

# The German Community of Colonial Charleston



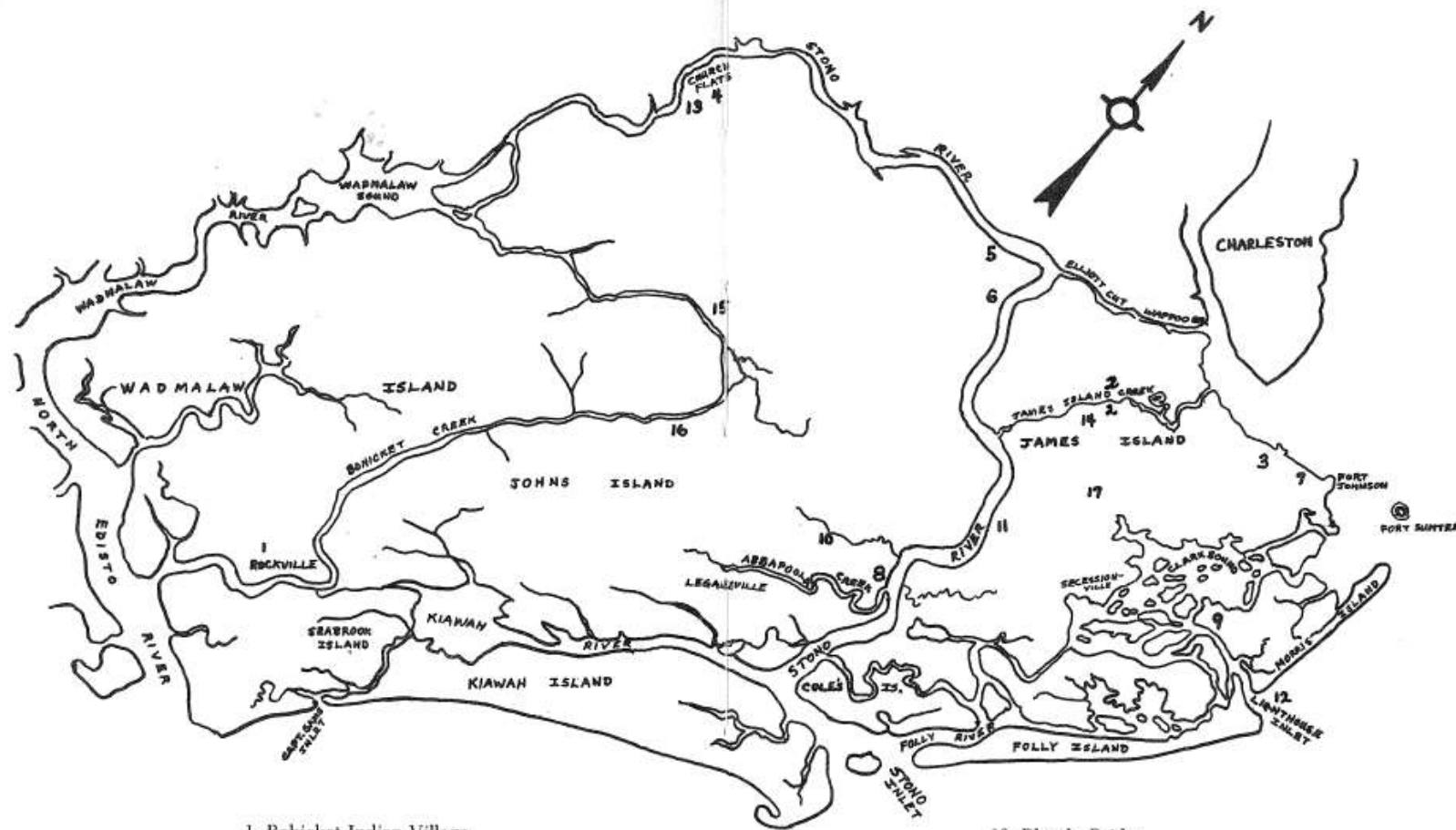
Marianne Cawley

South Carolina Room Manager

Charleston County Public Library

*“It is advised and resolved that thirty acres of land shall be laid out, most convenient to the water side for landing in a place described by the Mr. Bull and Capt. Gray in a Creeke Southward from Stonoe Creeke for a Towne for the settlings of those persons who lately arrived from New Yorke in the Shipps Blessing and Phoenix which said Towne shall be Called and knowne by the name of James Towne . . .*

*Journal of the Grand Council at Charles Towne December 20, 1671*



1. Bohicket Indian Village
2. James Towne
3. Battle Site, 1706
4. Slave Rebellion
5. Mathews' Plantation
6. Fenwick Plantation
7. Last Revolutionary Scrimmage
8. Capture of U.S.S. Isaac P. Smith
9. Swamp Angel

10. Bloody Bridge
11. Last Confederate Battle
12. Lighthouse
13. Stono Battle
14. St. James Episcopal Church
15. St. Johns Episcopal Church
16. Johns Island Presbyterian Church
17. James Island Presbyterian Church



During Colonial period, German immigrants to  
South Carolina fell into one of two groups,  
German-Swiss and Palatines.

Most Charleston Germans were from the Palatinate.





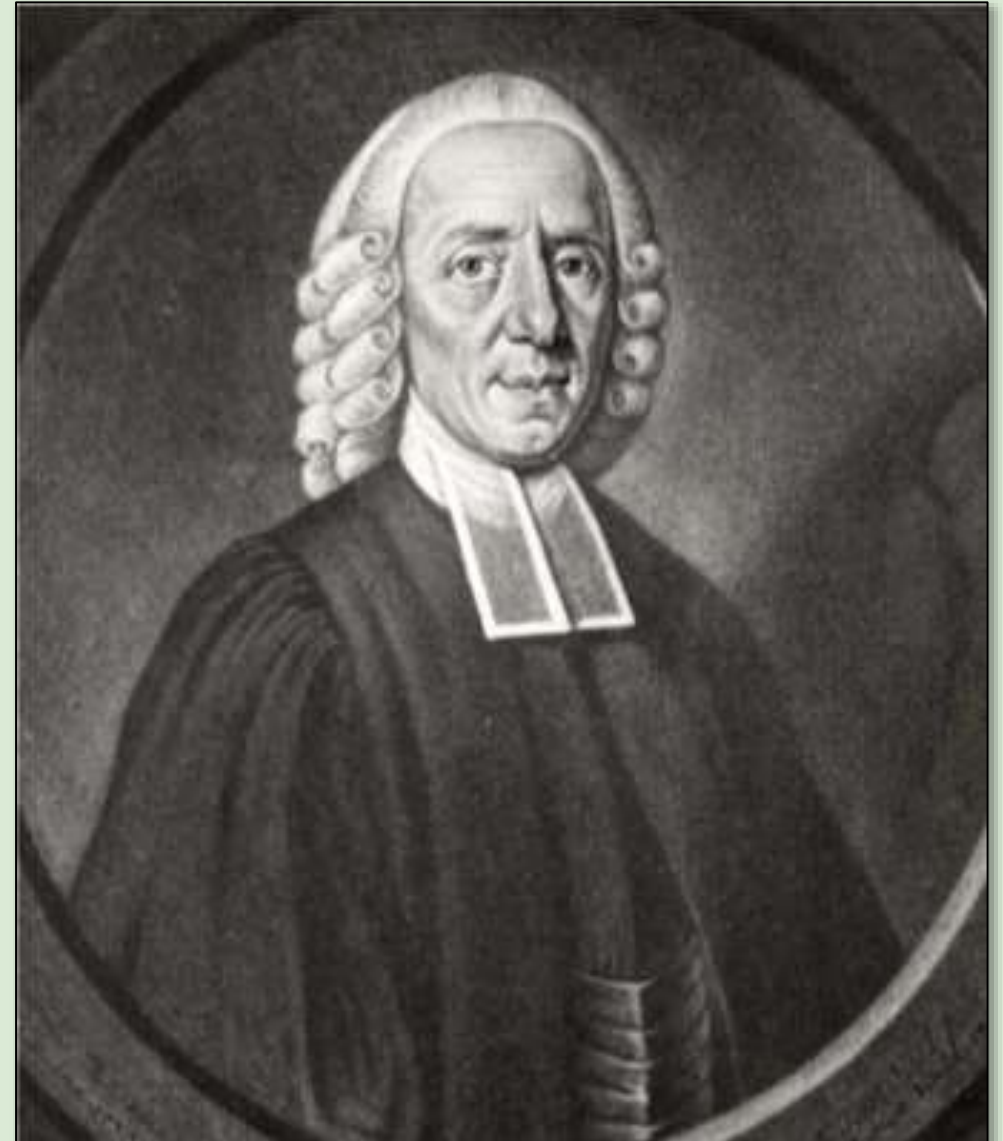


## Why did they come?

- Wars: Louis XIV of France's War of the Palatinate 1688-1697; War of the Spanish Succession 1702-1713.
- Disastrous effect on crop production and economy of the Palatine region. Every large city on the Rhine above Cologne was sacked.
- Location made the Palatinate vulnerable to invasions from France, Germany, and England.
- Winter of 1708-09 was the harshest in 100 years.
- 12,000 to 15,000 German Protestants took refuge in England; Catholics were shipped back to Germany.
- Queen Anne donated land in Colony of South Carolina for German refugees from the Palatinate, prior to her death July 31, 1714.

# Reverend John Martin Boltzius

- German Lutheran minister, leader of Georgia's Salzburger settlement, Ebenezer, near Savannah.
- First visit to Charleston was on May 23-26, 1734. Kept a journal of his travels.
- "A certain glazier and his wife, who are from the Palatinate, went with us to the Holy Supper."
- Boltzius held religious service at 5 a.m. on May 26, 1734, probably at the inn where he was staying.
- *"He administered the Holy Communion to those whom on whom on the day before he had examined and absolved absolved according to the usages of the Lutheran Church."*
- Sufficient Germans in Charleston in 1734 for Boltzius to preach to and hold a Lutheran service.



## Second Visit to Charleston, October 1742

*“I long to get out of this sinful city. Anyone who has lived in London may have seen and heard some abominations; but here they have reached the highest peak. The Europeans commit dreadful excesses with the Negro girls, as a result of which ones sees many half-white children around. I was told that many leading gentlemen do not marry but commit their disgrace with such heathen folk, which, however, is considered little or no shame.”*

*“Some of the German people still conduct themselves respectably and within bounds, but the young girls imitate the world publicly; and everywhere there is blindness, prejudice, wickedness, indifference, epicureanism, and atheism.”*

## Governor Robert Johnson's Township Plan, 1731

- Boon to Charleston merchants.
- A few of the township immigrants drifted back to Charleston, especially after some of the townships began to fail.
- *“There are several German people from Purrysburg here, who have been very badly treated by the local authorities.”* Boltzius Oct. 21, 1742
- Sick settlers or those unable to work were sent back to Charleston, which didn't please the local Charlestonians.



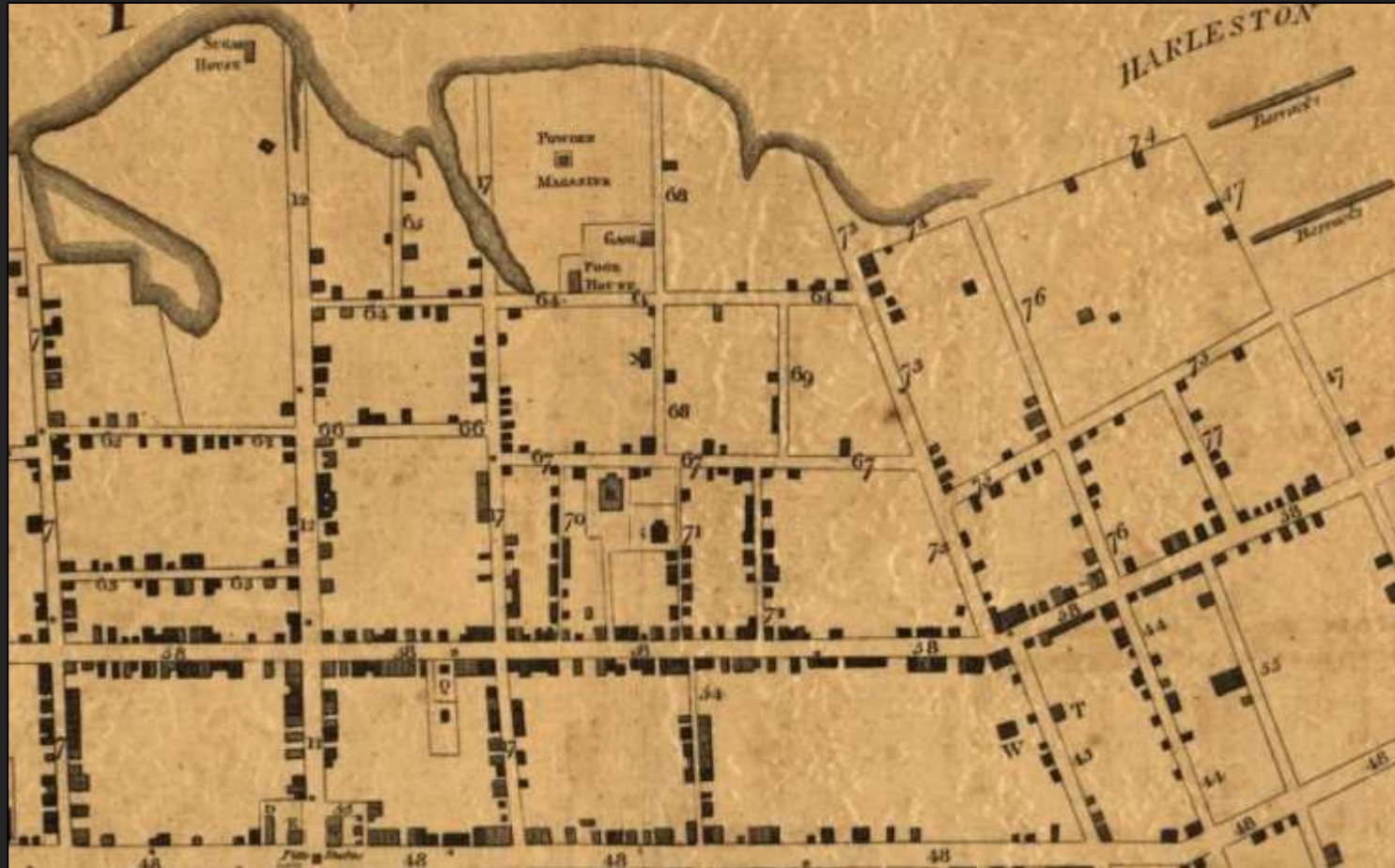
## **The Trickle of Germans into Charleston (by various routes and for a variety of reasons)**

- Some German artisans initially emigrated to Philadelphia but found too much competition from artisans already there. Some of these were Francis Hasenclever, Karl Florian Mey, butcher Melchior Wehrle, and drayman Michael Kalteisen.
- Some Germans came directly to Charleston, perhaps encouraged by family members already here. Blacksmith Michael Muckenfub emigrated from Neuffer in Wurttemberg, with fellow villagers Johann Kirchner, Conrad Burckmeyer, Johann Neuffer.
- George C. Rogers, Jr. says that in South Carolina before the 1750's the influx of settlers was from the coast inland; in the 1750's settlers move down from the north overland, and only after the 1770's did these the new immigrants outnumber the prior ones. Most early settlers came through Charleston.

## The Voyage was Hazardous

- Contemporary accounts indicate that the ships lost as much “*as half of their human cargo to sickness, etc.*”
- 160 out of 200 Germans died on the voyage from England to Virginia in 1743
- A ship with a cargo of Palatine immigrants in Charleston harbor was driven from her anchorage by the Sept. 15, 1752 hurricane “*about twenty of them, by bruises and other injuries lost their lives.*”
- 1767, a captain brought 450 Scotch-Irish to Charleston in a ship meant to carry 200.

# Downtown



Ichmography of Charleston, South Carolina, 1788

Bounded By King St., Queen St., the Ashley River, and Boundary (now Calhoun) St.

# **German Institutions in Colonial Charleston**

1. St. John's Lutheran Church
2. German Friendly Society
3. German Fusiliers

# German Jews

*Table 1*

Old-World Birthplaces of 478 Jewish Men, Women, and Children Resident in Early Charleston

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Germany        | 131 |
| England        | 114 |
| Poland         | 83  |
| Prussia        | 57  |
| Netherlands    | 28  |
| France         | 18  |
| Russia         | 14  |
| Denmark        | 7   |
| Bohemia        | 6   |
| Portugal       | 4   |
| Ireland        | 2   |
| Gibraltar      | 2   |
| Europe         | 2   |
| Wales          | 1   |
| Sweden         | 1   |
| Scotland       | 1   |
| Madeira        | 1   |
| Italy          | 1   |
| Galacia        | 1   |
| Barbary States | 1   |
| Austria        | 1   |
| At Sea         | 1   |
| Algiers        | 1   |

*Note:* The borders of central and eastern Europe changed many times. The places of birth as given in the records have been accepted as given.

## Some Charleston Jews with Place of Birth and date of 1<sup>st</sup> Record in SC

|                      |                    |      |
|----------------------|--------------------|------|
| Germany, Buseck      | Jonas Phillips     | 1756 |
| Germany, Hamburg     | Philip Hart        | 1749 |
| Germany, Koenigsburg | Joseph David       | 1763 |
| Germany, Mannheim    | Samuel Hart        | 1767 |
|                      | Israel Joseph      | 1764 |
| Germany, Oberdorff   | Jacob I. Cohen     | 1776 |
| Germany              | Moses Cohen        | 1772 |
|                      | Philip Jacob Cohen | 1772 |
|                      | Jacob Jacobs       | 1763 |

Hagy, James William. *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston*.



# St. John's Lutheran Church



- 1755 - Rev. Johann Georg Friedrichs, a German Lutheran minister, was the first pastor.
- 1759 - Cornerstone of church laid.
- 1760 - Friedrichs left for Amelia Township, possibly because of a conflict with the congregation over construction material of the Church.
- 1764 - Building dedicated.

## **St. John's had 15 ministers from 1755 to 1812**

- Including three years when an Episcopal minister served the church.
- Probably due to the congregation rather than actions of the ministers.
- Vestry didn't hesitate to discipline its ministers and lay down the terms under which they would keep their position.
- 65 families formed the congregations; blend of differing classes, nativities, and occupations.

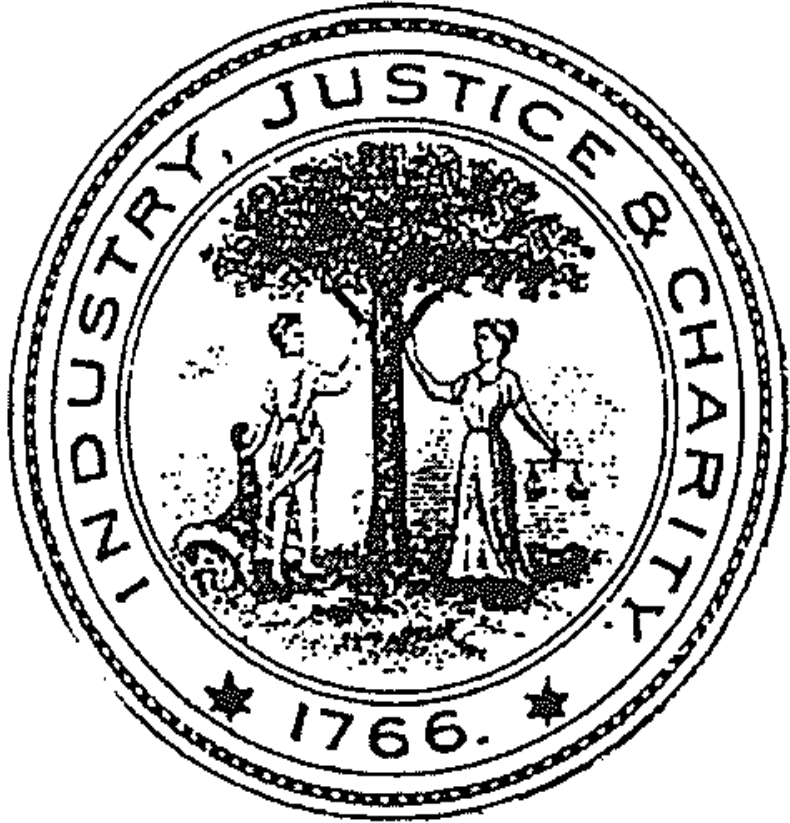
## Reverend Friederich Augustus William Daser came to the pulpit in 1770

He allowed his wife to “*conduct herself in a manner unbecoming a pastor’s wife, besides being ignorant of housewifery, and destitute in the true ornament of a woman, and heavy in self will and inordinate passions and affections.*”

Daser himself “*makes himself familiar with drunkards, flourishes with his sword at night along the streets, throws stones at windows & c., and his wife frequents the theatre at night and leads in the dance at weddings.*”

But another source said that when Daser first appeared in Charleston, he made such a favorable impression on current pastor of St. John’s, the Reverend John Severin Hahnbaum, that he married Daser to his daughter, with his store of sermons for a dowry, ordained him and secured for him the pastorate.

# The German Friendly Society



- January 15, 1766 – 15 Germans met in the home of Michael Kalteissen.
- Society a mutual assistance organization
- Loans made to members, which were repaid with interest. Sometimes charitable assistance given to members.
- Money raised in three ways: entrance and membership fees, fines, and by gifts.
- Society met every Wednesday and special dinners given quarterly and annually.
- Members joined for comradery and fellowship and for business associations.
- Members included mechanics and artisans, as well as merchants and skilled craftsmen.

**“The flower and crown of the German nation in this place.” Muhlenberg, 1774**





# Michael Kalteisen

- 1729 - Born in a village in Wurtemberg, Germany.
- 1762 - Record of his having established a business in Charleston.
- Member of the board of vestry and wardens of St. John's Lutheran Church.
- 1775 - Council of Safety appointed Kalteisen wagon master-general superintendent of transportation of South Carolina.
- 1776 - Provincial Congress appointed him commissary of military stores for the South Carolina forces.
- Elected member of the Provincial Congress and General Assembly.
- Warden of the City of Charleston.
- 1794 - federal government appointed him captain of the First Artillery of Engineers.
- 1802 - placed in command of Fort Johnson.
- 1807 – die at the age of 79.



# German Fusiliers

- Founded in May 1775.
- Founders: Michael Kalteisen, Alexander Gillon, Peter Bocquet, Gideon Dupont, William Livingston.
- Charleston's first German militia and the oldest German military company in the U.S.
- Continued in military service until the close of World War I.
- Started with between 100 - 137 men.
- Entered into active service July 12, 1775.
- According to General John Andreas Wagener *"The German company made a brilliant record for bravery and coolness under fire. Especially did it distinguish itself during the siege of Savannah. When the disastrous attack was made on the enemy's rampart, the Germans were the last to retreat and only after their brave leader, Captain Scheppard was shot down."*
- Captain Charles Sheppert may have refused to obey order of retreat when given.

When Charleston fell to the British in 1780, the Fusiliers were among troops captured.

In accordance with the terms of surrender the Company had to give up their muskets which had been presented to them by the Provincial Government.



John Horlbeck, private and an original member of the Fusiliers, hid his musket behind the wainscoting of his house. Carried another musket to surrender to the British.

All the other muskets were destroyed in the armory where they were stored. Horlbeck's musket was afterwards found and preserved by his family for many years.

## **German Institutions that were present in other large colonial German communities were missing in Charleston**

- No German press.
- No German school during colonial period.
- *“There are several English and French schools here, but no German one.” Boltzius Oct. 21, 1742.*
- No mention of a school in Minutes of German Friendly Society until February 29, 1802.
- Instruction in German language optional.
- No record of any provisions for the teaching of German to anyone found during colonial period.

## **Could be a member of all three German organizations without being German or born of German parents**

- 1766 rules of German Friendly Society specified a member had to be a German, born of German parents, or able to speak German language. Only German and English to be spoken at Society's meetings.
- Rule soon modified or ignored.
- French, English, Dutch names appears as both members and officers.
- 1775 Alexander Gillon was president and Peter Bocquet was vice president of the Society.
- Gillon born Aug. 13, 1741 to wealthy Dutch parents in Rottendam, Holland.

# **Altdeutsch – Colonial Period Germans and Their Descendents**

- In twenty years following Revolutionary War, they would become more Charlestonian than German.
- Determine to maintain their position in Charleston society.
- Became involved in politics of the city and two of them became mayor of Charleston in the early 1840's.
- Would have to deal with the Neudeutsch – the new wave of German immigrants to Charleston after 1830.





Portraits of the Firemasters and Officers of the Fire Department of the City of Charleston in 1841. Painted by C. Meyer, a German Artist

|                                                          |                                                                 |                                                    |                                                 |                                                                                                      |                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1. David V. McIntosh<br>Engineer                         | 2. James Short, President<br>Charleston Neck Fire Co            | 3. R. Wainwright Bacot<br>Pres Phoenix Fire Co     | 4. Peter Coburn<br>Vice Pres Charleston Fire Co | 5. W. H. Gibson<br>Pres Charleston Fire Co                                                           | 6. John C. Hoff<br>Firemaster           |
| 7. R. W. Hare<br>V.P. Vigilant Fire Co                   | 8. C. Meyer, The Artist<br>(German) who painted the picture     | 9. W <sup>m</sup> M. Taylor<br>V. Pres. Phoenix Co | 10. Rhett Bee<br>Firemaster                     | 11. J. M. Ostendorff<br>V. Pres. German Fire Co                                                      | 12. Alexander McDonald<br>Firemaster    |
| 13. D <sup>r</sup> E. C. Reckley<br>Pres. Marion Fire Co | 14. John A. Wagener, Pres. Bee<br>Man Fire Co. afterwards Mayor | 15. J. Cammer<br>V.P. Marion Fire Co               | 16. Theo. L. Smith<br>Foreman Neck Axe Co       | 17. W <sup>m</sup> Petsch<br>Superintendent city engines                                             | 18. Nath Fields<br>Firemaster           |
| 19. John Schnierle, Chief<br>Afterwards Mayor            | 20. W <sup>m</sup> Kirkwood<br>Firemaster                       | 21. Chs. H. West<br>Pres Vigilant Fire Co          | 22. John Symons<br>Pres Palmetto Fire Co        | 23. C. W. Cleaport<br>Engineer                                                                       | 24. B. J. Howland<br>Firemaster         |
| 25. J. F. Herr<br>Firemaster                             | 26. E. J. Folger<br>V.P. Palmetto. Fire Co                      | 27. John R. Herriott<br>Pres Aetna Fire Co         | 28. Ripley S. Hammett<br>Chief Engineer         | 29. John Hegling<br>Firemaster                                                                       | 30. Daniel Boineist<br>Pres Axe company |
| 31. Henry Casey<br>V. Pres. Aetna Fire Co                | 32. John Doyle<br>Engineer                                      | 33. Jacob J. Mintzing<br>Mayor of Charleston       | 34. Chas. H. Bryant<br>Ex. Pres. Aetna Fire Co  | Prepared from the original painting in the City Hall,<br>for Mayor Courtenay's City Year Book, 1885. |                                         |