

The Forefathers of North Carolina Pioneer Andreas Killian

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Bonded serfdom addendum

In fief was not outright ownership, but was holding land at the pleasure of the overlord, giving the overlord part of the revenues and providing men in case of military conflict. Most of the peasants who worked the land were *Leibeigene* (**bonded** serfs). A *Leibeigene* labored on the land in exchange for his family's subsistence and protection. In Bavaria, 70% of the farmers were *Leibeigene* and were virtually the personal property of the landholder. They could neither leave the land, nor marry without the landowner's permission. Land owned and operated by the church and its representatives was managed in a similar way. **Bonded serfdom was inherited from a female to her children. Bonded serfs needed permission to permanently leave the realm of their lord and permission was usually granted for a fee. If the serf moved to a different realm, some rulers demanded that settlers rendered themselves into local bonded serfdom and others did not. Bonded serfdom gave the lord the right to part of the estate after the serf's death and this created dissent.** The Dukedom of Bavaria finally abolished *Leibeigene* in 1783 and it was written into the new kingdom's constitution in 1808. The state of Württemberg later abolished it in 1817.