



Rev. Hans Herr (1639 - 1725)

Born: Sept. 17, 1639, Canton of Zurich, Switzerland

Death: October 11, 1725, Lancaster Co. PA

Reverend Hans Herr, a Mennonite Bishop, was described as *“medium height with long grey hair curled under at the ends and parted in the middle; heavy brows, dark hazel eyes, aquiline nose, mouth rather small with heavy lips, complexion florid with full beard covering the face, the whole lighted by a countenance in which sweetness and austerity were gracefully blended. Clad in the coarsest homespun, his feet shod with wood, he at last arrived in the far - off land in which some strange prophecy told him he and his People would be prosperous and happy, however poor when arriving.”*-- Hans Herr Memorial Assoc. 1895.

Portrait of Hans Herr by Leon Von Ossko –circa 1897.

Painting was based on an earlier work by John Funck (1755 - 1831) who married Ann Herr, a great-granddaughter of Hans Herr. "The Hans Herr Painting" Mennonite Research Journal (January, 1967) p. 11.

“Hans Herr was born in 1639, in Switzerland, at, or near Zurich, Canton of Zurich, became a member of the Mennonite religious society and a prominent minister of that denomination.

When religious persecution became unendurable, many of his congregation emigrated with him to the Palatinate in Germany, which was then governed by a ruler who promised them protection and religious freedom. This was satisfactory until the Palatinate fell into the hands of other rulers, when the Mennonites were again subject to severe religious persecution.

When this occurred, a number of them visited Penn in London, in 1707, and arranged terms with him to colonize a portion of what is now Lancaster county, and in 1709 Hans Herr, John R. Bundely, Hans Mylin, Martin Kendig, Jacob Miller, Hans Funk, Martin Oberholtzer, Wendel Bowman and others bought 10,000 acres of land on the south side of Pequea creek. A warrant was issued for the land October 10, 1710, and it was surveyed Oct. 23, 1710. The tradition, which is no doubt true, is, that these people held a conference as to what steps should be taken to inform their relatives and friends left behind in Europe of their opinions and expectations, and it was determined by lot that Hans Herr, their revered minister, should return, explain the situation and the great advantages of emigration, and bring with him those he could induce to come. There is a tradition that the "lot" fell upon Christian Herr, son of Hans Herr, instead of on his father, but it does not seem to be supported by historical evidence. Hans consented to go, but many argued that their beloved pastor, head and leader, then over seventy years of age, should not leave them at this juncture, and at last it was agreed that his brother-in-law, Martin Kendig, should go. Accordingly, without delay, he embarked for Europe and returned in 1710 with six sons and one daughter of the venerable Hans Herr, and members of the families of those who had come over in 1709. John Houser, John Bachman, Hans Shantz Jacob Weaver, Henry Funk and others, also came with them. The six sons of Hans Herr, John, Emanuel, Abraham, Christian, Henry and Samuel, and the daughter, Maria, were married and had families. Tradition asserts that several of his sons and daughters remained in Europe. One son, at least, went with a colony to London, England, in 1709, or about that date, and shortly after settled in Ireland. Some of his descendants came to the United States about fifty years ago.”

Source: GENEALOGICAL RECORD OF Reverend Hans Herr AND HIS DIRECT LINEAL DESCENDANTS FROM HIS BIRTH A. D. 1639 TO THE PRESENT TIME CONTAINING THE NAMES, ETC., OF 13223 PERSONS COMPILED, ARRANGED, INDEXED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER, AND PUBLISHED BY HER THEODORE W HERR, 1908. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924029842204>