mr. Paul Sweigart of the Newspaper Room of the Library of Congress assisted the author in locating important material. My wife, Mrs. Monique Fong Wust, cheerfully shared the work from beginning to end and provided valuable suggestions.

Klaus G. Wust

Arlington, Va.
September 1957

In a sense it is also an expression of the continuity which characterizes the German Society of Maryland that the same author who wrote the history of 1957 was asked in 1980 to update it before reprinting. Thanks are due to my friends, Dr.

Morgan H. Pritchett, Past President of the Society, and Dr. Carrie May Zintl, Chairperson of the Scholarship Fund for providing needed data. Mrs. Inga M. Roche, Office Secretary of the Society, furnished the present membership lists. Fortunately for all concerned, no revision of any of the historical content was required.

Klaus G. Wust

Edinburg, Va.
December 1980

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Considering the many hardships...

"In 1783 a very benevolent German Society was established at Baltimore in Maryland for the succor to poor strangers, sick people, in short all those in need among the Germans arriving there (not unlike the German House in Jerusalem which was founded six centuries ago by the merchants of two Hanseatic cities, Luebeck and Bremen, at first only for the care and support of the sick and wounded but later nevertheless growing into a knight's order capable of conquering kingdoms)." With this statement begins the earliest account of The German Society of Maryland. For more than four decades Germans from the Old Country and from neighboring Pennsylvania in increasing numbers had come to the new town at the mouth of the Patapsco which was readily developing into an important port. They had braved all adversities of pioneer life. They had founded their own churches where they worshipped and prayed in the language of their fathers. When the Revolutionary War broke out, they had placed their abilities and their skills as well as their lives at the disposal of the new homeland where most of their children had been born. By virtue of their thrift and hard work many among the Germans in Maryland had achieved a moderate prosperity and their daily lives began to become adjusted to the growing city of which they were a part.

It is to the credit of these early German inhabitants of Baltimore and other Maryland communities that they did not content themselves with having achieved a secure and prosperous home for themselves and their families, but envisaged a broad program of aiding those who would follow them into the new country after the war and of protecting them from exploitation and abuse. They still remembered the vicissitudes of immigrant life. Those who were fortunate enough to have at their disposal sufficient means to pay for their ocean passage and to buy a homestead and maybe even to keep a little reserve for the first lean months in the unknown land, knew only the struggle of readjustment among strangers. But even for them the memory of the first years spelled hardship and insecurity. Some of the Germans, however, like many of their fellow immigrants from the British Isles, had come to America completely penniless. The owners and captains of vessels were willing to take such persons across the Atlantic, if the emigrants (or in the case of minors, the parents or guardians for them) would sign a contract stipulating that upon their arrival they would pay for the passage by letting the captain hire them out as servants for a term of years to masters willing to advance the amount of the passage money. Emigrants who entered into such a contract were called "redemptioners" because by binding themselves for service for a certain number of years they "redeemed" themselves of their debt for the passage. They also became known as "indentured servants," a term stemming from the fact that the contract forms were

indentures.

For several years the redemptioners had come mainly from the British Isles. The growing abuses of this system having become known in Britain, rigorous laws and measures were adopted and enforced for their better protection. Letters and articles abounded in English newspapers warning poor people from entering into such contracts. Public opinion was successfully aroused against the "emigrant runners." Now the latter turned toward the continent in search of a continuation of their lucrative trade. In the decades before the Revolutionary War they induced many Germans and Swiss desiring to go to America to bind themselves for the passage. Little did the emigrants know or suspect what was in store for them after they went aboard. The contracts which the redemptioners had to sign in the Dutch or Northern German ports, and which few of them fully understood, contained the proviso, that if any passenger died during the voyage, the surviving members of the family, or the other redemptioner passengers would make good his loss. Thus, a wife who had lost her husband at sea, or her children, on her arrival would be sold for five years for her own passage and for an additional five years for the fare of each of her dead relatives, although they may have died in the very beginning of the voyage. If there was no member of the family surviving, it was common practice to add the time of the deceased to the term of service of the surviving fellow passengers. The captain usually confiscated and kept for himself the effects of the dead. This meant that the shipping merchant and the captain would gain by the death of a part of their cargo. Records of the emigrant trade in the 18th century seem to substantiate the assumption that many a captain kept this additional source of profit well in mind.

Once in an American port, the redemptioners were not allowed to choose their masters nor the kind of service most suitable to them. Some were fortunate in being acquired by humane masters or finding interested parties who would use them in the trade they had learned at home. But frequently the penniless newcomers were brutally taken advantage of. They were often separated from their families, the wife from the husband, and children from their parents, and were disposed of for the term of years, often at public sale to masters living far apart, and always to the greatest advantage of the shipper. Contemporary sources cite many examples of inhuman treatment, how they were literally worked to death, receiving insufficient food, castaway clothing and pitiful lodging. Cruel punishments were inflicted on them for the slightest offense by merciless and brutal masters. While a certain number of German redemptioners arrived at Annapolis and Baltimore prior to the Revolution, this practice had not reached alarming proportions in Maryland ports. Most of the German redemptioners were landed at Philadelphia where such a large number of brutal offenses became known that prominent German citizens banded together in 1764 to found the first German Society in North America for the protection of the newcomers. Already during the first year of its existence, the Society procured laws for the protection and aid of German immigrants from the Pennsylvania legislature. In 1766 the German Friendly Society of Charleston, South Carolina, was founded for the same purpose. While the war years had brought the Atlantic migration to a standstill, a new wave of immigrants was to be expected, particularly from Germany and Switzerland, once the peace on the seas was restored. Being the only large port near Philadelphia and being without any protective society for the redemptioners, Baltimore would invariably be the next gateway for this abuse. With wise foresight the leaders of the German community in Baltimore anticipated such a development.

After recounting the story of the colonial immigration, the first chronicler of The German Society of Maryland describes the reasons why the Germans in Baltimore expected a renewed influx of their countrymen and what measures they took to protect them from injustice: "Since the Revolution which was ended by the Paris peace treaty of the 20th of January 1783 recognizing the independence of the thirteen United Provinces, many more will migrate over here. For the causes of emigration are still present in our great Fatherland: limitation of religious freedom, restraint of conscience in manifold ways in order to prevent the exercise of the natural rights of man, i.e., freedom of thought and freedom of expression, injustice in courts, oppression by little and big despots and impediment of gainful activity.

"In the same year during which the independence of the United Provinces was recognized, the German Society was established to help needy countrymen. In Philadelphia such a Society has been in existence for some years. Baltimore-which thirty years ago consisted of but fifty houses, has now some 1800 beautifully built houses and next year will count 2000 of them-is vying with its sister city in wealth as well as in all good works. Therefor also the above mentioned Society was founded here. The inceptor of the same in Baltimore is from Berlin: a gentleman by the name of Wiesenthal who for more than thirty years has been considered the most skilled and philanthropic physician in this place. The secretary of the Society is a Mr. John Conrad Zollikoffer of St. Gallen, a cousin of the well-known clergyman by the same name in Leipzig. The membership consists of merchants, teachers, artists, and other citizens of German origin, all of the City or its vicinity. Several of them have been elected overseers. Their principal duty is to assist arriving countrymen financially and in any other respect."

Immediately after its founding in 1783, the Society published the following statement to acquaint the public with its purpose and with the duties of the overseers: ***Reasons which have led to the founding of a German Society at this place for the benefit of certain poor, newly-arrived or otherwise distressed Germans.***

Considering the many hardships human life is subjected to and embittered by, and observing how many of them could be-though not wholly remedied-at least alleviated so much as to make them bearable, it is regrettable that love of humanity has cooled down and the Samaritans who stand duly by their fellow men are few. Not the least, however, among all the circumstances which require the assistance to fellow men and the exercise of philanthropy is the case of people who abide in strange lands and being ignorant of the national language and custom, without means to support themselves, yea, often sick and weak, would be exposed to greatest hardship if there were no philanthropist to look after them and assist them. Such misfortune has so often befallen those who emigrated from Germany to this occidental continent that it caused the inhabitants of German birth and descent in the neighboring Pennsylvanian City to establish a Society with the purpose of helping such newly-arriving countrymen with advice and assistance. The success of this laudable enterprise soon became evident and it assumed such importance that many hundred poor Germans were assisted upon their arrival and enabled to settle as useful members in this so richly blessed land.

Inasmuch as it seems likely that within a short time from now many of our countrymen might leave their Fatherland to seek improvement of their lot in this country, the German Inhabitants of this City and its vicinity after due consideration have resolved to follow the example of their brethren in Pennsylvania by founding a similar Society in this City with the purpose of assisting not only newcomers but all

those who are in need. To this end they have resolved and undersigned the following articles:

ARTICLE I

Should vessels carrying German emigrants arrive at this City or its vicinity and should any passengers be in want through sickness or otherwise destitute, the overseers therefor elected will examine all cases in order to help such needy people. They must particularly well investigate the cases of those who have not yet paid their passage to protect them from injustice. They shall bring to reliable people those who have to indenture themselves for payment of their passage. They shall provide the sick with necessities and medicaments until their health is restored. They shall provide burial at the expense of the Society for those who die without leaving any means. Should such destitutes leave any children, the overseers will endeavor to entrust the latter to the care of good and reliable people and assure that they will attend school in order to receive a Christian education.

ARTICLE 2

As it may happen that newcomers who have paid for their passage but for lack of any acquaintances be unable to carry out their trade and be therefor exposed to want, as much assistance as possible should be accorded in order to enable them to work in their trade or otherwise make an honest living so that they may repay the amount spent for them. But only under the following condition: that such needy applicants are otherwise honest people neither given to drinking nor other vices in which case they would have nothing more to expect.

J.K. Zollkoffer, Secretary

Baltimore.

The new Society did not have to wait long before it was called into action. During the year of its founding the *Minerva, Bels, Harmony* and other vessels brought a great many German and Irish redemptioners to Baltimore. By the summer of the following year the expected influx of immigrants reached considerable proportions. Baltimore newspapers carried frequent advertisements like the following one:

GERMAN REDEMPTIONERS

Just arrived in the Brig Lavater, Captain Kulkens from Bremen. A number of healthy German Redemptioners, Men and Women; among whom are a Number of valuable Tradesmen, viz. Ropemakers, Gardeners, Weavers, Shoemakers, Blacksmiths, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Butchers, Hostlers, Tailors, Papermakers, Tilers etc. etc. For Terms apply to the Subscribers or Purviance Wharf.

Valck, Burger and Schouten
Baltimore, August 7, 1784

Every time a ship was reported to have entered the port, the Society sent its overseers to the wharf where they boarded the arriving vessel making inquiries as to the treatment accorded the passengers by the captain and the crew and assisting redemptioners through counseling and material aid whenever needed.

Unfortunately all the records of the first decades of the Society's work were lost, but from the pages of the *Maryland Journal* of August 10, 1784, we glean a statement of thanks which throws an interesting light on the spirit that guided the Society already during its earliest days. In its efforts to improve the lot of the redemptioners it did not limit itself to charitable and corrective acts but sought publicly to commend and to encourage a captain who had done more than his duty to care for those who had entrusted their lives and hopes to him during their voyage into the New World:

To Capt. Claas Kulkens, of the Brig Lavater:

Sir:

Upon inquiry concerning the usage of the people on board of your brig "The Lavater," we find, with peculiar satisfaction, that your attention to those principles which should animate a Christian heart, has rendered their situation as easy and comfortable as circumstances would permit. We cannot, sir, restrain our strong desire we feel of expressing to you our warmest acknowledgments, and publicly to offer you our sincerest thanks, which we consider as the smallest Tribute due, for your generosity and tenderness.

By Order of the German Society, Baltimore, August 9, 1784

JOHN CONRAD ZOLLIKOFFER, Sec.

While the first membership roster of the Society has not been preserved, some of the prominent members are known to us from other sources. The prime mover in founding The German Society of Maryland was no doubt Dr. Charles Frederick Wiesenthal (1726-1789), the undisputed leader of the German population in Baltimore. Although himself a stout Lutheran, he enjoyed the respect and admiration of men of all other faiths and was highly esteemed among his Anglo-American fellow citizens. He had come to Baltimore from the Province of Brandenburg during the early 1750's to practice medicine in the newly founded town. As a physician he won for himself the title of "Father of the Medical Profession in Baltimore." As a citizen he held innumerable offices in war and peace. For years he was the acknowledged leader of the Lutherans in Baltimore. Many a time he had helped destitute and sick immigrants before an organized Society existed. It was natural, therefore, that he should take the initiative in rallying Germans of all walks of life for the purpose of forming "themselves into a Society, for the protection of such of their countrymen as may be induced to come to this State, and guard them from the oppression and barbarity of unfeeling men." Although the distinguished physician was only in his fifty-seventh year of age in 1783, the strain of his indefatigable labors began to wear upon his health. When the German scientist, Dr. John David Schoepf, visited Wiesenthal in the fall of 1783, he noted in his diary: "He has been here since almost the first beginning of the town,

and for his private character as well as his attainments, is generally esteemed. It is a pity that his years and infirmities restrict his activities too narrowly." Nevertheless, beyond his active work as the first president of the Society, Dr. Wiesenthal offered his free services as official physician to the Society.

Intimately associated with the Prussian Lutheran in the Society's behalf was the Swiss merchant, John Conrad Zollikoffer, noted layman of the German Reformed Church in Baltimore. When Dr. Wiesenthal's increasing infirmities prevented him from performing his self-chosen duties as the Society's physician, another Swiss immigrant, Dr. William Zollikoffer, a native of St. Gallen, took his place.

The fact alone that such an organization existed in Baltimore helped to prevent many an injustice to German immigrants. Masters of vessels who had taken brutal advantage of their power over their passengers exercised greater care now, knowing that upon arrival they and their crew would be subjected to the scrutiny of the overseers appointed by the German Society.

In a letter to the church authorities in Germany the Rev. Just Henry Helmuth, president of the Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, on the 30th of August, 1785, mentioned the good works done by the German Societies of Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York in order to acquaint the clergy in Germany with their existence and their purpose. This letter was printed in the *Hallesche Nachrichten* in 1787 and thus also helped to spread the name of The German Society of Maryland in Germany.

One of the youngest members, Christian Mayer, a native of Ulm who had joined the Society in 1785, hardly a year after his arrival in Baltimore, showed an immediate interest in the fate of the redemptioners. He made a survey of all laws and regulations relating to servitude and slavery in Maryland and the adjoining states. After studying all the legal factors involved, he wrote a series of articles which he sent to Germany where they were published in 1791. He also furnished examples of actual passenger contracts and indentures for publication in Germany. Mayer was convinced that by informing the German public about the situation of redemptioners the number of people who would engage themselves without formal contract or without understanding the stipulations of their indenture would be greatly reduced. He felt keenly the need for special legislation for redemptioners when he wrote: "Only custom and habit oblige German emigrants to accept such service contracts. The contract which they engage in with the ship owner in Holland does not bind them in any way. When they arrive here they are mere debtors of the captains or owners of the vessel and legally they could apply for the relief of insolvent debtors." Mayer furthermore pointed out that the then existing laws in fact pertained only to "convicts from British and Irish prisons or Negro slaves." Their application to Germans and other emigrants owning money for their ocean fare had no actual legal basis other than being accepted through customary usage. He condemned strongly the expression "to buy or sell a German servant," as it was used frequently in advertisements or on handbills. "Intelligent people will not employ such wording; they will rather say: "the time of servitude of a German girl is to be disposed of." Nor will they advertise "for sale, a number of German Redemptioners" (or even, Servants), but "Arrived-German passengers willing to serve for their freight."

Christian Mayer's pioneer work in exploring the legal aspects of the redemptioner system was to play an important role some twenty-five years after his first articles appeared. Due to the European events following the French Revolution and the ensuing wars on the continent and on the seas, emigration to North America suddenly came to a standstill. The German Society, which had so well served the purpose its founders had envisaged, fell into a state of inactivity, but, as we shall soon see, not into oblivion. While the pioneer generation passed away, its spirit remained alive among the younger members, to be revived when the hour demanded it.

II

A Charter and a Law

Due to the Napoleonic Wars which raged all over the European continent, the young American Republic was cut off from the unceasing stream of immigrants. A second and third American-born generation took over where their immigrant fathers had laid the groundwork. Baltimore's Germans had a vital part in the surprising development of the city as a port and as an industrial center. By the turn of the century, Baltimore had grown to more than 40,000 inhabitants with an export trade volume of more than \$15,000,000 in merchandise per year, thus becoming the third largest port of the country. A period of prosperity set in, which, besides the complete absence of new immigration, greatly reduced the need for charitable work which the German Society had also undertaken. Wherever individuals required help, the local churches of German origin, whose leading laymen had been among the founders of the German Society, accorded it.

From 1812 to 1814 the United States became temporarily involved in the great European conflict. In 1814 the British navy, recognizing the importance of Baltimore, attempted to capture the city. The heroic American defense of which General John Stricker bore such an essential part is recorded in every school history. The roster of the defense committees of Baltimore in those critical days contained numerous German names which we will soon encounter on the roll of the German Society.

By 1815 the long series of wars in Europe and with it the short belligerency of the United States came to an end. The German states had been the principal battlegrounds. Although Prussia, Austria and the other German provinces were victorious over Napoleon, their lands were impoverished and devastated. Crop failures in 1816 and 1817 all over Northern and Central Europe denied the people the fruits of the restored peace. Some 60,000 Germans, mainly from Swabia and the Rhineland left their native soil to follow the example of an earlier generation. They wandered along the roads leading to the Dutch and Northern German ports or crowded barges down the Rhine. Poverty-stricken by years of war and famine, few among them had enough money to pay their passage to America.

Ship owners in these ports who had suffered tremendous losses during the Continental Blockade were only too eager to resume the old emigrant-running trade which had proved so profitable in pre-war days. Soon again immigrant vessels became a familiar sight in the harbor of Baltimore.

An incident which caused great excitement among the German population occurred late in 1816. A shipload of redemptioners consigned to Mr. Graff, a German merchant, arrived in Baltimore. Without the knowledge of the consignee, two German families were sold to free Negroes. No sooner became this "dishonorable abuse" known than a collection was taken up among the Germans of the city to buy the freedom of the two families. Leading men, among them Christian Mayer who recorded this incident, became increasingly concerned about the revival of the "white slavery" system. However, it took a more spectacular event to bring the old German Society back into action.

About the middle of November, 1816, upward of three hundred Germans, men, women and children, arrived in Amsterdam to seek passage to America. Skipper H.H. Bleeker of the *Jufvrow Johanna* offered them passage to Baltimore in return for their signing a contract to serve as redemptioners upon arrival. The Dutch ship sailed with its living freight in the midst of winter. Chronicles relate extremely low temperatures for that year. In Baltimore on February 14, 1817, the thermometer registered four degrees below zero. The entire Chesapeake Bay was frozen from shore to shore. It was in this weather that the *Jufvrow Johanna*, after fifteen weeks on the tempestuous Atlantic, sighted the capes in the first days of February and slowly made its way to Annapolis where it became ice-bound.

Captain Bleeker offered his passengers for sale in the usual manner. Upon arriving within sight of inhabited land, the passengers in their joy at having reached the promised land, threw their rotten bedding overboard. Moreover, the ship's pantry ran out of its last provisions. Acute suffering from the severe cold and from hunger set in.

Major L. Fraily of Annapolis, learning of the passengers' plight, inserted appeals in Baltimore newspapers, the first of which appeared in the *Baltimore American* on the 7th of February:

"To citizens generally and to benevolent Societies.

A ship with upward of 300 German men, women and children has arrived off Annapolis, where she is detained by ice. These people have been fifteen weeks on board and are short of provision. Upon making the Capes their bedding, having become filthy, was thrown overboard. They are now actually perishing from the cold and want of provision."

On the following day appeared an advertisement about the passengers: "Principally farmers and mechanics of all sorts, and several fine young boys and girls, whose time will be disposed of. Mr. Bolte, ship broker of Baltimore, will attend on board at Annapolis, to whom those who wish to supply themselves with good servants, will please apply." For six weeks the *Jufvrow Johanna* lay in the ice outside Annapolis before it finally arrived at its destination, Baltimore. Again advertisements appeared in the *Baltimore American*, the first on March 21, and the last on April 7. Presumably by the latter date the captain had sold all his passengers. Five months had elapsed between the departure from Holland and the sale of the last passenger in Baltimore.

The case of the *Jufvrow Johanna* in itself was certainly not unusual. What Captain Bleeker did to his passengers was no doubt done by numerous other skippers at that time. This incident, however, received immediate publicity thanks to Major Fraily. It went down into the history of German immigration to Maryland because it provided the immediate stimulus for the revival of the old German

Society and through it for an effective reorganization of the Maryland immigration laws.

Shortly after the news of the misery aboard the ice-bound vessel off Annapolis became known, the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Advertiser* on February 13, 1817, published an appeal to the German inhabitants of Maryland to meet at Kaminsky's Hotel on Bank Street that evening at 6:30 P.M. to revive the dormant German Society.

The gathering was attended by many influential citizens, among them General John Stricker, Commanding General of the Maryland Militia and himself of Swiss-German descent, and Christian Mayer who had joined the Society in 1785. Five days later, on the 18th of February, the first formal meeting in many years was called. A new constitution was adopted. The urgency of the situation demanded quick action. Already on the 3rd of March the new board of officers was elected:

President:	Christian Mayer
Vice Presidents:	Dr. A. J. Schwartz, Bernard J. Von Kapff, Heinrich Schroeder, General John Stricker
Managers:	Justus Hoppe, Lewis Brantz, Conrad Schultz, Jacob Small, Frederick Amelung, William Krebs, John F. Frick, Samuel Keerl, John F. Friese, Peter Sauerwein, Michael Kimmel, Jesse Eichelberger
Secretary of the Society:	Lewis Mayer
Secretary of the officers:	Lawrence Thomsen
Treasurer:	Frederick Waesche
Counsellors:	David Hoffman, Esq., William Frick, Esq.
Physicians:	John G. Wolf, Jacob Baer

In conformity with the Articles of 1783 the objectives of the Society were reiterated as follows: "The protection and assistance of poor emigrants from Germany and Switzerland and of their descendants who may reside in the State of Maryland or be temporarily sojourning therein."

One hundred and forty-nine citizens of German and Swiss birth or descent subscribed their names to the new constitution of the Society, among them such leading citizens as Frederick W. Brune, Charles Diffenderfer, J.J. Cohen, Jr., Philip D. Sadtler, Samuel Etting, Charles W. Karthaus and Benjamin J. Cohen. Their numbers included descendants of colonial settlers, immigrants from Austria, Baden or Switzerland, Lutherans, Calvinists, Jews and Catholics, men from all walks of life, a true representation of the German element of Maryland at that time.

In a spirit of tolerance and charity they went to work. The board of managers convened on March 6th to adopt a number of resolutions dealing with the procedure of voting, the duties of the counsellors and physicians and a membership drive. The constitution of the Society was ordered to be printed in the English and German languages. In order to acquaint the public with the Society, the constitution was also to be published in several Baltimore newspapers and in the *Westliche Correspondenz* (Hagerstown) and the German newspaper of Frederick. It was also resolved that all officiating German clergymen in Maryland should be considered honorary members. The sum of \$2,000 of the funds of the Society should forthwith be invested in United States stock.

The practical work for the protection of the immigrants was resumed without delay. The case of the *Jufvrow Johanna* allowed no further hesitation. A communication from a resident of Georgetown, D.C. was read during this first board meeting reporting grievances of a German family sold by Captain Bleeker outside the limits of the State of Maryland. Similar complaints reached the Society from Washington, D.C. and Virginia. The ship had originally sailed for Baltimore and the redemptioners aboard had the legal right to enter their service as redemptioners only in Baltimore or at least within the State. Bleeker, however, like several other captains, offered his human cargo for sale also in D.C. and Virginia newspapers. This being a clear violation of the law and the terms of the passage contract, the reports gave the Society an opportunity to bring the cause of these immigrants before the U.S. Court.

The large number of letters and appeals received by the Society immediately after its reorganization showed how badly it was needed. In all cases that became known to the Society, it took vigorous and energetic action as far as the existing laws permitted. From the records of 1817 still extant, we gather how Christian Mayer, ably assisted by the two lawyers, David Hoffman and William Frick, and the other officers of the Society, always tried the direct approach first by appealing to the conscience of the master against whom a complaint had been lodged. Only when an amicable settlement seemed impossible was court action sought without delay. From funds hastily made available by the members, the Society did its utmost to relieve those in distress.

Christian Mayer, whose familiarity with all legal aspects of the indenture system had already found expression in his earlier publications, as the president of the German Society could now put his long experience to good use. No one knew better than he the limitations of the existing laws in America and the complete ignorance regarding American legal process among the German and Swiss emigrants. While the Society could do valuable work in alleviating misery and suffering, a general improvement of the situation could only be brought about by the enactment of laws and regulations for the protection of immigrants arriving in the State of Maryland. Together with the two legal counsellors of the Society, Mayer drafted the text for such a comprehensive law to be submitted to the next session of the Maryland legislature which would meet in December, 1817.

The work of this committee of three proceeded satisfactorily. When the Society made its first public appearance at the festive banquet held at Kaminsky's Hotel on the 26th of December, 1817, President Mayer could report that the draft of the charter for the Society and the carefully prepared text for a redemptioner law had been submitted to the legislature at Annapolis.

The first banquet marked the beginning of what was to become the great annual gathering of the German Society. Once a year the entire membership and honored guests would meet at this social affair to pause and look back over the achievements of the past year, to gather impetus for renewed efforts and to spend a few hours in fellowship and good cheer. The first banquet had immediate results: the objectives and good works of the Society became more widely known, which was of great importance for the success of the proposals pending before the legislature.

The spirit which prevailed at this banquet has ever remained alive among the members of the Society. Toasts were offered by the officers to "The Land We Live

In," to "The German Confederation," to the great men of American and German history, but the one which, more than all eloquent speeches, came from the hearts of these men who had gathered to dedicate themselves to the service of newcomers on these shores, was: "To All Emigrants, May They never Be Ungrateful to the Country which Adopted Them."

The German Society of Maryland had now entered the public scene. What had originally been a group of charitable citizens who were banding together to help fellow Germans in distress, grew after the reorganization into a forceful weapon to combat injustice. As so often before and since in American life, the initiative of public-spirited men triumphed over the evils of the time. Prominent lawyers supplied the Society with the necessary legal knowledge. The great esteem in which General John Stricker was held all over Maryland lent a considerable moral authority to its cause. The names of wealthy and successful merchants on its roll had a powerful influence on public opinion.

As early as the 3rd of February, 1818, The General Assembly granted a charter incorporating The German Society of Maryland. Two weeks later, on February 16, 1818, the law prepared by the officers of the Society was passed by the legislature. It was entitled, "An Act Relative to German and Swiss Redemptioners."

The most important step was accomplished. For the first time a law was put into effect which decreed state regulation of the redemptioner system. It provided for the appointment by the governor of a commissioner to supervise all contracts for apprenticeship of immigrants. No longer could such contracts be imposed on the redemptioners without being first submitted to the commissioner and deposited in his office. His approval was the prerequisite for the contract's validity. The act further provided that everyone who secured a redemptioner under twenty-one years of age was required to give him at least two months of schooling annually during the term of his servitude. Most important was the provision that no immigrant was to serve longer than four years. No one could be held on board ship longer than thirty days after arrival in the port of destination.

Furthermore, stipulations for the protection of children, sick persons and next-of-kin survivors of persons who died during the voyage were included. The law expressly mentioned The German Society of Maryland which by its virtue was for the first time equipped with a powerful legal means to carry out its efforts in behalf of the immigrant.

If the Society had done nothing more than achieve the enactment of this law, it would have deserved its place in the annals of Maryland history. The decades now following were the time of the greatest immigration in United States history. Baltimore for more than eighty years was to be one of the three principal debarkation ports for the immigrant masses. Virtually hundreds of thousands of Europeans who landed in Baltimore were protected without their knowledge by this law, thanks to the foresight of Christian Mayer and his co-workers of the German Society. The new regulations were the instrument to prevent the recurrence of the terrible hardships which accompanied the immigration of the 18th century.

After the law was passed and took effect, the society did not rest, but took upon itself to see that it was adequately enforced. It recommended to the governor the man most suitable for the newly created position of commissioner: Lawrence Thomsen, secretary of the German Society. Thomsen was subsequently appointed

by the governor.

Meanwhile the Society also sought contact with European authorities to make its existence known, and, if at all possible, to inform prospective emigrants of the legal situation in Maryland. At about the same time the Dutch government had become alarmed at the swarms of Germans pouring into the Netherlands and awaiting passage for America on Dutch ships. Several German states also expressed their concern over the large number of their subjects leaving for America. Upon the initiative of Freiherr von Gagern, the Royal Netherlands representative to the German *Bundestag* it was resolved to send a gentleman by the name of Moritz von Fuerstenwaerther on a fact-finding tour to the North American ports.

In November 1817, Fuerstenwaerther arrived in Baltimore where he was received by the president of the German Society who discussed with him the redemptioner situation and outlined existing plans for effective action. At that moment, the redemptioner law was still in preparation. Christian Mayer cited recent examples of abuse of immigrants and recommended that all those willing to come to America who could not pay their passage be warned in advance of the vicissitudes awaiting them. This note of caution was later reflected in the report which Fuerstenwaerther submitted to the *Bundestag*: "The great number of examples known to me represent sufficient evidence to warn all emigrants who cannot pay for their passage, not to take ships bound for Baltimore, although that port is the best suited place of debarkation for all those who have the intention and the means to go farther west."

In his report, Fuerstenwaerther paid tribute to Christian Mayer whom he characterized as follows: "He is one of the wealthiest and most respected men in Baltimore without whose counsel no important decision is taken. Although he has made good in America, he still shows much attachment to his first Fatherland-which is not always the case here. Words cannot express enough praise for this unusual gentleman." Before returning home, Fuerstenwaerther went to Washington to discuss German emigration with Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. His report, which was also published as a book for the general public in 1818, certainly helped to spread knowledge of the newly revived German Society in the old country.

Within less than a year after its reorganization, The German Society of Maryland under Mayer's firm and inspiring leadership had achieved what had seemed impossible to earlier generations: to arouse the public conscience to the plight of the immigrant and to pave the way for the effective protection of what the young American Republic needed most: men and women willing and eager to populate its vast lands.

III

Receiving the Multitudes

When the officers and members of the Society united to celebrate the first anniversary of the reorganization on December 26, 1818, a successful year had come to an end. Optimism and good cheer prevailed throughout the festive banquet. Not only was the most important legislative work done, but also the Society had shown an unusual charitable activity: more than \$500 had been given to needy

immigrants during the past twelve months.

There was not time to rest, however, if the German Society wanted to fulfill its task of protecting the immigrants with vigor and lasting success. Of the multitude of cases which were brought to the attention of its officers in 1819 but two may serve here as examples to show how effective this protective work was. Both cases, the one of Johann Bodenwerber and that of the Breuning boys received wide publicity at that time.

In January 1819, Johann Bodenwerber, a German redemptioner, called on the German Society for help. His master, one Henry Freeburger, had repeatedly mistreated him, causing injuries serious enough to commit the victim to prolonged treatment in a hospital. President Christian Mayer first appealed to the master in order to make him release Bodenwerber from his bondage. When Freeburger failed to comply with this demand, an indictment by the grand jury with a subsequent conviction in criminal court was obtained. Johann Bodenwerber was freed from his contract as a redemptioner. A gift of money from the Society helped him to get a good start in his new life as a free man on American soil.

Likewise in January 1819, another case required immediate action. The Swedish ship *Prima* arrived in port with some 250 German and Swiss immigrants, most of them redemptioners, who had been shipwrecked on the Norwegian coast near Bergen while on their way to America. The Norwegian-Swedish authorities and the people of Bergen came to the succor of the distressed survivors. Through the generosity of many individuals and with the liberal aid of the Bergen officials, they were fed and clothed and the vessel *Prima* was secured for the continuation of their voyage to America. Upon arrival in Baltimore, the captain did not have sufficient funds to pay the required foreign tonnage tax. All passengers had to remain aboard which meant additional hardship for these people who had been shipwrecked in northern waters in the middle of winter and now were at long last hoping to land after their eventful voyage.

No sooner had the German Society learned of their plight than the officers called an emergency meeting. Without much hesitation it was decided to advance the necessary sum of money for deposit with the Collector of the Port in order to permit the landing of the passengers and whatever belongings they still could call their own. The Society also passed resolutions of thanks to the magistrate of the city of Bergen and other officials there who had assisted the unfortunate Germans in the most generous manner.

The following letter which President Mayer sent to the Secretary of the Treasury in Washington has been preserved:

The Honorable William A. Crawford,
Secretary of the Treasury of the United States,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

The Swedish ship *Prima*, Capt. Maxwold, arrived here some days ago from Norway, with upward 250 German emigrants in great distress. The collector of this district could not admit this ship to an entry, unless the foreign tonnage be paid or secured, as he is not yet officially informed of the treaty with Sweden recently ratified. To alleviate the distress of the redemptioners on board the *Prima*, I have this day made the requisite deposit, which the master of the ship had not the means

to do, and the ship is entered and leave given to land the passengers and their baggage. I have now to request, that you, sir, will be pleased to give direction to the collector respecting the tonnage this Swedish ship is chargeable with, that he may settle with me for the deposit made.

I have the honor to be most respectfully, sir,

Your most obedient servant,
CHR. MAYER
President of the Incorporated German
Society of Maryland

This charitable act of the German Society received wide acclaim. It did not, however, close the case of the vessel *Prima* in the records of the Society.

Generous aid was made available to the most needy among the ship's passengers. Lawrence Thomsen, the State Register of Redemptioners, was on board from the first day on to see to it that all contracts for the services of the redemptioners were drawn and signed in accordance with the law. The decks of the *Prima* were crowded with people eager to secure servants. The publicity which had accompanied the ship's arrival had attracted an unusual number of townspeople and farmers from far and near. While Thomsen was busy preparing contracts in one part of the ship, Mr. W. Denny, a farmer from the Eastern Shore, sighted two minor youngsters and being pleased with their appearance, offered Captain Maxwold a liberal amount of money to buy them as redemptioners. Before any contract or indenture could be drawn up, Denny hustled the boys into his boat, which he had left alongside the *Prima*, and sailed off across the Chesapeake Bay for his home in Queen Anne county.

All the while the parents had stood by without understanding what Denny negotiated with the captain. When they saw their children carried off overboard, they cried out in despair. Thomsen, who was immediately called to the scene, ordered Denny to return to the ship. Yet the kidnapper was neither moved by the grief of the parents nor by the order of the law. Carrying the boys away without a contract would give him almost unlimited power over them, including the decision when they might have reached the age of twenty-two, since no record of the date of birth would be available.

Thomsen at once reported this outrageous act to the president of the Society. To make things worse, the bereaved parents were sold to a farmer in Pennsylvania and thus left Baltimore without being able to pursue the case of retrieving their kidnapped boys.

Denny's act was a flagrant defiance of the law. The Society brought the case to court, and fought it to a successful conclusion: the Breuning boys were released from the unlawful custody of Mr. Denny. As their parents could not take proper care of them while serving as redemptioners the Society, acting under the authority of the Orphans' Court, had them regularly bound as apprentices to learn farming until their father and mother would have fulfilled the terms of their contracts.

On April 17, 1819, the able State Register, Lawrence Thomsen, suddenly passed away. During his brief term of office he had exerted a strong authority and discharged himself of his duties with extraordinary zeal and accuracy. He had not

only earned for himself the full confidence of the state authorities and of his German Society but also the gratitude of many a redemptioner as well as the respect of the ship captains. The Society recommended Lewis Mayer as the successor; he was accepted by the governor and held that position until 1823 when he moved from the city.

After the outbreak of yellow fever in Baltimore, especially at Fell's Point, the Society responded spontaneously with measures to relieve the sufferings of those stricken by the disease of impoverished through the standstill of the economic life of the city which resulted from this epidemic.

During these early years of the revived Society when it was constantly called upon to help, it was only natural that certain frictions occurred among its officers when important decisions were to be made. Differences over legal opinions on several cases had put a strain on the president's relationship with the two counsellors, David Hoffman and William Frick. Mayer, who was known and respected for his strong personality and his ability to act quickly and independently, tended to dispense with the counsel of his fellow officers. Though his untiring labors for the cause of the immigrants were unanimously acknowledged, even his close friends could not always approve of his actions. When for the case of the Breuning boys Mayer engaged an outside attorney, both counsellors resigned. They were replaced by Charles F. Mayer, the son of the president, and Peter H. Cruse.

It was not until 1821, when Christian Mayer declined his re-election as president and soon afterward his son tendered his resignation as counsellor, that both William Frick and David Hoffman again accepted their election as counsellors of the Society. Charles F. Mayer then was also persuaded to remain in office.

William Frick served the Society until 1832, when his numerous other public duties forced him to abandon his active work for the immigrants. In 1836 he was appointed collector of the port of Baltimore by President Jackson. Later he represented his city as State Senator and was Chief Judge of Baltimore County for many years. He remained a faithful member of the German Society until his death in 1855. David Hoffman was a prominent member of the Baltimore bar. From 1817 until 1836 he was professor of law at the University of Maryland. He resigned as a counsellor in 1836 when he moved to Philadelphia.

At the annual meeting on December 26, 1821, which was held at Williamson's Hotel, Justus Hoppe, a well-known merchant, was elected president. For the next twelve years he provided the Society with firm and sympathetic leadership.

By seeing to the strict enforcement of the registration and apprenticeship laws, the Society soon discouraged practices that had still been common one or two decades earlier. No longer do we find advertisements in newspapers offering "German emigrants for sale" or promising handsome rewards for apprehending "a runaway indentured servant." Fewer redemptioners came on the many vessels that carried Germans and Swiss to Baltimore. The system appeared no longer lucrative to owners and masters of ships, since stringent laws protected the rights of the immigrants. Warned by tales and rumors circulating all over Europe which were often only too true, many prospective immigrants now saved up enough money to pay at least for their passage leaving their fate after arrival to fortune, i.e., hoping to find ready employment upon reaching American shores. Thus the German Society still had ample opportunity to help during those years. Penniless arrivals in the past

had been taken care of by the masters who paid for their passage. Now they were left to themselves and invariably found their way to the German Society. The majority of the new immigrants desired to go west. A Swiss arriving on the German boat *Hyperion* in 1824 related in his diary how the Society furnished a horse and money to a destitute family to enable them to make their way to the Ohio country.

During his twelve years as president, Justus Hoppe was assisted by several able vice presidents. In 1822 B.J. von Kapff and Heinrich Schroeder were replaced by F.W. Brune, Sr. (until 1861) and John Mayer, who was known and respected for his strong personality and his ability act quickly and independently, tended to dispense with the counsel of his fellow officers. Though his untiring labors for the cause of the immigrants were unanimously acknowledged, even his close friends could not always approve of his actions. When for the case of the Breuning boys Mayer engaged an outside attorney, both counsellors resigned. They were replaced by Charles F. Mayer, the son of the president, and Peter H. Cruse.

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by F.W. Brune, Sr., (until 1861) and John Hoffman (until 1830), both of whom were very active in public affairs. In 1825 General John Stricker died. He had been one of the prime movers of the reorganization in 1817 and had served as a vice president ever since. The Mayor of the city of Baltimore, Jacob Small, filled the office of vice president from 1826 until 1829 leading the prestige and influence of his position to the cause of the Society. Another noteworthy event was the election of Benjamin J. Cohen in 1825 to succeed Frederick Waesche as the Society's treasurer, marking the beginning of a faithful incumbency of twenty years.

The charitable activities received universal praise. Another official recognition of the work of the German Society came with the passing of a state law in December 1832. Charles F. Mayer, counsellor for the Society and a member of the Maryland legislature, had introduced a bill which his brother Brantz Mayer, had drafted. The purpose of this new law was to relieve the Society of a part of its great financial burden and supply it with more means to carry on its work. This law was later incorporated in an amended form in the Baltimore City charter of 1898.

It provided that the captain of each ship arriving in a Maryland port state the number of immigrants on board. Then each immigrant had to pay a sum of \$1.50 to the State. Three-fifths of this money was to be allocated to the "Trustees of the Poor of Baltimore" and two-fifths to the German and Hibernian Societies of Baltimore. The Hibernian Society, founded in 1803, is the Irish counterpart of the German Society. The law of 1832 originally stipulated that the money be divided equally between the two societies, an unsatisfactory arrangement, because many more Germans and Swiss arrived in Baltimore than Irish. Therefore, in 1833, an amendment was passed providing that the money be divided proportionally between the two societies according to the actual number of arrivals of each nationality.

When Justus Hoppe laid down his office as president at the end of December 1832, he could proudly point to long years of fruitful effort and achievement. Under his guidance the Society had once again received official recognition in the form of a substantial financial subsidy. Henceforth it was to get sixty cents for every German or Swiss immigrant who landed in Maryland. This provision would enable the Society to increase its charitable work enormously. The outgoing president also could report that the wives of the members for the first time had banded together to make an important contribution. They handed the total proceeds of a charity concert amounting to \$100 to the treasurer with the request that the sum be immediately distributed among needy Germans of the city. The new officers elected by the meeting were Charles W. Karthaus president; Charles S. Boehm, Solomon Etting, F.W. Brune, Sr., and Gustav W. Luerman, vice presidents.

Charles W. Karthaus, the new president, was one of the charter members of 1817. He had been particularly active in the various membership and fund drives. Although the new law would provide a constant revenue in the future, Karthaus believed that the Society should at no time rely entirely on these allocations from passenger commutation tax. Since its inception the Society had been supported by its members and through donations from other citizens of German stock. He wanted it to remain that way. In February 1833, soon after his election, he called a meeting of the officers to prepare a canvass of all members and of perspective members in every ward of the city in order to increase the membership and to solicit subscriptions. At that time the regular dues amounted to \$3.00 a year but it is recorded that many a member contributed more than his share to the Society's funds.

The registration of every immigrant landing in Maryland in accordance with the law of 1832, which had gone into effect early in 1833, provides for the first time reliable figures for the total number of German and Swiss immigrants:

.....	1833-1839
.....	44,584 persons
.....	1840-1850
.....	50,660 persons
.....	1851-1860
.....	73,722 persons

From these official statistics it can be estimated that some 180,000 Germans arrived in Maryland ports during the three decades preceding the outbreak of the Civil War.

The part of the commutation money which was allocated to the German Society enabled it to enlarge the scope of its activity. Each of the twelve managers was authorized to give assistance to immigrants whenever and wherever needed. Two competent, salaried physicians provided medical care to indigent sick immigrants. The Society also contributed regularly to the eastern dispensary of the city.

Co-operation with the State authorities remained close and cordial. In 1830, Henry G. Jacobson, the State Register of Immigrants, had resigned and, upon recommendation of the officers of the German Society, was succeeded by Charles Starke.

From various reports received by the officers of the Society it became evident that an ever increasing number of immigrants arriving in Maryland from the interior parts of Germany were under the impression that they would be completely taken care of by the Society upon arrival. Their ignorance of American conditions, as well as much erroneous information circulating in Europe about the German Societies in the port cities, prompted Solomon Etting, one of the vice presidents, to call upon his fellow officers to prepare circulars to be printed in English and German, which could be handed to the captains and consignees of every arriving immigrant ship. Furthermore, a member by the name of Frederick L. Braun, who had served faithfully many years as a secretary and later as a vice president, was commissioned to prepare an informative booklet for distribution to those in the German states and in Switzerland who intended to emigrate to the United States.

Braun's concise and yet comprehensive account of the conditions in Maryland and the other states, paired with sound advice to prospective immigrants and a word of caution, was unanimously approved by the officers of the Society. This fourteen-page pamphlet, entitled *Wohlgemeinter Rat der Deutschen Gesellschaft von Maryland an Deutsche, die irgend ein Interesse an der Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika fuehlen* is today a coveted item for collectors of Americana both here and in Europe, because it constituted a plain but clear statement as to the minimum requirements for a successful emigration to and subsequent adjustment in America. Also important was the warning contained therein that those not physically or mentally fit or too infirm should be kept from coming over. The purpose and the limitations of assistance available from the German Society were also aptly discussed. By a resolution passed in October 1834, the officers ordered that 3000 copies of this pamphlet be sent to those parts of Central Europe whence most

German-speaking emigrants originated.

For several decades following, the Society had revised editions of this pamphlet printed and sent to Bremen, Hamburg, Rotterdam and Le Havre, the principal ports of embarkation, to be distributed on the vessels before departure.

Most Germans arriving in Baltimore hurried on to the Ohio River and from there to the prairie states which were rapidly being opened up for settlement. Baltimore was the favorite gateway for Germans during those years. This was largely true because of the ever growing trade between Baltimore and Bremen. While relatively few German ships had come to America in the earlier days, the Hanseatic seaports, Bremen and Hamburg, made great strides in regaining their one-time importance and German shipping took its place among the traditional seafaring nations. This sudden growth of German shipping lines was largely due to the profitable business of bringing German emigrants to the American shores. For the return journey the vessels could be loaded with hogsheads of tobacco or other American staple products. A close relationship ensued, especially between Bremen and Baltimore. Several prominent members of the German Society had active business connections with the Weser port.

As old as immigration to America was, the ever recurrent claim was made by natives that European governments and municipalities were unloading their convicts, paupers and other undesirable elements on American soil. The Society did its best to refute such claims. At times, however, through investigation of rumors to the effect that convicts were on their way to Baltimore was necessary. For instance, on July 1, 1837, a German newspaper in Philadelphia carried an item stating that a number of convicts from the Gotha prison were to be transported to New York or Baltimore via Bremen.

President Karthaus called a meeting of the officers as soon as he heard this news, which was quickly being picked up by the press in the other Atlantic seaports. The meeting resolved to inform the mayor of Baltimore without delay and to express the readiness of the Society to co-operate with the authorities in taking all necessary steps to prevent the landing and effect the immediate return of such undesirable passengers to Germany. The Society even offered to share in the expenses for any measures deemed appropriate. When the vessel arrived on which the Gotha convicts were suspected to be aboard, representatives of the German Society and city officers failed to detect any objectionable elements among its passengers. The Society maintained this stand throughout the years to follow, until prospective immigrants were screened by American consular officers before being admitted to the United States. Although the charges that felons were shipped over by German authorities was repeated frequently, especially during the "Know Nothing" era, there is no reliable evidence that convicts from Germany were ever landed in Baltimore.

A similarly persistent charge was that so-called "paupers," poverty-stricken tramps and vagabonds, were numerous among the arriving immigrants. Certainly some German communities aided financially such generally harmless but burdensome persons to cross the ocean, thus assuring that they would never return home. The actual number of paupers among the arrivals was very small but even those few who landed became a considerable burden to the Society. It therefore contacted the embarkation authorities in various European ports. Thanks to its good connections with Bremen, the Society in 1838 succeeded in having an ordinance

passed by the Bremen Senate "preventing the exportation of paupers and vagrants."

While the German Society constantly sought to mitigate the lot of arriving immigrants and to assist the needy among Baltimore's residents of German birth or extraction, the foregoing actions under the leadership of Charles W. Karthaus show once more that its work reached far beyond the day-to-day charity activities to which most other benevolent societies limited themselves at that time. The Society believed strongly in preventive measures. Its work represented a valuable assistance to the State and City authorities. As in the cases of the alleged importation of convicts and the prevention of the migration of paupers, the Society always was at hand when the occasion demanded the typically American interplay of government and citizenry.

IV

Work for the Strong, Aid to the Weak

The election held at the annual meeting of the German Society on December 26, 1840, amounted to a change of the guard. The generation which had led the Society since its reorganization in 1817 was now growing old or had passed away. While many of the sons faithfully carried on the work of their fathers in the Society, like Charles F. Mayer, now a vice president, F.W. Breune, Jr., Brantz Mayer, and William F. Frick, all three able counsellors, new leaders came from among the ranks of recent immigrants. It was with a light heart and great hopes for the future of the German Society that Charles W. Karthaus, one of the charter members of 1817, relinquished his job as president to Albert Schumacher, his elected successor.

Born in Bremen in 1802, the son of a city councilor, Albert Schumacher received an excellent education in his native city. At the age of seventeen he entered a large trading firm in which he achieved a responsible position in only six years. Following the advice of C.A. Heinecken of Baltimore (a member of the German Society), who had once worked for the same firm in Bremen, and was now operating an export business of his own, Schumacher decided to try his luck in Baltimore, where he arrived in 1826. As a member of Heinecken's firm, he traveled extensively in Latin America and Europe and his successful business contacts spanned more than half of the world. Despite his frequent travels he soon showed an active interest in the German Society, which he served as a manager from 1833 on. When Heinecken left the firm in 1839, Schumacher became the sole owner of the business. He rose to great prominence in the city, holding numerous offices on the boards of large industrial companies. The two Hanseatic cities, Bremen and Hamburg, appointed him consul general. When he added the honored position of the president of The German Society of Maryland to his manifold duties he did so with the firm determination to devote his best abilities to it, while lending at the same time the prestige of his own prominence to its cause. For more than thirty years Albert Schumacher remained president by annual re-election.

The greatest tide of immigrants from Germany was reaching Baltimore then. In the fifties the mob rule of the "Know Nothing" threatened the very existence of everything German in the city, a painful period which was followed by the trying years of the Civil War. The German Society was to be fortunate in having Albert Schumacher at its helm during the stormy years ahead. Thanks to his leadership the three following decades were an era of stability despite the ever increasing demands

upon the Society's resources.

In 1841, President Schumacher and Secretary Charles Spiker, acting on a motion of Dr. August Wegner, submitted a petition to the Maryland legislature for the appointment of a German Interpreter in the Baltimore courts. A state law was passed the same year, providing that a German interpreter be made available at all courts in Baltimore. For many decades this arrangement proved beneficial to many German-speaking persons who were involved in litigation.

When an attempt was made the following year to repeal the immigrant law of 1832, which allowed the German and Hibernian Societies two-fifths of the passenger commutation money, it met with strong opposition from the German Society. A vigorous protest was sent to Annapolis and a committee of five was elected under the chairmanship of counselor Charles F. Mayer which succeeded in having the bill defeated, thus assuring the continued receipt of the share of passenger money. This was particularly important since the funds raised by the Society would have sufficed to take care of needy cases among the Germans in Baltimore and the State of Maryland, but the greater number of cases which came before the Society at that time were those of transients who merely passed through Maryland in search of land in the West.

Up to the year 1841 the annual meetings and banquets of the Society as well as all meetings of its officers were held at Beltzhoover's Hotel. The anniversary meeting on December 26, 1842, was held for the first time in the rooms of the Germania Club which had its home then on North Howard Street. With the exception of a few years in the latter part of the century, the Germania Club House remained the meeting place of the German Society until World War I. The Club placed its rooms at the disposal of the Society free of cost throughout the seventy years.

New means were constantly sought to improve the services for which the Society was founded. In 1842 the liberal annual donations to the free public dispensaries of medicine were increased considerably. Also the salaries of the two physicians of the Society were doubled from \$50.00 to \$100.00 a year. Such an amount was certainly not a true compensation for all the services performed by the devoted physicians who perpetuated the humane work which Dr. Charles F. Wiesenthal and Dr. William Zollkoffer had initiated for the Society sixty years earlier. This token salary was merely to cover the actual expenses incurred while visiting and treating patients sponsored by the Society. The work of the physicians has been one of the greatest contributions of individuals to its cause.

What has time and again been ignored is the fact that the great majority of needy immigrants whom the Society assisted during the 19th century were only transients in Maryland. Most of them traveled on the national turnpike to Cumberland and from there on to the Midwest. Others turned north to find employment in the industrial cities. As long as they were within the boundaries of Maryland, the Society looked after them. When it received reports that German immigrants had been grossly imposed upon by a transportation agent at Cumberland, it pressed charges against the contractor for transportation in Baltimore as well as against his agent in Cumberland for obtaining money under false pretenses. Later the German Society appointed its own representative, a Mr. Treiber, in Cumberland, who was to observe closely the transit of immigrants and

report any irregularities without delay.

On the other hand, of course, it happened that many Germans remained in Baltimore even though they might not have planned to do so originally. For lack of acquaintances they found themselves unable to secure suitable jobs. In order to help such people, who often possessed skills valuable to the industrial development of the city, the German Society in 1845 established a so-called "Intelligence Bureau." Frederick Raine, publisher of the German *Correspondent*, for a minimal compensation offered to place this employment bureau in his newspaper office. During its first year of existence more than 2000 applicants appeared, some 600 of whom were able to find employment through the "Intelligence Bureau." In 1846 already, most of the 3500 applicants were helped in securing jobs. Soon the existence of this bureau became known far and wide outside Baltimore and in the next few years thousands of German workers were placed in shops and industrial establishments in Washington, York, Cumberland and Pittsburgh. Many factories and railroad companies availed themselves of the Society's placement bureau to find skilled mechanics or labors from among the German newcomers. By 1853 so much work was at hand in the "Intelligence Bureau" that the appointment of a full-time agent became necessary. Jacob Ober kept the office until his untimely death in July 1853, when he was succeeded by H.F. Wellinghoff who was instructed to locate the bureau at Fells Point near the landing piers of the emigrant ships. Wellinghoff retained this position for thirty years, during which time his name became synonymous with this special service of the Society. There is no record of the number of job seekers who applied at his office, but to judge from the number of applications during the first years, there must have been close to 50,000 people who sought help from him. Only when old age made it impossible for "Papa Wellinghoff" to continue, did he resign in 1883.

The Society also inaugurated an additional service for the sick who were under the care of its physicians. In 1846 Charles Caspari, a long-established apothecary, was authorized to furnish medicaments against prescriptions by the physicians at the expense of the Society. By 1849 two more apothecary shops, those of John Stehl and H.M. Koechling, were added in order to serve as dispensaries for free medicines to the poor.

Immigration increased steadily. Almost 74,000 persons from German speaking countries are listed in the official statistics as having landed in Baltimore between 1841 and 1850. Still others passed through the state in search of jobs after having arrived in New York and other ports to the north. The revolutions of 1848 and 1849 and their aftermath in Germany and Austria had given new impetus to emigration. While relatively few among the arrivals had been actively involved in the fighting, many young people were discontent with the restrictive measures that followed the failure of the uprisings. The available space on ships could hardly accommodate the swarms of those willing to emigrate. Weeks of waiting in the ports often consumed all the savings which were to help them over the first lean days in America. Vessels were overcrowded and many of the new-comers reported impositions that were thought to be problems of the past.

Louis Heuser, who later became a respected teacher in the English German schools of the city, vividly described in his diary the hardships which accompanied a voyage of fifty-five days from Bremen to Baltimore in the early fall of 1852. A virtual black market in food and drinking water aboard the vessels depleted the funds of many emigrants. Then the ocean trip alone still required four to six weeks

in spring and fall and eight weeks or more in summer.

This renewed increase in immigration provided plenty of work for the German Society, which reported a membership of 169 persons in 1851. While in the past its efforts had been universally acclaimed by the citizenry of Baltimore, regardless of national background, for the first time now the German Society was confronted with public attacks and criticism. The great influx of German and other European immigrants alarmed many native Americans, especially of the lower and uneducated classes. An intense feeling developed against foreigners, partly caused by the existence of numerous and very active German organizations in Baltimore. While the real reasons for this sudden appearance of xenophobia were complex and not to a small degree due to the general tension that prevailed in the decade before the Civil War, the fear that the large number of foreigners might form a state within the state, remaining aloof from the native-born citizenry, was a major contributing factor to the organization of the anti-foreigner movement, the secret order of the "Know Nothing," which spread rapidly all over the state and turned into a political party in 1854. Although the German Society had its origins in the 18th century and remained apart from the many ephemeral groups that were formed by recent German immigrants, it was frequently identified with their activities by those ignorant of its real purpose. A spirit of hatred and discrimination prevailed during the years between 1850 and 1860 which was equaled in American history only by the germanophobia of the First World War. Often the mob ruled the streets and newly arrived immigrants as well as old, established German and Irish organizations were openly attacked by rowdies.

During this trying period, the German Society accorded much help to the newcomers who were bewildered by the hateful reception which they received in the land of liberty. The Society maintained a dignified attitude knowing that the "Know Nothing" days were not to last forever. The prestige which many of its officers and members enjoyed in the public life of the city and the state contributed much toward overcoming the difficulties of the time.

In 1858 the German Society took a prominent part in the Steuben Festival, which was staged by the American citizens of German birth or descent in Baltimore to impress on the public the patriotism and loyalty of the great majority of German-Americans. General Steuben himself was in his later years the president of the German Society of New York, a sister organization with which the Baltimore Society maintained cordial and close relations throughout its history. Albert Schumacher, the chairman of the Steuben Festival in 1858, pointed out this fact when he recounted the numerous feats of Americans of German stock in defending and building the common homeland. The impressive and orderly demonstration in Baltimore had deep effects. In the face of physical threats the German-Americans rallied around the American flag.

Soon the scene changed. The great issues of the day were no longer the danger from foreign immigration but the acute danger of a division of the country over the problems of regional economic interests and over the slavery question. While the year 1860 still set a record with regard to the number of German immigrants arriving from Europe, the outbreak of the War between the States dried the flow of immigration down to a trickle. The war caught Maryland between the two camps. The sympathies of the members of the German Society were certainly as divided as those of most other segments of the population, but under the vigorous, tactful and liberal leadership of Albert Schumacher the Society remained intact. As in all

phases of its history, the German Society with its great mission of charity was never influenced nor divided by political, ideological or religious partisanship. It knew only one distinction: those, who were willing to help in its humanitarian endeavors, were always welcome while those, who were apt to carry partisan interests into its ranks, were rejected.

The first year of the war affected Baltimore's industry and trade severely. Thanks to the prudent foresight of its officers, the Society was fairly well prepared to meet the coming storm. Widespread unemployment brought many mechanics and laborers on the relief rolls. In 1861 alone 4158 persons applied to the Society for pecuniary assistance and almost all of the applicants were found to be worthy of support. Free medical prescriptions for the same period numbered 4608. All the while German immigration had diminished, reducing considerably the Society's revenue from passenger money. In 1862, for example, only 2172 newcomers from Germany arrived in Baltimore. Therefore, the German Society was forced to sell \$4,000 worth of Baltimore City stock not due until 1896 for only \$3,422.50. Spontaneously the members decided to increase the dues in order to make up partly for the great demand upon the funds.

In his report for 1862, Treasurer Israel Cohen, who had succeeded his father Benjamin J. Cohen in 1845, confronted the members with the fact that a continued emergency might make it necessary to encroach upon the invested fund of \$32,000 "to aid those who most need it, and for whose benefit it has been accumulated." Fortunately, the treasurer's apprehensions were soon dispersed by a turn for the better. Great economic prosperity befell Baltimore. The war brought new industries ready to absorb the many unemployed, and commerce developed past its prewar level. Despite the war, immigration also increased again. When hostilities ceased, the German Society counted more members than in 1860. It had weathered the storm thanks to its own steadfastness.

New tasks lay ahead. A committee consisting of Charles Spilker, Charles W. Lentz, Frederick Raine, and William Numsen was appointed to assist the State authorities in the promotion of immigration. The growth of the Society both in numbers and in financial resources enabled it to increase the salaries of the physicians and agents. Seven free dispensaries of medicines were now assigned throughout the city. Membership, which reached 200 in 1869, amounted to 217 persons in 1870.

Again, intercession was required when a bill was pending before the Assembly in Annapolis proposing increased taxation on arriving immigrants. The Society convened for a special meeting on March 29, 1870, and passed a resolution in protest against such a measure. A delegation presented this resolution to the legislature, a step which contributed decisively to the defeat of the bill.

The last official act of Albert Schumacher in his thirty-first year as the president of the German Society was to present the first donation of \$250 to the General German Orphan Asylum of Baltimore City. (By 1876 the Society had contributed \$1,900 to this worthy institution.) On June 27, 1871, Albert Schumacher died, not quite sixty-nine years old. His death was a severe blow to the Society. For thirty years, many of them stormy and crucial ones, his firm hand and his alert spirit had guided it and made it grow with the city and state to which its work is dedicated. The German Society honored its departed president by assembling in special meeting. The greatest bequest of Albert Schumacher to his

Society was the spirit of devotion and sacrifice which he had instilled in its ranks and which has ever remained alive in the Society, and has become an inspiration for generations to follow. He also left a substantial part of the fruits of his earthly labors to the good works of the German Society; in his last will he bequeathed \$10,000 of Baltimore City stock, the interest to be distributed annually among destitute Germans in the city.

"That we may not do injustice to our record of the past".

After Schumacher's death, the choice for president fell upon Herman Von Kapff (1818-1892), a successful Baltimore merchant. Von Kapff was a native of Lemgo (Lippe). He came to this country at the age of twenty one and joined the German Society not long after his arrival. He served as its secretary from 1853 until 1870 when he was elected one of the vice presidents. Throughout these years he had worked closely with Albert Schumacher, and it was not surprising that he carried on the work in the same spirit of charity and responsibility. By successive annual re-elections, Von Kapff remained president for seven years until 1878.

Immigration had reached another peak. In Baltimore alone more than 53,000 Germans landed in the first seven years of this decade. This increase in arrivals is reflected in the annual reports of the Society showing greatly expanded activities. At the yearly meeting of January 1875, Israel Cohen, faithful treasurer, presented his thirty-first report. Nobody among his fellow officers and friends anticipated that this was to be his last one. His father, Benjamin Cohen, had held the treasurer's office for twenty years until 1845, when the worthy son was elected his successor. In June 1875, Israel Cohen succumbed to a sudden illness. For half a century the finances of the Society had been entrusted to the custody, management and fidelity of the two Cohens. Their conscientiousness and self-effacing work can still today be gathered from the financial records. Their annual reports do not show the dryness and monotony so often found in treasurers' accounts. They are lucid and full of encouraging notes. Israel Cohen's words concluding his last report express better than all the eulogies published on the occasion of his death the credo of this man who gave thirty years of gratuitous service to the cause of the immigrant: "In conclusion then the undersigned has but to repeat his earnest prayers, that we may continue to render every aid and comfort to the deserving poor-that the sick and the destitute may be fully cared for, and that in the future we may not do injustice to our record of the past."

His wise counsel had prepared the Society's funds for a development which he and others had long foreseen. The Federal Government was taking the affairs relating to immigration out of the hands of the states. In consequence thereof, the United States Court in 1876, ruled that no state could impose a tax on the landing of immigrants, this being within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Government. Upon learning of this decision steamship lines and owners of immigrant vessels refused to pay further commutation tax for their passengers. This meant a yearly loss of thousands of dollars to the income of the Society, while there was no decrease in its expenses; the applications for charitable assistance rather increased and the Society was not inclined to refuse proper relief to anyone who was in need. Despite this severe blow, it went ahead with a plan which the ever-increasing demand for help made necessary. In January 1877, the Society resolved to open a centrally located business office staffed by two full time agents. Furthermore, these agents were to visit every immigrant vessel upon arrival. The new office also assumed the tasks of the old "Intelligence Bureau."

This new step, which was accompanied by considerable, additional expense, was taken by the officers of the Society because it was felt that those applying for help would do so more comfortably in a regular charity office than in the business

quarters of one of the officers, who were often not in a position to give sufficient time to the applicant's request. It was a courageous step in view of the financial report of the year just ended, which showed the inevitable results of the loss of income from the German Society's share in the commutation tax. As John R. Seemuller, the treasurer elected as successor to Israel Cohen, announced, the Society had a deficit of \$1,400 and for the first time the invested capital was encroached upon by the sale of some of its Baltimore City stock. Its capital at that time was \$75,000. To meet the emergency, membership dues were raised from \$3.00 to \$5.00. In 1877, many members made additional voluntary contributions in order to meet the deficit. Through stringent economy a sound financial basis was finally restored.

At the annual meeting of 1878, Von Kapff declined re-election and Claas Vocke, a merchant who for years had been prominent in the affairs of the Society, was elected its president. In January 1887, he was succeeded by Louis P. Hennighausen, an attorney and counsellor of the German Society for many years.

It was during the tenure of these two men that The German Society of Maryland wrote one of the most outstanding pages of its history. Again it responded to the appeal for aid coming from a class of people who were being mistreated in a barbaric manner just as earlier generations of the Society had answered the call to help the unprotected redemptioners, a fight begun in 1783 and carried to a successful conclusion in 1818 when the law protecting redemptioners went into effect. This time the cry for help came from oyster dredgers, a class of men whose work and whose sufferings were little known to the general public.

Oyster dredging was one of the major sources of income for the inhabitants of the counties along the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland and Virginia. Even today the watermen of the oyster fisheries lead a life of toil and sweat, but toward the end of the 19th century it was a cruelly hard, poorly paid work, done on small schooners manned by ten men or less during the coldest months of the year. It has been estimated that some 20,000 men were engaged in this occupation on the waters of the Bay during the eighties and early nineties of the last century. Often when the wind was fair and the water free of ice, dredging would be done day and night. Sixteen to eighteen hours of work in one stretch were frequent. In view of the hardships accompanying oyster dredging, the captains always had difficulty getting workers. Therefore, they tried to hire crews from among newly arrived immigrants who were unfamiliar with the work, its hazards and the value of the wages promised for a season. The operators of the oyster fisheries, notoriously those from the counties of the lower bay, put immigrants under contracts in New York, Philadelphia or Baltimore. At night the newcomers were herded onto vessels in Baltimore and taken to the lower bay, where they were distributed among the dredging schooners. Once they were aboard, they remained without contact with the outside world for many months. The boats would not touch shore during the season. Larger vessels took over their loads of oysters and brought supplies. The crews were a motley band of unfortunates. Few, if any, had ever worked on ships. Among them were Irishmen, Germans, Bohemians and Italians, men whose past records showed professions such as office clerks, students, teachers, artists, mechanics, farmers or craftsmen. They were strangers to the country, to the work and to each other. The captains, used to the hard life, were bent on getting as much out of their men as they could. Cold and dampness often caused illness. The so-called "oyster hand" became proverbial—the flesh of their hands cut and poisoned by oyster shells became violently inflamed. Each sick man aboard meant a loss of profit to captain

and operator, therefore maltreatment was the order of the day. It often happened that oyster boats landed in the spring with reduced crews. Nobody knew where the missing men were. Most of them had no relatives in this country and nobody was ever to inquire about them.

If after a cruel beating, men were still unable to work, they were put ashore without pay at some desolate spot miles from any town. Some succeeded in making their way in the midst of winter to the distant hospitals of Baltimore, which they filled every winter in large numbers. Reports reached Baltimore that captains had shot and killed men on the slightest resistance. The authorities seemed unable to cope with the problem.

In December 1884, news of the murder of a young German immigrant by an oyster boat captain became known. Otto Mayher, about twenty years old, son of a surveyor in Stuttgart, Germany, and two other Germans had signed up with Captain Williams of the oyster puny "Eva" in October 1884, for a season of service as dredgers. At first all went well. Then Mayher fell sick. The captain, furious at the prospect of losing the help of a man for a few days, beat him most brutally. Mayher's condition became daily worse. Williams continued his cruel beatings until one night, when the boat landed at a lonely spot near the mouth of the Manakin River in lower Fairmount, the captain locked the other two Germans up below deck, had unconscious Mayher rowed ashore and killed him there by breaking his victim's neck with his foot. The county authorities were notified by Captain Williams that Mayher had fallen down a hatch and broken his neck. After a hurried investigation, they accepted the captain's testimony and ruled Mayher's death accidental. Mayher's two German companions were not heard at all. When they were finally discharged, Williams set them ashore at Crisfield. They reached Baltimore on Christmas Eve and informed the German Consul of the crime. The Consul, by his attorney Louis P. Hennighausen, brought the matter to the notice of the authorities. Mayher's body was exhumed and examined. The captain was arrested and indicted. The German Society cooperated with the Consul and authorized the use of funds in order that justice be done in the Mayher murder case. It supported the two witnesses financially until the end of the trial. Captain Williams was finally convicted of murder and sentenced to eighteen years in the penitentiary. Both the conviction and sentence were confirmed by the Court of Appeals of Maryland.

The Mayher case, which was certainly not the only one of like cruelty during those years, aroused the German Society to take steps beyond bringing the guilty to trial. The court's action in this particular case served to provide an example which helped to prevent the recurrence of such crimes in many instances, but as it was with the abuses of the redemptioner system, only a rigid law could represent sufficient guarantees for the protection of the oyster dredgers.

At the beginning of the year 1886, the German Society decided to appeal to the Maryland legislature for the enactment of the necessary law. Louis P. Hennighausen and F. William Brune, the two counsellors of the Society, drafted regulations which such a law should embody. A committee of seven, consisting of Claas Vocke, Louis P. Hennighausen, F. William Brune, Christian Ax, William Numsen, Herman Von Kapff and Victor Buschmann, appeared before the assembly in Annapolis to urge the adoption of a protective law. But evidently the influence of the lower counties and the lobby of the oyster industries prevented action upon this matter.

During the following session of the legislature, the German Society appeared with a committee of twenty-five in Annapolis accompanied by an additional number of other prominent Baltimoreans, all members or supporters of the German Society. In what was reported in Maryland newspapers as an imposing demonstration, F. William Brune, L.P. Hennighausen, Heinrich C. Tiek and Oscar Wolff took the floor and addressed the lawmakers. They vigorously pressed the case of the poor oyster dredgers. They presented their plight in such a convincing manner that the law as proposed by the German Society was passed with a great majority. It went into effect on January 1, 1890. Its principal provisions were: a registry to be kept by special commissioners at the shipping ports of the crews of every oyster dredging boat, contracts in writing before these commissioners and records thereof of the period of time, wages, return to port, etc., the captain to be obliged to account for every man not returned; and severe punishment for disregard of the law. This law, of course, benefitted not only Germans but all other men who earned their living on the oyster boats, regardless of their national origin.

In its long and relentless fight for the oyster dredgers, the German Society showed an unprecedented vigor. In one instance, when the federal authorities refused to interfere in a clear case of violation of law on grounds that no federal vessel was available, the Society chartered a tug boat at its own expense, invited a U.S. marshal on board, and engaged in a wild chase after an oyster vessel on which irregularities were reported. The captain of the oyster boat they were seeking fled but was later apprehended on shore and punished.

Despite the law of 1890, numerous cases of dreadful maltreatment on oyster boats were reported. Each time the Society lent its assistance. Everyone of the many cruel captains and mates who were arrested upon the society's instigation was found guilty and punished.

In 1893 reports of cruelties and murders aboard oyster vessels were so frequent that the Hibernian Society, the St. Andrew's Society, the St. George's Society, the French Benevolent Society and the Charity Organizations Society of Baltimore joined the German Society in establishing a "Bureau for the Protection of the Oyster Dredgers." The representatives of these organizations elected Louis P. Hennighausen president of the committee for the establishment of the bureau. Colonel Heinrich C. Tiek, counsel of the German Society, who had distinguished himself during the struggle for the protection of the oyster dredgers, was appointed counsellor for this inter-group bureau. Numerous attempts of the oyster industry to have the protective laws revoked were quashed. But in 1894 the politically influential oyster interests succeeded in having the law for the protection of the oyster dredgers in the Chesapeake Bay so amended as to defeat completely its object. This meant that the labors of the German Society were nullified, at least for a time. Being convinced that any further intercession in Annapolis would be fruitless, the Society now turned to Washington in its efforts to secure the necessary legislation. Years of patient work on the part of the German Society and similar charitable organizations of Maryland, Virginia, New York and Pennsylvania were required to secure the help of the United States Congress which finally enacted a series of laws safeguarding the rights of oyster dredgers. In February 1906, the German Society testified at a public hearing. The cases presented and the skillful arguments of its officers contributed largely to the action which Congress took. Louis P. Hennighausen, whose own labors for over twenty years were so decisive for this success, wrote after the passing of the bills: "As far as laws can do it, the oyster dredger now enjoys full protection. A large share of the credit for this noble achievement is no doubt due to The German Society of Maryland, which took the initiative, and with energy and persistency continued at large expense for many years the humane effort to obtain good, effective laws for the protection of the oyster dredgers."

Throughout the years when the Society waged its tireless fight against the evil practices in the oyster fisheries, it did not neglect the ordinary routine work of charity. In the eighties the Federal Government had taken over the control of immigration and supervised the landing and expedition of the immigrants to the West. The German Society was able to discontinue this costly part of its work and its agents were relieved from the duty of attending the landing of newcomers. The opening of several free dispensaries of medicine supported by the city made the Society's own arrangements with apothecary shops superfluous. Likewise, free medical and surgical treatment was becoming available to the poor in hospitals, relieving the Society of still another part of its earlier activities.

Thus all resources and efforts could be concentrated upon the support of indigent Germans in Maryland. During the depression of 1893-94 alone, \$13,000 in cash was distributed directly to the poor. The employment office procured positions for 393 applicants during the same period. While the most sizable contributions came from the wealthier class of German Americans, numerous gifts were received from other citizens who felt that their small sacrifices would nowhere find a better application than through the good work of the German Society. At the height of the depression in 1893, for example, the workers of the Gail and Ax Tobacco factory collected \$200 on the job which they donated to the Society. Most touching is the contribution of \$35.00 which the treasurer received from oyster dredgers whom the Society had helped. A group of German ladies of the city offered the proceeds of a bazaar which netted a sum of almost \$1,100. This gift was partly used to establish

the so-called "German Society Free Bed" in the Maryland General Hospital.

During the years preceding World War I, the Society distributed always between about \$4,000 and \$5,000 yearly in cash for pure charity. There were always well over one hundred poor widows with four times as many children on its rolls. Altogether in the period from 1844 to 1914 the German Society paid in cash to the poor and distressed the large sum of almost \$420,000.

Membership statistics show a certain fluctuation. In 1887 there were 218 persons enrolled, in 1888 a sudden increase to 443 members was registered, the largest membership the Society ever had. At the turn of the century the figure was down to 252 but slowly increased again and from 1904 until 1914 averaged from 300 to 350 members.

At the anniversary meeting of the Society held on January 12, 1914, Louis P. Hennighausen, whose name had been placed on the ticket again as choice for president, declined re-election for reasons of old age. Vice President Louis P. Dieterich read a message in which the patriarch sketched his long association with the German Society since his arrival in Baltimore fifty-nine years earlier as a penniless German immigrant: "I have shared with you the sorrowful years of the Know Nothing time, the war years, good and bad times. Our Society, now in its 131st year of existence, has been the center of unselfish charity, of legal protection and of support of the oppressed immigrant, and it is today still the helper of the widows, the orphans, the sick and the poor." Then the message went on to explain that the infirmities of old age prohibited his continued activity at the helm of the Society which should be in the hands of a younger, stronger generation. In an unprecedented move, the Society unanimously elected him President Emeritus. Another great phase in the life of the German Society had come to an end. Ahead lay new labors and trials of which none of the men had any premonition who were gathered in the Germania Club House on that day to pay tribute to a truly great leader and to elect new officers.

VI

New opportunity for Service

The new Board of Officers elected in January 1914, was headed by Robert M. Rother, a leading banker of Baltimore and a member of the Society since 1888, president, and by H.G. Hilken, George Brunnecke, Louis P. Dieterich and Jacob Klein, vice presidents, Conrad C. Rabbe, treasurer since 1908, was retained in that office.

While the first months of the year were uneventful and the charity activities showed no unusual fluctuations, the outbreak of the European War in August 1914 suddenly confronted the German Society with an unprecedented experience. Hundreds of German and Austrian seamen were either discharged or forced to desert from Allied vessels coming into the harbor. Several North German Lloyd steamers and numerous freighters of other German lines were detained in Baltimore. Furthermore, German and Austrian reservists flocked to the ports hoping to find passage for Europe in order to answer the call to arms. Several thousand men were thus concentrated in Baltimore waiting for a chance to leave for Europe. Many among the seamen were without any means and possessed only the clothes they wore.

The German Society called an emergency meeting of its members. The response was unanimous: "We must help to the best of our abilities." The Executive Committee was directed to grant every possible assistance. From September to December alone 448 men were given meals and lodging. Clothing, tools, books and medical care were provided for the detained seamen. The Executive Committee enlisted the help of the Federated Charities and the Friendly Inn Association to care for the many others whom the Society could not help. Both organizations cooperated readily. The Hibernian Society made the classes of its night school available to the officers and men of German steamers, an act of brotherly assistance which has forever been gratefully remembered and which recalled the common work of the two societies in the struggle for the redemptioners and the oyster dredgers.

During the last four months of 1914 most members gave freely in time and money and advice to those whom the outbreak of the war had prevented from following their normal pursuits. When it became apparent that the Allied naval blockade would make their repatriation impossible, temporary jobs were secured for most of the seamen who had to leave their ships and for such members of the German and Austrian reserves who could not return to their previous occupations.

By early 1915 only fifty of these men still required maintenance at the expense of the Society. In his report for 1914, President Rother could proudly state that the emergency had been mastered by the Society although "the demands upon our treasury and the service of our agents have at times perplexed your Executive Committee in handling the situation." After enumerating the special services rendered, Rother continued, "the assistance to our poor families, widows and the aged has not been curtailed and your Executive Committee will strive to continue this aid undiminished."

During the following two years, the task was of similar scope. In 1915, 618 seamen and other stranded Germans required meals and shelter. Of these, 262 were given employment. In 1916 the Society called upon its members to donate food, coal, wood and clothing for many among the 668 people under its care. What is most interesting in retrospect is the fact that The German Society of Maryland from 1914 until 1917 did not waver in its adherence to the principles upon which it was founded in 1783. When the war broke out in Europe in 1914, the majority of German-Americans made no attempt to conceal their sympathies for the Old Country. Doubtless many members would have favored the participation of the German Society in the great drive for the German and Austrian Red Cross which netted almost one million dollars in Baltimore prior to 1917. But notwithstanding their personal feelings, President Rother and the men of the Executive Committee

felt bound by duty to the original purpose of the Society. Not a single cent of the funds of the Society was made available for use abroad. Helping the Germans and Austrian sailors stranded in Baltimore was well within its self-chosen duties but collecting money for a Red Cross effort abroad was another thing.

As the war continued and public opinion gradually tended openly toward the Allied cause, everything "German" became suspect. It must be said to the credit of the men who guided the German Society during the fateful years after the Good Friday of 1917 when war between the United States and Germany was declared, that their undivided allegiance to America saved it from becoming a victim of the general Germanophobia, as many other German-American organizations did. Its roots in America, in Maryland and in Baltimore were and are too deep to make it fall prey to any storm of that kind. Of course, there were personal tragedies and torn hearts among its membership. Its work was surrounded by suspicion and often by hatred. But the Society remained intact and continued its charitable work without interruption. In 1917, the Executive Committee held its monthly meetings regularly. No officer ever was absent for any political reason. Even membership-which tends to suffer from such outward strain in most organizations-was hardly affected by the events. Of the 330 members on the rolls before the declaration of war, 279 paid their dues in 1918, most of the losses in membership having been caused by death.

Unexpectedly, the German Society received great reinforcement in its work. Many wives and daughters of members had joined the German and Austrian Red Cross Society of Baltimore in 1914. When the breaking off of relations between the United States and Germany made working for the German Red Cross impossible, they decided to offer their services to The German Society of Maryland. At a meeting with the Executive Committee it was resolved to organize a "Ladies' Auxiliary" to exist independently but coordinating its efforts with those of the Society. On April 17, 1917, the "Ladies' Auxiliary to the German Society" was formally organized with Mrs. Carl A. Luederitz, president, and Mrs. Henry Wood, vice president, a secretary, a treasurer and twelve committee members. The Ladies' Auxiliary assumed right away an important part of the charitable work. Numerous people of German nationality or birth had lost their jobs as a result of the anti-German hysteria. More than fifty families were provided with food, warm clothes, shoes and fuel. By January 1, 1918, the Ladies' Auxiliary had grown to a membership of 186. Ever since it has contributed considerably to the cause of the German Society.

In 1919, the Society helped a good number of released German internees to find their way back to normal life or to return to Germany. Slowly the war-time hysteria abated. Little of what once had been called "German-Americanism" survived the war. Of the multitude of German relief societies which existed in most larger cities before World War I, only those founded in the 18th century came through undaunted, i.e., Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York and Charleston. They were after all truly American societies which had never accepted the hyphen that two generations of German Americans considered a solution to their dualism of allegiance. They could carry on the name "German" without any disguise because it designated not something foreign but only one of the many sources of the life-stream that had made the American nation. Only due to its deep American roots and its singleness of purpose did The German Society of Maryland survive a brief era which had spelled terror and despair to many other German organizations. Its members, some of whom were fourth or even fifth generation American-born, stood for more than an ephemeral Germanism. Proudly they referred to the name

"German" as the essence of their own heritage as Americans, yet not to claim special privileges. The German Society was and is there to serve and to help. It stands aloof from passing political and ethnic movements. It is typical of this attitude that its president in his annual report for 1914 referred to the German sailors as "foreign seamen," because they were neither American citizens nor immigrants intending to become naturalized.

This attitude was again evident twenty-four years later when the United States and Germany were enemies for the second time. Between these two wars lay active and fruitful years for the Society. Immigration from Germany revived somewhat, even after the enactment of the quota laws. It never reached the proportions of the great migration of the 19th century but there was plenty of work to do for those who came after World War I. Every annual report tells about jobs that were secured for these newcomers. Regular assistance to the needy, the aged and the sick went on. From 1919 until 1936, the German Society disbursed a total of \$69,209.57 in cash to its wards. During the same period thousands were assisted in other ways.

When the great depression set in, the Society and its Ladies' Auxiliary displayed an activity reminiscent of the busy days in the 19th century when hundreds of applicants knocked at its door every week. In 1931 alone, almost \$7,000 was distributed to those whom the depression had hit hardest. The Society took care of a considerable number of seamen stranded in Baltimore because of the general layup of American coastwise shipping in 1930-31. Relief was not confined to the city but was extended to needy persons of German extraction in many counties of Maryland.

The agent's reports for that period are often lucid and not without humor. They express enthusiasm and devotion as well as a wholesome, critical attitude toward her charges. This extract from a report by Miss Hattie Gries, beloved agent of the Society for two decades prior to World War II, may serve to give some insight into her work:

"Not a little part of the work of the Society is giving aid to the so-called 'transients.' These range from the professional *Schnorrer*, who travels from place to place and makes a living out of begging, to the man out of work, needy and seeking a new field of employment. Nice discrimination has to be exercised to avoid being taken in by the one or failing to help the other. Rather than err we give the applicant the benefit of the doubt by providing a meal or two and a lodging for the night. As a rule the Friendly Inn proves an acid test as to the kind and character of the applicant. The honest-to-goodness man is usually ready to saw a quantity of wood for his lodgment and breakfast, but the other kind flee as if pursued.

"Many come, plead want and seek carriage to some other city, north, south, east or west, as the case may be. Nine times out of ten, when a ticket is purchased and the applicant is escorted to the wharf or station, he suddenly changes his mind or disappears.

"The range of applicants runs from bogus counts to sure-enough gentle people in distress and from professional men to day laborers. The varied tales they tell would furnish many a theme for a true-life magazine."

A few words should be said to the men who provided the leadership of the German Society between the two World Wars. Robert M. Rother, elected president in 1914, remained at the helm until 1923. For many more years until his death he served on the Board of Directors. In January 1924, he was succeeded by Karl A. M. Scholtz who had joined the Society soon after he entered professional life as a

member of the Baltimore Bar in 1895. He was born in Czenstochow (Poland) in 1869 as the son of a veteran of the Union Army who had temporally returned to Europe after the Civil War. At the age of two, his parents brought him to Baltimore where he spent the remaining seventy years of his life. Scholtz was one of the truly great presidents of the German Society. Of all the many endeavors which filled his official and private life, the Society was closest to his heart. Much of its charitable work was guided personally by him. His undaunted idealism kept the Society together and determined its clear course in accordance with the best traditions of its American and German heritage when great pressure came to bear upon organizations of Americans of German descent as a result of events in Germany. Still from his sick bed, a few days before his death on Christmas Day 1941, he dictated his correspondence as the Society's president.

We now turn to the most recent phase of the life of the German Society of Maryland. To most of its members the events since 1942 will not yet seem historic but much of it has become past and well deserves its place in this account of a rich and eventful history. In January 1942, following the death of Karl A.M. Scholtz, Lewis Kurtz, a native Baltimorean and active member since 1911, was chosen president. This was but a few weeks after Pearl Harbor. Although public opinion was less incensed against fellow-citizens of German extraction than in 1917, much tact and a personality above suspicion were required to lead the Society through the war years. Lewis Kurtz had both. His long personal friendship with leading men of the community, his unwavering patriotism and the prestige which he enjoyed everywhere made it possible for the Society to function normally during World War II.

Moreover, one of the most memorable gatherings took place during this time. On January 26, 1943, in the middle of the war, the Society united with its friends in celebrating the 160th anniversary. Among those present were the Hon. Theodore R. McKeldin, a steadfast friend (and member) of the German Society, whose address entitled "The Cause of the German Society" was received with much acclaim, and the Hon. Howard W. Jackson, Mayor of Baltimore. The Governor of Maryland, the Hon. Herbert R. O'Connor, sent his greetings. A touching letter came from the Maryland Chief Judge, Carroll T. Bond, written on his deathbed, in which he apologized for not being able to come: "It would be a pleasure, if not a duty at just this time, to attend."

This respect for the German Society shown by prominent men at a time when many others would have gladly dissociated themselves from anything bearing the name "German," shows more than all eloquent speeches of calmer days the place which the Society occupies in its city and in its state.

As one of the consequences of the war, it should be reported that The German Society of Maryland, like all other German-American organizations, was subjected to an investigation by agents of the Internal Revenue Service questioning the tax exempt status of the Society. At the regular meeting of the directors of the German Society in March 1947, its counsellor, Herbert F. Kuenne, could report that the tax exempt status of the Society had been preserved.

Any suspicion that government agencies might have held against organizations of the Americans of German descent certainly was baseless with regard to The German Society of Maryland. We have only to glance over the minutes of the war years to substantiate this fact. At the quarterly meeting on April 12, 1943, for instance, expressions from the floor made it plain that despite all sympathy for the cultural heritage of Germany it was standing 100 per cent behind the American war

effort. The Society's secretary, Frederick H. Hennighausen recorded this sentiment in the minutes, as follows: "Our country is at war, and one of our enemies is Germany. Our duty, therefor, is to aid our country in the prosecution of the war and to do whatever lies within our scope to bring the war to a successful conclusion. The Society as such can, of course, take no active, physical part in the military affairs of the nation. However, many of its members and their sons are actively engaged in the military and naval forces of the United States, thereby giving their all to crush our enemies."

During the war years, as George F. Dederer, chairmen of the Executive Committee, reported to the members, much aid was given "people with illness, people with heartaches, people overwhelmed by conditions beyond their control." Through counseling and comforting, sometimes simply listening to folks who just wanted to talk over their problems, many of those to whom the war had brought inner conflicts and fears could be helped. The need for material aid was much smaller than before due to full employment and military service. While the demands on the Society before the war were so heavy that it had to draw upon principal to keep the needy from suffering, it began to restore some of this principal from 1942 on. Membership reached a low of just over one hundred in 1945 but increased rapidly thereafter.

Beginning with the year 1950, the annual meetings of the Society were separated from the annual dinners. In recent years the dinners of the German Society have gained in importance and are always noted with interest by the press and the public. The roster of speakers from 1931 on includes the names of many prominent people. To mention a few among them might serve to illustrate the wide range of attention which the Society has received: Judge Samuel K. Dennis, Chief Judge of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore; U. S. Senator Millard E. Tydings; Dean William F. Notz of the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University; Rabbi Dr. William Rosenau of Eutaw Place Temple; the Rev. J. Franklin Haas of the First Methodist Church; Pastor Fritz O. Evers of Zion Lutheran Church; Pastor Edward F. Engelbert of Martini Lutheran (Missouri Synod) Church; the Hon. Joseph Ridder, prominent newspaper publisher; Dr. Louis P. Lochner, internationally known correspondent of the Associate Press; Dr. Harr C. Byrd, President of the University of Maryland, Dr. Paul C. Empie of the National Lutheran Council; Dr. Otto H. Kraushaar, President of Goucher College.

When Lewis Kurtz relinquished the presidency to Otto H. Franke in January 1952, it was during a period of optimism and prosperity in the country which seemed to make organizations such as the German Society look superfluous. Indeed requests for help were becoming few. Passenger vessels no longer carried new immigrants into the port of Baltimore. More and more newcomers were to speed by aircraft to their destinations without crowding into port cities. In the beginning of his seven years as president, O.H. Franke called on the officers to explore new fields of service which would neither alter nor limit its purpose. O.H. Franke's long association with cultural, charitable and educational institutions and, particularly, his service as treasurer of the society from 1936 until 1943 convinced him that a major project could be embarked upon given the right balance of enthusiasm and stewardship. After careful deliberations a scholarship project was chosen.

The 174th annual meeting on January 16, 1957 unanimously adopted the resolution to "establish a SCHOLARSHIP FUND of \$50,000 to be used to grant scholarships to students of German ancestry at universities or colleges in Maryland, especially such students as a major in the German language."

The following year, when the German Society celebrated its 175th anniversary, the joyful occasion, while gratefully commemorating the achievements of the past, was highlighted by the announcement that the Scholarship Fund had become a reality. The first three scholarships were awarded the very same year. This new opportunity for service proved invigorating for the entire work of the German Society. Over the years many members volunteered to serve on the Scholarship Committee. With an ever increasing number of applications, selection of the most deserving applicants has not always been easy but its members have the satisfaction of finding that many of the earlier grantees have embarked on successful careers. Students of many different backgrounds in Maryland universities and colleges, including several recent immigrants, were assisted financially. During the twenty-two academic years since its establishment, the Scholarship Fund of The German Society has granted 238 awards totalling \$75,810. Much of this period the Scholarship Committee was headed by Dr. Ernst Cloos.

This new, additional project has in no way diminished the readiness "to give assistance and advice to persons of German origin or ancestry arriving or residing in the State of Maryland and to their descendants as may be in want and deemed worthy." The doors are always open. On a typical day of the office secretary a great

variety of people come in or call. Frequently contacts are sought for employment. Some just come into the office to discuss problems in their mother tongue. The needy are helped with medicine and food, the stranded traveler with a ticket. Bewildered by the unfamiliar myriad of social services in the city, newcomers seek advice and are helped with referrals. Even though demand for material aid is not as heavy anymore as in the past, the office reports still mirror certain ups and downs of the economy. Upon the suggestion of Vice President Vernon H. Wiesand the charity payments were broadened in 1969 and more recently have been increased to keep in step with inflation.

The quick pace of recent years is also evident from the number of members who have served as presidents. For the first 176 years of its existence, the German Society had only twelve successive presidents. Since 1959, a span of just over twenty years, eight members have had their turn at the helm of the society, albeit after decades of services in other offices: Francis W. Pramschuefer, Herbert F. Kuenne, Henry P. Thau, Charles F. Stein, Kurt H. George, Vernon H. Wiesand, Dr. Morgan H. Pritchett, and presently Frederick H. Wehrenberg.

Apart from performing the useful purposes in past and present, the members have always enjoyed the fellowship at the annual dinner and other functions. The German Society Medal was created to honor outstanding services to the community. It was particularly gratifying to note that one of the recent recipients, the Hon. William D. Schaefer, is not only the Mayor of Baltimore but also a member of long standing. The German Society has its firm place in the cultural life of Maryland and has in recent years been represented at numerous events. Every year in November members gather for worship at the other Baltimore institution that was founded by German immigrants of the 18th century, Zion Church.

Among its present membership the German Society counts descendants of the founders as well as men and women who came to Baltimore long after World War, II. Theirs is a common heritage and a common future. Together they are pioneers unwilling to rest on the laurels of a glorious past. To this hour the German Society has never abandoned the challenge of its founding fathers: to look toward the future.

APPENDIX I

CONTRACT FOR PASSAGE FROM ROTTERDAM TO BALTIMORE

(*This is a translation of the sample contract which Christian Mayer published in Schloezer's Staats-Anzeigen, Vol. 61, pp. 114-116, Goettingen 1791.*)

To Whom It May Concern: We, the undersigned passengers and our families on the one hand, and Messrs. Friedrich Caerten & Son, merchants at Rotterdam on the other hand, have commonly agreed on the following contract:

1. The above mentioned Messrs. Fr. C. & Son shall furnish the undersigned passengers with a good and comfortable vessel, commanded by an experienced Captain, in order to transport us with the same from Rotterdam across the ocean to Baltimore, to which end durable sleeping places shall be installed for each passenger, six foot long and one and a half foot wide, assuring privacy on both sides.

2. The above mentioned merchants Fr. C. & Son shall equip and furnish the vessel with good and appropriate victuals, i.e., bread, meat, flour, barley, peas, syrup, cheese, beer and water, and whatever else is required.

Such victuals shall be distributed daily among the passengers as follows per freight (those counting half a freight shall receive in proportion):

Sundays: one pound of beef cooked with groats and onions.

Mondays: barley with syrup.

Tuesdays: one pound of flour for cake and salt.

Wednesdays: one pound of beef with peas.

Thursdays: one pound of flour and some salt.

Fridays: dried codfish and

one pound of butter for the whole week.

Saturday: pea soup, one

pound of cheese and seven pounds of bread for the whole week.

Not less than one cup of gin daily and two quarts of water; vinegar shall also be carried on the vessel, likewise juniper berries not only to keep the same clean in order to have at all times good and fresh air on board but especially for the comfort of the people.

3. The undersigned passengers shall be allowed (if the Lord's weather permits) to cook some meals for ourselves and the small children, from 6 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock at night and to stay on deck. The sick shall also have the right at any time to use fire and water as often as required. In return thereof

4. We, the undersigned passengers oblige ourselves to pay to the above mentioned Messrs. Fr. C. & Son or their agents for our passage, baggage and household effects as freight from Rotterdam to Baltimore eleven guineas for each full freight.

(One fare for one man-Received from Messrs. Friedr. Caerten & Son 30 guilders which I shall repay you in America.)

The fare per freight shall be determined in the following manner: children under four are free, from four to fourteen they pay 1/2 fare, from fourteen on they pay full fare.

In full acknowledgement of the mutual obligations and promising to adhere to them truly and sincerely, we bind our persons and properties of any type to all courts and justices. In witness thereof we have confirmed this contract by our own hand.
Given at Rotterdam, July 25, 1784 (Signed: Peter Ruehl)

APPENDIX II

INDENTURE FOR GERMAN IMMIGRANT

(This is the full text of an indenture form printed and sold by William Goddard of Baltimore as reprinted in Christian Mayer's article "Deutsche Emigranten nach Nordamerika," Schloezer's Staats-Anzeigen, Vol 61, pp. 116-117, Goettingen, 1791. Those parts to be filled in by hand are given in italics.)

This INDENTURE Witnesseth, that *A.B. late of C. in Germany* in consideration of *Twenty Pounds current money of Maryland paid by D.E. of-- County for A.B.'s Passage from ---- on board the Ship F. Capn. G. H.* as also for other good Causes *he* the said *A.B.* hath bound and put *him* self servant to the said *D.E.* to serve *him his* Executors or Assigns, from the Day of the Date hereof, for and during the full Term of *Three Years* thence next ensuing. During all which Term, the said Servant *him* said *D. his* Executors or Assigns, faithfully shall serve, and that honestly and obediently in all Things, as a good and dutiful Servant ought to do.

AND the said *D.E. his* Executors and Assigns, during the said Term, shall find and provide for the said *A.B.* sufficient Meat, Drink, Clothing, Washing and Lodging *and at the Expiration of the said Term of Three Years Freedom Dues according to the custom of the Country-either a Milk Cow or the Sum of Five Pounds current money.*

AND for the true Performance hereof, both the said Parties bind themselves firmly unto each other by these presents. In Witness whereof, they have hereunto interchangeably set their Hands and Seal. Dated the ... Day of in the Year of our LORD, One Thousand seven Hundred and Eighty...

Sealed and Delivered in the Presence of:

J.K
A.B.(L.S.)

L.M
D.E.(L.S.)

APPENDIX III

CHARTER OF THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

The following charter or act of incorporation was obtained from the Maryland legislature on the third of February, 1818 by Chapter 100:

WHEREAS, the arrival of Germans and Switzers from Europe, and the numerous settlements made by them in various parts of the Union, have induced a number of persons in this State to associate themselves for the purpose of removing or lessening their distress in a strange land, and these persons having applied to the General Assembly of Maryland, for an act of incorporation. Therefore:

Section 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MD., That Christian Mayer, John Stricker, Augustus J. Schwartz, Bernard J. Von Kapff, Henry Schroeder, Justus Hoppe, John Frederick Fries, Conrad Schultz, James Keerl, Augustus Hammer, Frederick Leypold, Frederick and E. Amelung, Michael Kimmel, William Krebs, Louis Brantz, Philip P. Eckel, Jocab Small, Lawrence Thomsen, Louis Mayer, David Hoffman and William Frick, the present Officers of the German Society of Maryland and all persons who are or may hereafter become members of said Society and their successors, shall be and they are hereby created and made one community, corporation and body politic, for ever hereafter, by the name, style and title of "The German Society of Maryland."

Section 2. AND BE IT ENACTED, that the said corporation, and their successors by the name, style and title aforesaid, shall be capable in law of purchasing, receiving, holding, selling, leasing and conveying, all manner of lands, tenements, goods, chattels, rents, annuities, liberties, franchises or other property, real, personal or mixed; provided always, that the clear annual value or income from the property of the said corporation shall not exceed the sum of \$5,000 exclusive of the monies arising from annual or other stated subscriptions or payments.

Section 3. AND BE IT ENACTED, that the said corporation and their successors by the name aforesaid, shall be for ever hereafter able and capable in law to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered unto, in all or any court of justice, and it shall and may be lawful for them to have and use a common seal, and the same to break, alter and renew, at pleasure, and generally to do all things and acts which may be necessary to carry into effect the benevolent designs of said corporation.

Section 4. AND BE IT ENACTED, that said corporation and their successors, shall be capable of making such rules and bylaws as may be necessary for the regulation and government of said corporation, the same not being contrary to the laws and constitution of this State, or of the United States.

APPENDIX IV

AN ACT RELATIVE TO GERMAN AND SWISS REDEMPTIONERS

(Passed by the General Assembly on February 16, 1818)

WHEREAS, it has been found that German and Swiss emigrants, who for the discharge of the debt contracted for their passage to this country are often obliged to subject themselves to cruel and oppressive imposition by the masters of the vessels in which they arrive, and likewise by those to whom they become servants, BE IT ENACTED:

Section 1. Providing for the appointment by the governor of a trustworthy person, skilled in the German and English languages, as register of all contracts for apprenticeship of German or Swiss emigrants arriving in this State.

Section 2. Regulates the manner of making these contracts, and none shall be valid, unless the same be drawn by the register or approved by him.

Section 4. Provides for the recording of these contracts, or indentures, in a court of record.

Section 5. Provides that the master must give every minor under the age of twenty-one years at least two months' schooling annually during his servitude.

Section 6. No emigrant shall in any case be bound to serve longer than four years.

Section 7. That no German or Swiss emigrant arriving here shall be detained longer than 30 days on board of the vessel after such arrival, and receive during the detention on board good and sufficient provisions, without increase in the period of their servitude.

Section 8. Makes it the duty of the register to remove on shore any sick emigrant or any emigrant having been cruelly or ill-treated by the officers of the ship, at the expense of the vessel. If no purchaser is found for him within sixty days after arrival, the master or owners of the vessel have no further lien on such emigrant.

Section 9. That no children shall be answerable for the passage money of their parents, dead or alive, nor parents for their deceased children, nor a husband for his deceased wife, nor a wife for her deceased husband, any pretense of custom in contract, promise or agreement made beyond sea, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Section 10. That the masters of the vessels arriving, in case of the death of any German or Swiss emigrant, within ten days after arrival deliver to the register an accurate inventory of all the property of such emigrant on board of such vessel. The register shall then sell such property, pay the master the passage-money, provided that if the passenger died before the expiration of one-half of the voyage no passage-money shall be due, and the heirs of the deceased shall be entitled to the proceeds, and if after advertisement and due search no heirs of the deceased can be found within three years after the arrival of the ship then the proceeds to go to the German Society of Maryland.

From: Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland, *Annapolis. Printed by Jonas Green, Printer of the State, 1818, pp. 224-226. (condensed form)*

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OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 1981-1982

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Vice Presidents..... Francis W. Pramschuefer, Jr.
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Secretary..... Harry W. Branflick, Jr.
Treasurer..... Kenneth Utz
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Theodore J. Potthast
Office Secretary..... Inga Roche

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Vernon H. Wiesand, Chairman

HONORARY DIRECTORS

Gordon M. Stick William Muehlhause

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F. William Reis	Amelia Jacobson	Fred J. Prediger
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Frank Zimmerman	Dr. C.M.K. Zintl	Frederick H.
Wehrenberg		

HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

PRESIDENTS

Dr. Charles Frederick 1942-1951		Lewis Kurtz
Wiesenthal 1952-1959	1783-1789	Otto H. Franke
Christian Mayer 1959-1961	1817-1820	Francis W. Pramschuefer
Justus Hoppe 1961-1963	1821-1832	Herbert F. Kuenne
Charles W. Karthaus 1964-1967	1833-1840	Henry P. Thau
Albert Schumacher 1967-1970	1841-1871	Charles F. Stein, Jr.
Herman Von Kapff 1970-1973	1872-1878	Hurt H. George
Claas Vocke 1973-1976	1879-1886	Vernon H. Wiesand
Louis P. Hennighausen 1976-1981	1887-1913	Morgan H. Pritchett
Robert M. Rother 1981-	1914-1923	Frederick H. Wehrenberg
Karl A.M. Scholtz 1924-1941		
		VICE PRESIDENTS
B.J. Von Kapff 1905-1908	1817-1822	Henry Lauts
Gen'l John Stricker 1906-1916	1817-1827	Geo. Bunnecke
Dr. Aug. J. Schwartz 1906-1922	1817-1826	Louis P. Dietrich
Heinrich Schroeder 1907-1918	1817-1822	Jacob Klein
F.W. Brune, Sr. 1916-1922	1822-1861	Edw. Wischmeyer
John Hoffman 1822-1830	Thomas Foley Hiskey	1919-1936
Solomon Etting 1923-1923	1820-1840	Karl A.M. Scholtz
Jacob Small 1923-1928	1826-1829	Chas. Zies
Claas W. Karthaus 1924-1925	1830-1833	Chas. Glaser
Samuel Keel 1925-1925	1830-1841	Heinrich Ruhstrat
Charles G. Boehm 1926-1941	1833-1859	J. George Mohlhenrich
Gustav W. Luerman 1926-1932	1830-1846	Emil Kuehle
Chas. F. Mayer 1927-1928	1840-1845	Otto M. DuBraun
Dr. A. Wegner 1936-1947	1846-1852	George F. Dederer

F.L Brauns	1846-1853	Lewis Kurtz
}1937-1942		
Chas. W. Lentz	1851-1879	
}1952-1956		
Justus Bruehl	1859-1877	Carl L. Nitze
1938-1951		
Gustav W. Lauerman	1860-1867	Henry J. Herzinger
1942-1955		
Wm. Numsen	1861-1889	Francis W. Pramschuefer
1942-1959		
Charles Spiker	1867-1869	Otto H. Franke
1948-1952		
Christian Ax	1869-1872	Anton Hagel
1951-1958		
H. Von Kapff	1870-1871	Herbert F. Kuenne
1958-1961		
Wm. Seemuller	1877-1878	Henry J. Thau
1959-1964		
H. Von Kapff	1879-1887	Charles F. Stein, Jr.
1961-1967		
Jacob Trust	1879-1883	Ernst Cloos
1964-1966		
Henry Wilkens	1883-1887	Kurt H. George
1966-1970		
Fredk. Wehr	1887-1893	Vernon H. Wiesand
1967-1973		
P.L. Keyser	1887-1893	Henry P. Thau
1970-1975		
Claas Vocke	1888-1902	Morgan H. Pritchett
1973-1976		
Fredk. Raine	1889-1893	John Z. Schneider
1975-1977		
Geo. W. Gail	1892-1906	Frederick H. Wehrenberg
1976-1981		
Ernst Knabe	1893-1894	Henry P. Thau
1977-		
C.W. Schneidereith	1894-1906	Francis W. Pramschuefer, Jr. 1981
H.H. Hobelmann	1895-1906	
Henry G. Hilken	1903-1937	

TREASURERS

Frederick Waesche	1817-1824	
}1936-1943		
Benj. J. Cohen	1825-1844	Otto H. Franke
Israel Cohen	1845-1876	}1947-1948
1943-1946		Herman Badenhoop, Jr.
John R. Seemuller	1877-1878	Otto H. Ernsting
1949-1959		
Eberhard Niemann	1879-1889	C. Arthur Keene
1959-1968		
Chas. Weber, Jr.	1890-1907	William Muehlhause
1968-1973		
Robert M. Rother	1908-1909	Francis E. Preissler, Jr.
1973-1974		
Conrad C. Rabbe	1909-1914	John Z. Schneider
1974-1977		
William Spilman	1915-1921	Gerhard Siebert
1977-1978		
Edwin A. Spilman	1922-1935	Fred J. Prediger
1978-1981		
		Kenneth R. Utz 1981

SECRETARIES

Lewis Mayer	1817-1822	J.C. Wilkens
1874-1886		
Lawrence Thomsen	1817-1820	H. G. Hilken
1874-1886		
Wm. Frick	1818-1820	John Hinrichs
1887-1888		
Henry G. Jacobson	1821-1823	J.W. Middendorf
1887-1893		
B.J. Cohen	1824-1825	R.M. Rother
1888-1899		
J.C. Dants	1825-1826	M. Meyerdirck
1894-1895		
Fredk. L. Brauns	1826-1828	H. Ruhstrat
1899-1910		
Chas. Starke	1829-1833	Hans V. Marees
1911-1913		
Fredk. Focke	1832-1840	Herman Knollenberg
1896-1914		
Chas. Spilker	1833-1843	Henry A. Frentz
1915-1935		
Claas Vocke	1843-1853	Fredk. H. Hennighausen
1935-1949		
Charles W. Lentz	1841-1849	Herbert F. Kuenne
1949-1958		
Geo. Sander	1846-1851	Leroy H. List
1958-1961		
G.H. Spilker	1852-1856	Vernon Wiesand
1961-1973		
H. Von Kapff	1853-1870	Morgan H. Pritchett
1973-1974		

D.H. Meier 1974-1975	1856-1865	Henry P. Thau
Geo. A. Von Lingen 1975-1981	1865-1873	Frederick H. Wehrenberg
H. Wilkens 1981-	1870-1873	Harry W. Branflick, Jr.

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