THE EMIGRATION OF HANS HERR

By C. H. Martin,

It is generally recognized and known that Hans Herr was the first settler or the leading spirit in the first settlement of that section now known as Lancaster County. Volumes have already been written on this subject, historians lauded his virtues and intrepidity of heart however, I shall endeavor to present

to those of you not acquainted with the Emigration of Hans Herr the conditions leading up to his emigration, the type of settler he represented, perils encountered and the conditions in the Pequea Valley when he settled, and, to those versed in this history some facts which I believe hitherto not generally known, but highly interesting.

Most of us in whose veins flow blood sprung from so sturdy stock as Hans Herr may look with humble pride to his deeds believing with MacCauley that those who take no pride in the achievements of their ancestors near or remote are not likely to accomplish much worth remembering by their descendants.

Many years after the discovery of America wealth seeking was the chief

attraction to anyone sailing to our shores. Great were the stories of primeval wealth existant in this country. Many in search of such wealth suffered miserable death on our shores failing to find the Fountain of Youth or Alladin's Cave. Later those emigrating to America did so for other reasons than expecting to find a fortune. These reasons were religious, political and economic, chiefly religious.

Between the Reformation and Hans Herr's emigration was a period of sufferings, heartaches and severe trials to many residents of the Cantons of

Zurich, Berne and Schaffhausen, Switzerland where he and his neighbors of like faith and their ancestors for many generations lived, due to designed persecutions. The Herrs, Mylins, Kendigs, Millers, Hess's, Funks, Oberholtzers, Martins and Landis' and many others whose names are prominent in our County were residents of these Cantons, and per se neighbors. As an example of such persecutions and sufferings let me call your attention to the experience of Hans Meyli without doubt of the Meyli family represented in the Hans Herr party and Hans Jacob Hess ancestor of the family of the same name in

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Hans Meyli was an aged man imprisoned in 1637 through persecutions waged most severely in the Canton of Zurich, the authorities seizing his property, real and personal, applying the proceeds, 14,000 Florins, to their own use. Hans Jacob Hess, a minister of the Christian Church, suffered imprisonment in 1639 and 1640 on three occasions, one 19 days, one 8 weeks and a third period of 83 weeks, 16 of which were spent in irons. His estate of 4,000 Florins was confiscated without leaving anything for the support of his children, his wife having died during similar imprisonment. Additional references might be made to similar sufferings of persons whose names are now family names in this County, a few references, however, will suffice to show the merciless treatment meted out to those who stood for certain great principles, chief of which was the separation of Church and State and there is little doubt the position taken by Hans Herr and others on this subject was the incipiency of thought and attitude on this great question which later resulted in having

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That all Anabaptists who had abandoned the Roman Church and joined them should leave the country forthwith.

That all Anabaptists as had not gone out from the Romans but were descendants of their own society provided they had no real estate, should leave the country in half a year,

That all Anabaptists of the same class having real estate and engaged in merchandise should be granted a term of two years to close their business prior to their departure.

The Prince issuing this edict was appealed to for mitigation but he died

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Facing such stipulations some of the unfortunate brethren communicated find a haven. That these poor people were reduced almost to starvation may

be seen by the fact that among 282 persons searched in Alsace shortly after their arrival only 1640 Rix Dollars were found, an average of less than 6 Rix

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In 1677 a young Englishman was in the Rhine Valley teaching a doctrine quite similar to that held by thousands of residents of the Upper and Lower Palatinate and Switzerland. On Mar. 4, 1681, King Charles signed a document giving to this young Englishman, none other than William Penn, a large tract of land in America. It was soon recalled by these Swiss that this was the same man who a few years before had been in the Rhine Valley. Soon too they learned that liberty of conscience existed in the land granted to Penn and that

free exercise of trades, occupations and religions was allowed. Therefore does it seem strange that Hans Herr burdened with conditions as existed sought to better his condition by emigrating to America? But the step he took required a stout heart. We today can little appreciate the meaning nor measure the trials of his emigration under conditions of travel at that Those from Switzerland took a boat down the Rhine to Rotterdam

passing 36 custom houses on the way and in many instances what small funds an emigrant had were required to satisfy these custom authorities so that when Rotterdam or Amsterdam was reached, he was penniless. That Hans Herr and those coming to America with him may have fared somewhat better is proven by the fact that land taken up when they arrived in Lancaster County was soon paid for by some of the party, however that they received some assistance is proven by the following highly interesting letter which also estab-

lishes the year of their coming. This letter is in the Amsterdam Archives.

Worthy and Beloved Friends: Besides wishing them all temporal and eternal welfare we have wanted to inform you how that we have safely received that financial aid which the dear friends out of their great kindness of heart have given toward our journey; and this kind contribution came very opportunely to us, because the journey

cost more than we had imagined. God bless the worthy friends in time and eternity; and whatever may be of good for the body and wholesome for the soul may the merciful God give them and continually be and remain their

the ship on the 24th, were well lodged and well cared for, and we have been informed we will set sail from here next Saturday or Sunday for Gravesend, and wait there for the Russian convoy. God be with us, and bring us to land in America as happily as here in England. Herewith we commend you to the merciful God; and, should we not see another in this life, may God permit us to see one another in eternity. Wherewith we commend them all to the merciful God (together with courteous greeting from us all) and remain your true friends.

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"London, the 27th of June, 1710."

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Looking further into the type of men Hans Herr represented the eulogy paid by the Historian MacCauley who visualized such settlers as honest, laborious men, whose ingenuity and diligence could not fail to enrich any land which should afford them an asylum, may well apply. So far as Lancaster

County is concerned time vindicated this statement. Another writer states "God sifted a whole Nation that he might send choice grain into the wilder-Let us pause a moment to fully appreciate these words. settlers were not restless soldiers of fortune attracted by the promise of plun-They were not traders attracted by the prospect of inordinate profit.

They were not poor people in the full sense of that term, seeking only to improve their economic condition. They were drawn from the very best elements of the European nations, the progressives of their day who had the courage of their convictions. They came to the savage wilderness to establish nomes for themselves and their children, where they would be free from the

cramping restrictions on religious faith and forms of worship that led many of them to leave their former homes. To establish a state founded on their ideals of religious and civic rights they braved the perils of the stormy Atlantic, the Redmen and privations of pioneer life. The very word "Settler" summons a vision of stern men and brave women, battling against nature's relentless

rigors, industrious, Godfearing, independent. How like this description was Hans Herr. Methinks I can see the pronounced lines of stern resolution on his face. His figure stalks across the pages of Lancaster County's settlement like a giant. It is silhouetted on the horizon. Permit me to quote on additional authority on the type of men who settled

Pennsylvania which states that in spite of their faults and shortcomings they were the peers of any race of men that set its feet on the Western Hemisphere. This is a high tribute but deserving. The colonization of Pennsylvania and others by men of this type, whether Puritan, Dutch, Quaker, Mennonite, Lutheran, Catholic or Reformed, the same stern qualities being in the bosom of each settler, was the inception of a major nation like which the annals of History record none for comparison.

The letter above quoted proves conclusively that Hans Herr came to

America in 1710 leaving Gravesend the latter part of June likely landing at Philadelphia about September 1st. Tradition says he and his party trudged through the forest from Philadelphia to the Pequea Creek on foot save a few

on horseback bringing what few utensils, tools and clothing their limited facilities would allow, taking refuge under an oak until the log cabin was completed. Hans Herr born in Switzerland September 17, 1639, was, it will be seen, 71 years of age by this time. He has been described of medium hight, with long grey hair curled under at the ends and parted in the middle, had heavy brows, dark hazel eyes, aqualine nose, mouth rather small with heavy lips, complexion florid, with full beard covering the face, the whole lighted by a countenance in which sweetness and austerity were gracefully blended. Clad in the coarsest homespun his feet shod with wood he at last arrived in the far-off land in which some strange prophecy told him he and his people would be prosperous and happy, however poor when arriving.

The cabin providing shelter for a few years was succeeded by the commonly called Hans Herr House still standing near Willow Street, Pa., but which was built in 1719 by Christian Herr, a son of Hans Herr, as the inscription on the lintel will testify. The peculiar architecture of this house has attracted many.

I now wish to present to you a few highly interesting bits of information not recorded in any history of Hans Herr's settlement that have come to my attention, and I have scanned all of which I have any knowledge of. One informant, Mr. David Huber, late of West Lampeter Township, father of John Huber and David H. Huber, who now owns the farm upon which the Christian Herr house stands, was born in 1822. When 16 years of age his one grandmother, aged 92 years, died, and, when 18 years of age, his other grandmother died, aged 92 years also. It will thus be seen these ladies were born in 1746 and 1748 respectively, their recollection extending almost to those years, and, associations being with some of the first settlers. Information from such sources is not tradition otherwise the following might be questioned.

years, and, associations being with some of the first settlers. Information from such sources is not tradition otherwise the following might be questioned.

1st. At the time of the settlement a run or stream of water flowed from near the Brick Church Cemetery northeastward towards the Big Spring. Most of this stream, through deforestation and cultivation of land, has been dried up. Many Indian wigwams were along this stream in 1710 and a number of years thereafter. A number of these Indians in bad and cold weather spent the night in the Christian Herr House which is still standing. The number may be inferred from the remark "the house was laying full of Indians."

2nd. Rupp in his history of Lancaster County, page 74, states that Martin

Mylin, son of Hans Mylin, was the first gunsmith within the limits of the county. As early as 1719 he erected a boring mill on what is known as Mylin's run. That this must have been close to the Hans Herr cabin is proven by the fact that my informant stated the Hans Herr colony had made a dam using logs for the dam breast some of which logs can still be located. This evidently furnished water power for the gun boring mill.

3rd. A house of the same peculiar architecture as that of the Christian Herr house was erected on the land now the farm of Frank Herr along the State Road or Highway. This house was removed many years ago. Another house of the same type was on the farm lately owned by J. Aldus Herr. This house was torn down about 60 years ago. Both of these houses were near the Christian Herr House

Christian Herr House.

4th. Hans Herr and his colony had no news from home for seven years. Again quoting Rupp, page 80, wherein he says, "After they had been scarcely

residue of some of their families." From this one is led to think a delegate was sent to Switzerland within a year or two after settlement. This I doubt in view of the above information, thinking it is not likely that within a year or two such action was taken due to they themselves not knowing how well they were seated in much less time than seven years, and for the further reason— When lots were cast as to who should make the trip to Europe and Hans Herr was selected causing heaviness of heart through being separated from their preacher Martin Kendig volunteered to go and was accepted. I believe age was an equal factor in deterring Hans Herr from going since he was 71 at the time of settlement and if the trip to Europe to bring friends was in 1717 as I believe is established, he was 78 years of age. It is not likely a man of those years at that time, considered such a trip favorably. When Martin Kendig arrived in Switzerland he informed his friends that "ich hap an hause von lauder niss bleck"—I have a house wholly of nut logs. This was a significant remark likely made to indicate the favorable latitude and fertile land wherein they settled. It is not likely this house aside of the Hans Herr cabin was built in time to make the trip to Switzerland the year or two next following their arrival. This "Niss Bleck" house was wholly of walnut logs.

fairly seated they thought of their old homes, their country and friends. They sighed for those whom they left for a season. They remembered them that were in bonds as bound with them and which suffered adversity and ere the earth began to yield a return in kindly fruit to their labors consultations were held and measures devised to send some one to their Vaterland to bring the

Rupp's History, from his informant, a Mr. Hildebrand, says the house was built in 1717 which date in itself confirms my claims that Martin Kendig did not return to Europe until seven years after their arrival in 1710, and lends strength to the statement that they had no news from home for this period of time, the walnut log house likely being fully completed early in 1717 before Martin Kendig's start. Rupp also states through the same informant the house was situated about 200 yards south of the Strasburg Borough line. In this he may have erred as my informant, Mr. David Huber, stated that hearing of the walnut log house, when they were demolishing it, went, out of curiosity, to the place it stood, which was on the farm now owned by Emanuel Harnish being the first farm west of Hildebrand's Hotel immediately south of Willow Street, Pa., and found that it had been constructed of walnut logs only. This house was removed in 1841 at which time Mr. Huber was in his 20th year.

Martin Kendig therefore built this house on his tract of land in the original survey, lying west of the Christian Herr tract and not on the 2,000-acre tract lying at the eastern end of the original survey, part of which extended south of the Strasburg Borough line. Further proof that Mr. Kendig did not return to Switzerland within a few years after 1710, and quite conclusive, lies in the fact that at a meeting of the Commissioners Sept. 10, 1712, in pursuance thereof, there was laid out to Martin Kendig besides 2,000 acres already confirmed and paid for, the like quantity of 2,000 acres toward the Susquehanna of which the General Surveyor has made a return. It will thus be seen that there was laid out for him which he paid for, 2,000 acres of land between the

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in the Province during 1712. The settlers locating around the Hans Herr colony prior to 1717 when Martin Kendig returned with more of their friends were others than Swiss and consequently did not bring news from their old home. Rupp states than Germans and French settled around the Herr colony. 6th. Martin Kendig returned in the fall of the year which I believe I have proven to be 1717 with a number of friends augmenting the colony to about 30 families. The following Winter Hans Herr's enlarged colony nearly starved

due to limited provisions for such numbers.

and heavy expense of emigration, having stated in the London letter the trip cost him and friends more than they imagined.

As time passes much interesting information of an historical nature is lost to posterity, but with the recording of these additional facts they may be pre-

7th. Hans Herr was a man of very limited means when settling in what is now Lancaster County. This likely is due to the conditions in Switzerland

served indefinitely.

Many may wonder how Hans Herr's colony were treated by the Indians.

Aside from the fact above mentioned that they frequented the Herr house, history records they mingled together in fishing and hunting, the Redmen

being exceedingly civil. This is no doubt due to the following—Peter Bezallion an Indian trader, informed the Governor of the Province the Conestoga Indians wished to see him. Accordingly, Gov. Gookin with a few others visited Conestoga June 18, 1711, within a year after Herr's settlement, and after presenting some powder and shot and trinkets to the Indians addressed them in part as follows: Gov. Penn doubts not but the same mutual friendship which has all along as brothers passed between the inhabitants of this Covernment.

has all along as brothers passed betwixt the inhabitants of this Government and you, will continue. He intends to present five belts of wampum to the Five Nations and one to you of Conestoga and requires your Friendship to the Palatines settled near Pequea. To this the Indians answered in part—they are extremely well pleased with the Governor's speech and as to the Palatines

they are in their opinion, safely seated.

In closing, after hearing of Hans Herr's trials, emigration and establishing a home in the forest among skulking Indians, I believe you have formed an opinion that he too was one of the choice grains sent into the wilderness to whom it is entirely fitting and proper these descendants pay reverent tribute through which unborn generations of this family may continue to appreciate their heritage and respect their ancestor whose suffering and trials led, through

faith, to establishing a home in America of which meaning through a retrospective view his descendants may the more appreciate. His death Oct. 11, 1725, in his 87th year, permitted him to see his family and colony safely seated in a land almost equal to that of prophecy. His body was laid to rest in a

plot of land set aside for burial purposes now a part of the Brick Church cemetery where,

The breezy call of incense breathing Morn
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The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn
No more shall rouse him from his lowly bed.

No farther will I seek his merits to disclose Or draw his frailties from their dread abode Where they alike in trembling hope repose The bosom of his Father and his God.

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on horseback bringing what few utensils, tools and clothing their limited facilities would allow, taking refuge under an oak until the log cabin was completed. Hans Herr born in Switzerland September 17, 1639, was, it will be seen, 71 years of age by this time. He has been described of medium hight, with long grey hair curled under at the ends and parted in the middle, had heavy brows, dark hazel eyes, aqualine nose, mouth rather small with heavy lips, complexion florid, with full beard covering the face, the whole lighted by a countenance in which sweetness and austerity were gracefully blended. Clad in the coarsest homespun his feet shod with wood he at last arrived in the far-off land in which some strange prophecy told him he and his people would be prosperous and happy, however poor when arriving.

The cabin providing shelter for a few years was succeeded by the commonly called Hans Herr House still standing near Willow Street, Pa., but which was built in 1719 by Christian Herr, a son of Hans Herr, as the inscription on the lintel will testify. The peculiar architecture of this house has attracted many.

I now wish to present to you a few highly interesting bits of information not recorded in any history of Hans Herr's settlement that have come to my attention, and I have scanned all of which I have any knowledge of. One informant, Mr. David Huber, late of West Lampeter Township, father of John Huber and David H. Huber, who now owns the farm upon which the Christian Herr house stands, was born in 1822. When 16 years of age his one grandmother, aged 92 years, died, and, when 18 years of age, his other grandmother died, aged 92 years also. It will thus be seen these ladies were born in 1746 and 1748 respectively, their recollection extending almost to those years, and, associations being with some of the first settlers. Information from such sources is not tradition otherwise the following might be questioned.

years, and, associations being with some of the first settlers. Information from such sources is not tradition otherwise the following might be questioned.

1st. At the time of the settlement a run or stream of water flowed from near the Brick Church Cemetery northeastward towards the Big Spring. Most of this stream, through deforestation and cultivation of land, has been dried up. Many Indian wigwams were along this stream in 1710 and a number of years thereafter. A number of these Indians in bad and cold weather spent the night in the Christian Herr House which is still standing. The number may be inferred from the remark "the house was laying full of Indians."

2nd. Rupp in his history of Lancaster County, page 74, states that Martin

Mylin, son of Hans Mylin, was the first gunsmith within the limits of the county. As early as 1719 he erected a boring mill on what is known as Mylin's run. That this must have been close to the Hans Herr cabin is proven by the fact that my informant stated the Hans Herr colony had made a dam using logs for the dam breast some of which logs can still be located. This evidently furnished water power for the gun boring mill.

3rd. A house of the same peculiar architecture as that of the Christian Herr house was erected on the land now the farm of Frank Herr along the State Road or Highway. This house was removed many years ago. Another house of the same type was on the farm lately owned by J. Aldus Herr. This house was torn down about 60 years ago. Both of these houses were near the Christian Herr House

Christian Herr House.

4th. Hans Herr and his colony had no news from home for seven years. Again quoting Rupp, page 80, wherein he says, "After they had been scarcely

residue of some of their families." From this one is led to think a delegate was sent to Switzerland within a year or two after settlement. This I doubt in view of the above information, thinking it is not likely that within a year or two such action was taken due to they themselves not knowing how well they were seated in much less time than seven years, and for the further reason— When lots were cast as to who should make the trip to Europe and Hans Herr was selected causing heaviness of heart through being separated from their preacher Martin Kendig volunteered to go and was accepted. I believe age was an equal factor in deterring Hans Herr from going since he was 71 at the time of settlement and if the trip to Europe to bring friends was in 1717 as I believe is established, he was 78 years of age. It is not likely a man of those years at that time, considered such a trip favorably. When Martin Kendig arrived in Switzerland he informed his friends that "ich hap an hause von lauder niss bleck"—I have a house wholly of nut logs. This was a significant remark likely made to indicate the favorable latitude and fertile land wherein they settled. It is not likely this house aside of the Hans Herr cabin was built in time to make the trip to Switzerland the year or two next following their arrival. This "Niss Bleck" house was wholly of walnut logs.

fairly seated they thought of their old homes, their country and friends. They sighed for those whom they left for a season. They remembered them that were in bonds as bound with them and which suffered adversity and ere the earth began to yield a return in kindly fruit to their labors consultations were held and measures devised to send some one to their Vaterland to bring the

Rupp's History, from his informant, a Mr. Hildebrand, says the house was built in 1717 which date in itself confirms my claims that Martin Kendig did not return to Europe until seven years after their arrival in 1710, and lends strength to the statement that they had no news from home for this period of time, the walnut log house likely being fully completed early in 1717 before Martin Kendig's start. Rupp also states through the same informant the house was situated about 200 yards south of the Strasburg Borough line. In this he may have erred as my informant, Mr. David Huber, stated that hearing of the walnut log house, when they were demolishing it, went, out of curiosity, to the place it stood, which was on the farm now owned by Emanuel Harnish being the first farm west of Hildebrand's Hotel immediately south of Willow Street, Pa., and found that it had been constructed of walnut logs only. This house was removed in 1841 at which time Mr. Huber was in his 20th year.

Martin Kendig therefore built this house on his tract of land in the original survey, lying west of the Christian Herr tract and not on the 2,000-acre tract lying at the eastern end of the original survey, part of which extended south of the Strasburg Borough line. Further proof that Mr. Kendig did not return to Switzerland within a few years after 1710, and quite conclusive, lies in the fact that at a meeting of the Commissioners Sept. 10, 1712, in pursuance thereof, there was laid out to Martin Kendig besides 2,000 acres already confirmed and paid for, the like quantity of 2,000 acres toward the Susquehanna of which the General Surveyor has made a return. It will thus be seen that there was laid out for him which he paid for, 2,000 acres of land between the

firmed and paid for, the like quantity of 2,000 acres toward the Susquehanna of which the General Surveyor has made a return. It will thus be seen that there was laid out for him which he paid for, 2,000 acres of land between the date of the original survey in 1710 and the above named grant. The last grant or second tract of 2,000 acres he asked by confirmed to Maria Warenbaer. Mr. Kendig again appeared before the Commissioners Oct. 7, 1712, in connection with the Maria Warenbuer land grant. These transactions show his presence in the Province during 1712. The settless locating around the Harry Hope.

in the Province during 1712. The settlers locating around the Hans Herr colony prior to 1717 when Martin Kendig returned with more of their friends were others than Swiss and consequently did not bring news from their old home. Rupp states than Germans and French settled around the Herr colony. 6th. Martin Kendig returned in the fall of the year which I believe I have proven to be 1717 with a number of friends augmenting the colony to about 30 families. The following Winter Hans Herr's enlarged colony nearly starved

due to limited provisions for such numbers.

and heavy expense of emigration, having stated in the London letter the trip cost him and friends more than they imagined.

As time passes much interesting information of an historical nature is lost to posterity, but with the recording of these additional facts they may be pre-

7th. Hans Herr was a man of very limited means when settling in what is now Lancaster County. This likely is due to the conditions in Switzerland

served indefinitely.

Many may wonder how Hans Herr's colony were treated by the Indians.

Aside from the fact above mentioned that they frequented the Herr house, history records they mingled together in fishing and hunting, the Redmen

being exceedingly civil. This is no doubt due to the following—Peter Bezallion an Indian trader, informed the Governor of the Province the Conestoga Indians wished to see him. Accordingly, Gov. Gookin with a few others visited Conestoga June 18, 1711, within a year after Herr's settlement, and after presenting some powder and shot and trinkets to the Indians addressed them in part as follows: Gov. Penn doubts not but the same mutual friendship which has all along as brothers passed between the inhabitants of this Covernment.

has all along as brothers passed betwixt the inhabitants of this Government and you, will continue. He intends to present five belts of wampum to the Five Nations and one to you of Conestoga and requires your Friendship to the Palatines settled near Pequea. To this the Indians answered in part—they are extremely well pleased with the Governor's speech and as to the Palatines

they are in their opinion, safely seated.

In closing, after hearing of Hans Herr's trials, emigration and establishing a home in the forest among skulking Indians, I believe you have formed an opinion that he too was one of the choice grains sent into the wilderness to whom it is entirely fitting and proper these descendants pay reverent tribute through which unborn generations of this family may continue to appreciate their heritage and respect their ancestor whose suffering and trials led, through

faith, to establishing a home in America of which meaning through a retrospective view his descendants may the more appreciate. His death Oct. 11, 1725, in his 87th year, permitted him to see his family and colony safely seated in a land almost equal to that of prophecy. His body was laid to rest in a

plot of land set aside for burial purposes now a part of the Brick Church cemetery where,

The breezy call of incense breathing Morn
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw built shed

The breezy call of incense breathing Morn
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw built shed
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn
No more shall rouse him from his lowly bed.

No farther will I seek his merits to disclose Or draw his frailties from their dread abode Where they alike in trembling hope repose The bosom of his Father and his God. Author: Martin, C. H.

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