

The Salzburgers' "City On A Hill": The Failure Of A Pietist Vision In Ebenezer, Georgia, 1734-1774

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THE SALZBURGERS' "CITY ON A HILL": THE FAILURE OF A PIETIST VISION
IN EBENEZER, GEORGIA, 1734-1774

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of History
in the College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
2005

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ABSTRACT

A group of Protestant refugees from Salzburg founded the town of Ebenezer, Georgia, in 1734. The Pietists at the Francke Foundation in Halle sent two pastors, Johann Martin Boltzius and Israel Christian Gronau, to lead the religious immigrants in their new settlement. As other historians have shown, the Halle sponsors wanted Ebenezer to fulfill their own purposes: establish social and religious autonomy under British colonial rule, reproduce the economic structure and institutions of social and religious reform of the Francke Foundation, and establish a successful Pietist ministry in North America. This study examines journals and correspondence from Ebenezer's pastors, British colonial authorities, and the German religious sponsors to reveal how different aspects of the Pietist vision were compromised until Ebenezer resembled a typical German-American settlement rather than a model Pietist community. Georgia's economic conditions, political pressures, and Ebenezer's internal demographic changes forced the pastors to sacrifice their goals for an orphanage, a free labor economy, and a closely structured community of persecuted Protestants. They ensured Ebenezer's economic success and social autonomy, but they were unable to replicate their sponsors' most distinctly Pietist economic, social and religious enterprises.

Dedicated to my mother and father, whose devotion to learning challenges me to put forth my best effort every day.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to a number of people who invested their valuable time and energy into helping me successfully complete this project. Dr. Rosalind Beiler inspired my interest in this topic during a research seminar, and as my advisor she generously offered guidance and encouragement when I most needed it. Drs. Sean Adams and Scott Perry, my thesis committee members, challenged my perspective and critiqued my writing with characteristic thoroughness. Dr. Spencer Downing helped with the initial conceptualization of this project, and Dr. Craig Friend contributed his expertise on southern history. Professor Jon Sensbach at the University of Florida directed me to several sources on transatlantic Pietism. The History Department's wise and dedicated staff, Nancy Rauscher, Carole Gonzalez, and Dr. Edmund Kallina provided support and advice throughout the entire process. I am also very thankful for the community of graduate students with whom I had the privilege of sharing this experience. More than anything else, their fellowship made my work at UCF truly enjoyable.

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INTRODUCTION: A VISION CONCEIVED

Gotthilf August Francke, leader of the eighteenth-century Pietist ministry in Prussia, called the town of Ebenezer in 1743 “the fortress of all refugees in Georgia.... Thus, the Lord has made of Ebenezer a City on the Hill which shall [not be] hidden and [shall be a] light to all others. May He give you and all other inhabitants of Ebenezer the grace to excel... before all other European inhabitants of America.”¹ Ebenezer’s attempt to create a Pietist “city on a hill” was led for over three decades by Johann Martin Boltzius, a pastor trained at the Francke Foundations at Halle in Prussia. He had the responsibility of seeing his Pietist mentors’ vision for Ebenezer become a reality. Boltzius walked a fine line as both pastor and administrator, balancing the goals of his religious patrons in Europe, the needs of his congregation in America, and the expectations of his colonial authorities in Georgia and England. In his efforts to ensure the community’s survival and maintain its autonomy as a Lutheran settlement, he had to compromise the most distinctively Pietist characteristics of Halle’s vision for a German “city on a hill.” The realities of life in the Georgia climate under a distant English government and American economic conditions forced Boltzius to adapt his vision for the economic, social, and religious practices of Ebenezer until it disappeared altogether.

The founding of Ebenezer began with the expulsion of around twenty thousand Protestants from the Archbishopric of Salzburg. Two Protestant organizations joined forces to help these exiles, seen as victims of Catholic domination: the German Pietists of

¹ Gotthilf August Francke to Johann Martin Boltzius, 27 March 1743, quoted in Renate Wilson, “Halle Pietism in Colonial Georgia,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 12 (1998): 278.

the Francke Foundations in Halle and the Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in London. They connected through Samuel Urlsperger, the Lutheran Senior Minister at Augsburg, a voluntary patron of the Salzburg refugees and a corresponding member of the SPCK. Several other members of the SPCK were also on the Board of Trustees given a charter to establish the colony of Georgia in 1732. On behalf of the Georgia Trustees, Urlsperger recruited nearly sixty of the displaced Salzburger to settle in the new colony. The SPCK agreed to pay the salaries of two German ministers trained at the Francke Foundation to care for the spiritual needs of the Lutheran immigrants, primary pastor Johann Martin Boltzius and catechist Israel Christian Gronau.²

The Pietists in Halle and their Protestant allies had a clear vision for the Lutheran refugee settlement's potential as a model religious community and as a North American branch of the Pietist ministry. Historian Renate Wilson has established that in the eyes of the German sponsors, Ebenezer was intended to be a "German enclave" reproducing "the pattern of economic independence and social and religious self-governance based on the pragmatic principles of universal Christian reform that had been developed in the Francke institutions in Halle."³ Although Ebenezer was characterized as a refuge and utopian "city on the hill," it differed from other religious settlements because of its "attempt to

² Renate Wilson describes the network of Protestant charitable organizations in *Pious Traders in Medicine: A German Pharmaceutical Network in Eighteenth-Century North America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); "Continental Protestant Refugees and their Protectors in Germany and London: Commercial and Charitable Networks," *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 20 (1994): 107-124.

³ Renate Wilson, "Halle and Ebenezer: Pietism, Agriculture and Commerce in Colonial Georgia," (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1988), 18.

replicate specific institutional models.”⁴ The Francke Foundations, created by August Hermann Francke (whose son Gotthilf August was “father” of the Salzburger settlement), were the base of a multi-faceted Pietist ministry in Halle and set the precedent for Boltzius’ efforts in Ebenezer. A. H. Francke had begun his philanthropic efforts as a pastor in the impoverished community of Glaucha on the outskirts of Halle. He promoted aiding the poor through social reform, shutting down taverns and providing education and care for poor children and widows. By the time he died in 1727, the Francke Orphanage was known across Europe as a “city of schools” devoted to training its inhabitants in Christian principles including a serious work ethic.⁵

In his goals for both religious and social reform, Francke shared many impulses with similar Protestant movements in Europe. Evangelical reformers were devoted to observing the Scriptures, rejecting church legalism such as the enforcement of confession, and emphasizing individual repentance and conversion experiences as the way to a Christian life. Their social and economic activism resembled the Calvinism of English and Dutch reformers.⁶ The plight of persecuted Protestants like the Salzburgers, caught in the middle of regional counterreformation efforts, created even closer alliances between Protestant groups such as the SPCK and the Halle Pietists.⁷ So it is no surprise that the SPCK would agree to sponsor a settlement under the spiritual leadership of pastors trained under Francke’s influence and experienced as teachers in the Francke Orphanage.

⁴ Wilson, “Halle and Ebenezer,” 19.

⁵ Wilson, *Pious Traders in Medicine*, 18.

⁶ Wilson, “Halle and Ebenezer,” 22-3.

⁷ Wilson, “Continental Protestant Refugees,” 107-8.

To keep his patrons apprised of the Salzburgers' progress both spiritually and economically, and to provide them with a tool for fundraising, Boltzius kept a daily journal which he sent to Urlsperger for editing and publishing. In these journals he makes clear his practical interpretation of the Pietist vision for Ebenezer through the events he emphasizes and the opinions he shares. He focuses mostly on the conversion experiences of his congregants, their daily prayer hours and Bible teachings, and his constant exhortations to put their faith in Christ and take on His righteousness. Ebenezer was supposed to be a community of believers living godly, orderly lives based on individual conversion experiences and communal Bible study and prayer. Boltzius followed A.H. Francke's example of punishing moral infractions by excluding members from communion until they repented.⁸ He consistently praised the Salzburgers' diligence and industry in the face of hardship, recording only a few instances where congregants refused to accept his authority and were asked to move away from Ebenezer.⁹

Replicating the Francke Foundation's principles required more than an effective pastoral ministry and submissive parishioners, however. The European sponsors wanted to see visible reproductions of the Francke Orphanage and its economic enterprises to solidify Ebenezer's reputation as a refuge for the poor and a base for Pietist education in Georgia. First, Ebenezer had to become a self-sufficient and autonomous community independent of government support and capable of earning capital to support charitable

⁸ Mary Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics: Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in England, Württemberg and Prussia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 155.

⁹ George Fenwick Jones provides a general history of Boltzius and the Salzburgers in *The Salzburger Saga: Religious Exiles and Other Germans Along the Savannah* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984); also *The Georgia Dutch: From the Rhine and Danube to the Savannah, 1733-1783* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992); "In Memoriam: John Martin Boltzius, 1703-1765, Patriarch of the Georgia Lutherans," *Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (1965): 151-65.

efforts. Although the Halle Pietists had formed a cooperative relationship with converts among the Prussian nobility, and even the monarchy, through their charitable works, they were “well aware of the sudden changes in patronage and similar dangers to institutional continuity that went with dependence on royal protection.”¹⁰ Francke, therefore, had built a strong base of economic support for his orphanage that included donations as well as a number of commercial enterprises that employed the orphanage’s inhabitants. The Orphanage Pharmacy manufactured and sold medicines, a printing press produced religious literature, and a variety of missionary associates commissioned numerous Bible translations as part of Halle’s trading practices.¹¹ Ebenezer tried to achieve similar economic success by establishing successful agriculture and millworks, maintaining European faith in their experiment, and pursuing profit through Georgia’s silk industry. After securing its own economic success and autonomy under the British colonial government, Ebenezer needed to build an orphanage, modeled after the Francke Orphanage, to serve as the basis of Pietist education and philanthropy in Georgia. The success of this institution and the enterprises supporting it would serve as an indication of Ebenezer’s success as a transplant of Halle Pietism.

The Trustees also had a specific “Georgia Plan” in mind when they identified the Salzburgers as potential colonists. Many of them were Protestant philanthropists and wanted Georgia to be a “model colony” that provided refuge and opportunity for Europe’s poor and persecuted Protestants. They paid for the passage of “worthy poor” like the Salzburgers and granted each household fifty acres of land. To avoid the

¹⁰ Wilson, “Halle Pietism,” 281.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 282.

inequitable distribution of land and wealth that had developed in South Carolina's plantation economy, the Trustees prohibited slave ownership and large landholdings, even among settlers who paid their own way. The British government also wanted Georgia to serve as a buffer zone between the Carolinas and Spanish Florida, so the Trustees tried to divide the land among as many farmers and potential soldiers as possible. Slaves could have undermined the colony's military purposes by rebelling and running away to join the Spanish military in Florida, so prohibiting slave ownership guarded against potential internal and external threats.¹²

The Trustees' plans for Georgia's economic structure and Protestant haven gave Boltzius and his sponsors the impression that Georgia would be the ideal environment for their community. By 1752, however, the Trustees had abandoned their Georgia Plan and allowed the colony to develop a staple economy based on large slave-operated plantations. Wilson suggests that Ebenezer's dependence on European support left it especially vulnerable to the changing local economy. She identifies three main factors that, by 1770, confirmed the failure of the Halle experiment: the end of alliances with London interests in the face of growing American nationalism, the decline of Foundation funding after G.A. Francke's death in 1769, and economic stratification and competition among the citizens of Ebenezer.¹³ Ebenezer's failure to fully replicate Halle institutions and principles began long before the 1760s, however. From their first years in Georgia, the Salzburgers were engaged in a series of compromises as Boltzius adapted his goals in

¹² Paul S. Taylor outlines the Trustees' philanthropic, economic and military goals in *Georgia Plan: 1732-1752* (Berkeley: University of California, 1972).

¹³ Wilson, "Halle Pietism," 290-1.

the face of environmental challenges, political pressures, labor shortages, and eventually a new economic structure that contradicted his ideas about community structure and economic enterprises. Each challenge presented an obstruction to European goals and forced Boltzius to adapt aspects of the original Pietist vision for the sake of Ebenezer's economic success and autonomy. In this sense, Boltzius' failure to reproduce Francke institutions in Ebenezer represents a form of cultural adaptation in which other religious groups had engaged earlier in the British colonial period.

The Salzburger were not the first community to have specific religious goals motivating their settlement in British North America. Comparing Ebenezer's purposes with those of similar communities helps to clarify the most important characteristics of Halle's goals and define the Pietists' interpretation of "failure." For example, Boltzius shared the Massachusetts Puritans' conviction that a prosperous colony was necessary to bring positive attention to their religious experiment. But the English Puritans were seeking a place, free of institutional constraints, where they could create their own civil and ecclesiastical government to allow for a purification of Calvinism that had been impossible in Europe.¹⁴ The Halle Pietists were not necessarily expecting the Salzburger to establish a theocracy free of interactions with a secular government. Francke had actually experienced a cooperative relationship with the monarchy in Prussia. He had gained state support for his institutions by improving the social and economic conditions around Halle through his activities with the poor.¹⁵ Since the

¹⁴ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 4-5.

¹⁵ Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics*, 159-60.

Georgia Trustees already shared the Pietists' concern for providing opportunity to poor Europeans, Halle expected the colonial government to support Boltzius' efforts at recreating the Pietist ministry in Georgia. When the secular authorities did not support his goals and Boltzius was forced to take a political role as Ebenezer's leader, the Halle vision suffered a setback.

Ebenezer also faced challenges from its surrounding British culture and economy, much like the Moravian groups who settled in North Carolina.¹⁶ The Moravians who founded Wachovia intended it to be "an exclusive refuge from religious persecution where they would live in sanctified seclusion."¹⁷ They immediately discovered that economic success would come more easily if they "demonstrated a willingness to abandon many external characteristics of their German heritage," so they engaged in what past historians have called "partial assimilation."¹⁸ They adopted Anglo-American economic practices and village structures while maintaining their church as the core of their Moravian identity. Although they originally intended to settle their colony in closely structured villages of small farms that would foster community ties and replicate aspects of German society as had their first village, Bethania, Wachovia's founders adopted their English neighbors' pattern of dispersed plantations. The Moravians were willing to engage more lucrative economic practices to help their town succeed, because

¹⁶ For the origins of British culture in America, see David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Jacke P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

¹⁷ Jon F. Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan: The Making of an Afro-Moravian World in North Carolina, 1763-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), xvii.

¹⁸ Daniel B. Thorp, "Assimilation in North Carolina's Moravian Community," *The Journal of Southern History* 52 no. 1 (1986): 20.

they were still achieving their goal of establishing “a refuge for the benefit of the Moravian Church.”¹⁹ For the Salzburger, such “partial assimilation” was not an option, because economic practices and community structure were both important aspects of the Halle vision being imposed upon Ebenezer. They needed to build a closely structured town where they could use their resources to support themselves and the operation of public works for the good of the community. They could not adopt the economic system of the Carolinas, based on widely spaced plantations where individuals pursued the accumulation of private wealth. Abandoning the Francke institutional models in favor of Anglo-American structures would signify a failure to fully transplant Halle Pietism.

Chapter 1: A Vision Obstructed, 1734-1740, describes the Salzburger’s struggle in their first years of settlement to become self-sufficient and autonomous in a harsh colonial landscape. At first they were completely dependent on the colonial officials for their survival until they could grow crops, and when their land proved infertile, Boltzius discovered that the Trustee government prioritized military concerns over Ebenezer’s agricultural success. In order to maintain the appearance of respect for his colonial government and please his European benefactors while ensuring the survival of Ebenezer, Boltzius had to carefully negotiate his relationship with colonial authorities who frustrated rather than aided the success of his vision. The infertility of Ebenezer’s first location and the unsatisfactory cooperation of civil authorities in Ebenezer, Savannah, and London all delayed Ebenezer’s ability to achieve Boltzius’ goals. He was forced to

¹⁹ Ibid., 33.

take on administrative and political responsibilities to ensure economic success before he could even begin to pursue his other religious goals.

Chapter 2: A Vision Fading, 1740-1750, explains the challenges to Boltzius' efforts to recreate the Francke Orphanage and maintain a reputation for Ebenezer as a refuge for poor Europeans in need of employment. Georgia's labor shortages made it impossible for Boltzius to operate the economic enterprises necessary to support an institution for the poor, while mortality rates rendered a European-style orphanage unnecessary in Ebenezer. At the same time, English colonists in Georgia were trying to establish a plantation economy that would threaten Ebenezer's reputation and community structure. Boltzius was forced to adapt his ideals in the face of a dominant British culture and economy, as he tried to balance pressure from colonists who did not support his vision and the expectations of European sponsors who did not understand conditions in America.

The late 1740s were a turning point for Georgia as the Trustees abandoned their original goals for the colony's economic and social structure, permitting slave ownership and the accumulation of large landholdings. As the economy of the colony around him changed, Boltzius justified changes in Ebenezer's structure to ensure the success of his community. As a result, Chapter 3: A Vision Failed, 1750-60, shows Ebenezer to be headed in a decidedly different direction than the Halle Pietists had envisioned. The addition of new settlers, slave labor, and English church structures solidified the Salzburger's abandonment of any visible signs of Halle principles as Ebenezer developed a stratified plantation economy along with the rest of Georgia.

By the end of Georgia's colonial period, Ebenezer was the most prosperous town in Georgia. Although economic success was one of Halle's priorities for a community that exhibited the blessings of God, the Pietists certainly never envisioned a plantation economy where individual interests were more important than the spiritual fellowship of the community. But after three decades of negotiating, prioritizing, and adapting Halle principles, Boltzius did not lead a community whose structures and institutions could be held up as a "city on a hill" to other Protestants. The environment, economy, and culture of British Georgia rendered the full replication of Francke's European institutions and enterprises impossible.

CHAPTER 1: A VISION OBSTRUCTED, 1734-1740

When the first Salzburgers landed in Georgia, they believed they were settling in a “model colony” under the governance of philanthropic proprietors, but the colony’s harsh environment threatened their survival, and the colonial government hindered rather than helped Boltzius establish Ebenezer’s physical and spiritual identity. During the first few years of settlement, three series of events shaped Ebenezer’s relationship with the colony’s temporal authorities and challenged the establishment of Ebenezer’s autonomous existence. First, the Trustees located the Salzburgers on land that was strategically positioned for the colony’s defenses but could not produce enough crops for the settlers to support themselves. Boltzius struggled for almost two years to get the Salzburgers a fertile location, while the malarial climate and poorly built temporary dwellings caused health problems and high child mortality rates. Secondly, Ebenezer suffered from a lack of competent local leadership. Boltzius did not originally plan to govern Ebenezer with a unified ecclesiastical and civil government, but when none of the Trustees’ candidates for local government met his standards for a trustworthy Christian leader, Boltzius took over all administrative responsibilities. The “burden” of civil authority, as he called it, detracted from Boltzius’ ability to care for the spiritual needs of his congregation, but he decided that he would have a better chance of fulfilling his vision by working alone than with uncooperative administrators. But even after acquiring new land and getting rid of the unsuitable administrators, the Salzburgers were still dependent on the colony’s government for a couple of years as they tried to produce crops on their newly assigned lots. This dependence resulted in a third hindrance to

Ebenezer's development, because Georgia's inefficient bureaucracy did not effectively provide the Salzburgers' with the provisions and tools that they needed (and believed they had been promised) to build their town. Although the Salzburgers were able to build a self-sufficient and autonomous settlement by the end of the 1730s, they did so in the face of unanticipated physical hardships and unmet promises from the colonial administration.

According to Renate Wilson, "only natural and economic forces affected realization and development" of Ebenezer's goals for twenty years under the Trustees' government.¹ But in these early events Boltzius' goals were hindered by more than just environmental difficulties. The Halle Pietists, who enjoyed state support for their economic and social activities in Prussia, had high expectations of the philanthropic Trustees who professed to share some of their concerns for social reform. While they did not want Ebenezer to be dependent on the Trustees, they expected the Salzburgers to have the government's cooperation and at least receive the land and provisions they were promised to get them started. But the colonial government was slow to provide them with the quality of land and provisions that they needed to build their town. These physical trials delayed the development of a self-sufficient community, endangering the success of its other goals and the reputation of its sponsors. At the same time, Boltzius' rejection of potential leaders to administrate civil affairs in Ebenezer created a theocratic community instead of the pragmatic structure Halle had anticipated. Instead of trying to

¹ Wilson, "Halle Pietism," 279.

cooperate with leaders who did not share his ideals, Boltzius adjusted his application of Halle practices by taking on political responsibilities in addition to his religious duties.

In addition to hampering the self-sufficiency and pastoral ministry of Ebenezer, the events of the 1730s brought about a more subtle compromise of Pietist principles by challenging Boltzius' ability to maintain a respectful attitude toward the Trustees' government. The Halle Pietists believed in a system of governance that included "appropriate Lutheran deference" to secular authorities.² Therefore, Ebenezer's pastors found ways to address their problems without overtly expressing any displeasure with the Trustees' government. They were determined to pursue their goals for Ebenezer's economic and social development while maintaining the appearance of respectful Christian subjects. As their difficulties and frustration increased, however, their respect became merely that—a superficial appearance for the benefit of European benefactors. This duality between outward deference and internal distrust continued throughout the colonial period, as Ebenezer became an autonomous and successful settlement.

The Quest for New Ebenezer

When the first Salzburger transport immigrated to Georgia in 1734, the Georgia Trustees promised each household fifty acres of land, to be assigned by the Trustees.³ General James Oglethorpe, one of the most active Trustees and the colony's military

² Renate Wilson, "Public Works and Piety in Ebenezer: The Missing Salzburger Diaries of 1744-1745," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 77 no. 2 (1993): 346.

³ George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Detailed Reports of the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1733-1734)*, vol. 1, trans. Hermann J. Lacher (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1968), 190. All such charity colonists sent to Georgia at the Trustees' expense during the first few years of settlement were given fifty-acre farms. Colonists who paid their own way and brought ten servants with them could obtain as many as five hundred acres, but no more. Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730-1775* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 8.

leader, met the Salzburgers in Savannah in March 1734 and took them to the site he had chosen for them. The settlement was located inland at the head of a stream they called “Ebenezer Creek,” which connected to the Savannah River. Each household was assigned a house lot and two-acre garden plot in town, with a field to grow crops on the outskirts. They named their town Ebenezer, meaning “stone of help,” or “the Lord hath helped so far.”⁴

Oglethorpe’s first impression of Ebenezer was so positive that he left soon after seeing the Salzburgers safely settled, believing that as “a religious, industrious and cheerfull People” they would most likely “succeed very well.”⁵ The young nobleman who had led the transport from Europe, Commissioner Philipp Georg Friedrich von Reck, also went home with plans to return to Georgia after applying for his own grant of five hundred acres. After they left, Oglethorpe gave Boltzius and his assistant Gronau “supervision over temporal affairs.”⁶ Therefore, Boltzius had to handle the problems that arose when the Salzburgers’ location turned out to be infertile and unable to support their goals for a self-sufficient community.

Ebenezer’s location proved to be problematic for several reasons. The Salzburgers discovered that the land they had been given was infertile as soon as they started to plant crops. Mostly it consisted of “only a thin layer of humus which would blow away as soon as the land was cultivated.”⁷ Other areas were swampy and uneven.⁸

⁴ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 35.

⁵ Kenneth Coleman and Milton Ready, eds., *The Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 20 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982), 52.

⁶ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 1:87.

⁷ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 37.

Ebenezer Creek was supposed to provide them access to the Savannah River and therefore easy access to Savannah, where the colonial government's storehouse held provisions to support the colonists during their first two years of settlement. But the creek proved to be full of shallow swamps and huge cypress roots that would not allow a boat loaded with provisions to get through. Without their own crops or water access to Savannah, the settlers had to drag provisions over eight miles with horses and makeshift sledges, after clearing a trail and building seven bridges.⁹

By August 1734, Boltzius decided that he must approach the Trustees about Ebenezer's poor location. He inspected the assigned lots and found it "impossible, also unnecessary, that these good people should build their houses and have their gardens in swampy and waterlogged places when there is much beautiful level land on both banks of the river." He also decided the garden plots were each too small, and he knew the settlers wanted "very much to be certain that they [would] have their certain and usable land, because next month a number of things such as turnips, cabbage, parsley, etc. must be planted." Therefore, "necessity and love" for his congregation forced him to make the difficult journey to Savannah to speak with Thomas Causton, the head bailiff, keeper of the stores, and the Trustees' only representative in Georgia whenever Oglethorpe was in England.¹⁰ Causton agreed to visit the Salzburger settlement in a few weeks and bring a surveyor with him to look over the land assignments.¹¹ This first meeting between

⁸ George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Detailed Reports of the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America...* Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1734-1735), vol. 2, trans. Hermann J. Lacher (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 9.

⁹ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 37-8.

¹⁰ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

Boltzius and Causton was merely the beginning of a series of exchanges through which Boltzius would try to obtain new land from the Trustees without directly complaining about their leadership or questioning their authority.

The Salzburgers lived for months with the insufficient shelter of temporary huts and the inconvenience of carrying their own provisions up from Savannah while they respectfully followed all of Causton's instructions. They hoped that he would, in turn, provide a long-term solution to their problems. Causton would send barrels of beef, rice, and flour on a boat up the Savannah for them to pick up at Abercorn, the closest landing. If their horses were "not fit to carry a load," they had to carry the barrels on their backs.¹² In fact, by mid-October 1734, Causton was asking them to come all the way to Savannah to pick up their own provisions, since he could not find anyone to transport the food up the river to Abercorn. Boltzius observed in his journal that the settlers "carry out these and other labors with much patience, but they are sorry that they are so often prevented from continuing with their field work and the building of houses." After eight months Causton still had not come to see their land and discuss where the permanent houses and gardens should be built, so they started to build huts for themselves, "particularly because they have no protection against the severe cold in the common shelter" they were occupying together.¹³

Causton disappointed them again by making them change their farming structure when he finally visited Ebenezer in February 1735 to inspect the land. Instead of having new gardens surveyed, he told the Salzburgers to labor communally and divide whatever

¹² Ibid., 14.

¹³ Ibid., 16-17.

they were able to harvest among them. This order contradicted the Trustees' original promise of fifty acres for each Salzburger family to own privately.¹⁴ Communal labor also compromised the pastors' beliefs in a well-ordered community based on individual responsibility and stewardship. These Pietist leaders valued private property as "a good held in trust," to be used responsibly by individual stewards for public benefit and to further a positive reputation for their Christian community rather than the accumulation of individual wealth.¹⁵ Still, rather than subvert Causton's order, Boltzius and Gronau explained his instructions to their congregation and "they promised to follow this advice and to make an honest attempt at it, because they did not want to be accused of disobedience by their benefactors."¹⁶

The Salzburgers accepted another discouraging order in May when Causton told them to start fencing land for cattle. They had tried to avoid building as many permanent structures as possible, since they hoped to move their town to more fertile ground, but they followed the order anyway.¹⁷ Boltzius and his congregation continued to show respect for the Trustees' representative even though he had failed to fulfill the Trustees' promises to them. In September 1735 Boltzius told G. A. Francke that Causton "does so much good" for the Salzburgers that they "could hardly desire more without sinning."¹⁸

¹⁴ Alan D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 2 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1905), 25.

¹⁵ A. G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 166. In contrast to Halle principles, the Pietists of Württemberg would have viewed private property negatively as a temptation to distract them from God. Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religions in a New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 34.

¹⁶ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:44.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.

The urgency of Ebenezer's problems increased when the town received a second transport of Salzburger refugees in January 1735. The new colonists expected, based on positive early reports, to find Ebenezer settled on fertile soil on its way to becoming a thriving agricultural community. When the transport reached Savannah, "they were told they would find no fertile ground here around Ebenezer; and, because they saw nothing but bad soil on their way [to Ebenezer], many of them became depressed."¹⁹ The new immigrants insisted to their transport's commissioner, Jean Vat, that they be settled in an area with fertile soil, so he took on the task of persuading Causton to grant them different land. On 25 January 1735, Vat returned to Savannah to speak with Causton.²⁰

Vat succeeded in bringing Causton and the surveyor back to Ebenezer with him, but he did not acquire new land for the Salzburgers. The three men traveled several hours away to look for better quality land, but they said they were finding a new location for the second transport of Salzburgers alone. Boltzius knew better than to anticipate that Causton would give even the second transport a new allocation. He reported in his journal that "the new Salzburgers have asked permission to settle at another place, where good land is nearby, but this will not be permitted them, but rather Ebenezer will be steadily built up right where it is."²¹ Boltzius clearly had gotten the message that Georgia's administrators intended to keep the Salzburgers in their original location. The second transport never separated from the first group, in spite of Vat's efforts to get better land for them.

¹⁹ Ibid., 35.

²⁰ Ibid., 39.

²¹ Ibid., 41.

Oglethorpe planned to keep the Salzburgers at Ebenezer's original location because of his military purposes for Georgia's settlers. The British colonists in Carolina wanted to claim the area south of the Savannah River, but without settlers there to occupy it they could not keep the Spanish from making it part of Florida. The Carolinians wanted to see "citizen-soldiers" establish a buffer between themselves and the Spanish and Indian inhabitants of Florida.²² Thus, the founders of Georgia had this purpose in mind along with their philanthropic goals. Oglethorpe had placed the Salzburgers in an area "strategic for a military post."²³

Rather than represent the Salzburgers' need for new land to the Trustees, Causton assured Oglethorpe that his chosen location would eventually succeed. In a January 1735 letter to the Trustees, he blamed the Salzburgers' desire to move on "ill-designing people" who were making them "uneasy" with their location. He was probably referring to Englishmen who passed through Ebenezer and criticized the quality of the region, causing the settlers to feel "confused and discouraged" about their future. Causton told the Trustees that he had persuaded the Salzburgers to give the land in Ebenezer more time, that it "would soon Enrich itself, and for their Immediate use, They might plant on any good Land they could find near them."²⁴

In spite of Causton's discouraging behavior during that first year, Boltzius determined that the entire settlement of Salzburgers needed to move. He still tried to go along with the wishes of his secular authorities until he could accomplish his ultimate

²² Kenneth Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 8.

²³ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 35.

²⁴ Coleman, *Colonial Records*, 20:170; Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:35.

goal. In April 1735, when Vat had the Salzburgers build a “firm and spacious guard-house,” another permanent structure that they had tried to avoid building, Boltzius admitted that it was a more suitable building to use for a church and school than the rooms they had been using in his house. He added in his journal, however, that the “dear congregation will themselves make arrangements for a church and a school” when “God lets us know at which place we shall stay permanently.”²⁵ Such comments hint at Boltzius’ lingering refusal to accept the government’s rulings as final, and they can be seen as subtle appeals to his religious sponsors, considering the purpose of his journals.

Boltzius used his and Gronau’s official journals as one way to apply pressure to the Trustees while maintaining an outward appearance of respect and obedience. He knew that after he sent the diaries to Europe, the Salzburgers’ patron Samuel Urlsperger would edit and distribute them among other Protestants, such as the SPCK, to encourage their continued financial support of the Protestant refuge. By describing their hardships in his official diary, Boltzius was telling many of their sponsors how their poor land presented obstacles to their physical well-being and financial independence.²⁶ Boltzius described in detail many instances of failed crops and delayed provisions, and he complained that their poorly-constructed temporary dwellings allowed cold air to weaken those who were already ill. Many of the Salzburgers suffered from dysentery, but the infertile soil provided little nourishment to help them improve. Boltzius lamented that while he and Gronau wanted to provide all who were sick with “good bodily care,” there

²⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:71.

²⁶ Urlsperger took out many of the negative comments before distributing the diaries, but the editors of the *Detailed Reports* have actually found the original copies of several volumes and restored the deletions. See Jones, *Detailed Reports*, introduction.

was “no opportunity for that here in Ebenezer. The best that we can have prepared for [them] are soups made of flour and ground up Indian corn or rice, with tea. Other things which might give strength and refreshment are not to be had at any price.”²⁷ The diaries must have had their desired affect, because Urlsperger wrote to the SPCK and asked them to petition the Trustees for new land for the Salzburgers.²⁸

Boltzius also addressed the Trustees and their other sponsors more directly, but still respectfully, through a letter campaign. As early as February 1735, he and Gronau were writing to several of the Trustees and to Henry Newman, secretary of the SPCK. They did not specify that their primary purpose for writing was to ask for land; rather, they thanked their benefactors for all of their efforts on behalf of the Salzburgers. However, they had Commissioner Vat add a few lines to their letters commenting on the poor condition of their soil so that their concerns might be taken seriously.²⁹ The pastors used Vat in his official capacity as an advocate for their cause and therefore avoided making direct complaints to their authorities that might be construed as disrespectful or ungrateful.

By May the pastors had written more letters to London and Germany, describing the needs of the Salzburgers clearly but going to great lengths to justify their complaints so that they would not be perceived as discontented with their authorities. They reminded the Trustees and their other sponsors that as pastors they were only trying to perform their assigned duties, which included apprising the sponsors of the settlement’s

²⁷ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:77.

²⁸ George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Henry Newman’s Salzburger Letterbooks* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 595.

²⁹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:43.

condition and making sure that “everything is maintained in good order.” They reminded the sponsors that the provisions they were sending would “continue to be given in vain” if the Salzburgers were not eventually able to become self-sufficient. The pastors wanted to be sure that if “God does not give His blessings to our representations we will still have done what we could,” especially since the first reports had been so positive that the benefactors might not know the truth about their land.³⁰ When they received responses to their letters in August, they were happy to learn that “the complaints we sent to the proper places, about our poor soil as well as other matters, have not done any harm but, with God’s blessings, may well do some good for our congregation.”³¹

This series of interactions between the pastors and their sponsors culminated in a meeting between Boltzius and Oglethorpe in early 1736, after almost two years in Georgia. Their exchange proved to Boltzius that the Trustees did not share his priorities for Ebenezer and forced him to challenge the decisions of his “benevolent” government. While Causton had continued to deny the Salzburgers permission to relocate, the prospect of Oglethorpe’s return to Georgia gave them renewed hope that the Trustees might actually address their need for fertile land.³² Boltzius looked forward to speaking with Oglethorpe in person, and he prayed “to God to guide his heart in regard to [their] land.”³³ The settlers anxiously awaited his arrival, as they knew that the sponsors planned to stop providing provisions for them two years after Ebenezer’s founding. They even found an area near the convergence of the Savannah River and Ebenezer Creek,

³⁰ Ibid., 83-4.

³¹ Ibid., 114.

³² Ibid., 120, 185.

³³ Ibid., 188.

called the “Red Bluff,” that appeared to be a good prospective location for the town.³⁴ They hoped, after all of the pastors’ representations to various authorities, that Oglethorpe would give them permission to move to their chosen location and there pursue the economic and social goals that were unreachable in Ebenezer.

In February 1736, Commissioner von Reck, leading a third group of Salzburger immigrants, returned to Ebenezer and told Boltzius that Oglethorpe had finally arrived in Savannah and wanted to meet with him. According to von Reck, the Trustees had finally decided to relocate the Salzburgers, and Oglethorpe wanted Boltzius to help him determine the new location. Boltzius departed with von Reck right away for Savannah. He did not record many details about his interactions with von Reck and Oglethorpe in his official diary, but he started keeping a separate “Confidential Diary” not intended for publication. He described his negotiations with Oglethorpe more candidly in this “secret diary,” revealing a conflict between his goals for a model community and Oglethorpe’s military purposes for the settlers.³⁵

Boltzius was accustomed to respecting Oglethorpe’s authority over him and the Salzburgers, but his private record of negotiations with Oglethorpe indicates that he was not willing to compromise the economic and spiritual growth of his community, even if he was forced to argue with the Trustees’ desires. When von Reck warned Boltzius that Oglethorpe still did not intend for Ebenezer to be completely abandoned, but that he would want a few settlers to remain there so the buildings would not go to waste,

³⁴ Ibid., 174, 219.

³⁵ George Fenwick Jones, ed. and trans., “The Secret Diary of Pastor Johann Martin Boltzius,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 53 (1969): 81-2.

Boltzius told von Reck “quite frankly that my conscience and my office would not let me permit a division of the congregation.”³⁶ This attitude was also clear in his representations to Oglethorpe. He explained why the Salzburger could not support themselves at their present location, and he also argued that the entire town needed to be moved, not just part of it.³⁷ Someone had suggested that the Salzburger live like the residents of Savannah, who each had a house in the city, a few acres for a garden nearby, and fields several miles away, but Boltzius did not want his congregation to work so far from their homes. Such an arrangement would keep them from being able to attend daily prayer hours, one of the Pietist practices Boltzius had tried to establish for the sake of Ebenezer’s spiritual fellowship. He argued that community worship was one of the privileges they had come to America to enjoy.³⁸

Oglethorpe’s initial response caused Boltzius to doubt the Trustees’ regard for the Salzburger’s rights as English subjects. Although he assured Boltzius that he “wished to do whatever he could to their advantage,” Oglethorpe’s options for land he could give the German settlers were limited. He offered the excuses that the land north of Ebenezer Creek was reserved for Indians, and he did not want to risk inviting hostilities. Desirable land along the Savannah River, including the Red Bluff the Salzburger wanted, was being reserved for English settlers and could not be given to Germans. He insisted that the Salzburger “remain six miles inland from the river,” closer to the strategic location he had originally intended for them.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid., 82.

³⁷ Ibid., 82.

³⁸ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:175.

³⁹ Jones, “Secret Diary,” 83.

Boltzius refused to accept Oglethorpe's reply as a final ruling. He continued to argue in favor of the Red Bluff, citing more reasons why this land would help them establish a model community, a purpose that he believed to be part of the Trustees' plan for the entire colony. He said their relocation to that area would glorify God by creating a positive advertisement for the Protestant colony. It would motivate more settlers to come, who would not be disappointed by the condition of the settlements when they arrived. He even appealed to Oglethorpe's conscience through assurances that he trusted in the "paternal care" of Oglethorpe as seen in his previous behavior towards them.⁴⁰ Boltzius was still trying to express a respectful attitude toward Oglethorpe's position, even though he did not want to accept Oglethorpe's decision. In reality, he was beginning to doubt the Trustees' intentions toward the Salzburgers, as he wrote later in his secret diary:

We still hope that the Salzburgers will enjoy the rights and liberties of Englishmen as free colonists. *It appears to me* and to others that the Salzburgers and the Germans in general are a thorn in the eyes of the Englishmen, who would like to assign them land that no one else wants and on which they will have to do slavish work. Just as Mr. Oglethorpe has made it very clear that he can not give our people this or that land on account of the Englishmen, and is thereby still causing us difficulty.⁴¹

Oglethorpe finally visited Ebenezer for himself later that month and saw the regions in question. After more appeals from Boltzius and other Salzburgers, he agreed to let them build their town on the Red Bluff.⁴² He insisted that they give it the same name as their original settlement so they could maintain the appearances of a successful

⁴⁰ Ibid., 84.

⁴¹ Ibid., 92 (emphasis in original).

⁴² Ibid., 87-8.

venture.⁴³ Hence the town on the Red Bluff was called “New Ebenezer,” and it would indeed become the most successful community in colonial Georgia.⁴⁴

Boltzius’ quest for New Ebenezer not only delayed his congregation’s establishment of a self-sufficient community, but the process took its toll on his relationship with the Georgia Trustees as well. The Trustees’ only local representative, Causton, required the Salzburgers to compromise their values and suffer malnutrition rather than represent their needs to the authorities. After the pastors lobbied their European sponsors on their settlement’s behalf, the Trustees finally agreed to relocate the town, but Oglethorpe’s hesitancy to sacrifice his military purposes for the sake of Boltzius’ model community suggested to Boltzius that they did not share the same priorities. Boltzius and Gronau found ways to appeal to their benefactors without overtly rebelling against their authorities, while Boltzius’ only real confrontation with Oglethorpe was kept a secret, so they avoided visibly compromising their integrity as loyal Lutherans. But the respectful and contented appearance that they maintained was only covering a growing sense of disillusionment toward their role as subjects of the Georgia Trustees. Boltzius learned that the potential for cooperation with his philanthropic government in the pursuit of his goals was not as great as Halle had originally anticipated.

⁴³ George Fenwick Jones, “In Memoriam: John Martin Boltzius, 1703-1765, Patriarch of the Georgia Lutherans,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (1965): 157-8.

⁴⁴ Phinizy Spalding, *Oglethorpe in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 26.

The Burden of Civil Authority

Boltzius may have answered the call to be head pastor for the Salzburger refugees headed to Georgia, but he soon became responsible for more than just their spiritual needs. He essentially governed Ebenezer from 1734 until his death in 1765. The Halle Pietists did not intend for him and his assistants to govern a theocracy when they first sent the pastors to Georgia, but Boltzius took on the role of civil authority because he viewed the other prospective leaders as incompetent or incompatible with his vision for the community. His decision to take complete control of the community was an adaptation of Halle practices in response to the political situation in Ebenezer. The Francke Foundations operated within the framework of a secular government that supported their reform efforts; the Halle Pietists did not seek political control. Boltzius had to justify his actions to Ebenezer's sponsors by explaining why the candidates for local government in Ebenezer would obstruct rather than support his Pietist ministry.

One of the candidates for civil authority in Ebenezer was the man commissioned to lead the Salzburgers to Georgia, young Hanoverian Baron Philip Georg Friedrich von Reck. Boltzius recorded a favorable first impression of the initial transport's leader, but his opinion of von Reck later changed. A few weeks after the Salzburgers reached Georgia in 1734, Boltzius wrote in his official diary that "the Commissioner is very much concerned with the hard work which the Salzburgers must do to prepare the way to Ebenezer, and it brings him much discomfort. Everything he does shows his earnest application and honesty."⁴⁵ Von Reck was not much help to the Salzburgers at that point,

⁴⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 1:73.

however, because he returned to Europe intending to ask the Trustees for his own grant of land in Georgia. His departure gave Boltzius his first experience with civil authority, as Oglethorpe gave Boltzius and assistant pastor Gronau “supervision over temporal affairs.” They expressed concern from the beginning that this job would distract them from their “important office” as pastors, so they asked the settlement’s doctor, Andreas Zwiffler, to assist them. Civil problems were to be reported to him first, and if they did not “amount to much,” he would handle them.⁴⁶ Even with this arrangement, however, Boltzius had to devote much of his time to secular affairs because he was the person responsible for representing the Salzburger’s needs to the colonial government in Savannah.

In January 1735 a new prospective administrator arrived in the person of Jean Vat, the commissioner of the second Salzburger transport. Samuel Urlsperger, the Salzburger’s patron in Augsburg, had met him before the transport left Europe and reported his reputation as “upright and well qualified for such tasks.”⁴⁷ When the second transport arrived in Georgia, however, one of the shipmates accused Vat of depriving the Salzburger of their provisions while they were on the ship. Boltzius chose not to believe the man’s claims, and he willingly let Vat take charge of the stores in Ebenezer.⁴⁸

Boltzius and Vat appeared to cooperate in their different positions of leadership for several months. Vat maintained complete control over Ebenezer’s provisions, distributing portions of the quarterly supplies when they were due, differentiating

⁴⁶ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 37; idem., “In Memoriam: John Martin Boltzius,” 160.

between the first and second groups of colonists.⁴⁹ Boltzius indicated some resentment toward Vat's authoritarian approach to his job, complaining in June that he and Gronau had to specifically ask him to let cattle be slaughtered so that several pregnant women could have fresh meat.⁵⁰ Boltzius portrayed their system positively, however, in August 1735 when he reported that "the Commissioner now entrusts me more than previously with the management of external affairs. We live together in love and friendship. Through God's grace we are not embarrassed by even the smallest matters that occur in the community, and these dear people seek refuge with us with all of their problems, asking our advice and, whenever possible, taking advantage of our assistance."⁵¹

Boltzius and Vat's partnership came to end, however, as soon as Vat tried to exercise authority over the pastors. In September Causton gave Gronau permission to have a fireplace built in his house, but Vat sent Zwiffler and two of the tithingmen to stop the construction, according to his authority as "delegated Commissioner" of both the Trustees and the SPCK. When Boltzius spoke with him, Vat "justified his procedure with English customs and laws... and he vowed he would oppose this construction as well as that of a fireplace in my house to the very limit and with emphasis even if we had permission from Mr. Causton." Boltzius and Gronau told him they were going to speak with Causton in Savannah about the issue, and Vat told them he would go separately "in order to complain copiously to Mr. Causton" because he claimed Boltzius "encroach[ed] on his office and [made] the people disobey him."⁵²

⁴⁹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 1:105.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 122-24.

⁵² Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:156-57.

Boltzius justified his conflict with Vat to Halle by arguing that Vat's treatment of the Salzburgers had changed for the worse. Although "at first he behaved very well and was able to give a good appearance to all the things about which the people complained on the voyage," Boltzius told his authorities that he no longer believed Vat had the people's best interest in mind. He wrote in his official diary that Vat had "turned much more bitter toward us." Boltzius had "asked him several times to release the things that were given to the people, for example two kegs of butter, several kegs of brandy, sugar, soap, etc. Likewise he should at least open the wine that Mr. Causton sent for refreshing the sick and give it to the thirsty people." But Vat, according to Boltzius, had refused to take his advice and insisted that "he was free to distribute to whom and how he wished."⁵³ Boltzius also accused Vat of lacking the character of a trustworthy leader. He was disturbed that Vat had stopped attending "divine services," always read secular books rather than the Bible, and never participated in Holy Communion with the Salzburgers. Boltzius wrote in his official diary that "the people knew all these things and... were offended by them. What sort of trust would they have in such a commissioner, especially since there are additional matters that run contrary to Christianity."⁵⁴ Boltzius and Gronau decided they "would be most happy and would thank God if a conscientious Christian man would be sent to whom the civil government could be entrusted; we have already made this heartfelt desire known in our letters and diaries. The poor people would be in a bad fix if this man were to be their authority."⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid., 157.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 159.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 157-61.

Boltzius did not yet say that he wanted to govern the town by himself, but he clearly rejected Vat as an authority figure who would support the advancement of Halle's purposes.

When the first transport's commissioner, von Reck, returned to Ebenezer in February 1736 with a third group of immigrants, Boltzius did not consider him to be a wise choice for a leader, either. Although Boltzius had praised his concern for the Salzburger during their first weeks in Georgia, he decided upon further acquaintance that von Reck was "young, hotblooded, and often lacks deliberation." He feared that if both commissioners remained in Ebenezer, there would be "collisions" between the two of them that would "cause great scandal, as has almost occurred several times already."⁵⁶

A conflict between the commissioners was the event that convinced Boltzius to take charge of Ebenezer's administration. One month after von Reck's arrival, Vat made a trip to Savannah and took the key to the storehouse in Ebenezer with him. When von Reck needed nails for the third transport's new houses on the Red Bluff, he broke the lock on the storehouse and took them while Vat was gone. Also, because he had not brought provisions for his transport, "he was compelled to take some of the provisions stored here and send them to the Red Bluff."⁵⁷ Vat then complained to Oglethorpe that von Reck had broken the rules concerning provisions, and Oglethorpe reminded both Boltzius and von Reck that Vat had been placed in charge of Ebenezer's storehouse by the Trustees.⁵⁸ In his response, Boltzius defended von Reck's actions, claiming that "Mr.

⁵⁶ Jones, "Secret Diary," 88.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁵⁸ Alan D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 21 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1910), 133-37.

Vat's sudden impulses and rudeness had given the young and hotblooded Mr. von Reck cause for these and those rash resolutions, although he really means well."⁵⁹ Boltzius had little respect for Vat after their previous disagreements. Oglethorpe justified Vat's position of authority and tried to reconcile the commissioners, but the frustrated Vat decided to end his stay in Georgia. He told Oglethorpe, "As it is not in my Power to be thus used by Schoolmasters and School Boys, I most humbly request the Favour of You to discharge me from the Trust you have been pleased to honor me with."⁶⁰

Boltzius did not trust von Reck to govern any more than he had trusted Vat. Although he had always expressed faith in von Reck's intentions, believing he "means very well by the people and is greatly loved by them," Boltzius still wished "he would not follow his own ardor and sudden fancies so much."⁶¹ Boltzius observed that von Reck had "gone a bit too far and made [Oglethorpe] angry several times. Perhaps God uses these errors to keep Mr. Oglethorpe from entrusting the government of the congregation to him alone."⁶² Obviously von Reck did not fit the pastor's image of a "conscientious Christian man" who could be trusted with Ebenezer's civil affairs. Von Reck soon suffered depression from "the heat, fever, and lack of respect and success" that he experienced in Ebenezer, and he was gone within months.⁶³

Before von Reck's departure, Boltzius suggested that increasing his own authority would benefit Ebenezer, even if the commissioner maintained responsibility for secular affairs. He blamed the conflict between the commissioners on the fact that the Trustees

⁵⁹ Jones, "Secret Diary," 101.

⁶⁰ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 21:137.

⁶¹ Jones, "Secret Diary," 103.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶³ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 42.

had not communicated their orders clearly to the pastors. Vat had always maintained that his rules concerning provisions and security measures came directly from Oglethorpe, to the extent that he claimed “to have full power from Mr. Oglethorpe to hang those who do not obey his commands strictly....”⁶⁴ But Boltzius had thought von Reck’s authority to be justified because “he remained so sanguine and had been presented to the community by Mr. Vat himself as a commissary whom they were to obey and who was to see to external matters along with us.”⁶⁵ After that miscommunication, Boltzius believed that the Salzburgers would benefit from the pastors’ taking a more active role in administrative affairs, as he admitted in his personal diary:

We would have gladly prevented the breaking into the storehouse... if only we had known anything at all of Mr. Oglethorpe’s or of Mr. Causton’s orders. Therefore I am now asking Mr. Oglethorpe to have his future orders concerning the community in Ebenezer reported to me or my dear colleague too so that no further harm will be done. I am also humbly beseeching him to advise us how far Mr. von Reck’s authority extends over our congregation so that no distress and misery will be caused as it has been during Mr. Vat’s time.⁶⁶

In the fall of 1736, Boltzius gained full authority over his congregation’s administration when he and Gronau were left to govern Ebenezer after von Reck’s departure. Boltzius may have asked for this position because he personally wanted to control the settlement’s administration. G. F. Jones writes that “Boltzius succeeded in playing Vat off against von Reck” in order to regain the authority that he had exercised during the first transport’s early months in Georgia.⁶⁷ But regardless of his motives, Boltzius knew that his sponsors had not originally intended for him to govern a

⁶⁴ Jones, “Secret Diary,” 95.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 41.

theocracy. He wrote in his secret diary that “there is no pleasure in managing external affairs and we would gladly be relieved of this burden; but the glory of God and the salvation of our dearly beloved congregation depends on it, as we know from experience.”⁶⁸ Boltzius decided that Halle purposes would be better served if the pastors controlled the government instead of trying to work with administrators who did not support their ministry. He created a political structure for Ebenezer that differed from Halle’s, but he justified this particular adaptation of his vision with the idea that he was facilitating the success of more important spiritual goals.

The Problems of “Practical Governance”

In 1736, Samuel Urlsperger lamented that the Salzburger “have had to suffer severe trials from time to time, partly because they are working land that is quite wild, partly because they are so far away from England where important decisions must be made.”⁶⁹ The structure of Georgia’s proprietary government rendered it largely ineffective for conducting the colony’s business. The inefficiency of this government hampered Ebenezer’s success in the 1730s, because the Salzburger depended on the Trustees for food and services until they could establish their own agriculture and industries.

The Trustees governed Georgia without any participation from the colonists, in spite of the pattern of self-government that had developed in other colonies by the eighteenth century. Fifteen of the Trustees served on the Common Council, which met

⁶⁸ Jones, “Secret Diary,” 89.

⁶⁹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 2:xxi.

more frequently to discuss the details of the colony's internal affairs.⁷⁰ The functioning of this council kept "practical governance" of the colony in England rather than delegating authority to an executive power in Georgia.⁷¹ To administrate justice, they created a "Town Court" in the first settlement of Savannah. It consisted of bailiffs, who also served as magistrates, assisted by constables, tithingmen, and conservators of the peace.⁷² The Trustees did not give the bailiffs clear instructions specifying the extent of their authority, but Oglethorpe essentially left the bailiffs in charge of the colony whenever he returned to England, where he stayed during the Salzburgers' first two years in Georgia.⁷³

Although the Trustees never designated him official executive authority, Oglethorpe was the only Trustee to ever set foot in the colony, so he appointed all of the local officials. He found few suitable candidates among the first group of charity colonists, so he gave most responsibilities to two men, Thomas Causton and Noble Jones. Thomas Causton was the head bailiff and keeper of the Trustees' store from 1734-1738, whose inefficiency and abuses of power brought criticism from Oglethorpe when he returned in 1736.⁷⁴ Noble Jones was well-respected but overburdened as a doctor, carpenter, conservator of the peace, surveyor, and militia officer.⁷⁵ These two men illustrate the problems colonists experienced as a result of Georgia's insufficient political

⁷⁰ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 89-90.

⁷¹ Clarence L. Ver Steeg, *Origins of a Southern Mosaic: Studies of Early Carolina and Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975) 73.

⁷² Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 91. The constables and tithingmen summoned juries and served warrants. Constables also served as prosecutors and officers in the militia, and tithingmen became officers for the ten men who stood guard in their tithing (comprised of several town blocks). Conservators of the peace prosecuted minor offenses and lawsuits.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁷⁴ Ver Steeg, *Southern Mosaic*, 91; Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 94.

⁷⁵ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 93.

structures, and the Salzburger were no exception.⁷⁶ The difficulties they faced in obtaining their provisions and getting their land surveyed delayed Ebenezer's development into a self-sufficient community and challenged their respect for the Trustees' government.

After moving to New Ebenezer to find better soil in 1736, the Salzburger had problems with the way Jones had surveyed their land. Boltzius complained in his official diary that some of the Salzburger's assigned garden plots were sandy, and the fields for their crops were still not completely surveyed. If each citizen could plant his forty-eight acre plantation:

It would be of great benefit for those, in particular, whose gardens are entirely on sandy ground. If only they had those forty-eight acres, they could select the best lands and work them to greater benefit.... The food being as bad and entirely insufficient as it is, the people exhaust themselves in their work in order finally to gain their own bread; but, where the land is so terribly poor as are some of the lots, they are forced to work without reward and find little joy in it.⁷⁷

Boltzius also complained about Causton's treatment when he refused to pay the blacksmith in Abercorn for the repair of the Salzburger's tools. The blacksmith sent Boltzius a bill for their recent repairs, claiming that Oglethorpe had ordered him to do so. Boltzius refused to believe that "it should be the will of the Lord Trustees that impoverished and hardworking people such as ours, who work for the very bread they eat, should be forced to pay for the repair of such necessary tools as axes, hoes, etc." He

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁷⁷ George Fenwick Jones and Renate Wilson, eds., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1737)*, vol. 4 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976), 10.

thought they had been “deprived of this privilege since they moved from Old Ebenezer, perhaps from secret revenge” because Causton had not wanted them to move.⁷⁸

With his usual respectful tone, Boltzius expressed confidence in the intentions of the Trustees, blaming only the government’s structure and the Trustees’ representatives for Ebenezer’s problems. He claimed to have no doubt that “if the Lord Trustees were themselves to see the miserable land and the unending industry of the Salzburgers as well as their continuing poor circumstances, which are due solely to the wrong provisions made for these poor people, their hearts would break in commiseration and they would soon be inclined to provide real help.” But the Trustees worked through representatives, who “may well have ulterior motives,” and Boltzius suspected that they were unwilling to give the Salzburgers the good land that was available. He claimed their treatment was “hardly in accord with the promises extended to them and with Christian fairness.”⁷⁹

Boltzius complained to Causton about “the miserable circumstances of the Salzburgers and the poor regard in which they are held.” He “stated these matters with much concern, most humbly yet frankly,” but he was afraid “that this may not be too well received.”⁸⁰ A few days later he needed to go to Savannah, so he took the opportunity to speak with Causton in person about their most recent problems. Causton agreed to pay their recent repair bill, but he warned that would be the last one. He also told Boltzius that the Salzburgers could go ahead and choose their own plots of land for their plantations, and they could prepare the land for planting, but the plots would still need to

⁷⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 10.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 16.

be surveyed.⁸¹ These responses satisfied Boltzius temporarily, but the government's inefficiency still challenged the Salzburger's attempts to become self-sufficient. Because Jones traveled with the militia, the Salzburger's had to wait until December 1737 for the final surveying to be done.⁸² Many of the newly surveyed farms still included infertile portions, so they had to divide the more fertile plots.⁸³

Until 1738 the Salzburger's depended upon provisions from Savannah that were often late, provided they arrived at all. In March Boltzius had to distribute only half a boatful of food, since the storehouse in Savannah was low.⁸⁴ A month later he recorded that "the recently arrived provisions are far from sufficient to relieve our want," and the task of ensuring everyone's needs were met was beginning to hinder his performance as the pastor. Boltzius "had to swallow a number of rude remarks and accusations of favoritism, etc. from some coarse and uncivil members of the 3rd transport," because he found it "impossible to please everyone in taking care of the physical needs of man." He worried that if they perceived him as too lenient towards some people and too harsh towards others, some may have "secretly become embittered against our position and office, although this cannot easily be detected on the surface." He feared that he would "hardly be able to discharge my functions [as pastor] any longer if the matter of provisions is not settled definitely and satisfactorily."⁸⁵

Causton's execution of the rules concerning provisions continually plagued Boltzius. For example, in November 1737, Boltzius sent a boat to Savannah to pick up

⁸¹ Ibid., 18.

⁸² Ibid., 36.

⁸³ Ibid., 214.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 38.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 54.

their provisions, but it returned empty because “Causton is of the opinion that our people have already taken what was coming to them.” According to Boltzius’ accounts, however, “all three transports are still due a considerable amount of meat, rice, corn, and other things.”⁸⁶ He went to Savannah to go over the accounts with Causton, as he had done many times before, and returned a week later, commenting that his “own accounts on the provisions are so well kept that it should not have taken more than a few hours to settle them, and they should have clearly shown him how much our people have received in the manner of provisions....” But because Causton had given his bookkeeping responsibilities to “a young boy who made many errors,” Boltzius left without knowing where the accounts stood. According to Boltzius, Causton “refused to consider whether the provisions sent to me arrived in good shape or half spoiled and whether they had the proper weight or not,” and he wanted to include in the accounts some oxen even though they had run away. Boltzius was “much hurt by the fact that our dear Mr. Causton tends to be all too ready to go back on his promises, orders, and his word ... Thus, I have had to pay in cash for some things which he had previously promised as gifts, and some goods which had been given as gifts to the sick are now not to be considered as such, according to his recent words.”⁸⁷

While describing Ebenezer’s poor physical conditions in his official journal, Boltzius continued to express faith that the Trustees were “much to be praised.” He blamed the location of the government for the fact that the Trustees’ orders were not

⁸⁶ Ibid., 193.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 200-1.

followed, explaining that “their execution is bound to be delayed in their absence.”⁸⁸ By 1737, after many complaints from other colonists, the Trustees realized that their representatives were not sufficiently communicating the affairs of the colony to them. They appointed Colonel William Stephens to serve as “Secretary for the Affairs of the Trust within the Province of Georgia.” He was sent to report on the attitudes, economic affairs, defense, religion, education, and any other information he could provide on the status of the colony.⁸⁹ After finally becoming better informed about the affairs of their colony, the Trustees replaced Causton as storekeeper, and they restructured the government so that the colony would be governed by a local council in Savannah, led by Stephens.

Even without the cooperation of the local government, Boltzius succeeded in establishing his own system of administration. When making his initial tour of the colony, Colonel Stephens reported to the Trustees that the Salzburgers had “no Court of justice, or lawyer, or Rum, but peace prevail’d, and in case of any petty difference, the Minister call’d 3 or 4 of the discreetest Elders together, who in a summary way determined as they thought just, and the Partys went away contented.”⁹⁰ But whereas Boltzius was successful at maintaining order within his own community, the Trustees created more obstacles for him by giving Boltzius civil authority without clearly designating his position. When they made arrangements with Urlsperger to send another transport of immigrants to Ebenezer in 1741, they told him “there would be no occasion

⁸⁸ Ibid., 157.

⁸⁹ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 95.

⁹⁰ Alan D. Candler, *Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 5 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1908), 60.

to send a Comissary with them or make him a Magistrate at Ebenezer.”⁹¹ That same year, however, Boltzius complained that the Trustees had never clearly granted him “temporal authority for the secular administration of our community” except to put him in charge of provisions after the initial conflict between the first two commissioners.⁹² The British in Savannah did not respect his authority, much less support his goals for Ebenezer, as would become more obvious in the 1740s when Boltzius engaged in more heated political battles over the legalization of slavery.

In spite of the colonial government’s unmet promises and inefficient operations, the hard work of the Salzburgers under Boltzius’ leadership ensured Ebenezer’s economic success. In 1737 they grew enough corn for their own needs; however, it was two years later before Boltzius could convince Oglethorpe to give millstones for the building of a power-driven mill near Ebenezer. The Salzburgers donated their time to build a dam, a flour mill, a “pounding mill” for rice, and eventually sawmills as well. They earned a measure of respect from English colonists, who brought their own grains to be ground at Ebenezer.⁹³

By the end of the 1730s the Salzburgers had surmounted numerous obstacles and finally achieved a level of self-sufficiency. They found economic success because Boltzius made several adjustments in his attempts to replicate Halle practices. He took on more responsibility in “secular affairs” than originally intended because Ebenezer’s

⁹¹ Ibid., 484.

⁹² George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1741)*, vol. 8, trans. Maria Magdalena Hoffman-Loerzer, Renate Wilson, and G. F. Jones (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 275-6.

⁹³ George Fenwick Jones, “The Salzburger Mills: Georgia’s First Successful Enterprises,” *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 23 (1998): 105-117.

civil commissioners did not cooperate with his own priorities for the community. He also lost much of his respect for the British authorities who did not prioritize the philanthropic goals that he expected them to support. His appeals to the Protestant benefactors in Halle and London show an effort to maintain a respectful appearance externally, but his complaints to Oglethorpe and Causton belie his discontent with the colonial government.

The Salzburgers' hard work in the face of environmental and administrative difficulties earned them the respect of other English colonists who benefited from their industry, but this respect did not extend to the political realm. Boltzius' poor relationship with the English officials in Savannah only worsened in the 1740s when he fought the rising tide of proslavery opinion. Whatever genuine respect he might have maintained for the Trustees' intentions would be disappointed by their inability to defend "the core of the Georgia Plan."⁹⁴ Their capitulation would result in the greatest attack on Halle's vision of Ebenezer as a refuge for the poor and a reproduction of Francke enterprises.

⁹⁴ Taylor, *Georgia Plan*, 3.

CHAPTER 2: A VISION FADING, 1740-1750

By 1740, the Salzburgers were no longer dependent on their colony's government for food. They faced new challenges, however, because of labor shortages in Georgia. As Boltzius was trying to establish an orphanage in Ebenezer, other colonists in Georgia were agitating for the legalization of slavery. The reality of economic and social conditions in the colony, so different from conditions in Europe, forced Boltzius to compromise some of the most visible and fundamental aspects of his goal for a North American branch of Francke's ministry.

While the British colonies attracted vast numbers of England's unskilled laborers in the seventeenth century, European immigrants were fewer and more diverse in background in the eighteenth century. Later indentured servants migrated from Germany, Ireland, and Scotland, and the variety of skills they brought was more diverse than their ethnicities. By the eighteenth century, most colonies used slaves for field labor, so among Europeans the "increasingly affluent colonial communities" recruited highly skilled artisans, carpenters, manufacturers, and masons.¹

The nature of North America's eighteenth-century labor sources was problematic for Georgians, because they needed field hands but could not use slaves. The Trustees had prohibited slavery as part of their plan for a secure colony, free of large landholdings, where poor immigrants could find opportunity. After economic hardships during their first few years in the Georgia environment, many English colonists began agitating for

¹ Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1988), 61-2.

the legalization of slavery in the late 1730s. Other English settlers brought in slaves illegally, hoping to replicate the agricultural success of South Carolina. Ebenezer's pastors supported the ban on slavery because of their own desire for an economy that would welcome poor Protestants, but their congregants needed farmhands to replace the children who had died from diseases. Also, the pastors needed laborers to support their own enterprises and attempts to establish Pietist institutions of reform.

Labor shortages undermined Ebenezer's purposes in two highly visible ways in the 1740s. First, Boltzius was unable to maintain his reproduction of the Francke Orphanage without workers to operate the economic enterprises that supported it. He ended the orphanage's service as a house for poor children and widows and dedicated its building to the silk industry. Boltzius adapted the orphanage's usage to meet the needs of Ebenezer's citizens, which included few orphans, so in principle he did not abandon his Pietist purposes. But his European sponsors saw its closure as a symbolic failure, because Ebenezer did not maintain the same type of institutional refuge for the poor for which Francke was known, therefore compromising its reputation as a North American base of Pietist reform. Secondly, Boltzius' ardent support of the Trustees' slavery prohibition made him the target of animosity from other Georgians. He risked his reputation by publicly reversing his position once the Trustees caved to proslavery pressure and invited him to participate in the creation of a slave code. He had to accede to the legalization of slavery in order to exert his influence over the laws that would govern slave use in Georgia. With the closure of Ebenezer's philanthropic institution and

the defeat of the Trustees' Georgia Plan by a proslavery majority, the realization of Halle's vision for Ebenezer appeared to be fading.

Ebenezer's Orphanage: A Symbolic Failure

Boltzius and his Pietist mentors envisioned Ebenezer as a community of believers devoted to philanthropic and economic enterprises in the tradition of Francke's institutions of social reform.² Francke had begun his reform efforts by establishing a school for the poor, believing religious education to be the first step in social reform. He had expanded his institutions to include "a well-reputed complex of day and boarding schools for the different estates," an orphanage to house and train the poor in profitable work, and extensive commercial enterprises to free him from sole dependence on donations.³ These economic endeavors included a printing business, a chemist to produce and sell medicines, and the manufacture and trading of luxury items that Pietists themselves would not approve of using. Still, it was the orphanage by which Francke's work was known.⁴ Boltzius and Gronau, who had taught in one of the Francke Orphanage's schools, attempted to reproduce Francke's institutions by building their own orphanage based on economic support from donations, agriculture, and the silk industry.

Ebenezer's orphanage held symbolic importance for the colonists' sponsors as it indicated their success in replicating the Pietist reform efforts. It served as a boarding school, infirmary, and home for widows as well as children who had lost one or both

² Wilson, "Halle Pietism," 279.

³ Wilson, "Halle and Ebenezer," 24.

⁴ Daniel L. Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England: Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 41.

parents. Three men and their families lived there and supervised the residents in sericulture (silk manufacturing) and other agricultural work.⁵ These three men were the head carpenter and mill builder as well as the orphanage manager, all considered “major contributors to the emerging infrastructure of the settlement.”⁶ But fewer than ten years after beginning its construction, Boltzius ended the orphanage’s service as a refuge for the poor, claiming that economic conditions rendered the collective maintenance of orphans impossible.

The Salzburgers began constructing the orphanage in November 1737 with funds sent from Europe for that specific purpose.⁷ By 1743, Boltzius was making plans to build a second orphan house and devote the first building partly to silk-making and partly to an infirmary.⁸ Since the Trustees had promised to pay a subsidy for the silk produced in Georgia, Boltzius planted mulberry trees on the orphanage property for the purpose of raising silk worms.⁹ By April 1744 Boltzius was convinced that “the silk manufacture will be one of the most profitable labors in Ebenezer, if only people will take seriously the culture of mulberry trees and if they are supported in their beginning and for the next couple of years by encouragement and by some aid on the part of the Lord Trustees.”¹⁰

The orphanage’s silk industry did not earn the profits Boltzius had expected because it required more laborers than Ebenezer could supply. The Salzburgers declared

⁵ Wilson, “Missing Salzburger Diaries,” 348.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 349.

⁷ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 4:195.

⁸ Alan D. Candler, ed., *Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 24 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1915), 219.

⁹ George Fenwick Jones and Renate Wilson, ed. and trans., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1744-1745)*, vol. 18 (Camden, ME: Picton Press, 1995), 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

in 1743 their “great desire for Christian servants of both sexes and all ages.”¹¹ Since 1741, the Trustees had recruited far fewer indentured servants and immigrants than they had in the 1730s. Ebenezer had grown from its original fifty-two settlers to 279 adults and children because additional Salzburger transports had increased the town’s population throughout the 1730s. The population remained at that level throughout the 1740s, however. So many children had died from disease in the early years that Ebenezer’s population did not benefit much from a natural increase in the workforce.¹²

While most of the Salzburgers were suffering for farm hands, Boltzius needed servants to help with his efforts to make money for the orphanage. He had already planted mulberry trees at the orphanage for the purpose of raising silkworms, but he could not get enough help tending the worms because all of the Salzburgers had their “hands full with planting and tending the crops and the cattle, not to speak of miscellaneous work and many obstacles.” He also complained that he was not able to take full advantage of the orphans’ labor, unlike the orphanage in Europe, because:

In this country the orphanage cannot keep children long after they are grown, for they return either to their mothers or to other relatives to help them keep house. Or else other good people who have small children ask the orphanage to let them have the grown girls for housework, and the larger boys are trained for men’s work so that we have little help from them.¹³

He had to differentiate between circumstances in Georgia and the practices of Halle’s orphanage in order to defend the slow start of his ventures to his sponsors.

¹¹ George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1743)*, vol. 10, trans. Don Savelle and G. F. Jones (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 125.

¹² Renate Wilson, “Missing Salzburger Diaries,” 344.

¹³ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 18:5.

Boltzius identified right away how much the success of his silk industry, with so few workers, depended on substantial compensation from the Trustees, but he was disappointed by their reaction after they had encouraged the pursuit of sericulture. One of the Trustees many purposes for Georgia was to grow “semitropical products,” especially silk, which England had been importing from other countries for £500,000 every year.¹⁴ In April 1744, the men and women who lived at the orphanage had produced enough cocoons to bring in a small amount of money for the orphanage. The Trustees had promised to pay two shillings per pound of cocoons, although Boltzius believed they had paid four shillings previously to people in Purysburg, and he heard other South Carolinians were making even more.¹⁵ He also heard that in some places outside Georgia, colonists were selling twelve ounces instead of sixteen as a pound of silk. He expressed determination to be “satisfied with what is being paid. For the Lord can bless a modest sum as well.”¹⁶ This expression of faith would preserve Ebenezer’s reputation as a contented town under the Trustees’ leadership, but at the same time Boltzius told his patrons of the orphanage’s extreme need for money:

For there are now many people in the orphanage who need food and clothing and, if they are ill, care. Most of them, as is customary in the orphanage, are not able to contribute to their sustenance, for they are young and thus need to go to school... The orphanage also has many expenses on the outside in the congregation, for the poor and needy receive as much help as is within our ability, and we take great care that the whole congregation shall benefit from this care.¹⁷

Until the few workers at the orphanage could grow enough silk to bring in sufficient funds, Boltzius was buying on credit in Savannah and still depending on

¹⁴ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 113.

¹⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 18:5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

support from Europe. He continued to emphasize his need for more workers to make the orphanage a financially independent institution. Since many of the orphans left as soon as they were old enough to be of use to someone else, Boltzius and the orphanage administrators depended on hired labor to conduct the institution's enterprises. He wrote "the lack of servants for a just wage is one of the main reasons that we cannot bring the affairs of the orphanage into the desired state. The day laborers whom we must use often for construction, in the fields and for other tasks cost much but we cannot do without them."¹⁸

Boltzius explained to his sponsors that hiring laborers in Georgia was much more difficult than employing servants in Europe, because Georgia offered so much space and opportunity for advancement to the skilled European immigrants who settled there. Since the Trustees gave away land grants to free white males, "everyone is able to start on their own, however difficult that may be. But the people here prefer to labor on their own rather than go into service."¹⁹ Therefore, employing laborers was very expensive, because free people looking for agricultural employment were so scarce. Not only were workers in America expensive, but to Boltzius the servants who had come to Georgia were "perverse," exhibiting "disloyalty and wickedness" that he had never seen among servants in Europe.²⁰ This lack of affordable, reliable workers kept Boltzius from trying different business ventures to bring in extra money for the orphanage. The rest of the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 221.

Salzburgers were busy maintaining their own farms and could not spare enough time to help Boltzius with profitable enterprises on behalf of the orphanage:

The high cost of labor is the reason that I myself can not undertake anything in my family's farming and can not make any experiments and tests in some matters as a good example for the community, for this would cause me to fall into debt. One has so many expenses for indispensable work on practical matters that it is difficult to imagine. The community is poor and the merchandise in this country is so excessively expensive that I cannot expect anyone to work for us gratis or for a low wage, even if they are willing.²¹

Although Boltzius claimed that he was trying not to incur debts on behalf of the orphanage, he had already been forced several times to risk the institution's financial security on behalf of the community. In April 1744 he used donations to buy a large boat for the community to transport goods and travelers up and down the Savannah River. In the past the Salzburgers had suffered "trouble, inconvenience, and expenses" to borrow a boat from other colonists. Boltzius declared he "would rather sell a horse or two from the orphanage" than let the Salzburgers live without a boat of their own. He justified the expense, saying he did "not doubt that our heavenly father will, in His time, know how to pay this debt that must be incurred in buying this necessary boat. The orphanage has already risked much for the sake of the congregation, and in this our dear God has never let us get stuck or brought us to shame."²²

Boltzius had also let the orphanage risk financial loss in order to invest in the silk industry, hoping that profits would eventually free the orphanage from dependence on European donations. Kalcher, one of the orphanage's administrators, turned the boys' dormitory into a home for the silk worms, erecting "broad repositories and containers in

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 30.

which some eight or ten thousand worms are fed and can spin themselves in very conveniently.”²³ Kalcher warned Boltzius that since the Trustees’ purchase price for cocoons was only two shillings per pound, “the orphanage will have more loss than gain from silk manufacture; for every task they neglect in the fields during this busy season they must hire day laborers later on.” Nevertheless, Boltzius was optimistic that their efficiency would increase, “for now the people there know from experience how one must treat the silk worms from the beginning to the spinning of the cocoons.” He hoped that the Trustees might increase the bounty to four shillings, which he heard they had paid other colonists for raw silk in the past. He also sent two young women to Savannah to learn how to reel the silk, so they could determine whether spun silk could earn more profits than sending cocoons directly to England.²⁴

In spite of the confidence he expressed, Boltzius’ actions show that he was concerned about the viability of his plans for a second orphanage building. He kept postponing its construction, “partly due to the lack of boards and partly for other important business at the orphanage and the community,” such as the debts he had incurred in order to buy the community’s boat.²⁵ He was “quite resolved not to be too hasty in this matter... so that we will not incur unnecessary debt and cause want and sorrow for ourselves and inconvenience to our dear Fathers and friends.”²⁶ But he admitted that his “mind has been much afraid and depressed... for things will not come

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 31.

²⁵ Ibid., 44-5.

²⁶ Ibid., 44.

together; and, since we have no servants, we have little income and the orphanage must be almost entirely supported with the gifts from Europe.”²⁷

These concerns caused Boltzius to consider alternatives to the new orphanage building. He learned that Kogler, one of the men at the orphanage, wished to take his family back to their own farm once the new orphanage was built. But Boltzius’ main purpose in building a larger orphanage was to allow the three families who administered the orphanage’s affairs, Kalcher, Lackner, and Kogler, to have enough room to live together. Boltzius assured his sponsors that “if Kogler wishes to leave, the two closely allied families can make do until God shows us how to proceed.” The boards and posts that had already been cut or obtained for the new orphanage could “serve some other useful purpose even if this building is not erected. We urgently need a school in our town.” Not only did Boltzius think of other uses for the materials they had acquired for the new orphanage, he also wondered if they might find new ways to care for their orphans and widows instead of maintaining them together in the orphanage. He observed that, “after our dear Lord has helped most of our congregation make a living on their own, they can well take care of their own poor, such as widows and orphans, if they can only have a little help in this. Therefore, we may no longer need a house for widows and orphans.”²⁸

The rest of the community’s need for servants was another reason to consider closing the orphanage altogether. Some of the children who had previously been raised in the orphanage were already working for other Salzburgers, and other orphans were

²⁷ Ibid., 45.

²⁸ Ibid.

now “old enough to be used by the farmers in their households, particularly in the care of their small children. They cannot find any servants here and are therefore glad to have the services of one of the boys or girls.”²⁹ Since the orphans could be useful to the rest of the community by working for individual families, the orphanage as an institution was not really serving a practical purpose. In contrast to the poor Prussian community where Francke had established his orphanage, Ebenezer needed no such institution to provide care and employment for its poor citizens.

Boltzius decided to disperse the orphans in May 1744. He explained in a letter to G. A. Francke that “the release of the few orphans, boys and girls, has been requested by the housefathers of the congregation, who have nowhere else to turn for servants.” Because no widows were living there anymore, and the orphans were all old enough to help care for small children or do other work on the farms, Boltzius decided that “it should [not] any longer be necessary to maintain an orphanage in Ebenezer.” He assured Francke that they would not let the existing buildings be wasted, but Kalcher would continue working the fields and producing silk, at least “until we learn what the Lord has decided.”³⁰

Because the orphanage was important to Ebenezer’s reputation as a refuge and a replication of Halle Pietism, Boltzius went to great lengths in his journal to justify the closure in religious terms as well as the practical concerns he had already described. He claimed that some of the orphans might be better cared for in individual homes than they were in the orphanage anyway. For example, Boltzius wrote that “some good people feel

²⁹ Ibid., 45-6.

³⁰ Letter to G.A. Francke, 4 June 1744, quoted in Wilson, “Missing Salzburger Diaries,” 350.

that Paul Klocker will be better provided for in a Christian single family than among the many children and adults in the orphanage, who do not all come from the same place.” He described this orphan as “frail,” having required much care from the Kalchers, but he “then heard that Mrs. Glaner, who herself is without child, loves... in particular this boy, so much that she will take him as her child.” Boltzius spoke with the Glaners, who agreed to “accept this child as their own and to rear it in accordance with the will and the intent of the Lord as He would direct them.”³¹ Boltzius also reminded his sponsors that all of the farmers were “sufficiently conscientious” to send the children to school every day if the orphans were put into their service.³² The Salzburger would still fulfill the Pietist goal of educating the poor, even if the poor were no longer housed in an institution for that purpose.

Boltzius also described ways in which he believed the orphanage’s closure would actually aid the success of a “city on the hill” by improving Ebenezer’s reputation with other colonists. He hoped to pay off the orphanage’s debts, believing “it would not be prudent and Christian conduct to leave a burden of debt on the orphanage manager and others who come after us.”³³ He also wanted to finish the Zion Church, Ebenezer’s second church being built out near the plantations, and he needed to put some money toward repairs on the mill. Such public works, while not as distinctive as a recreation of Francke’s orphanage, were important to Boltzius for maintaining the appearance of a successful Christian settlement. Boltzius had noted at the completion of their first mill in

³¹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 18:61.

³² *Ibid.*, 46.

³³ *Ibid.*, 69.

1741 that, because it was the first mill of its kind built in Georgia, he heard “reasonable people say that one can obviously notice that the presence of God is with us.”³⁴

Boltzius tried to portray the closure of the orphanage as a positive event because he still hoped his European sponsors would send donations for other uses in the community. He wanted the sponsors to see Ebenezer as a worthwhile experiment, even if it looked slightly different than they originally envisioned. He indicated his hope that the sponsors would continue to send money by explaining that “if our heavenly Father should desire further gifts from Europe to flow to our orphanage and we had no widows and orphans to care for, we should see to it that such charitable gifts of love were well used in our congregation.”³⁵ After paying off the debts he had incurred while operating the orphanage, Boltzius planned to “use any donations from Europe which the Lord may provide in His generosity to finish the Zion church sooner rather than later and start a new and necessary addition to the mill and undertake other useful tasks for the building of our Plantation City.” He especially hoped to give some money to the farmers who had lost cattle to the plague or theft, as well as remembering other “poor and sick” members of the community.³⁶

In spite of Boltzius’ efforts to paint the orphanage’s closure as a benefit for Ebenezer, it was still seen as a certain measure of failure by the Pietist sponsors. They decided to withhold publication of the diaries for 1744-45 so that this news would not be widely distributed. The orphanage had been an investment on the part of Protestants in

³⁴ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 8:11.

³⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 18:69.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

England and Germany who trusted the reputation of the Halle orphanage as “a charitable voluntary foundation.”³⁷ The financial reputation of these sponsors would have been affected by the fate of Ebenezer as a “city on the hill,” according to Wilson.³⁸ But she argues that closing the orphanage benefited Ebenezer in the long run, because “the town of Ebenezer withstood both decline and conflict and laid the basis for future growth” while Europeans, motivated to invest in Ebenezer’s commercial enterprises, continued to help the community.³⁹ The orphanage land and building remained the “focal point of experimentation and instruction” for the silk industry, thanks to the labor of the pastors’ wives after the orphanage’s inhabitants moved out.⁴⁰ Also, by 1745 the Salzburgers had restored their gristmill, built a rice mill, and begun designing a sawmill.⁴¹

While Ebenezer certainly did enjoy economic success as the result of Boltzius’ decisions in 1744-1745, the orphanage’s closure represents a failure to fully replicate the most well-known aspect of Halle Pietism, the Francke Orphanage. Boltzius had to change his orphanage’s purposes to meet the needs of his community, eventually ending the collective support of orphans and delegating the responsibility to individual families. But Boltzius did not abandon the principles of Pietist reform—he ensured that orphans would be educated and employed, and he preserved Ebenezer’s economic support from both donations and silk manufacture. He adapted the Halle vision to succeed under the conditions of “this country,” as he called it, which meant sacrificing an institution that had become purely symbolic.

³⁷ Wilson, “Missing Salzburger Diaries,” 352.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 364.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 364-5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 361.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 363.

The Ruinous “Scheme for Negroes”

When Boltzius complained about Ebenezer’s need for servants, he never considered the possibility of using slaves. When he heard that the Reverend George Whitefield was petitioning the Trustees for the right to use slaves at his own orphanage in Bethesda, Boltzius told him it would be “a great deal better to give up an Orphan House, than to drive out poor Labouring people from the Colony,” making “this Retirement & Refuge for poor persecuted or Necessitous Protestants, a Harbour of Black Slaves....”⁴² The widespread use of slaves was completely incompatible with Boltzius’ vision for his “city on the hill,” where poor persecuted Protestants could find refuge and employment. But pressure from proslavery agitators outweighed Boltzius’ support of the Trustees’ antislavery laws, and the Trustees repealed the slavery prohibition, thereby threatening Ebenezer’s reputation and economic structure. Boltzius’ participation in the political debate over slavery reveals his own adaptations to the majority culture in Georgia.

The Trustees prohibited slavery in Georgia in 1735 because they believed it would endanger their own goals for the colony’s economy and security. First, they wanted to prevent any great disparities of wealth among the colonists. As the historian Betty Wood explains, “prospective settlers were promised a ‘comfortable subsistence,’ but the Trustees emphasized that the attainment of this goal would depend upon their willingness to work.”⁴³ They prohibited women from inheriting or owning land so that men could not accumulate large landholdings through marriage. Individual land grants were limited to five hundred acres unless colonists brought over indentured servants, who

⁴² Candler, *Colonial Records*, 24:440.

⁴³ Wood, *Slavery*, 6.

were seen as future farmers and soldiers, for an additional fifty acres of land per servant transported.⁴⁴

The Trustees also worried that allowing large numbers of slaves into Georgia would undermine the colony's military purposes. Georgians were supposed to develop "a chain of fortified townships along the southern frontier" to guard against Spanish invasion of the British colonies.⁴⁵ The Spanish presence in Florida would encourage slaves to escape and join their military in fighting the British colonials, as had already happened with slaves in South Carolina.⁴⁶

By 1740, a strong proslavery faction emerged among the English and Scottish "adventurers" who had paid their own way to the colony. They first petitioned the Trustees to repeal the slavery prohibition using several arguments: that the climate was unhealthy for whites to work in, that white servants were too expensive, that indentured servants were untrustworthy and could easily escape without fulfilling their commitment, and that Africans would be employed only as unskilled laborers, leaving the skilled labor for poor whites.⁴⁷ They also published pamphlets criticizing the Trustees and petitioned the royal government directly in 1740, forcing the Trustees to discuss the issue. In 1742, Thomas Stephens was appointed to represent these "malcontents" before Parliament, where the House of Commons was debating the renewal of financial support for the colony. The Trustees agreed to consider repealing the prohibition of slavery, probably to

⁴⁴ Taylor, *Georgia Plan*, 3.

⁴⁴ Wood, *Slavery*, 24-5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁶ Taylor, *Georgia Plan*, 23.

⁴⁷ Wood, *Slavery*, 24-5.

persuade Parliament to renew its support, which it did.⁴⁸ The Trustees did not actually repeal the prohibition until the end of the decade, however, after proslavery settlers continued to pressure them, many bringing slaves into Georgia in spite of the antislavery law.

Boltzius publicly supported the slavery ban, because the economic structure envisioned by the Trustees harmonized with his own vision of a town where Christians lived in close fellowship and worked diligently to support themselves. He wanted Oglethorpe to fund more transports of Salzburgers to expand Ebenezer's workforce and reputation as a place of opportunity for poor Protestants. He also feared the insecurity that the presence of African slaves would bring, having previously witnessed violent behavior from slaves and knowing that the nearby presence of the Spanish would encourage runaways. He had visited South Carolina and believed that type of economic system would encourage laziness and immorality while depriving industrious poor whites of employment. He thought it "much better for our disposition of our land to resemble God's disposition amongst His people than to resemble the essence of worldly persons who dissipate themselves hither and yon and suffer harm in body and soul."⁴⁹

When he heard that Oglethorpe was contemplating another transport of Salzburgers in 1739, Boltzius feared that the growing proslavery faction might discourage Oglethorpe from sending more white settlers. If the malcontents could convince Oglethorpe that slaves were indeed a necessity in the Georgia climate, the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 40-56.

⁴⁹ George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Detailed Reports of the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America...* Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1742), vol. 9, trans. Don Savelle (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 237.

Trustees would then be less motivated to send white settlers at a higher cost than they could send slaves, so Boltzius determined to convince the Trustees that slaves were not really necessary.⁵⁰ He wrote to the Trustees that the climate in Georgia was “not so very hot, as idle & delicate people endeavor to persuade themselves & others, & for that unreasonable Reason would like it mighty well rather to employ Negroes in their Work, than white European people....” He argued that allowing African slaves to be used would result in the “Ruin of poor Labourers. White people, if industrious & desirous to follow the Direction of God... are capable enough to plant here every sort of Country Grain without hurting their Health in the Summer season; of which is Witness my whole Congregation.”⁵¹ He hoped that Ebenezer’s success would hurt the credibility of colonists agitating for slaves.

As the proslavery agitation in Georgia increased through the 1740s, Boltzius continued to support the prohibition as a crucial aspect of the Trustees’ original plan for Georgia to be a refuge for poor Protestants like the Salzburger. He told the Trustees that he hoped through his “preaching, prayers, labours & writing” to further “the Prosperity of our Settlement, nay if possible of this whole Province by using all possible honest means for bringing their wise Scheme into execution....” This “wise scheme” of the Trustees, according to Boltzius’ understanding, was to create “not a harbour of black Slaves, but an Asylum for poor Distressed & labouring Protestants of any denomination....”⁵² He described the “many poor labouring Protestants” that he knew must “Sigh and groan

⁵⁰ George Fenwick Jones and Renate Wilson, ed. and trans., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1739)*, vol. 6 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981) 41-2.

⁵¹ Alan D. Candler, ed., *Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 22 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1904), 121.

⁵² Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:201.

under the Yoke of Spiritual and Temporal Slavery in Germany and would be very thankful to God and his Instruments to find under the Government of our most Gracious King a corner to live by the fruit of their own labour.”⁵³

Boltzius argued that legalized slavery would harm the very people the Trustees had intended to help with the economic structure of their unique original plan. He claimed there would be “no livelihood for poor whites where there are sufficient Negroes” who would work for less money.⁵⁴ He told the sponsors that if the laws forbidding slavery as well as laws governing land sales were changed, then merchants from South Carolina would “buy the best Districts of Land” and use slaves instead of paying white laborers for their work. Without such employment, the poor whites would “be forced to leave the Colonie.”⁵⁵ Boltzius recorded such an incident in his official journal when a German servant asked his permission to move from a proslavery area to Ebenezer and take employment on a Salzburger plantation, where white laborers were still valuable. Boltzius complained that “wherever the Negro mind prevails, the poor are held in low esteem; however, some people do not recognize it and consider the importation of Negroes a beneficial, or at least innocent and harmless matter.”⁵⁶

Boltzius also expressed his fear for the security of Ebenezer. His past experiences with slaves had convinced him that the colonists should not risk “the great Danger of Life, nor the Robberies of Fields and Orchards; that must be expected from those savage

⁵³ Ibid., 283.

⁵⁴ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 9:261.

⁵⁵ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:168.

⁵⁶ George Fenwick Jones, *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1748)*, vol. 12, trans. Irmgard Neumann (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 108.

and hungry Creatures.”⁵⁷ During a stay in Charleston when he first came to America, Boltzius had observed that having slaves could be a “great convenience,” but it was “coupled with great danger, for the blacks, who are said to number thirty thousand in Carolina alone, are not faithful to the Christians and are very malicious.”⁵⁸ When a Carolinian planter loaned the Salzburgers several slaves to help build their houses, Gronau had hired someone to watch his house whenever he was gone, because “the Negroes [were] very bad, always happy when they can steal this or that in the way of meat or other things.”⁵⁹ Stories of insurrections like the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina reinforced the pastors’ impressions that allowing “the said destructive freedom of buying Negroes... would be dangerous for the loyal people of our community.” Boltzius noted in 1741 that “a party of Moors in Carolina again rebelled against their masters and caused damage; and in this a Spanish spy is said to have been the leader. Revolts like this have occurred in Carolina several times of late.”⁶⁰ In 1748, a Salzburger who lived on the Savannah River suffered theft and property damage from the “Negroes” who traveled up and down the river to trade with the Indians.⁶¹ Experiences such as these convinced the pastors of Ebenezer that allowing Georgians to own slaves would threaten the lives and property of their community.

Perhaps the most important concern to Boltzius was that, in his opinion, slavery would increase laziness and diminish respect for Christianity in the colony. He claimed that the malcontents would not need slaves if they had just “learned to walk in the fear of

⁵⁷ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:168.

⁵⁸ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 1:56.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶⁰ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 8:239.

⁶¹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 12:83.

God, from whom all blessings descend, had used the right means of cultivating their land, lived to the rules of a frugal husbandry,” and had exhausted less labor-intensive means of subsistence like the silk industry, instead of trying to grow staple crops, in spite of his own experiences to the contrary.⁶² These malcontents did not “recognize the good purpose of God and also of the Lord Trustees and their state government, but rather long for the freedom of the planters in Carolina; but we wish to have no part of it.”⁶³ Boltzius rejected the argument made by George Whitefield that slaves should be brought into Georgia for the purpose of exposing them to Christianity, because he had already witnessed the hypocrisy of slaveowners in Charleston. The black people there had been “very much urged to work but never urged to become Christians. Very few, perhaps not any, have been baptized” and they “live like animals, with respect to the Sixth Commandment and in other ways.”⁶⁴ He also saw how colonists in Georgia treated their free servants, keeping them from attending church, and he did not believe they would treat slaves any differently. He was “just amazed at people who claim that they bring in Negroes in order to turn them into Christians but do not allow their Christian servants to observe the means of grace and the Sunday once every two months.”⁶⁵ He thought “there can be no blessing in this unchristian manner of living.”⁶⁶

Boltzius supported the slavery ban for over a decade; however, he abruptly changed his public stance in 1748. He did not actually change his personal views on slavery, but he decided his efforts to oppose it were futile because the government was

⁶² Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:201.

⁶³ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 9:237.

⁶⁴ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 1:57.

⁶⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 12:79.

⁶⁶ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 10:13.

not enforcing its prohibition anyway. In 1748, he told the Trustees, “Things being now here in such a melancholy situation I most humbly beseech their Honors not to regard any more our or our Friend’s Petition against Negroes.”⁶⁷ A couple of months later, Boltzius made his acquiescence public by attending the Grand Assembly that the Trustees held in Savannah to consider a slave code for the colony. Boltzius was skeptical about whether the malcontents would actually obey restrictions on the size and dispersal of the slave population that the Trustees wanted to enact. Instead, he made his priority the “Instruction of Negroes in the Principles of Christianity” as a way of preventing immoral behavior and ensuring security for the white colonists.⁶⁸ Boltzius succeeded in persuading the Trustees to require that slaveowners have their slaves spend Sundays under the instruction of “Protestant Ministers of the Gospel” rather than working. Also, slaves were forbidden to cohabit without being married by a minister, and interracial relationships were strictly prohibited.⁶⁹ He assured the Trustees afterward that “all [was] done to my great satisfaction” and that he was grateful to them for taking his advice.⁷⁰

Boltzius publicly conceded to the other colonists’ demand for slaves; however, he had not actually changed his personal opinion of slavery enough to desire it in his own community. When Whitefield told him he had heard that slaves were going to be permitted, Boltzius “was not happy to hear this.”⁷¹ When several Salzburgers expressed their concern about the threat posed by a slave presence, Boltzius contemplated asking

⁶⁷ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:289.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 438; Wood, *Slavery*, 73.

⁶⁹ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:434.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 438.

⁷¹ George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1749)*, vol. 13, trans. David Roth and G. F. Jones (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 42.

the Trustees to grant them an entire district free of slaveowners “for fear of openly damaging people, cattle, and crops. ...If others in their neighborhood had Negro slaves, then they too would go to ruin and see their children and possessions placed in danger.”⁷²

Boltzius’ decision to stop opposing the legalization of slavery was mostly a reaction to the fact that other colonists were already ignoring the ban anyway. Boltzius still supported the original prohibition, but, as Wood writes, “after 1743 the dissidents were struggling to secure the legal recognition of an institution that was already beginning to exist in practice.”⁷³ When he told the Trustees to ignore his antislavery petitions, Boltzius did so because “if they are bountifully disposed to forgive the present bold step of several Inhabitants in bringing over black Slaves from Carolina to our Province and to allow the introduction of them,” then the Salzburgers wanted the slaves to at least be used “under such wise restrictions that it be not a discouragement but rather an encouragement to poor white Industrious people to settle and live in this happy Climate.”⁷⁴ Apparently he held out hope that the Trustees would enforce a slave code more faithfully than they had enforced the prohibition of slaves. Therefore, Boltzius decided it was more important for him to ensure the morality of the new slave code than for him to maintain his antislavery stance.

Not only did the Trustees’ government fail to enforce its antislavery policy, they did not support Boltzius’ position within the colony when he came under attack by the malcontents. In 1741 Thomas Stephens, the malcontents’ appointed representative, had

⁷² Ibid., 45.

⁷³ Wood, *Slavery*, 76.

⁷⁴ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:289.

recognized Boltzius as his strongest opponent in this political battle, and he had tried to convince Boltzius to support him. Boltzius had “refused to hear him for good reasons, taking care that he and his accomplices would not become embittered against us.”⁷⁵ After Stephens returned to England to represent the proslavery faction before Parliament, Boltzius wrote to the Trustees to pledge his support for the “wholesome Constitutions of the Honorable Trustees” and to protest “against such people & their Endeavours, who presume & style themselves Agents of the People in Georgia: we have nothing to do with them & their selfinterested dangerous Contrivances.”⁷⁶

His response to Stephens reveals again how much importance Boltzius placed on Ebenezer’s loyalty to the Trustees. Boltzius worried that the Salzburgers “ought to be censured as ingrateful & wicked people, if we should meddle with any of the bad Contrivances of such persons” that complained against the Trustees’ government and complained “under the Heaps of Benefactions” that the Trustees gave the colonists.⁷⁷ This aspect of his belief system was yet another motivation for actively supporting the slavery ban. Boltzius believed, or at least he knew that his Halle patrons believed, that the Salzburgers would forfeit God’s blessing if they opposed the government under which they had been placed. He described the opposition to the Trustees’ laws as “a most abominable thing not consistent with reason and Scripture which presages nothing else but God’s Punishment in his own time.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 8:461.

⁷⁶ Alan D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 23 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1904), 457.

⁷⁷ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 23:457.

⁷⁸ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:289.

Boltzius succeeded in maintaining Ebenezer's reputation as a respectful and loyal town, as testified by John Dobell, the schoolmaster and register in Savannah. Dobell told the Trustees that Boltzius was their "well attached and most faithful Servant." It was "he and none besides himself (who stands at the head of others) that shews the least good liking to the Trustees Government, and 'tis he and none but he that strives to bring their Honours Orders Rules or Schemes to good effect."⁷⁹

In return for his loyalty to the Trustees' original laws, Boltzius incurred the wrath of other colonists, in spite of his hopes that they would not be "embittered" against him. According to Wood, the malcontents saved "some of their most vicious accusations" for the person "whom they saw as an extremely influential stumbling block to the accomplishment of their objectives."⁸⁰ Dobell told the Trustees in 1746 that the malcontents were continually brewing "ill blood and base underhanded Opposition" against Boltzius.⁸¹ Two years later Boltzius told Dobell that he still "was much grieved on account of the oppositions I constantly meet with by reason of my constant Attachment to the laudable Scheme of their Honors the Trustees."⁸² He believed that "all from the highest to the lowest Vote for Negroes and look upon me as a Stone in their way toward which they direct all their Spite and they will I suppose not rest till they have removed it."⁸³

Proslavery planters as well as colonial officials in Savannah showed hostility toward Boltzius because of his antislavery stance. He told the Trustees in 1744 that "the

⁷⁹ Ibid., 68.

⁸⁰ Wood, *Slavery*, 70.

⁸¹ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:68.

⁸² Ibid., 283.

⁸³ Ibid., 284.

Magistrates are not favourers to us, since I would not come into the measures of Thomas Stephens & others, who rose up in parties against the Honorable Trustees.”⁸⁴ He believed that the authorities in Savannah “secretly harbor[ed] some ill will against us,” because they would “write many stories to the Lord Trustees” but would not tell Boltzius openly if they had a complaint against him and the way he governed his community.⁸⁵ As a result, Boltzius asked the authorities to “decide in council whether or not I should have the power to adjudicate some civil matters in Ebenezer and to deter, within Christian love and seriousness, the wicked from their offending ways.”⁸⁶ Receiving no satisfaction from them, he told the Trustees that “the Magistrates of Savannah are not so very assistive in keeping & promoting good Orders in my Congregation,” and he asked them to say specifically “whether they allow me & my faithful fellow labourer Gronau, any power to stop effectually Wickedness in the bud without being censured for it by the Magistrates in Savannah, to whom wicked & disobedient people take their Retreat & find shelter.”⁸⁷

The Trustees did appoint Boltzius and Gronau official “Conservators of the Peace” for the district of Ebenezer in 1744, but this endorsement did not relieve the animosity.⁸⁸ Boltzius told them in 1747 that “the jealousy & rage of English, French & Dutch people is so much kindled against me, that they call me the fountain of all evils, which they fancy to fall upon them on account of the prohibition of Negroes: They curse me in a very scandalous manner, and threaten to do me a mischief, if it was in their

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁸⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 18:18.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 24:304.

⁸⁸ Alan D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 1 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1904), 456.

power.”⁸⁹ These threats caused him to resign from the “office of a manager of the secular affairs in our place, since, being the reproach of every body at Savannah & elsewhere, and my life in danger too, I find great obstructions to perform my ministerial office successfully.”⁹⁰

In the past, Boltzius had not trusted any other candidate to govern the town of Ebenezer in a way that would harmonize with his own vision for the congregation. In 1748, knowing that the malcontents would “not be quiet, ‘till they have got me out of the way, & ‘till they have gained their point with respect to Negroes,” Boltzius found a suitable person from within his community to take on the burden of government.⁹¹ He suggested a surgeon who had come on the fourth transport of Salzburgers in the late 1730s, Johann Ludwig Meyer, as a replacement for himself as Conservator of the Peace and manager of secular affairs. He believed Meyer to be “competent and trustworthy,” and the Salzburgers “agreed to accept his authority and to supply him with wood and grain until his salary from the Lord Trustees starts to arrive.”⁹² The Trustees appointed Meyer Conservator of the Peace in 1748, but he did not take full responsibility for the governing of Ebenezer, rather he assisted Boltzius “by attending to the legal and non-local business on their behalf.”⁹³

By the time the Trustees repealed their prohibition of slavery in 1750, Boltzius had several reasons why he could blame their government for hampering the success of his “city on a hill.” He believed they had failed to enforce their antislavery laws, their

⁸⁹ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:200.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 11:134.

⁹³ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:328, 332; Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 11:134.

local officials undermined Boltzius' authority because of his antislavery stance, and they eventually gave up on keeping slaves out altogether. Boltzius certainly had reasons to be discontent under Georgia's government, although he continued to uphold Ebenezer's image as a loyal community. But Boltzius' responses to the challenges of the 1740s show him adapting Halle's goals to meet the needs of his congregation in the colonial environment under the domination of a British culture that did not share his ideals. After Ebenezer's orphanage closed and the Trustees decided to permit slavery in Georgia, Ebenezer's reputation as a reproduction of Halle, providing refuge and employment to poor Europeans, was fading and success for the Halle vision became less realistic.

CHAPTER 3: A VISION FAILED, 1750-1760

By the end of the 1740s, most Georgians had adopted the use of slave labor to grow staple crops such as rice and indigo, and the colony was beginning to resemble the Carolinas economically and culturally. As Jack Greene describes, colonists of the Lower South developed an increasingly stratified society with wealthy planters dominating the elite class.¹ In the two decades preceding the Revolutionary War, “white settlers in the low-country area of the Lower South were the wealthiest segment of the population of colonial British North America.”² These elite planters, merchants, and lawyers established a “luxurious and highly anglicized lifestyle” as part of a progressively more coherent social order that resembled English society, instead of the loose social order that had characterized Georgia’s early years.³

Changes made by Georgia’s colonial government aided the development of a plantation economy and anglicized social order. The Trustees repealed their prohibition of slavery in 1750, simultaneously loosening restrictions on landholdings. In 1752, the colony’s charter reverted to the Crown, and the royally appointed governor and legislative assembly enacted policies on land and slave use that attracted migrants from other slave-based colonies. The new colonial government also established the Anglican

¹ Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 142-5.

² *Ibid.*, 147.

³ *Ibid.*, 147-51.

Church and divided the colony into parishes, abandoning the Trustees' policy of toleration.⁴

Ebenezer's adaptation to Georgia's anglicized social order and growing plantation economy represents the abandonment of Pietist ideals and the adoption of more typical German-American attitudes toward cultural autonomy. The Salzburgers started to use slave labor and acquire larger landholdings, engaging in the economic practices of the English colonists around them. They also welcomed new German settlers in an effort to strengthen their town economically and make up for the early mortality rate and labor shortage. New transports in 1751 and 1752 brought "Swabian" immigrants who were seeking economic prosperity, not a refuge for religious freedom. Although he valued prosperity as a sign of God's blessing, Boltzius feared the new colonists were harming Ebenezer by seeking wealth for the wrong reasons. At the same time, the original Salzburgers started to spread out more in order to develop larger plantations. These changes weakened the core of Ebenezer's community and further undermined its original focus on spiritual fellowship and industry that would glorify God by supporting philanthropic enterprises.

Ebenezer's leaders were able to preserve the Lutheran Church in the face of Anglican establishment, however, because Boltzius operated the town's churches according to the letter of the law, using Anglican titles and structures, while ignoring the authorities' intentions by preaching Lutheran doctrine in German. He maintained the center of Ebenezer's domestic culture, but he confirmed the superficiality of their public

⁴ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 125, 140, 174, 230.

respect for English authority and compromised the visibility of Ebenezer's Lutheran identity. Throughout these processes, Ebenezer began to resemble other communities with groups of German colonists who engaged English economic practices and public institutions when necessary, but maintained their domestic culture through church and language.⁵

Taking on "Black Servants"

In 1745, Boltzius closed Ebenezer's orphanage because of the town's labor shortage. Although he distributed the orphans among Salzburger families to work as servants, Ebenezer still needed more laborers. Boltzius complained in 1747 that if the Salzburgers had to continue working without servants, "the hard work will bring them to their graves prematurely."⁶ Disease and infant mortality had cost them "all the children who were born here in the beginning and who would be by now twelve or thirteen years old and could be of some help to their parents in many ways."⁷ Boltzius convinced the Trustees to recruit one more group of indentured servants in 1749 in an attempt to prove that European sources of labor would work, if the right kind of servants were hired.

Past experiences had shown Boltzius how hard it was to find "loyal servants" in the colonies, as he had complained during his struggle to operate the orphanage in the early 1740s. He asked the Trustees to send them servants "who properly are called

⁵ A.G. Roeber describes how most German-speaking immigrants were able to maintain domestic culture through the preservation of their language and churches while taking advantage of English institutions and economic practices in the public sphere in "The Origin of Whatever Is Not English among Us': The Dutch-speaking and the German-speaking Peoples of Colonial British America," in *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 220-83.

⁶ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 11:106.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

Servants in Germany,” as opposed to the European migrants who had “come upon their own accord,” because the latter “leave their Country by reason of growing Gentlemen here & get rich, therefore have no inclination at all to serve to a great loss & disappointment to their Masters.” He requested specifically to get “good natured and industrious servants from Germany by the help of our friends there, without whom the progress of our undertaking for the Good of our Settlement will much be obstructed.” They wanted fifty men and twelve women to whom they would give “decent wages” and then land at the end of their indenture.⁸

In October 1749 the *Charles Town Galley* brought sixty-three indentured servants from the Palatinate to Georgia, twenty-one of whom were kept in Savannah. The rest, including families with children as well as single men and women, were hired by the Salzburgers for several years of labor. It soon became clear that these servants were not the loyal field workers the Salzburgers needed. One man was a shoemaker and managed to redeem himself quickly, thus depriving Salzburger Brandner of the servant he had drawn. Others threatened to run away, complaining that the Salzburgers expected three and a half years of service while the Englishmen in Savannah only required one or two years of work. Boltzius hinted in his diary that all was not well: “We must wait and see how it will go with our servants. Some of them are still restless because they cannot practice their trades as apprentices and journeymen but must work as farm hands.”⁹

The fact that indentured servants from Germany did not meet Boltzius’ expectations for farm hands held greater implications to Boltzius’ vision because of their

⁸ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 25:204.

⁹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 13:123.

importance to his antislavery argument. He had encouraged the Trustees to send white servants instead of allowing slaves, because they would better support the colony's culture of small farmers and employed laborers. Therefore, it was "a great harm for us and the whole country that we have not received the kind of servants we described, those who have been nothing but farmers. We could then have convinced everyone that more could be accomplished with such servants than with Negroes."¹⁰ Instead, Boltzius had to give up on what he had hoped would be the perfect alternative to slavery. When several of the servants were captured after running away, Boltzius decided he would "hardly make any more effort to further the coming of redemptioners or other Germans into this country."¹¹ Although Ebenezer was supposed to provide opportunity to poor Europeans, Boltzius decided to no longer welcome indentured servants. These skilled laborers were not interested in the agricultural efforts of the original Salzburger, nor did they need employment in the silk industry, but they wanted to pursue success with their own skills.

After the Palatine servants failed to fulfill their labor needs, the Salzburger started to "fall into the temptation of wanting Negroes," which Boltzius had protested for so long.¹² In July 1750 a member of the first Salzburger transport, Leimberger, told Boltzius that he had been forced to buy a "black female servant" because he could not find a white one. His German servant was sick and anxious for his freedom, while he and his wife were both ill and needed help with their three children. Boltzius attested that "in the past, if anyone in our community spoke against using Negroes, then it was this man

¹⁰ Ibid., 123.

¹¹ George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger(1750)*, vol. 14, trans. Eva Pulgram, Magdalena Hoffman-Loerzer, and G.F. Jones (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 40.

¹² Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 12:80.

himself,” so if Leimberger decided to buy a slave, he must have “been forced into it by great necessity.” Considering how few of their servants had been useful, whether they were lazy, restless, or sick, Boltzius could no longer “object when people wish to introduce Negroes into our community.”¹³

Boltzius had to justify his acceptance of slavery to his sponsors, because for years he had been explaining why slavery was incompatible with Halle’s economic and religious culture. He told them the white indentured servants had become a financial burden, because the Salzburgers had to pay for their passage while they barely helped enough to pay their own keep. Hiring free servants like they had in Europe was nearly impossible because of all the available land for white settlers. Settlers were scarce enough to keep wages high and land costs low, but Boltzius hoped that this situation might actually “improve if more Negroes come to this country.” He had seen in the past how indentured servants could become “excellent colonists” when set free and allowed to work for their own profit. Employing slaves and freeing the indentured servants would help populate the colony with free whites, which would bring down wages and make plantations more valuable.¹⁴

Boltzius also conceded, at least publicly, to the claims that slavery in Georgia was beneficial to the slaves themselves. He told his sponsors that the Council in Savannah had assured him the Africans had been “eternal slaves in their own land and that they lived under great tyranny and difficult circumstances and were legally bought and sold.” If they were already destined to a life of slavery, then “Christians should feel no more

¹³ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 14:93.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

scruples in buying them or possessing them than the Patriarchs and even Philemon himself in the New Testament, to whom St. Paul sent back the servant Onesimus and demanded not his emancipation but just good treatment.” As long as the colonists treated them well, the slaves would be better off in Georgia than in Africa, and in Ebenezer they would “also have an opportunity to come to a recognition of Christ.”¹⁵ Although Boltzius had previously rejected the argument that slaves should be bought for the sake of Christianizing them, he now presented this as a possibility.

Apparently the majority of Boltzius’ congregants were less hesitant to buy slaves than he was. In 1750 both “young Kiefer” and his brother-in-law, Kronberger, were keeping a slave to help them plant crops. The other members of the community noticed their success, and according to Boltzius, they were “all set on either buying or borrowing Negroes.” While the pastors refused to get involved in the sale or purchase of slaves, they “would certainly not begrudge such an opportunity to our dear people who can not succeed without help.”¹⁶ A month later, Kiefer bought his fourth slave in South Carolina.¹⁷ The following year Boltzius reported that three branches of the Kiefer family had acquired slaves.¹⁸ One of the original Salzburger bought his second slave in November 1752, and Boltzius commented that while they still had “very few Negroes” in Ebenezer, “more will probably be bought gradually through necessity.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Ibid., 55.

¹⁶ Ibid., 100.

¹⁷ Ibid., 112.

¹⁸ George Fenwick Jones, ed. and trans., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1751-1752)*, vol. 15 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 44.

¹⁹ Ibid., 251-2.

Boltzius still had to make his own personal decision whether or not slave-operated plantations would benefit Ebenezer's spiritual ministry. In 1750 the Council gave him five hundred acres for his own plantation, as well as several hundred for Hermann Lemke, his assistant pastor. Although he knew the only available servants were "unreliable," and his sons were about to leave home in pursuit of higher education, he still could not see himself buying slaves and operating a large scale plantation.²⁰ When people tried to persuade him otherwise by mentioning the success of Kiefer and Kronenberger with slaves on their plantations, Boltzius agreed that slave labor proved very useful. His hesitation derived from the question of whether "a Christian should buy them with a good conscience and keep them in perpetual slavery." He expressed a desire, however, to "be enlightened and to be able to form a more educated opinion."²¹ He was no longer determined to stand by his original ideals, but his opinions were being influenced by his continued exposure to successful slaveowners.

Boltzius tried in 1750 to consider a "new arrangement" for the white servants, probably to reassure his sponsors that he was exhausting all of his options. He suggested that organizing the laborers differently might "show us whether or not white servants deserve their poor reputation as workers." He hoped that "if the workloads of the white servants could be arranged differently, these people could prove very useful and many other German people would be welcome to come here and make a good life for themselves."²² Boltzius must have known, though, that his effort to bring back the

²⁰ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 14:119.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

²² *Ibid.*, 143.

colony's original economic structure, to keep it from becoming "populated with Negroes, just as Carolina is," would not produce the desired results. He warned his sponsors that "not only Englishmen, but also most of our own people, are prejudiced against using white servants; therefore, no more industrious workers can be sent to this colony from Europe."²³

Boltzius often expressed concern that slaves would pose a threat to the colony's security, but in 1752 he decided that the Salzburgers could more easily keep slaves in order than white servants. He complained to the Trustees that they were "obliged to deal very tenderly with ill natured Servants" or else the servants would run away to Carolina and find refuge just like black slaves could in St. Augustine.²⁴ He realized they could "keep the Negroes of both sexes in better order than the white servants and maids," who ignored laws of morality and order, and could "often take more liberties in this land than the Negroes are allowed to. The masters and householders could demand good order from the Negroes if they wished" because other opportunities for economic success were not as plentiful for a black runaway as for a white deserter.²⁵

The news that their salaries were going to be cut in 1753 finally convinced the pastors that they had to invest in slave-run plantations in order to support their own families. The only way for them to make up the difference in their salaries would be "to establish a plantation on good soil and to raise cattle." Since white servants had proven to be a waste of money, they "had to decide in favor of buying and using some Negroes

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Alan D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 26 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1915), 82.

²⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 15:248.

or Negro slaves.”²⁶ After looking at the lands designated for the ministers, Boltzius and Lemke recognized that “if these areas were settled with some Negroes for the benefit of the Ebenezer minister and his congregation and if they were planted with rice and indigo, we soon would have, with God’s blessing, the long-sought trade and hence better support.”²⁷

Once the pastors had reconciled themselves to using slave labor on their plantations, they began to raise money for the widespread use of slaves for their public works. They needed labor not only to support themselves, but to operate the millworks they had established as one of the town’s most profitable industries. They claimed, however, that they would buy slaves “with the intention of leading their souls to the Lord Jesus through Christian instruction and through holy baptism.” They suggested that:

If Christian benefactors of means wished through their charities to put us in a position to buy little Negro children with their mothers (for it would not be Christian to separate them, even though it is common here and there), then they would be a seminary of young branches from heathendom, who would grow up as baptized Christians and afterwards serve as a stimulating example for their mothers and other Negroes for accepting the Christian religion.²⁸

The pastors also described how the poorer citizens among them needed help to acquire slaves, so that they could develop more land and better compete with other Georgians using slaves to produce staple crops. They emphasized that while they no longer had an orphanage through which to support the poor, their friends in Europe “still have an opportunity now to give benefactions and to show compassion to our congregation. If

²⁶ George Fenwick Jones, ed., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1753-1754)*, vol. 16, trans. G.F. Jones and Renate Wilson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁸ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 15:272.

God made it possible for us to help the weakest among the Salzburgers to get Negroes, God's blessing would soon help them."²⁹ They also stressed the importance of the "Minister's Plantation," which needed the "fruitful contributions" of "beneficent souls" to help it succeed. Lemke, the assistant pastor, described how "without such an institution we would not know how to support churches and schools and the ministers and teachers in them. It would be of little use to demand such support from the congregation for, even if they were able to contribute, it would be difficult to force them in this free country."³⁰ Apparently these appeals worked, because in late 1753 the pastors were able to put several slaves to work on one of the ministers' plantations who had been purchased with "the money sent to us for this purpose."³¹ They successfully convinced their benefactors that adopting certain Anglo-American economic practices would help them maintain some of their philanthropic ministries.

As Boltzius and Lemke adapted their economic practices to support their spiritual goals, they tried not to focus their reports on the changing economic structure in their town. Instead, the pastors described the benefits to the slaves who were brought to Ebenezer. They advised their congregants to treat the slaves "with a Christian mind." If they cared for both body and soul, providing slaves with food and shelter as well as Biblical instruction, they could expect God's blessing on their efforts.³² The pastors did their part to contribute to the spiritual well-being of Ebenezer's slaves, such as baptizing a newborn baby whose owners, the Zettlers, promised "to bring it up to all the good in the

²⁹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 16:99.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 172.

³² Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 15:48.

dogma of Christ and not to dismiss it from their care.”³³ Boltzius provided Christian teaching to an English-speaking slave woman who expressed interest after her own baby died.³⁴ He hoped that the Salzburgers would teach their slaves German “by consorting with them at work, at meals, and at daily divine service, which duty God will someday demand of them. After they have learned the language it should be our greatest joy to instruct them privately on Sundays and Holy days.”³⁵

Boltzius also defended slavery to his European sponsors by comparing slaves to the servants in European society. The Pietists in Halle operated within a socially stratified society, providing education or training to each class differently without trying to change the social order.³⁶ Boltzius reminded them that their European social order of masters and servants was “based on God’s word” and made possible a “bourgeois society and even the Christian church itself.” But people in the colonies were poor and struggling because “it has been impossible in this country to establish such an order, because everybody in this free land wants to be a gentlemen, master, and householder, and almost nobody wants to be a servant, apprentice, or hired hand.” Therefore, the Salzburgers were “taking on black servants instead of white ones,” substituting slaves for the servants employed in European society.³⁷

Ironically, the pastors ended up justifying Ebenezer’s adoption of slave labor with the same argument they had posed against slavery. They had once portrayed a slave society as the antithesis of Christian order and charity, but when they decided they had no

³³ Ibid., 4.

³⁴ Ibid., 282.

³⁵ Ibid., 251.

³⁶ Wilson, “Halle and Ebenezer,” 24.

³⁷ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 16:5.

choice but to use it, they presented slave labor as a natural part of the Christian social order of masters and servants. Their reinterpretation of the Christian social order, however necessary they may have found it, helped Ebenezer develop a plantation economy similar to South Carolina's, which was exactly the economic structure Boltzius had tried to resist throughout the 1740s.

The Infiltration of "Riffraff"

Originally, the Salzburgers expressed a desire to see Ebenezer and its surrounding areas settled only by people who valued the spiritual priorities of their community. Their pastors, as Halle Pietists, were part of a "discourse favoring religious persecution as a precondition of the virtue of foreign settlers."³⁸ They believed that migrants who had endured persecution for the sake of their religion had proven their faithfulness and would be immigrating for the right reasons. Boltzius wanted settlers in his community who would work hard to support Ebenezer's reputation and ministries with their agricultural or industrial efforts. Property was a blessing to be used for the good of the community, not for accumulating individual wealth. But Ebenezer received new inhabitants in 1751 and 1752 who did not share the self-sacrificing, community-minded Protestant work ethic that Boltzius had found in the first groups of Salzburgers in the 1730s.

In a 1738 letter to Samuel Urlsperger, the Salzburgers asked that more of their countrymen be recruited to strengthen their settlement. They specified that they wanted their area to be settled by people who were immigrating "only in order to save their souls" and "would support themselves at last honorably by the work of their hands; then

³⁸ Wilson, "Halle Pietism," 275.

we would live together as brothers in great joy and peace.” They determined that “no true Christian looks for riches and luxuries in this world and the man who wishes to seek for these in Ebenezer must stay away.” Even someone who would be content with only their necessities provided must first “consult with God in hearty prayer so that he shall come not of his own accord but by the will of God.”³⁹

By 1750, no more Salzburger were available to come to Georgia, but Ebenezer still needed more settlers to make up for the mortality rate they had suffered in their new climate. Urlsperger recruited other German Protestants, this time from the territory of the free Imperial City of Ulm on the Danube. They were “carefully screened” by Lutheran ministers to make sure they would be the right addition to Ebenezer. According to G. F. Jones, “the recruiters did their job well,” for the first transport was housed and assimilated by 1751.⁴⁰ But Boltzius at one point stated that while “some, to be sure, are industrious workers,” he did not find them all to be “diligent listeners,” and he felt that “through such behavior and through their lives in general they make themselves incapable of divine blessing and physical support.”⁴¹ Boltzius realized after a number of these Swabian immigrants had moved to his area that they were not necessarily going to help him advance the Pietist vision for Ebenezer.

Boltzius had consistently emphasized the importance of settling Ebenezer with the “proper” citizens. When Grimming, a Salzburger who had moved away and married a Scottish woman, wanted to move back to Ebenezer in 1738, he had to get permission

³⁹ Alan D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 22 bk. 1 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1904), 346-7.

⁴⁰ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 15:ix.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 226.

from both Oglethorpe and Boltzius. Boltzius appreciated Oglethorpe's promise at that time "that he would not allow anyone to move to our place unless he were previously known to him and to us as honest and orderly."⁴² Another settler, Held, wanted to return to Ebenezer in 1750 after living in Carolina for several years. The pastors agreed, but only "after he had given his promise to lead an orderly life," and they recommended that he settle all of his debts before returning. Boltzius emphasized that "we are not interested in people who are willing to come here only for the sake of earning money and who would be eager to leave after having achieved this goal."⁴³ He referred to unworthy colonists as "riffraff, who might cause us great harm and bring the displeasure of our benefactors upon us."⁴⁴

When the first transport of Swabians arrived in Georgia in October 1750, Ebenezer's assistant pastor and the assistant conservator of the peace went to Savannah to discuss the intended location for the new settlers. Lemke and Meyer brought back a "good opinion" of the new immigrants, which, Boltzius reported, "pleases me and encourages me to take care of them as well as I know how...."⁴⁵ The Council intended to give them land that had recently been acquired from the Uchee Indians, on the Blue Bluff across the Savannah from Ebenezer. First, however, "those of our original residents who did not have a plantation of their own up to now, either because of their trade or because

⁴² George Fenwick Jones and Renate Wilson, ed. and trans., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger (1738)*, vol. 5 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 240.

⁴³ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 14:136.

⁴⁴ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 5:124.

⁴⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 14:181.

they were minors at the time,” would take the land closest to Ebenezer. The new settlers would be able to choose land nearby.⁴⁶

Boltzius personally chose a site for the new colonists where they could plant crops as well as build their own mills, but he was disappointed when they rejected his advice. They found a different location where they would be close enough to use the Salzburgers’ mills.⁴⁷ Boltzius complained in his journal that “without my knowledge the newly arrived people have journeyed to Ebenezer... in order to settle here even though I had given them sufficient and clear instruction in a public assembly concerning the nature of our soil, the causes of our former difficulties of subsistence, and the advantages they could achieve on right good land with God’s blessing.”⁴⁸ Their refusal to follow his advice probably caused him to doubt the legitimacy of their “calling” to Georgia. He made a specific point of telling the President of the Council in Savannah that “all the new colonists had come to Ebenezer at their own initiative,” distinguishing them from the Salzburgers who had been more clearly called there as recruits of the colony’s sponsors.⁴⁹

Over the next couple of years, many of the Swabians proved to be less than ideal colonists to Boltzius. He expressed surprise that while most of the new settlers suffered from fever, “most of them recover and remain alive, even though their behavior is so bad.”⁵⁰ He thought their actions were bad enough to deserve punishment, not the blessing of good health. He told the sponsors that he was having “trouble” with “many, if not most, among the Swabian transports,” so the German religious leaders would not be

⁴⁶ Ibid., 177.

⁴⁷ Candler, *Colonial Records*, 26:198.

⁴⁸ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 15:120.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 125.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 225.

too quick to respond “to the requests... of such people asking them to recommend them to the Lord Trustees.” Neither did he want other Europeans to think they could come to Ebenezer and easily acquire wealth.⁵¹ The new colonists must have been complaining about the physical hardships in Georgia, for Boltzius made a point of describing how the original settlers “did not leave their homeland for material things, a good life, and earthly advantages, but they came here to win freedom of conscience, a church and a school, and the freedom to adhere to, and enjoy, their Evangelical religion.” Therefore, it was “unfair to whine about the physical trials at Ebenezer and to grumble and complain.”⁵² The earlier Salzburger immigrants had faced much harsher conditions, with bad land and insufficient provisions, but they had always been willing to work hard with what they had, according to Boltzius. He had tried specifically to solidify the Salzburgers’ reputation as industrial and diligent, even though they had been discontent with the conditions of their original location and provisions. He made no such effort on behalf of the new settlers.

To Ebenezer’s pastors, the excessive “murmuring” of the new colonists in the 1750s showed that they were more concerned about material comforts than spiritual growth. Lemke regretted that they did not hear a sermon Boltzius preached about murmuring, because “very few of them attended.”⁵³ This pattern continued, as months later the pastors had “noticed for some time that some of our listeners are no longer quite as eager to attend the weekly sermons and evening prayers and that they have kept their

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁵² Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 16:35.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 50.

children out of school for several weeks.”⁵⁴ On another occasion one of the “honest” Salzburgers told Boltzius that several men had “frivolously missed the afternoon sermon on the day of the Lord,” despite their knowledge that dishonoring the Sabbath was sinful.⁵⁵

While new colonists strengthened Ebenezer physically, they obviously did not strengthen it spiritually in the way that Boltzius and his “Reverend Fathers” in Europe had hoped they would. While the original Salzburgers were beginning to compromise their original ideals by using slaves to aid their material success, their community was expanded by immigrants who prioritized economic gains over spiritual ones.

Legislative Assaults on the Vision

The laws and government of the Georgia colony underwent several changes in and after 1750, in addition to the act allowing slavery, that contributed to the growth of Ebenezer’s plantation economy and further distanced the Salzburgers from their British authorities. Restrictions governing land sales and slave ownership were loosened, religious freedoms were constricted, and control of the entire colony reverted to the crown to be delegated to colonial governors and assemblies. Georgia finally had economic, political, and social structures resembling the other southern colonies.

The Trustees made some important adjustments to their laws governing land ownership, in conjunction with their legalization of slavery. They originally put restrictions on landholdings in order to prevent major disparities of wealth, to ensure that

⁵⁴ Ibid., 136.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 187.

the colony would provide opportunity to the poor white immigrants who were to benefit from their charity while strengthening the colony's defenses. They granted a maximum of five hundred acres to individual settlers, and these only included those who paid their own passage and brought ten servants over with them. Colonists like the Salzburgers, who were transported on the Trustees' charity, were given fifty acres each.⁵⁶ Land ownership was restricted to "adult males capable of performing military duties," with women being prohibited from either owning or inheriting land.⁵⁷

By 1750, when they conceded to the proslavery agitators, the Trustees had also repealed all of their restrictions on land ownership. They gave the authority to make land grants to the colony's president and his council in Savannah, a right which was given to the governor and his council when the colony reverted to royal control. After 1754, land could be acquired through public or private purchase, gift or bequest, or application to the authorities in Savannah.⁵⁸

The loosening of land laws allowed for the two plantations granted to Boltzius and Lemke so the ministers could support themselves through the development of plantations.⁵⁹ It also motivated the Salzburgers to spread out a little more, sacrificing their sense of community for the sake of better plantations. In 1752, the council "urgently insisted" that the Salzburgers "move from each other and to good land for their

⁵⁶ Wood, *Slavery*, 8.

⁵⁷ Lee Ann Caldwell, "Women Landholders of Colonial Georgia," in *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, ed. Harvey H. Jackson and Phinzy Spalding (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 184. Forbidding women to own land would ensure that as much land as possible was inhabited by potential soldiers, as well as preventing the accumulation of land through marriage. Landowners who died without a male heir had their land taken by the Trustees and regranted.

⁵⁸ Wood, *Slavery*, 90.

⁵⁹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 14:130.

better nourishment.” They promised one hundred acres to anyone who would move, so several of them moved to the Goshen area nearby.⁶⁰ Boltzius had already complained that the colonists on the Blue Bluff were too far away to conveniently come to prayer hour every evening; he could not have been pleased to see his devoted congregants spread out even more. He complained that land was still available in the town, “but people would rather move away from their church and school to a distant area than settle on such land.”⁶¹

The transfer of power to the governor, his council, and the colonial assembly accelerated the abandonment of the “Georgia Plan.” Boltzius heard that since the Trustees’ charter had expired, “many people from Carolina and other colonies are coming into our Georgia and wish to settle here. They are bringing many Negroes with them.”⁶² The influx of planters from other colonies was due to the governors’ application of the Board of Trade’s policy, which granted land based on colonists’ ability to develop it. Colonists who possessed sources of labor could prove that they were capable of developing more acres than a colonist who did not. Therefore, colonists from the Carolinas and the West Indies who already owned slaves were able to take advantage of this policy and accumulate land quickly.⁶³ They brought not only laborers, but systems of plantation management, and eventually they gained significant influence politically and socially. By the 1770s, “a clearly defined and increasingly closed planter elite” had

⁶⁰ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 15:183.

⁶¹ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 16:54. Boltzius was constantly encouraging his people to pursue the silk or lumber industries instead of relying on farming, but apparently they preferred to compete with the Carolina planters and accumulate larger holdings. He eventually developed his own grant into a successful plantation as well.

⁶² Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 15:227.

⁶³ Wood, *Slavery*, 91.

become dominant in a colony that for decades had tried to resist the development of this social and economic structure.⁶⁴

The royal government's new slave code in 1755 showed the influence of immigrants from other southern colonies. Boltzius hoped that Georgia's new government would put into law the "good restrictions" that the Trustees had placed on slaveholders, "for the sake of good order, good subsistence, and security."⁶⁵ But the slave code written by the Georgia Assembly in 1755 was less concerned with ensuring the spiritual welfare of slaves and their good treatment, and more focused on simply preventing extreme cruelty to them while providing for stronger security in the colony. Owners were still required to halt labor on the Sabbath, but they did not have to provide for their slaves' instruction in Christianity. Provisions were made for closer supervision of slaves, tighter restrictions were placed on their mobility and education, and processes were established for trying and punishing slave offenses. At the same time, the Assembly enlarged the black-white ratio, with the hope that closer supervision would make up for the security risk.⁶⁶ They passed yet another revision of the code in 1765 that further reduced the stipulations on harsh treatment. It also resembled the South Carolina code by concentrating on the risk of poisoning, addressing fears of slave violence more vigorously as the slave population increased from twenty to forty percent between 1750 and 1766.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Ibid., 108-9.

⁶⁵ Jones, *Detailed Reports*, 15:245.

⁶⁶ Wood, *Slavery*, 112-23.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 124-6.

Thus, after 1750, the economic and social structures of the Georgia Plan that had so closely resembled the Pietist goals for Ebenezer were quickly transformed as other legal changes followed the allowance of slavery. Georgia began to resemble South Carolina in its use of slaves, distribution of land, and legal structures. The royal government that took power in 1752 also changed the laws governing white colonists' spiritual condition that forced the Salzburgers to sacrifice their reputation as a Pietist Lutheran congregation and gave the German colonists more cause to be disappointed in their British government.

The Trustees established a policy of toleration in Georgia upon its founding. Until 1758, all colonists except Roman Catholics were guaranteed religious freedom. As Anglican philanthropists, the Trustees wanted Georgia to be a haven for persecuted Protestants from Europe. They authorized Boltzius to preach his Lutheran version of Protestantism, based on the Augustine Confession. The overall policy was so liberally enforced that even a few Roman Catholics resided in Georgia without persecution.⁶⁸ As Kenneth Coleman describes it, "the absence of religious harassment reflected not so much a deliberate policy on the part of Georgia's government as the general climate of opinion. Settlers were certainly more important than their religious beliefs."⁶⁹

After Georgia's royal government was established in 1752, Anglicans in the assembly made a couple of attempts to establish the Anglican Church as Georgia's state religion. Boltzius firmly protested the proposition to establish the church and divide the

⁶⁸ Harold E. Davis, *The Fledgling Province: Social and Cultural Life in Colonial Georgia, 1733-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 195-6.

⁶⁹ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 236.

colony into parishes. He wrote to “beg the Gentlemen of our Assembly would please to remember, that the Province of Georgia was intended by His Majesty for an Asylum for all sorts of Protestants to enjoy full liberty of Conscience.” He argued that Georgia should copy the example of Pennsylvania, another colony with large numbers of German Protestants. These Protestants would continue to come “as long as the Assembly takes care to keep their Necks free from bearing the Yoke of a New Church Government which they endeavor’d to escape with their children & Posterity by resorting to a Land of Liberty.” Boltzius requested that, based on the terms under which Ebenezer was settled, they be exempt from the leadership of parish church government and parish duties. Otherwise the congregants at Ebenezer would be “grieved,” and all German Protestants would be discouraged from ever joining them.⁷⁰

While Boltzius argued against the bill for establishment, he chose not to join with the Congregationalists or the Presbyterians to put forth a united opposition (being as divided from them as he was from the Anglicans). In 1758, the devout Anglicans in the assembly succeeded in passing an act of establishment through the strategizing of skilled politicians. To help it pass, they included several safeguards in the act to protect dissenters. It prohibited any Anglican clergy from exercising judicial powers, did not interfere with the church services of dissenters, and provided for “churchwardens and vestrymen” to be elected by the vote of all freeholders and householders, including dissenters.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Alan D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 13 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1907), 257-9.

⁷¹ Davis, *Fledgling Province*, 206.

The Ebenezer Lutherans preserved their own practices and teachings in spite of the establishment, because they comprised a “substantial majority” in St. Matthew Parish, the area surrounding Ebenezer. Harold Davis shows that the enacted law “left them free to honor the letter of ‘establishment’ while violating the intent, and they quickly set about doing just that, certainly with the knowledge and probably with the encouragement of the civil authorities in Savannah.” Because dissenters were allowed to vote for the church leadership, the Lutherans met every year in Ebenezer to elect their own church deacons as churchwardens and vestrymen. This way the community “wryly complied with the law by installing its own leadership under the titles of the ‘establishment’ in St. Matthew. They ran matters completely to suit themselves with no more than a wink in the direction of Anglicanism.”⁷² This practice allowed the Salzburger to voice respect for their English authorities without actually submitting to their official rulings. Nevertheless, the colonial government’s enactment of this law confirmed Boltzius’ opinion, already developed, that the English authorities did not share his priorities.

By the close of the 1750s, Ebenezer had in reality abandoned most of Boltzius’ goals for the Pietist community. The Trustees unintentionally sabotaged their efforts by abandoning the most important aspects of their original plan for the colony, a plan that should have supported the economic and social structure that Boltzius desired. By legalizing slavery and the accumulation of large landholdings, the Trustees allowed Georgia to develop a “planter elite” and a stratified society resembling South Carolina’s, which was incompatible with Ebenezer’s purpose as a place of opportunity for poor

⁷² Ibid., 207.

Europeans. The royal government that took control in 1752 increased Georgia's resemblance to South Carolina by enacting similar land policies, slave codes, and religious structures. While Boltzius maintained a respectful appearance and obeyed the letter of the law, he watched the government continue to undermine his efforts.

Meanwhile, the realities of colonial life led the Salzburger to compromise their own ideals. The freedom that Georgia offered to white immigrants left few settlers interested in working as loyal servants, so the colonists at Ebenezer—including some of the very first Salzburger refugees—began using slaves. After a long and bitter battle against the use of slave labor, Boltzius began defending their necessity as his flock found slave labor increasingly attractive. Ironically, he used a European interpretation of the proper Christian social order to defend the use of “black servants,” although his initial resistance to slavery had been based in his desire to see a community of Christians living by “the sweat of their brow.” He and Lemke actually justified the use of slaves on their own plantations as a way of supporting the valuable ministries of their churches and schools.

The combination of external pressures and internal needs caused Boltzius and the Salzburger to compromise and adapt their religious ideals until the vision of a Pietist “city on the hill” was gone. Their economic success brought Ebenezer and its industrious settlers much praise, but at the cost of their tightly-knit, church-centered community and the visible Halle institutions that it was supposed to replicate. By the end of the colonial period, Ebenezer was no longer a refuge for poor Protestants but a group of plantations

dominated by large landholders who prioritized their own success over the well-being of the community and its religious ministry.

CONCLUSION: A VISION FORGOTTEN

On a Sunday in 1774, several colonists stood guard in front of Ebenezer's Jerusalem Church with their swords drawn. They were there to keep Christoph Friedrich Triebner, the newest pastor sent from Halle, from using the pulpit to criticize pastor Christian Rabenhorst. When Triebner and his supporters arrived at the church, they were barred from entering by their fellow congregants. After trying to get in and being locked out again, Triebner took his following to the home of Caspar Wertsch to hold their own services.¹ Ebenezer's church was caught in the middle of a feud between two angry and accusatory factions that would carry their fighting into the War for Independence. The situation in Ebenezer in 1774 proves that Boltzius' adaptations to colonial Georgia provided for Ebenezer's economic success and autonomy, but ultimately resulted in a failure to visibly reproduce Pietist practices and principles.

The division of Ebenezer began with Triebner's arrival in 1769. Boltzius' death in 1765 had left his new assistant Rabenhorst and the aging Lemke with the responsibility of caring for Ebenezer and the surrounding plantations. The Halle fathers hired Triebner to help them, in spite of G. A. Francke's reservations about his greediness and impulsiveness, because willing candidates for the job in far-off Georgia were so scarce. They transferred Boltzius' salary to Triebner because Rabenhorst was still supported by

¹ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 173; Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1945), 601.

the minister's plantation. Triebner presumed that he was replacing Boltzius as primary pastor with Rabenhorst remaining the third pastor.²

The real conflict began when Triebner "accused Rabenhorst of trying to misappropriate the Ebenezer mills." He had gained a following among the older parishioners with what Jones calls his "puritanical views," in contrast to Rabenhorst's tolerance. With the confidence of this faction behind him, Triebner denounced Rabenhorst to Ebenezer's sponsors in Halle and convinced them to place him in charge of the mills.³

The mill board in Ebenezer, led by Johann Adam Treutlen, defended Rabenhorst. Treutlen's prime competitor as a merchant and prominent citizen was Wertsch, Triebner's brother-in-law. Soon the entire community was divided in support of Triebner and Wertsch or Rabenhorst and Treutlen. But according to Jones, they were really Wertsch and Treutlen factions. Both men were justices of the peace and wealthy merchants "who had the common people under their sway."⁴

This conflict between two factions led by elite citizens shows Ebenezer to be in a condition quite different from what Boltzius and his mentors had envisioned forty years earlier. The two factions sent a barrage of letters to the pastors' authorities in Halle until they sent a mediator, the Pietist pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in Philadelphia, to solve the conflict. Muhlenberg met with each pastor and presided over a number of heated discussions between the emotional Triebner and the intelligent Treutlen.

² Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 172.

³ *Ibid.*, 172-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

Eventually Muhlenberg found in favor of Rabenhorst's defense and told Triebner to apologize for accusing him, while the mills were rented to a tenant instead of being placed under the pastors' governance.⁵ This settlement did not end the factionalism, but Muhlenberg's records of his interactions reveal how seriously Ebenezer had compromised Halle's goals for a Pietist "city on a hill."

In 1774, Ebenezer was no longer led by a strong pastor determined to prioritize his congregation's religious education and public works. Instead, the most powerful men in the community were two wealthy merchants and planters, members of Georgia's elite class, both of whom started as schoolmasters but found the benefits of business more appealing.⁶ The town of Ebenezer was not the closely structured town that Boltzius had tried to establish, but its population was spread out on large plantations in surrounding areas. One visitor observed in 1765 that Ebenezer did not deserve to be called a city, as only twelve houses existed with the church in Ebenezer proper.⁷ The pastors and their ministry were not supported by the cash-earning enterprises like silk that Boltzius had tried to establish at the orphanage, in the tradition of the Francke Orphanage and its profitable operations. Instead they depended on salaries from the SPCK, donations from Halle, and the earnings of a slave-operated minister's plantation to maintain the church.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ George Fenwick Jones, "John Adam Treutlen's Origin and Rise to Prominence," in *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, ed. Harvey H. Jackson and Phinzy Spalding (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 221. Boltzius hired Treutlen as schoolmaster and let him operate a shop to supplement his salary, but Treutlen left the schoolhouse and used his earnings to buy slaves. He acquired more land and slaves until he was the wealthiest man in the district. Wertsch came with the transport of servants in 1749 and worked for the schoolmaster on the plantations. He also became a storekeeper and took charge of the silk industry, later marrying the late Gronau's daughter. Triebner married another of Gronau's daughters to become Wertsch's brother-in-law.

⁷ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 172.

By the 1770s Ebenezer, like the rest of Georgia, had developed an economic and social structure like that of neighboring South Carolina.

Politically, also, the inhabitants of Ebenezer went along with English colonists in the 1770s. Boltzius had established a double-edged relationship with the British at Ebenezer's beginning, expressing his respect for the colonial authorities publicly like a good Lutheran while pursuing his own desires for the Salzburger regardless of British support. As the resistance began, Ebenezer's Germans "took little initiative in the independence movement," remaining largely uninvolved with the political dealings of their English neighbors.⁸ But the only real loyalty existed among the remaining members of the older generation, who had been granted refuge by the colony's British founders, and Triebner, whose salary still came from the SPCK in London. The younger generation had grown up with this duality of external deference and internal disaffection for British authority, so it is easy to see how men like Treutlen could join the Revolution if it best suited their economic interests. Coleman writes of Georgians in general that, "if the 'unfortunate poor' learned to ignore the Trustees long before 1752, then the 'middling sort of people' learned to object strongly to unpopular British actions by 1775."⁹ This statement describes the Salzburger as well. Most Salzburger "went along with the majority of the population when the Whigs took over the government," belying the absence of any strong loyalty to the British.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., 176.

⁹ Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 272.

¹⁰ Jones, *Georgia Dutch*, 179.

But the story of Ebenezer's goals and compromises is not just a history of colonial economic and political development. It is an example of cultural adaptation and negotiation. The Salzburgers brought goals and ideals to America that had been formed in a distinctly European setting and could not be put into practice in such a different environment without some adjustment. They had to negotiate with the dominant culture in Georgia—British colonists and administrators who did not share their devotion to a Pietist vision requiring certain economic and social structures—while adapting their principles to work within a strange environment.

T.H. Breen identifies eight “constraints upon cultural creativity in early American societies,” several of which apply to the aspects of the Ebenezer experience described in this study: motives for colonization, physical environment, demographic configuration, and economic constraints.¹¹ Obviously, the Salzburgers' motive for settlement differed from that of other Georgians who prioritized economic and military opportunities for individual or imperial advancement. As the majority and governing culture, British colonists and rulers exercised the rights of a “charter group.” They determined what other groups would be able to do “by making decisions about institutional forms, about the treatment of other races, about the allocation of natural resources.”¹² Ebenezer's development was delayed because they were subjects of British authorities who wanted the settlement to occupy a strategically valuable location rather than an economically viable one. When the Salzburgers finally did acquire usable land, they faced pressure

¹¹ T.H. Breen, “Creative Adaptations: Peoples and Cultures,” in *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era*, ed. Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.), 199.

¹² *Ibid.*, 205.

from the English colonists who wanted Georgia to adopt slave labor and develop a plantation economy with the earning potential of South Carolina's.

Secondly, physical environment exerted a significant influence over the Salzburgers' ability to recreate European institutions and practices. Breen's observation holds true, that "it was far easier to reproduce traditional ways of life in a familiar environment than in one that threatened their very survival."¹³ The disease rate among children born in Ebenezer, which exacerbated Georgia's labor shortage, is just one example of an unexpected hardship caused by the Salzburgers' new environment. This high mortality rate, combined with low numbers of white laborers coming to the colonies, caused demographic configuration to become a factor in German-English interactions. Each group sought different alternatives to the labor shortage, and in an effort to avoid using slaves, the Salzburgers invited new immigrants into their settlement. Boltzius' attempt to defend the profitability of white labor actually changed the religious culture of his own community, as Ebenezer's new settlers did not accept his spiritual authority unquestioningly.

Economic constraints affected the Salzburgers most drastically when Georgians began using slaves to grow rice on large landholdings. The popularity of "the staple crop radically changed the structure" of Georgia's society and facilitated the emergence of an elite class.¹⁴ Ebenezer was forced to compete with the rest of Georgia's slave-owning

¹³ Ibid., 207.

¹⁴ Ibid., 213.

population, so its inhabitants and pastors chose to establish their own slave-operated plantations, forever changing the economic and social structure of their community.¹⁵

While his attempts to build a “city on the hill” were diluted by these cultural constraints, Boltzius’ negotiations always had two sides. Boltzius compromised the most distinctive and visible aspects of Halle’s vision for Ebenezer, but he was able, with the help of his Protestant support network, to ensure the economic success and independence of the Lutheran refugees. Under his leadership, the hard-working Salzburgers established a self-sufficient and autonomous community. While Ebenezer never served as an example of Pietist institutions or social reform on a large scale, the industrious Salzburgers were held up as examples of successful colonists to other Georgians throughout the colonial period.¹⁶ They maintained a rather isolated existence, seen in their continued use of the German language (except for Boltzius, who used his excellent English skills to represent his congregation’s interests to the British).¹⁷ This autonomy allowed them to maintain the essence of their religious community, Lutheran teachings in their own churches. They may have chosen to spread out and operate plantations rather than maintain Pietist prayer meetings every day, but when the British government forced the establishment of Anglican churches, Boltzius was able to preserve their Lutheran doctrine and practices.

¹⁵ The addition of slaves obviously caused African-European exchanges in Ebenezer as well. Although that aspect of Ebenezer’s culture lies beyond the economic and political focus of this study, it could prove an interesting comparison with Sensbach’s work on Afro-Moravian culture. Boltzius records many concerted efforts to Christianize the slaves in Ebenezer and teach the “savages” to live orderly lives.

¹⁶ Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England*, 175.

¹⁷ In 1759, Governor Ellis complained that few residents of Ebenezer spoke English or associated with other colonists. He wanted to see them share agricultural and silk-reeling skills with other colonists. Alan D. Candler, ed., *Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 28 bk. 1 (Atlanta: Franklin Printing, 1916), 205.

Ebenezer's European background and Pietist leadership give its colonial history a unique character, dominated by Boltzius' attempts to bring a Halle vision into reality in the face of unexpected challenges. But compromises that led to the failure of distinctly Pietist goals gave the Salzburger a similar cultural history to other groups of Germans in colonial America.¹⁸ They took advantage of "English liberties" and succeeded in competing economically with their British neighbors. At the same time, they established an independent German community with the Lutheran church at its center.

¹⁸ A.G. Roeber, "Whatever is Not English," 220-83. The Salzburger community's cohesive private culture and the German cultural experience in general stands in contrast to that of the Huguenots, who found religious freedom in British America but were dispersed too widely to maintain a visible French culture. See Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

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