

The Origins of the Bethabara Colony from Norway



In 1740 Norwegian Moravians founded a Moravian colony in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and in 1747, another colony settled in Bethabara, North Carolina. In Bethlehem, these Norwegians, including some Swedish and Danish families came in contact with their kinsmen. The Swedish Lutherans of Delaware were in parts of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. When the Swedes who settled on Delaware lost their independence in 1656, the new political state of New Sweden existed, but only for 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. The church records of this colony reveal many Norwegian names. During the 18th century, Norwegians came in considerable numbers to America and joined the Delaware Swedes. The port to look to is *Gothenburg*, which lies not far distant from the province of *Smaalenene* - since it was a regular Swedish sailing port for American-bound ships.

One of the most prominent members of the Bethabara Colony in North Carolina was Dr. John M. Calberlane, born in 1722 in Trondhjem, Norway. He came to New York in 1753, having sailed from London on the ship *Irene* on June 30th, arriving on September 9th. Dr. Calberlane, whose noble character and untiring devotion to the welfare of his fellow colonists, takes its place among the old distinguished colonial physicians. On July 28, 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 the service of Calberlane in his short life of six years in the colony.

Other Norwegians among these Moravian colonists were: Susanna Stokkeberg, from Sondmore, 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

died 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 in 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.

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

<https://books.google.com/books?id=PhsOAAAIAAJ&pg=PA38&lpg=PA38&dq=Dr.+John+M.+Calberlane&source=bl&ots=Ej6PY6egfb&sig=ACfU3U1EHB YUqX36AmbXGp2Yo4PEBoH7WQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj3oNrhka1AhWIVTABHVkoBxwQ6AF6BAgEEAM#v=onepage&q=Dr.%20John%20M.%20Calberlane&f=false>

<https://northcarolinapioneers.com/counties/countyforsyth.html>