

Kocherthal 's 1709 map of Carolina

<http://blog.ncmaps.org/index.php/kocherthal-1709-map-carolina/>

May 15, 2019

A very cursory historical background on Kocherthal and the Palatines

Before we get to Kocherthal's 1709 map of Carolina, a very brief historical background is in order. The Palatine region of western Germany was devastated repeatedly by wars in the 17th Century and early 18th Century. Famine and poverty inflicted by constant war are frequently cited as reasons for emigration of German Palatines during this period.

An unusually harsh winter of 1708-09, the coldest in Europe in the past 500 years, exacerbated famine conditions and may have prompted the Palatines to consider relocation.¹ If decades of war and famine had not yet instigated mass migration, what encouraged the Palatines to finally overcome inertia in 1709? The major catalyst for mass emigration of Palatines to the Netherlands or England and eventually to North America, it turns out, was a small "Golden book". It received its nickname from the gilt lettering of the title page and/or cover.

The title of this book has been translated into English as "Extensive and Detailed Report of the Famous Land Carolina, Situated in the English America."² The "Golden Book" was authored by German Lutheran minister Joshua Kocherthal (née [Josua Harrsch](#)), who based its contents on earlier Carolina promotional tracts published in London.

There are excellent options for further reading on the history of the German Palatines, some of which are on line. Here are just a few:

Chapters 1-3 of *Christoph von Graffenried's Account of the Founding of New Bern, edited with an Historical Introduction and an English Translation*, by Vincent H. Todd... in cooperation with Julius Goebel, available [on line here](#).

Becoming German, the 1709 Palatine Migration to New York, by Philip Otterness; a preview is available on line [via Google Books](#).

The October 2008 issue of [Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage](#), the quarterly journal of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, was devoted entirely to all things Kocherthal.³ The contents include:

- Kocherthal: A Tricentennial Commemoration of the Palatine Migration of 1708/1709
- The Ecclesiastical Situation in the Kraichgau: Two 1699 Letters from Pastor Josua Harrsch to Superintendent Johann Philipp Schlosser
- Who Was Kocherthal and What Happened to His Party of 1708?
- Extensive and Detailed Report of the Famous Land Carolina, Situated in the English America [1708/1709], by Kocherthal [Josua Harrsch] (English translation of Kocherthal's "Golden Book").
- A Harrsch/Kocherthal Bibliography

Knittle, Walter Allen. 1936. *Early eighteenth century Palatine emigration: a British government redemptioner project to manufacture naval stores* (multiple more recent printings, none readable on line).

An excellent synopsis on Kocherthal's book and map was recently published on Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps, Inc. web site. You can read that by [clicking here](#).

How about the map?

Kocherthal's book proved quite popular; three editions were published in 1709.⁴ Kocherthal had hoped to reproduce two English maps of Carolina⁵, but had been unable to do so due to "certain coincidences and hindrances."⁶ Kocherthal referred readers to a "general map by Niclaus Visscher, the title of which is: [Nova Tabula Geographica complectens Borealiorem Americae Partem &c](#)"⁷ Kocherthal added, "The special map, however, will be produced by Mr. Danckert himself, God willing, and thus be available at the coming fair in Frankfurt."⁸ The "special map", a small map of Carolina and Virginia, was included in the third edition of Kocherthal's 1709 book, and may be contained in at least some copies of the second edition.⁹ The map bears no title and no engraver or printer imprints (Figure 1).

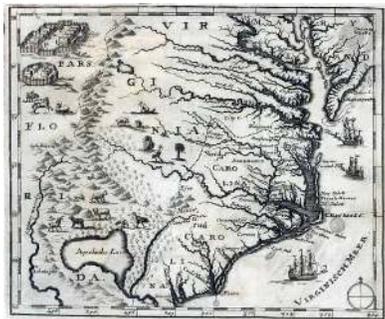


Figure 1. Untitled map of Carolina and Virginia, 1709. Original in the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University: <https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/s/m977y5> looks closely,

It is obvious that this small map was primarily derived from the same region on Visscher's larger map, *Nova Tabula*... But if one looks closer, one will find additional place names in Carolina. Were these supplied by Kocherthal? Interestingly, one surviving example of Visscher's *Nova Tabula*..., held by the Royal Danish Library, may be the exact copy used as a template for the engraver of Kocherthal's map. This particular copy of *Nova Tabula*... has manuscript additions in Carolina that match the new place names on Kocherthal's map (Figure 2).



Figure 2.
 Left: Detail from Visscher's *Nova Tabula*.
 Middle: Detail from the copy of Visscher's *Nova Tabula* in the Royal Danish Library, showing manuscript annotations incorporated into the Kocherthal map.
 Right: Detail from Kocherthal's map

Curiously, not only were several manuscript additions in Virginia on the Danish Royal Library's copy of *Nova Tabula*... not included on the Kocherthal map, but many of the engraved place names in Virginia on *Nova Tabula*... were omitted on Kocherthal's map (Figure 3). Was this an oversight? Lack of time and/or money for the engraver? Or, could it have been a conscious effort to make Carolina look more civilized and inviting to potential European emigrants? After all, the book was written to promote immigration to Carolina, not to Virginia.

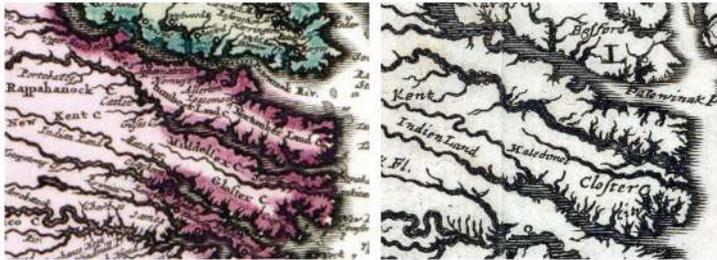


Figure 3.
 Left: Virginia detail from Visscher's *Nova Tabula*, showing numerous place names.
 Right: Virginia detail from Kocherthal's map, showing significantly fewer place names.

As on many maps of the 1680-1720 period, there is complete confusion over the two Carolina Charles Towns, i.e. the earlier and transient settlement on the Cape Fear River, and the latter more permanent settlement in South Carolina.¹⁰ As a result, the river nomenclature is a mess. Charles Town (Carls-Thon) is shown just above Cape Fear on the *Ashley* River! In real life, the Cooper and Wateree rivers are north of the Ashley River. Since the Ashley River empties at Cape Fear on the Kocherthal map, the Cooper and Wateree rivers had to be placed even further north, with the Wateree emptying into Pamlico Sound! Meanwhile, back in South Carolina, there is additional confusion. The Wando River, which empties into the Cooper River near Charleston in real life, is shown north of the Santee River, in the approximate location of the otherwise omitted Pee Dee and Waccamaw Rivers. There is no Charles Town in South Carolina on the Kocherthal map.

Also of interest on the [Danish Royal Library's copy of Visscher's *Nova Tabula*](#) is a manuscript map of the Carolina coastal plain added in a blank region of the ocean at the lower right. This provides a far more accurate rendering of this region than is seen on Visscher's engraving or on the Kocherthal map. Given the differences in ink color, it is possible that this manuscript map and the manuscript notations on the engraved portion of Visscher's map may not have been done at the same time.



Click the bunny and zoom in on all the critters!

Finally, one cannot leave the [Kocherthal map](#) without taking a moment to appreciate the wonderful variety of wildlife depicted, more than are shown on other maps of this period.

Also note the Native Americans, enclosed in palisaded villages and safely tucked far inland. Nothing to fear here!

Kocherthal's book and map are extremely rare. Until recent digitization efforts by many libraries (a special big THANK YOU! to the John Carter Brown Library), the only on line illustration of the map was in Ashley Baynton-Williams's excellent Carolina cartobibliography.¹¹ The map is listed (map 149), but not illustrated, in Cumming's *The Southeast in Early Maps*. Until recently, no copy had appeared on the market in the past 100 years.¹² This copy of the map is bound with a 72 page (second edition) version of Kocherthal's tract, and is bound with three other tracts and a map pertaining to Pennsylvania.

Any corrections and/or supplementary information would be greatly appreciated. Please use the "What's on your mind?" comment box below.

Comments

1. **Tom**
 May 27, 2019

Thank you.