

## THE HOPE PASSENGERS - AN IMMIGRATION STORY

Passengers on the British ship Hope, traveling from Rotterdam to Philadelphia in 1733, were a combination of both unattached immigrants and Mennonite families – all apparently from the South Palatine area of Germany. While there is strong evidence that the majority of passengers were Mennonites, no one is quite sure yet whether **Hans Michael jurig Brimer** was part of that group, or simply a migrant refugee traveling on the same ship.

What is known is that there were several families of Mennonites on the Hope who had experienced a particularly difficult time. They could be considered long-time religious refugees during a time of major social and religious upheaval throughout the European region.

These “Hope” families had experienced what historians call “the first expulsion” of Swiss Mennonites from their homes in towns and villages in the Swiss Emmenthal Valley area (especially Sumiswald). They fled together to the Alsace area in 1671, living there about 40 years.

### SETTING THE STAGE

As for **Hans Michael jurig Brimer**, he was born in 1706, apparently in the Pfalzer area of Lower Palatine, after a period of brutal regional wars. Soon after his birth, during 1708 and 1709, the area was hit by the harshest winters in over 100 years, killing crops and vineyards. Food production was sparse. Add to that the oppressive taxation, the religious bickering, and the need for more and better land, migration to the new world became very attractive. In 1709, Queen Ann invited harassed Palatinates to journey to the British areas of America and Ireland, provided they agreed to allegiance to the Crown, and renounced all ties to the Pope and the Stuarts. Over 7,000 responded and traveled to Rotterdam to board British ships. By 1712, over 3,000 Palatinates had migrated to America, and 4,000 to Ireland.

While this major migration was underway, the French King was evicting the “Hope” families, along with most other Mennonites who were in the Alsace area. The “Hope” families had not yet decided to migrate to America or Ireland – electing to move the twenty or thirty miles on into the Zweibrucken region of Lower Palatinate instead, settling in the town of Zweibrucken in 1712. During this same time period (1709-1717), the remaining Mennonites in Switzerland were experiencing a “second expulsion”. Most were resettling in Lower Palatinate. Apparently some were aware of the Zweibrucken Mennonites and decided to move there to join them. By the time Hans Michael was 26, there were 27 Mennonite families living in Zweibrucken in 1732.

But hostilities between France and Germany were flaring up again. France wanted to use part of the Palatine area as a corridor to reach what was then called the “United Netherlands” (Holland). The Mennonites, who were pacifists, refused to defend their adopted Palatine homeland. So the locals wanted them gone. To encourage them to move on, their “protection” fees were doubled, land purchases were restricted, and the number of Mennonite families was not allowed to exceed 200.

The favorable attitude by the British government encouraging people from Palatine to settle in the North American colonies could not be ignored. Settlers of some areas were even being offered free land, tools, and a year's food supplies. William Penn, the Quaker, was seeking immigrants to settle his new lands in the Pennsylvania area. He sent his recruiting agent Martin Kuedig to Palatine. By 1712, a considerable group of Mennonite immigrants had been recruited and successfully resettled to the Chester area of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Kuedig sought out all groups, but obviously his heart was out for the Mennonites.

By 1718 there were 600 of the faith occupying 15,000 acres of land in the Chester area of Pennsylvania. By 1732, approximately 3,000 Mennonites from the Palatine region had arrived in America and were writing family members to join them.

Thus the stage was set for the Hope's particular group of Palatine refugees and Mennonite families to join the thousands of other immigrants leaving the region. They traveled to Amsterdam solely and in small groups. But Amsterdam was suffering with small pox among the local children. The immigrants boarded the ship and sailed to America. Children died on the trip, as did adults.

### **THE JOURNEY BEGINS**

Research indicates there were approximately nineteen adult unmarried / single male refugees on the Hope whose background cannot be confirmed. **Hans Michael jurig Brimer** was one of those. He is shown on the original ship passenger manifest list as being single and age 27 when he boarded. He was the only person with that last name on the Hope - there is no record of a wife or children. When the ship arrived in Philadelphia in August 1733 and the passenger manifest list was filed, a mandatory second list of those pledging allegiance to the Crown was also prepared and filed. On that list, his name was shown as **Hans Georg Brimmer**.

A third mandatory list was also filed, which lists all those males over the age of 16 signing an "abjuration" against the Pope and the Stuarts, renouncing each and recanting all allegiances to them – which again lists his name as **Hans Georg Brimmer**. A Philadelphia census conducted in 1733 lists his name.

Once safely on American soil, most Mennonites families apparently moved on to Pennsylvania, while some elected to travel to Charleston, then on to one of the newly forming Carolina townships. The unattached single men had to decide what to do.

Settlers in the new townships were promised 50 acres of free farmland per person, 1 year of food supplies, as well as basic tools, and a free lot in town. **Hans Michael jurig Brimer** elected to travel to the Carolina townships.

### **ARRIVING IN ORANGEBURGH TOWNSHIP**

We do know **Hans Michael** arrived in the newly forming township of Orangeburgh, in the recently created Berkeley County, which was actually an expansion of a pre-existing village called Saxe-Goth, located along the Edisto River. We think there is a distinct possibility that Hans arrived in the area about two years later, on Sunday, 20 July 1735 aboard the ship "Oliver" captained by Robert Robinson.

On the other hand, the government also provided an overland method of travel from Charleston to the Orangeburgh area that included use of horses to carry both the

immigrants and their travel provisions, plus a guide. However the overland trip from Charleston took about 6 days, and was very difficult. Travel provisions were sufficient for the groups and fairly good, and included rice, meat, biscuits, salt, plus Welsh corn and flour. The food was distributed daily.

But daytime travel was affected by heat and humidity. There was no good water available. There were no shelters or tents. The travelers had to sleep under the pine trees for shelter. There simply was neither help nor comfort provided. Some nearly died.

When the immigrants arrived in the newly forming Orangeburgh Township, they discovered there was no housing and no basic support services – just a few village cottages along the river. Nothing else existed but forests. Letters have been found which describes the conditions the new settlers faced upon arrival in the area, including no shelter, and how sad, sorrowful and wretched they felt at having believed the words written in Jean Pierre Purry's pamphlet encouraging emigration to Carolina.

Weakened by the trip, some immigrants were very distressed at their plight and the wretched conditions they were facing, and decided to travel back to Charleston. When back in Charleston, and taking their complaints about their plight to the government representatives, they were given promises, but most did not believe them and decided to travel back to Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania countryside.

As for **Hans Michael jurig Brimer**, we do know that he was listed on a Philadelphia census in 1733 taken soon after his arrival there. And we do know that he had arrived in Orangeburgh by 1735 and had decided to stay. We are not sure if he had ties to a Solomon Brimer, who was already in Berkeley County and who had received a land grant for 365 acres on 15 September 1705 or not. But we do know that **Hans Michael** was allocated both a 200 acre piece of farm property, and town lot number 170 on 24 September 1735. He was issued a land grant with a drawing of the properties, as well as a written description signed by the surveyor George Haig (see picture below of a reproduction of the document). The land grant was apparently approved, filed, and a warrant issued 17 September 1736 (record S213019 Volume 0034 page 00454). See picture of the original Orangeburgh Township layout below, with lot 170 highlighted.

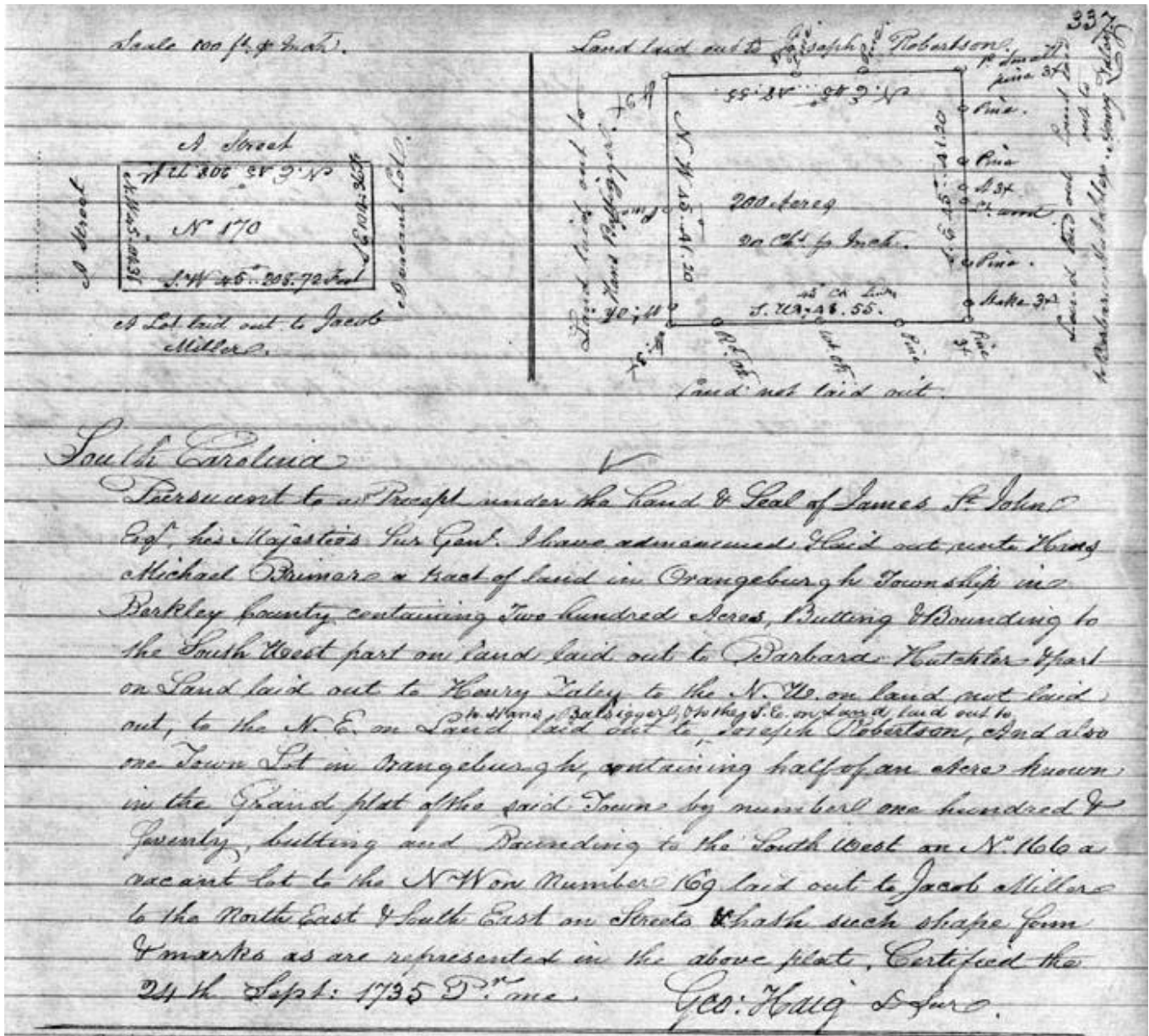
Because rules at the time permitted a grant of 50 acres of farmland per person, we assume that Hans Michael arrived in Orangeburgh with a wife and two children. But we only know of his son Benjamin, so more research is required to determine who the second child is – if there was one. There was apparently a quiet practice of temporarily “adopting” a child in order to qualify for more land. Research also needs to be done to determine whether Hans married one of the single Hope passenger women after arriving in Philadelphia, or someone else that he met after his arrival.

And a question remains as to whether Hans and family arrived with the other original Orangeburgh settlers by the boat that sailed from Philadelphia, arriving in Charleston (as noted by the Charleston newspaper at the time), then sailing up the Edisto River to the newly forming Orangeburgh, or whether he and his young family hiked down from Philadelphia using the Indian trails, then hiked on to Orangeburgh using the overland route.

# MAP OF ORIGINAL ORANGEBURGH TOWNSHIP SHOWING LOT 170



**GRANT DEED / PLAT  
OF HANS MICHAEL JURIG BRIMER FARMLAND AND TOWN LOT 170  
24 September 1735**



Note: Many of the original deed documents were quickly deteriorating, requiring handmade copies to be made (like the one shown here), which have only recently been digitized for the state archives.

Hans Michael jurig Brimer died in the summer of 1765. South Carolina Archives lists a "memorial" document for 200 acres and a town lot dated 24 August 1765 with names of Hans' neighbors and friends also listed – Henry Belsiger (lot 174), Barbara Hutchler, Joseph Robertson and Henry Zaley (lot 168). (See South Carolina Archives Series S111001, Volume 0008, page 00019, Item 005).

Compiled from various sources by Michael Brimer, August 2012