

Forsyth County, North Carolina. BETHARA

In 1740 Norwegian Moravians took part in the founding of a Moravian colony at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and in 1747 of one at Bethabara, North Carolina. At Bethlehem these Norwegian (and Swedish and Danish) Moravians came in contact with their kinsmen, the Swedish Lutherans of Delaware and adjoining parts of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Swedes on the Delaware had lost their independence in 1656. New Sweden as a political state existed but sixteen years. Ecclesiastically, however, the Lutherans of New Sweden remained subject to the state church at home for one hundred and fifty years more, and linguistically the colony was Swedish nearly as long. In the church records of this colony there appear not a few Norwegian names, particularly in the later period. We know that Norwegians in considerable numbers came to America and joined the Delaware Swedes in the eighteenth century. Gothenburg, which lies not far distant from the province of Smaalenene, was at the time, and has continued to be, the regular Swedish sailing port for America-bound ships.

One of the most prominent members of the Bethabara Colony was **Dr. John M. Calberlane**, born 1722 in Trondhjem, Norway. He came to New York in 1753, having sailed from London on the ship Irene, June thirteenth, arriving on September ninth. Dr. Calberlane's name occupies a foremost place among the old colonial physicians; he was a man of much ability, noble in character and untiring in his devotion to the welfare of his fellow colonists. On July twenty-eighth, 1759, he himself succumbed to a contagious fever that visited the settlement. In a sermon delivered on Easter Sunday, 1760, Bishop Spangenberg gave public recognition of Calberlane's service in his short life of six years in the colony.

Other Norwegians among these Moravian colonists were: Susanna Stokkeberg, from Söndmøre, Norway, born 1715, who came to America in 1744 with her husband, Abraham Reinke, a Swede, to whom she had been married that year in Stockholm. Reinke is reputed to have been an able preacher of the gospel, the two laboring together in the congregations of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Philadelphia, and Lancaster. She died in 1758, he in 1760, leaving a son, Abraham Reinke. Peter Peterson, who was born in Norway in 1728, and had joined the church in London, came to America as a sailor on the ship Irene in 1749. He died in 1750. Jens Wittenberg, a tanner from Christiania, born 1719, came on the Irene in 1754; he died in the colony, 1788. Martha Mans (probably Monsdatter), from Bergen, born 1716, came on the Irene in 1749. She lived in Bethabara as a teacher and religious adviser until 1773. At the same time, also, came Enert Enerson, a carpenter, while in 1759 came Catherine Kalberlahn, and in 1762 Christian Christensen, a shoemaker, from Christiana. The latter was born in 1718; he had lived some years in Holland before coming to America. The year of his death is 1777. Erik Ingebretsen came over June twenty-second, 1750, via Dover, having been on the ocean six weeks, a remarkably short passage for that time.

The names of several Norwegians are recorded who served in the War of the Revolution. Thus

under John Paul Jones served Thomas Johnson, who was born 1758, the son of a pilot in Mandal, Norway. The New England Historical Register, Volume XXVIII, pages 18–21, gives an account of Johnson's career in the American marine, from which we learn that he was among those who served on board the Bon Homme Richard in her cruise in 1779, having been transferred by Paul Jones from the Ranger. Later he went with Paul Jones to the Serapis and the Alliance and finally to the Ariel. With the last ship he arrived in Philadelphia February eighteenth, 1781. For a fuller account of Johnson's career the interested reader is referred to the source of which mention has already been made.

Thomas Johnson lived to the good old age of ninety-three, dying July twelfth, 1807, in the United States Naval Hospital in Philadelphia. He had been a pensionist here for a number of years, being known generally by the nickname "Paul Jones." A biography of Johnson written by John Henry Sherburne was published at Washington in 1825, to which I have, however, not had access. Another Norwegian by the name of Lewis Brown (Lars Bruun) also served under John Paul Jones. I lack further particulars, however, regarding Brown, except that he is spoken of in Sherburne's book, *Life of Thomas Johnson*.

A Norwegian sailor, Captain Iverson, settled in Georgia some time about the close of the eighteenth century. United States Senator Iverson from Georgia was a grandson of this Norwegian sailor pioneer in Georgia.[25] About 1805 another sailor, Torgus Torkelson Gromstu, from Gjerpen, near Skien, Norway, settled in New York.

In my article on "The Danish Contingent in the Population of Early Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, 1906, I spoke of a society, styling itself Scandinavia, as having been organized in New York City on June twenty-seventh, 1844. I there designated this as the earliest organization of the kind in this country. This I find now to be incorrect. As early as 1769 the *Societas Scandinaviensis* was founded in Philadelphia. The membership of this society was made up of Swedes, Norwegians and Danes, the first of these presumably being in the majority. The first president of the society was Abraham Markoe (Markö), a Norwegian. One of the memorable events in the history of the society was a farewell reception given in "City Tavern" on December eleventh, 1782, in honor of Baron Axel Ferson, hero of the Battle of Yorktown. The committee of seven appointed to present the invitation and also to wait upon General George Washington at Hasbrouch House, Newburg, with a view of securing his presence consisted of the following: Captain Abraham Markoe, Sakarias Paulsen, Andreassen Taasinge, Rev. Andrew Goeranson, Jacob Van der Weer, John Stille and Andrew Keen. Says the chronicler of the event:

"This event was one of the most glorious in the Society's history. The reception was held at the City Tavern, Wednesday evening, December eleventh, 1782. The President of the St. Andrew's Society, Rev. Wm. Smith, D. D., lauded the bravery of the Baron and his men at the Battle of Yorktown, whereupon General Washington in thanking the members of the Society for their

forethought in tendering the reception to the noble officer (he subsequently decorated Ferson with the "Order of the Cincinnati" for valor displayed) expressed his pleasure at being present among the people of his forefathers' blood, as he claimed descent from the family of Wass, who emigrated from Denmark in the year A. D. 970, and settled in the County Durham, England, where they built a small town, calling it Wass-in-ga-tun (town of Wass.)"

Source: A History of Norwegian Immigration to the United States : From the Earliest Beginning down to the Year 1848 by George Tobias Flom