

**HISTORY OF THE
GERMAN SOCIETY
OF MARYLAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649604647

History of the German society of Maryland by Louis P. Hennighausen

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

LOUIS P. HENNIGHAUSEN

**HISTORY OF THE
GERMAN SOCIETY
OF MARYLAND**

HISTORY

OF THE

German Society of Maryland



JOHN STRICKER

R 26-25

HISTORY

OF THE

German Society of Maryland

COMPILED BY

LOUIS P. HENNIGHAUSEN

READ AT THE MEETINGS OF

THE SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF
THE GERMANS IN MARYLAND

1909

For Sale by
W. E. C. Harrison & Sons, Booksellers and Stationers
214 E. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Md.

1909

Copyright, 1909, by
Louis P. Hennighausen

Press of
The Sun Job Printing Office
Baltimore

HISTORY
OF THE
German Society of Maryland.

The history of "The German Society of Maryland" will be more interesting and better understood by some knowledge of the formation and histories of similar societies in other Atlantic ports of North America during the eighteenth century, who still continue their noble work of charity at the present time. They came into existence during the years of 1764 to 1784 in the cities of Philadelphia, Pa.; Charleston, South Carolina; Baltimore, Maryland, and New York, with the object to assist German immigrants in distress and to mitigate and finally to abolish a pernicious system of contract labor of free white persons, which in reality became a system of slavery limited in years. We find that most of the laws governing the conduct of negro slaves, were in the course of time made applicable to the white contract immigrant laborers usually called "Redemptioners."

There is an erroneous impression that these redemptioners were all Germans, when, in fact, persons of all nationalities were kept under that bondage. For many years English, Irish and Scotch had preceded them, and the earliest German immigrants to our country were free settlers who paid for their passage and for their homesteads.

It is to the everlasting credit to these early German immigrants and their descendants that they were the first and, as far as known to the author, the only men who combined to mitigate and at last to free their poor fellow immigrants from the thralldom of this bondage.

THEIR PATRIOTISM AS AMERICANS.

Nor did these early settlers who formed these societies confine themselves to mere humanitarian work, building churches, schools, orphanages, etc., they were also patriotic, public-spirited citizens. When the colonies rose to throw off the English yoke in the years 1776 to 1782, they took an active part in the war for the independence of our country. Every one of these large German societies elected men as their officers, who rendered or had rendered voluntary military service in the American army during the Revolutionary War.

General F. W. Von Steuben, Col. H. E. Lutterloh, Lieut. Col. F. H. von Weisenfels, of New York; General Peter Mühlenberg, Fr. A. Mühlenberg, the first speaker of the House of Congress; Col. Ludwig Farmer, of Pennsylvania; Major Michael Kalteisen, Commander of Fort Johnson, Charleston, South Carolina; Major Karl Friedrich Wiesenthal, M. D., of Baltimore, Maryland, were all distinguished officers of the War of Independence, and served as presidents of the several German societies in their respective states.

An interesting full history of the German Society of Pennsylvania was published by the historian, Dr. Oswald Seidenstricker, Philadelphia, 1876; the history of the New

York Society by Anton Eickhoff, in his "Der Neuen Heimath," E. Steiger and Company, New York, 1884. The history of the German Society of Charleston, South Carolina, has to my knowledge never been published or written. I have therefore given it more space in this work and made use of information furnished by its officer from the records; and of the historical sketches by General J. A. Wagner, published in *Deutsche Pioneer*, Cincinnati, 1871, p. 2 and 36; *The Germans in Colonial Times* by Lucy Forney Bittinger, J. P. Lippencott Co., Philadelphia, 1901; *Koerner's Deutsche Element*, 1880, A. E. Wilde and Company, Cincinnati. The history of the German Society of Maryland is taken from the original records of the society, the earliest records up to the year 1817 being lost, and of later records partly destroyed by the great fire of 1904, also from contemporaneous publications, newspaper and manuscripts, many legislative acts, law reports, personal conversation with old persons who had been redemptioners, letters, etc., etc., relating to *the redemptioners*.

A redemptioner was a person from Europe, desirous, and often induced and persuaded to emigrate to the English colonies of North America, to better his condition, and had not the means to pay for his passage.

The owners and captains of an emigrant vessel to these colonies were willing to take such persons across, if the persons, and if minors, the parents or guardians for them, would sign a contract: that on their arrival they would pay for the passage, by the captain hiring them as servants for a term of years to masters willing to pay the wages in advance to the amount of the passage money.