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THE EARLY GERMAN HYMN BOOKS OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

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The Reformed Church in this country has always cultivated congregational singing. The earliest reference to a German Reformed service in this country takes notice of the good singing of the people. On November 21, 1715, John Fontaine with two friends visited the Reformed settlement at Germanna, in Virginia, and described it as follows in his diary:

“They make use of the block house for divine service. They go to prayers constantly once a day, and have two sermons on Sunday. We went to hear them perform their service, which was done in their own language, which we did not understand; but they seemed to be very devout and sang the Psalms very well.”¹

Most of the early immigrants brought at least three books with them to the New World: their Bible, their hymn book and their catechism. But as they came from different parts of Germany, in which different hymn books were in use, they experienced at first considerable difficulty in their singing. Rev. John Philip Boehm testifies to this when he reports in 1739 that “singing up to this time had to be

¹ Cf. JOURNAL OF THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Vol. II, p. 101.

- To 1 old couch
- To 2 old Tables
- To 1 book stand
- To 1 pr: old Iron tongs.....
- To 3 feather beads & bolstrs:
- To 3 old Cheests
- To 1 pr: brass fier shovell & Tongs.....
- To 1 pr: brass and Irons.....
- To 1 pr: of Doggs.....
- To 1, pr: Brass Ditto.....
- To 1 pr: small Iron and Iron.....
- To 6 old Large Chares.....
- Cattle
- To 2 bulls 5 stears.....
- To 9 coves & Calves
- To 3 yearlings & 1 heifer.....
- To 1 young Steer
- To 1 horse & 1 mare and fole.....

Copia Jno- Watts
 Robt: Pitt

The within Inventory was Recorded March ye: 26th: 1711
 Pr Mr Robt: Snead Cl: Cur: Com Accomack

A true copy from the records of Accomack Circuit Court as recorded
 in Will Book &c, 1692-1715, page 550.

Teste: JOHN D. GRANT, C. C.

In the name of God Amen; I, *Anne Holden of Accomack County State of Virginia* being at this time of a sound mind and disposing memory do make this my last Will & Testament in manner and form following, viz;

Im primus; I Give and Devise all my lands on Match-tank known by the name Fookes neck to John, Francis and Joseph Boggs equally to be divided between them their heirs and assigns forever.

I give to Francis Boggs a negro boy in his Possession.

I Give to Joseph Boggs a negro Girl in his possession, a negro man Called Peter, and a two year old mare;

Item; I Give and devise One hundred Acres of land purchased by my deceased Husband King to Thomas and John Sandford to be Equally divided between them their heirs and assigns forever,

I Give to John Boggs a young negro such as my Executors shall determine,

I Give to Betty Sandford a negro woman called Lucy and her youngest child; a Bed and furniture, two Cows and Calfs, and Six pounds in money;

I Give to Ann Sandford widow a negro Girl Called Pricillia,

I Give to John Sandford Lucy's Second Child,

I Give to Ann Sandford, Daughter of the Widow, a negro boy, son of Lucy,

I Give Esther Benston a negro woman Called Lancy and her Child,

I Give Doctor William Williams the sum of Two hundred pounds and a set of Curtains in his Possession

I Give and devise Twenty of my slaves to be determined by my Executors equally to be divided between the Children of Ann Whittington, Elizabeth Whittington, and Jacoman Milligan, except Elizabeth Nichols, each to have one third part, and the Division to be made as Equally as Possible by my Executors but if the negroes should not be willing to go to the person or persons to whom they shall be allotted, I do direct that they shall have Liberty to choose their Masters, and if such persons will give a reasonable price for them my Executors shall sell them and apply the money to the person or persons to whom they were allotted

I Give the two Pictures of Father and Mother to Samuel Wilson,

I Give and devise to Colo. William Selby the following negroes viz; Guy, Nicy, James, Lithor and her Children, which I exchanged with George Holden during our lives for a negro woman called Flora and her children, and if Lithor and her children are so disposed of as not to be Conveniently procured then I give Flora and her Children to the Colonel,

also a Case of Drawers, a large Copper Still & a set of Curtains;

I Give to the Reverend Jacob Ker the sum of Twenty Pounds,

I Give to the Reverend Samuel McMaster the sum of forty Six pounds, a Mahogany Desk, a bed and furniture, and a negro woman called Keziah and her Children,

Item; I give and Devise to John Milligan and Mary Milbourn all the Land and Plantation where I live, John Milligan to have the old part where I formerly lived, being the Westernmost part of the land, and Mary Milbourn the Eastermost part of the land where I now live, to be Equally divided between them their heirs and assigns forever, but should John Milligan die without a child lawfully begotten by his Body then I give and devise that part mentioned to him to Arthur Whittington his heirs and assigns forever,

I also give and devise all my Marsh and Land at or near Sexes Island to John Milligan and Mary Milbourn to them, their heirs and assigns forever,

I give to Mary Milbourn a negro Woman called Comfort and her Children, Hannah and her Children, a large looking glass, a Walnut Table, a set of Curtains, a Bed and furniture, a yoke of Oxen, four Cows, six head of Sheep and a work Horse

I Give fifty Pounds to the Good poor of my Neighbourhood to be given and disposed of at the discretion of William Selby;

I Give one hundred pounds to the Pitts Creek Congregation to be disposed of by the Session for the support of a Minister.

I give to Jacoman Milligan six head of Cattle, ten head of Sheep, one Table, six Chairs, six pewter plates, two dishes, six Hoggs, Twenty barrels of Corn, two work Horses, one yoke of Oxen, and to have a Maintainance of that part of the land devised to her son John during her life;

I Give to Millison Gladden in moveable property to the value of five pounds;

I Give to Colonel William Selby and Mary Milbourn two

dozen of Pewter plates and six dishes marked with a Cypher G. A. H. to be equally divided between them;

I Give to Peggy Milligan one bed and furniture,

My Will and desire is that my negro man called Ben should have his freedom after my decease,

My Will and desire is that my Executors should retain as much money in their hands out of my estate as will purchase a negro woman called Sarah belonging to the estate of George Holden should she be sold and to have her freedom,

I give my wearing apparel to be Equally divided among my negro women,

I also direct and burthen the Legatees of my lands with the Maintenance of all my old negroes who are past their Labour,

I Give all the rest of my Estate to be disposed of by my Executors, and the negroes to be sold in families, to such Masters as they shall Choose, at a reasonable price, and the money raised thereby to be Equally divided between Ann Whittington Elizabeth Whittington and Jacoman Milligan, but if any person or persons purchasing any of my negroes shall attempt to send them over the Bay to sell or dispose of them then such Negroes shall be free and be entitled to the priviledges of other free Negroes,

Lastly, I Nominate and appoint Doctor William Williams, Colo. William Selby, Samuel McMaster and Elijah Milbourn Executors of this my last Will and Testament to which I have affixed my hand and seal this fifteenth day of November in the year of our Lord One Thousand seven hundred and Eighty Seven

Ann ^{her} X Holden (*Seal*)
mark

Signed Sealed and Acknowledged in the presence of Peter Delastatius, Charles Drummond, Joachim Milbourn, Comfort Drummond, George Corbin, Thomas Evans;

At a Court held in Accomack County January 29; 1788;

This Will was proved by the oath of Peter Delastatius, Charles Drummond, Comfort Drummond, Joachim Milbourn, George Corbin and Thomas Evans witnesses thereto and ordered to be recorded; And on the motion of William Williams, William Selby, Samuel McMaster & Elijah Milbourn taking Oath and giving George Corbin, Thomas Evans, Thomas Sandford and William Vessels for their Security who entered into and acknowledged a bond for that purpose Certificate is granted them for obtaining a Probate thereof in due form.

Test Littleton Savage Cl Cr.

A true copy from the records of Accomack Circuit Court as recorded in Will Book 1788-1794, page 16.

Teste: JOHN D. GRANT, C. C.

[THE END.]