

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

OCTOBER 6, 1987—GERMAN AMERICAN DAY

What the Germans brought to America?

The war had a "devastating impact on Germany," he explained, "resulting in a loss of at least one-fourth of the population, and the desire to seek a better life in the New World."

But Germans were also attracted to America by William Penn, he said, "who traveled to Germany and spoke in Frankfurt am Main and in the Rhineland area about Pennsylvania and the religious freedom it offered."

"This ignited interest in America and the possibility of immigration."

When a group of Mennonites approached Pastorius in 1683, he set off to Pennsylvania himself to seal the deal.

Arriving in Mid-August, he negotiated with William Penn for the tract of land slightly north-west of Philadelphia where Germantown would be born.

He split this land between German Society investors and the Krefeld emigrants who were currently making the 74-day journey to the US.

Their ship – the Concord - arrived in Philadelphia on October 6th.

A growing population

Over the next few years, Germantown grew rapidly.

As well as sharing Penn's wish to develop a commonwealth of peace, brotherly love, and religious toleration, most of the Pennsylvania Germans were skilled farmers and craftspeople.

They sold farm produce in Philadelphia, as well as setting up a successful linen weaving business.

Meanwhile, Pastorius stayed in the settlement he had created.

In 1688, he and three others signed The Germantown Quaker Petition Against Slavery, thought to be the first anti-slavery petition presented by white colonies in America.
