

They Came from Germany, Aboard the Thistle

By Rev. James R. Hawk

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Thousands of German migrants came to the New World during the 1700s.

The Grindstaff's sailed aboard the Thistle in the year 1738. They came when plundering wars and religious persecutions had reduced the Lower Palatinate to a wasteland, when people ate grass and leaves, when graves were guarded, and children were kept near their mothers, when passenger ships were loaded beyond capacity, with bunk beds almost everywhere, when hundreds were buried at sea, when lengthy voyages caused rationing of bread and water, and selling of available ship rats and mice, when churning sea gales rose like mountains and tumbled over frightened migrants, when the unhealthy were unwelcome at the port in Philadelphia. The year of 1738 was the worst of sailing seasons, famously called the year of the "destroying angels".

The Grindstaff descendants are traced through battles of the Revolutionary War, the War Between the States, the War of 1812, and forays against the Cherokee Indian Nation.

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