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Joseph Crellius and German Immigration To New England 1740-1754

The Background of Germantown in Quincy, Massachusetts*

by Robert Paul Bloomberg

Joseph Crellius (or Crell)¹ earned a place in American history mainly through his prominent participation in two business enterprises — the Germantown, Massachusetts, industrial project, and the promotion of the immigration of Germans to colonial New England. Strangely, in both of these ventures he failed. Nevertheless, he left his mark to the extent that a study of his activities gives a better understanding of the concept of Germantown, of the immigration of Palatine Germans to this country in the mid-eighteenth century, and of the man named Crellius. That is the three-fold purpose of this paper.

I

Joseph Crellius was born in the Franconia, or Franken, district of Germany, and migrated to America in 1736 with his two daughters and his brother Stephen. They were granted by the Government of the Colony 750 acres of land at Saxe-Gotha on the Congaree River in South Carolina, where the first German settlers in that region had arrived only one year before. One of the original settlers returned home with a description of the area signed by thirty-one colonists. The Crelliuses may have been influenced by this advertising. It is known that several people did emigrate as a result of it.²

After just three years in America, Joseph Crellius petitioned the South Carolina legislature for £350 to finish a wheat mill he had started to build; the money was to be repaid upon completion.³ Crellius had actually

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Beyond the fence, and now surrounded by breakwater stone, the Germantown Wharf extends into Town Bay, as it has from the days of Joseph Crellius' map of Germantown.

received only £22, and it appears that he did not finish the mill. Although his farm had prospered, he apparently tired of it quickly. In September 1739 he advertised it for sale along with all his other goods including three slaves.⁴ Soon after this he moved to Philadelphia.

Once settled in Philadelphia, Crellius turned to a new profession, that of printer. He produced the German-language weekly, the *Hochdeutsche-Pennsylvanische Journal*. This was the second journal of this type in the Colonies. Crellius advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of May 26, 1743 that "he hath began (sic) to publish a Weekly newspaper in the German

language."⁵ A few days later another notice soliciting advertisements appeared in the *Gazette*, signed by Joseph Crellius.⁶

Christoph Sauer's *Hochdeutsche-Pennsylvanischen Geschichtsschreiber* on June 17, 1741 stated that Crellius had printed several numbers of his paper in English type while he was awaiting the arrival of a supply of German type from Europe. On November 10, 1743 the *Gazette* carried this Crellius advertisement: "Being recovered from my Sickness, I continue to publish my Weekly German Newspaper, which I began in May last."⁷ The paper probably ceased publication some time in 1744. No

copies of it are known to exist today.⁸

Crellius's press published at least one pamphlet in 1743 titled "Ein Extract von der Registratur der Suprem Court, mit dem Nahmen-Register der letzt hin Naturaliserten, und die Eyde mit dem Quaker Attest."⁹ (An excerpt from the Registry of the Supreme Court, with the registry of names of those most recently naturalized, and the oaths with the Quaker declaration.) More significantly, Benjamin Franklin arranged with Crellius to have Franklin's pamphlet "Plain Truth" translated into German. This Crellius did and the pamphlet was published by Gotthard Armbruster in 1747.¹⁰

To supplement his income, Crellius conducted a night school during the winter and operated a store that sold "allerlei gangbaren Waaren."¹¹ (all kinds of marketable goods.) He translated the will of Henry Hartman from English into German in 1744 and probably acted as a translator for the German community on other occasions.¹²

Near or perhaps over the printing shop in 1749 was the home of Dr. Peter Nygh who had married Crellius's daughter Anna.¹³ The house in which the Nyghs lived was insured by Sarah Dillwyn, the owner of Benjamin Franklin's eighth home in Philadelphia. Franklin's dwelling, into which he moved in 1750, was at the corner of Race and Second streets, not far from the Nyghs.¹⁴

There is additional evidence of a close association and friendship between Benjamin Franklin and the Crellius family. Crellius's daughter Mary gave to William Strahan, a close friend of Franklin's, power of attorney to receive a legacy from England.

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Because of some confusion about her name, she wrote her signature on a piece of paper and had Franklin send it to Strahan.¹⁵ Several years later Franklin wrote from Utrecht, Holland, to his daughter Deborah that "At Amsterdam I met with Mr. Crellius and his Daughter that was formerly Mrs. Neigh; her husband died in Carolina and she is married again and lives very well in that City. They treated us with great Civility and Kindness; . . ."¹⁶ It is reasonable to assume that it was through this relationship that Crellius later became acquainted with Franklin's brother John who became involved in immigration schemes in Boston; and it was probably from this connection that Benjamin Franklin became interested in the Germantown venture in Massachusetts.

It was with this promising background that Joseph Crellius entered the immigration business and became a leader in the Germantown venture.*

II

There is no direct evidence that sheds light as to the reasons why Joseph Crellius became entangled in immigration promotion as a means of earning his living. The first reference to his interest in this field is a notice he published in Sauer's paper on September 21, 1746 asking his debtors to settle with him as he intended to travel to Holland in the spring. Here as before, he offers many of his belongings for sale, including a "young negro (sic) who understands baking."¹⁷ There is also a reference to a second voyage in 1748-1749 in a letter from Crellius to Spencer Phips, Lt. Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.¹⁸

There are two plausible explanations as to why Crellius offered his services as an immigration agent to the Colony. The first, albeit the less likely, is suggested by author Lucy Bittinger among others. She claims that Crellius had become acquainted with Henri Luther, a printer, type-founder, and aulic counselor¹⁹ in Frankfurt, Germany.²⁰ Luther, who figures prominently in later events, was intensely committed to correcting abuses in the trade in Palatine emigrants and wanted to start an emigration to New England free from these faults. Since it is known that Benjamin Franklin was actively involved in the promotion and financing of German language papers in America, it is possible that he knew Luther first

*Germantown is a peninsula in what was then Braintree, now Quincy, Massachusetts.

and introduced him to Crellius.²¹ However, it appears that Crellius had corresponded with Luther only briefly and formally prior to 1749 since, when he went to Europe in 1751, he carried with him a letter of introduction to Luther from Lt. Governor Phips.

The role of Phips is better supported by other available information. It started with the letter from Philadelphia dated December 19, 1749, mentioned above, from Crellius to Phips. In it Crellius refers to Phips' speech to the General Court of Massachusetts on November 23, 1749 wherein he urged that positive steps be taken to encourage the immigration of foreign Protestants to the Colony.²² Phips and other influential men in the province believed that Massachusetts would benefit greatly by an influx of such people. These immigrants would provide the skilled labor much needed by the Colony, and also could act as a buffer on the western frontier against the French and the Indians.²³

From this small beginning, events built rapidly. On January 10, 1750 the General Court ordered that a bill be drawn up to supersede any act that tended to discourage immigration to Massachusetts. Two weeks later the General Court voted to establish four townships for prospective settlers: two in the western part of the Colony near Fort Massachusetts; and two in southwestern Maine which was then part of Massachusetts.²⁴ For Crellius this meant that if he could fulfill the requirements of the act, namely to bring in 120 settlers to each township within three years, he would receive 200 acres of land in each township for himself. Joseph Crellius was thus commissioned to solicit and import foreign Protestants to Massachusetts as settlers.²⁵ Jasper Stahl in his *History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro* claims that Crellius's application for the commission received the endorsement of Benjamin Franklin. In view of the friendship between Crellius and Franklin, and Franklin's interest in things German, Stahl's undocumented statement seems reasonable.²⁶

Coincident with these events, but unrelated to them, Joshua Winslow presented a memorial to the General Court representing the advantage to the Colony of bringing in foreign Protestants. The General Court voted to comply with his request to sail to Northern Ireland and bring back between 300 and 500 Protestants with at least 30 families among them. In conjunction with this the Court voted

to appoint a two-man committee to survey and lay out 63 house lots in the westernmost township. The Court laid down specific requirements that the settlers would have to meet before they could claim ownership of the land.²⁷ Although nothing came of Winslow's plans, the spirit of encouraging immigration to the Colony was clearly in the air.²⁸

In his opening message to the General Court on May 30, 1750, Lt. Governor Phips reported that Joseph Crellius had arrived in Boston and had delivered to him more particular plans to effect his project. Phips thought it to be of great importance to encourage the settlement of Germans since they were likely to introduce "many useful Manufactures . . ." and teach us ways to increase our wealth by their example of frugality and diligence.²⁹ Two weeks later on June 12, the General Court received and sent to committee a memorial from Crellius containing his proposals for establishing "the linnen and other Manufactures within this Province."³⁰ The result of the committee's deliberations, reported out on January 12, 1751, buttressed by Crellius's petition, his plans and his behind-the-scenes maneuvering, was the passage of the first law in the colonies that regulated the importation of immigrants to a province.

To prevent overcrowding and other evils on board ship during the Atlantic crossing, the act fixed the amount of space allotted to each passenger, specified penalties for infractions, and provided for on-board inspections. It tried to protect the kin of passengers who died on a voyage by making the master of the vessel account for all the deceased's goods, so that after debts were settled, the remainder could be used for the survivors' benefit.³¹ Unfortunately this law had at best only a minor effect on the conditions of the Atlantic crossing.³² It did nothing to relieve the problems encountered by the emigrants in Europe before they embarked for America, nor did it address the conditions awaiting them when they arrived in their new country.

Before setting sail for Europe to begin his work, Crellius must have had a sobering thought. The task before him was huge: to gather 480 families in three years in order to receive the dubious award of 800 acres of uncleared, unsettled forest land on the frontier where hostile French and Indians were a constant threat. In order to maximize his chances of success in an exceedingly risky venture, Crellius

entered into two other schemes at the same time. One of these was conducted entirely under cover, the other in the open; but both ran counter to the avowed purposes of the original grant from the Colony of Massachusetts. Both are discussed below.

III

No history of the German immigration is possible without mention of Samuel Waldo (1696-1759), the Boston merchant whose vast land holdings centered around present Waldoboro, Maine. The story of Waldo and his efforts to obtain settlers for his lands in Maine is a long and involved one that is outside the scope of this paper. Attention will, however, be given to Waldo's relations with Joseph Crellius, and his concurrent activities in the immigrant trade.

It is not known precisely how or when Crellius met Samuel Waldo.³³ It is known that Waldo, probably through an agent, sent word to Crellius that he desired some of the immigrants resulting from Crellius's 1748-1749 trip to Europe to be sent to his lands at Broad Bay in Maine. Twenty to thirty families did in fact go there after Crellius's transport reached Philadelphia.³⁴ According to Stahl, sometime between 1748 and 1753, probably nearer 1748, Waldo met Crellius and "induced or bribed the recruiting Commissioner of the Province to act in part in his interest." At the same time, Waldo's agents in Boston, including his brother-in-law Isaac Winslow (brother of Joshua Winslow mentioned above) manipulated affairs so that many Germans after arriving in Boston were diverted to Waldo's estates. Stahl emphasizes that Waldo was a successful expert at undercover, secretive machinations.³⁵ Thus it is clear that when Crellius left for Europe he expected to send some of his passengers to lands owned by Waldo. In return he would receive an agreed-upon fee per head. This then is the undercover scheme.

To further complicate matters, Crellius entered into yet another venture. On August 24, 1750 John Franklin, Norton Quincy, Peter Etter, and Joseph Crellius leased from Col. John Quincy the land for the Germantown enterprise. William S. Pattee states in his *History of Old Braintree and Quincy* that Crellius organized the manufacturing company "not being disheartened by his failure to settle his former granted townships."³⁶ This appears to be in error since

Crellius devised the Germantown idea in the same year in which he received the conditional grant which allowed him three years to settle the land.³⁷ Thus he had not yet failed nor had reason to be disheartened. It was evidently his intention to recruit settlers for all three locations (the townships, Maine and Germantown), or for whichever of the three appeared most lucrative.

IV

The idea of a planned industrial colony in America did not originate with the Germantown venture. At least three other mercantilist-industrial projects had been proposed but failed to materialize.³⁸ Germantown was therefore the first practical application in America of what had been until then merely an idea.

The Germantown plan probably originated with Joseph Crellius with the close cooperation of Peter Etter.³⁹ Etter was a well-to-do Swiss stocking weaver of Boston,⁴⁰ who had lived in Philadelphia in the 1740s. He knew Benjamin Franklin, and it may have been through Franklin that Crellius and Etter met. The plan* well described by Pattee (p.474), was submitted to Benjamin Franklin for his approval.⁴² Franklin's later ownership of eight house lots in Germantown testifies to his enthusiasm for the idea. Crellius and Etter then convinced three other men to associate with them in the venture. One of these was John Franklin of Boston, Benjamin's brother, a tallow chandler by trade. His particular function was to act as broker for the indentured servants who were expected to fill the labor needs of Germantown and the colony.⁴³ Norton Quincy contributed influence and wealth. His father owned the land on which Germantown was to be built and was a former speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Isaac Winslow, who was added to the group in 1752, was in charge of the business affairs in Boston of his father-in-law, Samuel Waldo, who saw in Germantown a prime source of colonists for his Maine territories.⁴⁴ It would be to his advantage to have a more direct link to the entire immigration project than Crellius alone; and Winslow provided this link. Winslow himself stated that it was his wealth that induced the others to make him a partner. His letter to Waldo on

*The plan provided for eight industries to be operated. The quality of the workers' houses was specified. The town was laid out like a European town, and as Philadelphia was. The squares bore German names. No copy of the map is known but it is referred to on Crellius' recruiting posters that have been found in Germany.⁴¹

May 12, 1752 tells much about the origins of Germantown.⁴⁵

An interesting observation can be made at this point based on the information presented. Each of the partners in the Germantown venture, with the exception of Norton Quincy, was in 1750 involved in the immigrant trade in one way or another. While only Crellius was devoting full time to the immigrant business, Etter, John Franklin and Winslow all looked to the importation of foreign Protestants for a profit. In this regard Germantown would serve a dual purpose. It would provide a place where immigrant workers could labor in return for their passage money. It would also serve as a way station for immigrants destined for other locations. This is made clear in the above-referenced letter of May 12, 1752 from Isaac Winslow to Samuel Waldo in which he even suggests that Waldo might buy some lots in Germantown and build shelters for people destined for Broad Bay. In either case, Crellius stood to make a profit.

It appears therefore that Joseph Crellius had laid the groundwork for a most successful business venture. He had brought about a situation in which he could deliver his passengers to the four original townships, to Waldo's lands, or to Germantown. If one deal did not succeed, he had the other options. It seemed that he could not fail; but fail he did.

V

Joseph Crellius sailed for Germany in the late summer of 1750, carrying with him a letter of introduction to Henri, or Heinrich, Luther from Lt. Governor Phips. Phips assured Luther that the immigrants would be protected by the Province in the event of war; that they would have full freedom of religion; and that a large number of "Gentlemen of Substance" seemed well disposed toward the project. Many of them owned large amounts of land and would "freely bestow" a portion of it on the settlers.⁴⁶

Based in part on this recommendation, Luther worked assiduously to assist Crellius and took him into his home during his stay in Germany. Luther printed advertising circulars,⁴⁷ set up an office for Crellius in Frankfurt, hired agents in various nearby towns, and spread the word that the Massachusetts colonization effort was an honest one.⁴⁸ Upon his arrival in Germany, Crellius asserted that he was the authorized agent of Massachusetts, and implied that the British government was also supporting his plans.⁴⁹ Both

claims were false. Whatever the intent, the result was the impression that he was not being totally honest and that he would use any means to lure his colonists.

Crellius did not enter the immigration business in a vacuum. By 1750, there were many agents at work on the Rhine River "representing" diverse areas including Pennsylvania, Nova Scotia, and the southern colonies. Since none of them had the official backing of his government, except John Dick for Nova Scotia, they would labor under a severe disadvantage if Crellius used his commission effectively. With the full weight of the Colony behind him, and with the claim of being the only authorized agent for Massachusetts, Crellius would be able to attract a large number of prospective colonists who naturally would be favorably disposed to a destination that officially welcomed them. Furthermore, many of the agents were "Neulanders", "Werbers", or "Sellers-of-souls". They resorted to any means to lure unwary emigrants to the shippers or merchants who were paying for them at so much per head.⁵⁰ These agents were convinced that their profits would be drastically reduced if Luther's proposed reforms were introduced. In any event, they reasoned, the loss of business to Massachusetts could turn out to be substantial.⁵¹ The result was an extremely bitter, and occasionally violent, controversy that lasted even after Crellius left the immigration business in 1753.

The most determined and most powerful adversary with whom Crellius had to deal in Europe was John Dick (1720-1804).⁵² Dick contracted with the British Board of Trade to supply not more than 1500 Protestants for Nova Scotia. He was to receive one guinea per head as compensation.⁵³ Under Dick's direction his agent began a campaign to discredit Crellius and the Massachusetts project. Soon the agents of other interests joined in, and Crellius found himself under vicious attack.⁵⁴

Crellius had to cope with yet a further problem. He owned no ships of his own, nor did the colony provide him with any. He was therefore forced to negotiate for transportation with the Rotterdam shippers and merchants; precisely those people who stood to lose most if he succeeded, and the ones who were leading the fight against him. Despite these formidable obstacles, Crellius managed to recruit enough emigrants to start down the Rhine

toward Rotterdam in the spring of 1751. There he negotiated, against Luther's advice, with the firm of John Stedman & Co. for a ship. Through the mediation of one Freidrich Kurtz he was able to secure a transport. After a month's delay in port, the *Priscilla* left for England with its passengers, including Crellius, on board.

In England, Crellius met with Samuel Waldo, probably to arrange for the disposition of those emigrants destined for Maine, and definitely to enlist Waldo's aid in his fight against John Dick. Crellius tried to have the Board of Trade restrict Dick's activities against him. With Waldo's help, he managed to silence Dick at least for the moment. These negotiations, however, wasted more time. Consequently the *Priscilla* did not leave England until July, almost two months after Crellius first assembled his colonists.⁵⁵ This long delay caused him great troubles in his later activities.

Once at sea, Crellius's miseries were compounded. Because of the excessive delays before sailing, the supplies of provisions for the passengers were seriously depleted. Upon complaint to the master of the ship, the passengers were told that the fault lay with Crellius who had not supplied adequate provisions to last the whole voyage. Passengers were given two choices: to buy the ship's provisions, or starve. Crellius, displaying a weakness of character that was to recur in the future, pleaded that he was quite ill, locked himself in his cabin and refused to see anyone. The outcome was that many of the passengers were forced to go into debt to the ship for their food, although rations were expressly a part of their contract.⁵⁶ In a letter to Phips, Crellius tried to exonerate himself of any blame in the matter. He was still confident that, with Luther's continued help, a number of good substantial settlers, including "Farmers, Tradesmen, and Manufacturers" could and would be brought in the next year. However, "private interest" was bringing all into confusion as Luther took exception to the employment by Crellius of Werbers and merchants who Luther said would cheat the people out of their provisions. Luther specifically named Stedman as a prime example of the merchants he opposed. Crellius lamented that this was exactly what had happened to him on this voyage. Stedman "wrested" the transport from him through one Peter Wild.⁵⁷

From his description of the people on

board as being of the poorer sort, except for two or three, it is clear that most could not have afforded the cost of passage. They were therefore almost certainly in debt before they left Germany and knew that they would arrive indentured.⁵⁸ Further evidence of this situation is found in John Franklin's advertisement that appeared in the *Boston Post Boy* of September 16, 1751, while the *Priscilla* was still at sea. Franklin requested that written proposals be sent to him from persons wanting to settle Germans on their lands. Had all the debts been contracted on board the ship, Franklin would have had no knowledge of it and so could not have been sure that he would be able to control the disposition of the immigrants. As free men, they could have gone where they pleased. If, however, he had known before Crellius left Germany that the Germans would be coming as redemptioners, he could then plan, as the advertisement indicates he did, on directing the immigrants wherever he and the landowners desired.

Meanwhile, during the summer and fall of 1751, Luther wrote frequently to the General Court of Massachusetts trying desperately to gain its favor for his ideas and plans for the importation of Germans. He emphasized that the best way to proceed was on his advice, which at this point was to circulate advertising matter stressing the advantages of religious freedom, the fertility of the soil, and the protection that the colonial government would afford to the settlers. He even went so far as to name his new-born daughter "Anne" to show his regard for the British government and the Province.⁶⁰ The soundness of his procedural suggestions cannot be questioned. His motives seemed honorable and humane but he may not have been above the sort of duplicity of which he later accused Crellius. This is aptly illustrated in his letters to Waldo and Phips from which it appears that he was working for Waldo as well as the Province.⁶¹

The *Priscilla* arrived in Boston on October 28, 1751 approximately five months after its passengers had left their homes. About fifty families or two hundred persons survived the trip. Unfortunately this was deemed by the General Court to be insufficient to warrant opening up one of the townships.⁶² As the winter was fast approaching, the immigrants were in a precarious situation. According to Stahl, this was exactly what wealthy

Bostonians with large tracts of land, especially Waldo, wanted. Some inferential support is given to this position in a letter from John Franklin to his brother Benjamin in which he states that he has to cut short his letter because he, along with a Committee of the Council of the Legislature, is about to board the German ship that has just arrived. His purpose could well have been to sign up as many of the Germans as possible before other brokers got to them.⁶³ The evidence indicates that many people were willing and eager to take advantage of the situation. This can be seen in three advertisements in three successive editions of the *Boston Evening Post* on November 18, November 25 and December 2, 1751. These requested that anyone who wished to pay the passage of the newly-arrived Germans in return for their labor could deal with William Bowdoin "who acts for said Germans."⁶⁴

The legislature was slow to move in aid of these destitute people, forming a committee in November 1751 to investigate their condition. The committee did nothing until January when it ordered that the Germans be provisioned by Peter Etter, their "interpreter." He would distribute to them through the province commissary, blankets and beds, and provide them with some poor relief. The order made it clear that the provisions were to be returned when they were no longer needed.⁶⁵ Crellius meanwhile pursued his own goals. He wrote, probably to Phips, that some of the Germans wanted to inspect the eastern township sites, and he requested a guide for them.⁶⁶ Although it is not a definite fact, it appears likely that Crellius had a hand in the disposition of many of the Germans through Waldo, Etter and Franklin.

The outcome was the eventual disposition of all the Germans as indentured servants. According to Etter, twelve families went to Germantown, twelve more agreed with Bowdoin to settle in Maine (probably in Dresden), five families proposed to go to the western townships, while the fate of four to seven others is uncertain. In the spring of 1752 a few families went to Broad Bay in Maine as a result of negotiations carried on by Isaac Winslow based on a contract drawn up between Crellius and Waldo in London in 1750. Crellius was supposedly granted a number of acres of land at Broad Bay by Waldo in return for securing the settlers.⁶⁷ Isaac Winslow, the agent in Boston for the Broad Bay

settlement, wrote to his father-in-law Samuel Waldo on March 2, 1752 that he thought it "improbable" that a considerable number of Germans would be settled there. He said that a total of about fifteen families, nine definite, the best of the lot, would go to Broad Bay. All of these he reported had paid their freight.⁶⁸

The proceedings of the General Court of 1752 summarize the situation of the Germans during that winter. In a report seemingly tinged with cynicism it is stated that, according to information from Peter Etter, the Germans had been generally well provided for, partly by their own labor and partly by the generosity of "Gentlemen in the Town of Boston", and that they are willing to labor for their support in Boston "or the Country Towns."⁶⁹ Charles Allen gives an account of the destinations of the Germans in Maine.⁷⁰

VII

Early in 1752, Joseph Crellius and his associates turned their attention to the next voyage. For the first time Thomas Flucker is mentioned as an associate in the business. Flucker, a son-in-law of Samuel Waldo, was an influential man in Boston and a member of the Legislature.⁷¹ Crellius was now hampered by his association with Luther and appears to have adopted a policy of expediency, even to the extent of consorting with the despised "enlisters". For whom he was working at this point is not clear.⁷²

Crellius left Boston in February of 1752 and arrived in London in late March. There he met with Waldo to renew their contract of the previous year, to which was appended a clause giving the immigrants freedom to leave Broad Bay. This was done to relieve Luther's apprehensions about the sale of indentured servants. Luther may have had good reason to worry because there is evidence dating back to 1744 that Waldo had been treating indentured servants on his lands harshly, jailing those who ran off before their contracts expired.⁷³

In April Crellius traveled to Rotterdam where he entered into a contract with John Harvard and Co. to provide him with a ship for this year's transport. This firm was notorious for its greed and chicanery in the immigrant trade. Luther had advised Crellius to engage an Amsterdam firm that he recommended. Nevertheless Crellius proceeded to Frankfort where Luther again received him into his home, knowing that Crellius had contracted with Harvard and Co.

Crellius may have sensed that Luther was working both for and against him.

Crellius and Luther immediately set to work establishing once again the network of offices and agents along the Rhine. This time, however, they concentrated on the northern areas where Crellius was less well known. Prospects appeared good for the coming year since Dick's commission for Nova Scotia had been revoked by the authorities, thus reducing competition. Dick's agents, however, now without an outlet for their passengers, declared themselves for the Carolinas. They were being paid 100 ducats each by Rotterdam merchants to defray emigrants' expenses, which was more than enough to sway prospects to their side. Further, in March one König of Rotterdam announced that he had received printed authority from his principals giving him privileges equal to Crellius's to engage people for New England.⁷⁴ Luther and others still considered Crellius the sole agent or commissioner for New England and advised him to carry with him the seal or coat of arms of the Province engrained in wood.⁷⁵ This Luther appeared to believe would put a stop to those who had been reprinting Crellius's ads with their own names appended.⁷⁶

In the face of concerted opposition from his competitors, Joseph Crellius worked on three fronts: openly with Luther to obtain recruits for the Province of Massachusetts and the four townships (this may or may not have included Germantown); semi-openly with Samuel Waldo to get immigrants for Broad Bay; and secretly with his partners Franklin, Etter and Winslow to get colonists for them as brokers. Crellius's first step was to have circulars printed refuting the charges of his enemies and asserting the primacy of his commission over all other purposes, real or fraudulent. Crellius appears to have erred in not responding to all the accusations raised against him. His silence on some of the charges led his opponents to believe they were true, and led to the embarrassment of his friends. In May 1752, Crellius's agents wrote to Luther that Crellius was under heavy attack as a cheat and an imposter. They added that his enemies were being successful in enticing away many prospective emigrants. They pleaded with Luther to seek legal redress against these calumniators.⁷⁷ One of Crellius's and Luther's agents, a Mr. Goetsel of

Spiers, cited specific examples of the tactics used by Crellius's detractors. John Dick was singled out as the worst offender, luring passengers away with promises of free passage to Nova Scotia and the advancement of money. More significantly, Dick and his agents were spreading vicious rumors about Crellius ". . . in such a Manner as I do not chuse to mention."⁷⁸

The result of this controversy, at least as far as Crellius was concerned, was confusion and relative failure. After much difficulty he managed to gather together about 350 "souls", or passengers. These he laboriously transported down the Rhine to Rotterdam where he found nearly all the shippers aligned against him. John Harvard refused to allow the emigrants on board his ship until Crellius arrived in person as surety. Further delays ensued, primarily because the ship that Crellius had chartered through Harvard could accommodate only 260 people, thus leaving about 100 with no means of transportation. Since this number represented only about half of a full load, it would have been unprofitable to charter a second ship just for them. The alternatives were to abandon them in Rotterdam, or let them be used as human cargo for some other destination in America. The first alternative was unsatisfactory since their money was running out. Since other destinations were clearly preferable to starvation, they asked Crellius to release them from their contracts so that they might go with other merchants and shippers.⁷⁹ Ultimately most of them went to Maryland.

Crellius fully realized the problems that his errors in planning and execution had created. He must also have known what this would mean for the future of his projects. He stated that if he were rid of the Franconians and Italians he would be able to leave quite soon with just one transport. When the ship finally did leave, however, Harvard had it routed to Boston rather than Broad Bay, thus not fulfilling Crellius's contract with Waldo. Before he left Rotterdam, Crellius was criticized because there were so many "poor people" among the emigrants. He stated fatalistically "I must let everything take its course, provided I bring only my Body whole upon the sea." He added the comment that in no way would he continue in the business.⁸⁰

Nine days later, however, Crellius was more optimistic. He announced

that the tragedy was over. He would set sail the next day for Boston with 260 "freights" (adults) leaving behind eighty whom he dismissed "at their desire."⁸¹ Nevertheless he arranged to have an advertisement published after his departure announcing that he would not return to Germany after this trip. Those wishing to go to New England in the future would have to follow written instructions that he would leave behind.⁸² This advertisement was dated May 28, 1752.⁸³ Many agents claimed that Crellius owed them money, and by the end of May he was under such heavy attack that he was required to go into hiding out of fear for his life.

VIII

There is evidence that Crellius brought some French Protestants to New England but little is known of them. Bernard Fây, in an article titled *Une Colonie Rhénane, en Nouvelle Angleterre au XVIII^e Siècle*, mentions two letters that were written by Frenchmen from Montbéliard and Besançon on Crellius's first voyage in 1751.⁸⁴ They give such a glowing account of their treatment on the voyage and in New England that their credibility is questionable. They do indicate, however, that apparently Crellius did bring some French Protestants to New England along with the Germans. This, in addition to his mention of Italians above, indicates that Crellius drew from a wide area in his recruiting.

Joseph Crellius and his cargo sailed for England on June 25, 1752. As on the previous voyage there were long delays that depleted the resources of the passengers and placed them deeper in debt. In late August the ship departed for Boston where the immigrants disembarked on September 19th, a remarkably short passage.

In late August, while Crellius was at sea, John Franklin, Norton Quincy, Isaac Winslow, and Peter Etter (who also acted as attorney for Crellius) sold their interests in Germantown to Joseph Palmer and Richard Cranch, with instructions to commence several manufactures at once.⁸⁵ The sale might have been motivated by one of two reasons. First, the original proprietors might have lacked sufficient capital to carry out their objectives. This seems unlikely since Quincy, Etter and Winslow were well off financially. Second, they may have considered that they could profit more from the immigration end of the scheme as brokers, than as manufacturers. There is no indication that the planned

manufacturing had started, although some immigrants were already there. That they did act as brokers is shown by advertisements offering the Germans for indenture. The *Boston Evening Post* of September 25, just after the ship arrived, carried this announcement:

"Tuesday last a ship arrived from Holland with about 300 Germans, men, women and children, some of whom are going to settle at Germantown and others in the eastern parts of the province. 'Tis said about 40 children were born during the passage. [Actually more likely four were born.] Among the Artificers come over in this ship, there are a Number of Men skilled in the making of glass of various sorts."⁸⁶ On the same day and for the two weeks following, an advertisement appeared in *The Evening Post* as follows:

"Just arrived . . . in good health, a Number of very likely Men and Women, Boys and Girls, from Twelve to Twenty-five years old, who will be disposed of for some years according to their Ages and the different Sums they owe for their Passage. Any Persons who have occasion for such servants may treat with Mr. John Franklin . . . Mr. Isaac Winslow, or Capt. Hood on board his ship now lying in Braintree River, before the new settlement of Germantown."⁸⁷

This swift action suggests that these men had planned in advance to drop the manufacturing project and turn exclusively to brokerage. Whether or not Crellius knew of the sale of Germantown before he reached Boston, it appears to have fitted in with his plans to dispose of his immigrants to whomever offered him the best deal.

The fate of these immigrants is not easy to trace. Some stayed at Germantown with Palmer and Cranch but this number was relatively small. Samuel Waldo was able to procure about twenty-five families (about 50 to 70 "freights" or 100 people) for his settlements in Maine. Soon after this Waldo deserted Crellius, probably because he realized that the future of German immigration would be controlled by Luther, not Crellius who had twice failed to bring in the settlers Waldo needed, and who had announced he was leaving the business. As for the remainder of the immigrants, at least 75 people, their ultimate disposition is unclear. Some eventually reached Dresden, Maine, perhaps through Crellius's influence and with the aid of John Franklin's brokerage activities. This group of immigrants,

according to Allen, were French Huguenots, thus confirming other evidence that Crellius had recruited in or near France.⁸⁸ Some went to Lexington, Massachusetts, and in 1757 purchased from that town land in present Ashburnham where they eventually settled.⁸⁹

At this stage in history, Joseph Crellius drops from view. Apparently disgusted with his failures, fearful for his life should he return to Germany as an immigrant agent, and perhaps chronically ill, he announced that henceforth he would be known as a "West Indian merchant only."⁹⁰ Despite Crellius's retirement, the controversies surrounding his two voyages with immigrants continued for more than a year, and the efforts of his creditors even longer. He left Boston shortly after 1753, and in 1755 visited his old home in South Carolina. There he commented that the recent German immigrants were "poor and of the meaner sort" and asked the Legislature to employ his talents as an agent to procure a better class of settlers.⁹¹ Nothing came of this. It can only be imagined that penury and desperate circumstances could have prompted Crellius to consider a return to the wars. The final mention of Joseph Crellius appears in the letter quoted above (note 16) from Benjamin Franklin to his daughter relating that he and his son William had met with Crellius and his daughter during a visit to Amsterdam in 1761. Crellius died in 1765, presumably in Europe.

CONCLUSIONS

In the course of this narrative, two interesting questions have been explored. Although neither can be answered definitively, sufficient evidence has been presented to reach some reasonable conclusions.

The first concerns the establishment of Germantown. Joseph Crellius and his associates had developed and promoted the plans for the manufacturing enterprise and started the implementation of their plans; but then sold out before any manufacturing operation had commenced. Why did they abandon the project at that point?

It is noted that the step was taken while Crellius was at sea. Of the four proprietors who made the decision, only Peter Etter was a manufacturer. Three, including Etter, were engaged in the immigrant trade. It appears that they saw more chance of profit in the immigrant business than in the planned manufacturing enterprise. It may be significant that they sold Germantown to two industrialists who continued its

development essentially as Crellius had planned it.

The second question is more difficult. What kind of a man was Joseph Crellius? By establishing a newspaper, planning the Germantown project, and undertaking an ambitious immigration program, he showed business initiative and acumen that attracted the interest of the astute Benjamin Franklin and other people in high places. In all three ventures, however, he lacked the capacity to crown his efforts with success. For moral character he must be judged by the rough business ethics of his time, not by present-day standards. It does not appear that he was any more deceitful, cruel or hypocritical than others engaged in the immigrant trade, or other businesses. Whatever business benefits the use of dubious practices may have brought him, he was incapable of handling the resulting enmity and criticism leveled against him. His inability to either avoid or cope with adversity contributed much to his failures as a businessman.

Despite his weaknesses and failures, Joseph Crellius played a positive role in the history of colonial America. His vision was responsible for Germantown, this country's first planned industrial development. As a member of the German community in the colonies and as an immigration agent, he helped settle Germans in this country in the middle of the eighteenth century, a development that proved culturally and industrially important to the colonies and later to the new nation. Since Crellius was not isolated in his role, the story of his life sheds light on a significant chapter in American colonial history.

Endnotes

1. Some writings refer to our subject as "Crell." "Crellius" has been used throughout this paper as the name by which he was and is more generally known.
2. Robert Meriwether, *Expansion of South Carolina* (Kingsport, Tenn., 1940), 55-57.
3. Leonard Labaree, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, Conn., 1961), 3:479; 4:78.
4. J. H. Easterly, ed., *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly - South Carolina 1736-1739* (Columbia, S.C., 1951), 594, 655.
5. Meriwether, *Expansion of South Carolina*, 56. The advertisement is reprinted in full.
6. Clarence Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers* (Worcester, Mass., 1947), 2:918.
7. H. Frank Eshleman, *Historic Background and Annals of the Swiss and German Pioneer Settlers of Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Penn., 1917), 282.
8. Rudolf Cronau, *Drei Jahrhunderte Deutschen Lebens in Amerika* (Berlin, 1924), 142.
9. *Das Buch der Deutschen in Amerika* (Philadelphia, Penn., 1909), 482.
10. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers*, 2:918.
11. Carl Wittke, *The German Language Press in America* (Lexington, Ky., 1957), 23. Wittke believes that Crell published his paper until 1746 when he gave it up and returned to Germany.

9. Charles Hildebrun, *The Issues of the Press in Pennsylvania 1685-1784* (Philadelphia, Penn., 1885), 1 181.
10. C. William Miller, *Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia Printing* (Philadelphia, Penn., 1974), 221.
- Charles Evans, *American Bibliography 1730-1750* (Chicago, Ill., 1904), II 331.
11. Rudolf Cronau, *Das Buch der Deutschen in Amerika*, 482.
- Erna Risch "Joseph Crellius, Immigrant Broker," *New England Quarterly* 12 (June 1939): 246. The shop was on Arch Street.
12. *Abstract of Wills of Philadelphia Co., Recorded in Administration Book A* (Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania III, June 1908) 188.
13. Leonard Labaree, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 4:78. Nygh died in 1756 in Europe, and Anna married Francis Farquhar in May 1758. Farquhar owned a tavern in Amsterdam.
14. Hannah Roach, "Benjamin Franklin Slept Here," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 84 (April 1960) 150; 152.
15. Leonard Labaree, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3: 478; 479.
16. Leonard Labaree, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 9: 356.
17. Risch, "Joseph Crellius, Immigrant Broker," 246.
18. Jasper Stahl, *History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro* (Portland, Maine 1956) 121; 157.
- Risch, "Joseph Crellius, Immigrant Broker," 246.
19. In the Holy Roman Empire, the Aulic Council was a personal council to the emperor, and functioned as a supreme court.
20. Lucy Bittinger, *The Germans in Colonial Times* (New York, 1968) 134.
21. Leonard Labaree, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 12: 153; 379.
22. *Massachusetts Archives*, 15a: 45.
- Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1749-1750* (Boston 1952) 26: 180. Phips may also have been influenced by the fact that he owned a one-tenth interest in the lands in Maine that might be settled.
- Stahl, *History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 42.
23. *Massachusetts Archives*, 15a: 45.
24. *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1749-1750* 26: 180; 183.
25. Risch, "Joseph Crellius, Immigrant Broker," 247.
- Wilfred Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff*, (Philadelphia 1910) 16.
26. Stahl, *History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 164.
27. *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1749-1750*, 26: 154; 167, 171.
28. Early histories of the Colony mention the efforts to induce immigration but devote little attention to it. In two of them Crellius is mentioned, once neutrally, and once very critically.
- Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts Bay*, edited by Lawrence S. Mayo, Cambridge, Mass. 1936, volume III, 8-9.
- Albert Bushnell Hart, Editor, *Commonwealth History of Massachusetts*, New York, N.Y. 1928, volume II, 259-260.
29. *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1750-1751*, 27: 8.
30. *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1750-1751* 27: 23; 130; 142.
31. *The Acts and Resolves Public and Private of the Province Massachusetts 1750-1751* (Boston 1878) Vol. III: 536-537.
- Risch, *Joseph Crellius, Immigrant Broker*, 248.
- Winthrop Bell, *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, Ontario, Canada 1961), 276.
32. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 90. Stahl terms the law "humane" but "motivated by mercenary conditions." He believes that it had a good effect since complaints about the evils are heard less under it.
33. Risch, *Joseph Crellius, Immigrant Broker*, 246.
- Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 157. Stahl is suspect in his information on Crell's career. For example he states that Crell migrated to Pennsylvania in 1740.
34. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 158.
35. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 156.
36. William S. Pattee, *A History of Old Braintree and Quincy*, (Quincy, Mass. 1878), 473.
37. *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1753-1754*, 30: 16. The land grant was not revoked until June 6, 1753, by vote of the General Court.
38. Louis Wright, *The Dream of Prosperity in Colonial America*, (New York 1965), 78-79.
- Edward Kirkland, *A History of American Economic Life*, 4th ed. (New York, 1969), 45.
39. Albert Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, (Boston, 1909), 260. Faust states that "some Boston promoters" matured the plan, encouraged by the good impression the German settlers had made in Maine.
40. E. Alfred Jones, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts*, (London, 1930), 133.
41. A complete description of the map is given in Karl S. R. Arndt, *Franklin's Lost Map of Germantown, Massachusetts*, *Pennsylvania Folklife*, 31 (Winter 1981-1982) 87-89.
42. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1884), 1: 215.
- Labaree, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 4:65. Etter named one of his children Franklin Germanicus in 1752.
43. Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff*, 18; 22. Schoff believes that it was John Franklin who organized the company after his brother Benjamin had introduced him to Crellius.
44. Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, 260.
45. I. Winslow to S. Waldo, 12 May 1752, Henry Knox Papers, 50: 109, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
46. S. Phips to H. Luther, 1 August 1750, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: 59.
47. *Collections of the Maine Historical Society* (Portland Maine 1859), 6: 321. Here is found an example of one such advertisement, dated 1753.
48. Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, 255.
- Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 164.
49. Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, 254.
- Herbert Osgood, *The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York 1924), 2: 510.
- Neither of these authors backs up his statement with a source. Crellius also went to the Consul of Great Britain in Frankfurt and to the British Ambassador at Regensburg, ostensibly to explain his mission (see Risch, 249). It is more likely that his object was to create the impression that these men sanctioned his mission, or at least were somehow connected with it.
50. Luther to the General Court of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: passim. These letters give an excellent discussion of the role of Neulanders.
51. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 165.
- Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, 254.
52. Bell, *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia*, Chs. 5-7, passim.
53. Bell, *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia*, 126; 131.
54. Risch, *Joseph Crellius, Immigrant Broker*, 250.
- Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 165.
55. Risch, *Joseph Crellius, Immigrant Broker*, 251.
- Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 166.
- Bell, *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement Nova Scotia*, 172.
56. Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff*, 21.
- Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 167.
57. J. Crellius to S. Phips, 11 November 1751, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: 100.
58. Frank Diffenderfer, "The German Immigration into Pennsylvania through the Port of Philadelphia, and 'The Redemptioners,'" *Philadelphia German Society, Proceedings and Addresses*, 10 (1899) 152, 154, 183. Diffenderfer bears out this analysis completely in his description of Redemptioners and their situation.
59. Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff*, 22.
60. H. Luther to S. Phips, 5 September 1751 and 11 November 1751, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a:89; 99.
61. H. Luther to S. Waldo, 5 September 1751, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: 83.
- I. Winslow to S. Waldo, 24 January 1752, Henry Knox Papers, 50: 107, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
62. Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff*, 23.
63. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 169.
64. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 169.
65. *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1751-1752* 28: 72, 76. It is possible that many of the provisions, especially the blankets, were never provided.
- Charles Allen, *History of Dresden, Maine* (n.p. 1931), 134.
- I. Winslow to S. Waldo, 24 January 1752, Henry Knox Papers, 50: 107, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
66. J. Crellius to S. Phips (?), n. d., Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: 95.
- Joseph Willard to John Hill, 3 December 1751, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 105.
67. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 169.
68. I. Winslow to S. Waldo, 2 March 1752, Massachusetts Historical Society Transactions, 50: 108.
69. *Journal of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1751-1752* 28: 118.
70. Allen, *History of Dresden, Maine*, 49; 125; 129; 139. The letter is dated 13 September 1752; 192.
- I. Winslow to S. Waldo, 2 March 1752 and 12 May 1752, Henry Knox Papers, 50: 108, 109, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
71. I. Winslow to S. Waldo, 2 March 1752, Henry Knox Papers, 50: 108, Massachusetts Historical Society.
72. Schoff, *The Descendants of Jacob Schoff*, 27.
73. S. Waldo to Sebastian Zouberbuhler, 6 May 1744, Samuel Waldo Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
74. J. Leucht to Luther (?), 27 January 1752, 13 February 1752, 19 March 1752, abstracts, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: 115.
75. J. Leucht to Luther (?), 22 March 1752, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: 115, abstract.
76. J. Leucht to Luther (?), 3 March 1752, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 115, abstract.
77. Martin to Luther, 4 May 1752 and 9 May 1752, abstracts, Massachusetts Archives, Boston 15a: 118.
- Eber to Luther, 6 May 1752, abstract, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: 118.
- Leucht to Luther, 12 May 1752, abstract, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 119.
78. Goetsel to Luther, 16 April 1752, quoted, Massachusetts Archives, 15a, 120-1, abstract.
- Goetsel to Luther, 6 November 1751, 12 January 1752, 10 March 1752, abstract, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 15a: 119, 120.
- Gros to Luther, 30 April 1752, abstract, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 121.
- Hobbold to Luther, 4 May 1752 and 19 May 1752, abstracts, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 121; 122.
79. J. Crellius to H. Luther, 15 June 1752, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 144.
80. J. Crellius to H. Luther, 15 June 1752, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 143.
81. J. Crellius to H. Luther, 24 June 1752, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 145.
82. Copy of advertisement, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 136.
83. Martin to Luther, 29 May 1752, abstract, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 138.
- Martin to Luther, 5 June 1752 and 6 June 1752, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 139.
- Leucht to Böttiger, 6 June 1752, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 142. Böttiger was a factor of Luther's. This letter confirms Martin's claims about payment.
84. Bernard Fäy, "Une Colonie Rhénane en Nouvelle-Angleterre au XVII^e Siècle," *The Franco-American Review*, 1 (winter 1937); 276.
85. Pattee, *A History of Old Braintree and Quincy*, 475.
86. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 174. Quotation from the *Boston Evening Post* of 25 September 1752.
87. Stahl, *The History of Old Broad Bay and Waldoboro*, 174. Quotations from the *Boston Post Boy* of 25 September 1752, and from *The Evening Post* of 25 September, 2 October, and 9 October 1752.
88. Allen, *History of Dresden, Maine*, 125; 127; 136; 139.
89. Ezra Stearns, *History of Ashburnham* (Ashburnham, Mass. 1887), 94.
90. Martin and Leucht to Luther, 2 September 1752, Massachusetts Archives, 15a: 146.
91. Meriwether, *Expansion of South Carolina*, 153.