

## **JOHANN CHRISTOPH SAUER: PIONEER OF THE GERMAN-AMERICAN PRESS**

### **Hans Leaman**

Johann Christoph Sauer (born ca. February 2, 1695 in Ladenburg, Electoral Palatinate; died September 25, 1758 in Germantown, PA) was the most active publisher of German-language print in colonial America. Through his publishing work, based in Germantown, Pennsylvania, he became the mouthpiece for many German immigrants' opinions on the political and religious controversies of the mid-eighteenth century. Contemporaries recognized that the path to winning the political support of German-speaking settlers in the mid-Atlantic colonies ran through his printing press, and Germans on both sides of the Atlantic looked to him as a prime conduit of information between Europe and America.

Sauer imported the first set of German type to America, edited the most successful German-language newspaper and almanac in the colonies, and published the first European-language Bible in America. The first editions of many German-American churches' hymnals and devotional books also bear his press's imprint. Both his son and grandson, who bore his name, continued his major printing projects after his death and remained prominent voices for sectarian German-Americans during the French and Indian War and the American Revolution.

### **Family and Ethnic Background**

Sauer was born into a Reformed pastor's family in the Electoral Palatine town of Ladenburg, situated along the Neckar River halfway between Heidelberg and Mannheim. His father, Johann Christian Sauer, and mother, Anna Christine, had him baptized in the parish church on February 2, 1695. He had at least one older brother, one older sister, and one older step-brother from his father's first marriage. Sauer's father had studied theology at Marburg and took up a post as pastor and schoolmaster in Ladenburg in 1681. Soon after Sauer was born, the family moved to Feudenheim, closer to Mannheim, where Johann Christian pastored until his death six years later in 1701. It is uncertain where Sauer spent the rest of his childhood, but by the age of 18 he was living in Schwarzenau, in the County of Wittgenstein, and working as a young tailor. The presence of a Sauer

- 1 Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer, Pennsylvania-German Printer: His Youth in Germany and Later Relationships with Europe," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 82 (1958): 316-40, here 319-23.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 222-23; Hans Schneider, *German Radical Pietism*, trans. Gerald T. MacDonald (Lanham, MD, 2007), 89-97, 107-12; Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Was Christopher Sauer a Dunker?" *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 93 (1969): 383-91.
- 3 Sauer to Brethren and Friends (Germantown, Dec. 1, 1724), handwritten copy, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek, Göttingen, Cod. Ms. Hist. 821, 10r-18v, here 15r, translation at R. W. Kelsey, "An Early Description of Pennsylvania. Letter of Christopher Sower, written in 1724, Describing Conditions in Philadelphia and Vicinity, and the Sea Voyage from Europe," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 45 (1921): 243-54, here 249.
- 4 News from Sauer was often first published in Germany in the radical Pietists' religious journal *Geistliche Fama, Mittheilend Einige Neuere Nachrichten von Göttlichen Erweckungen* (Berleburg, 1730-1744). Sauer, in turn, frequently reprinted material from *Geistliche Fama* in his early publications.
- 5 Daß Leben deß Herrn Charles Hector Marquis St. George de Marsay von ihm selber beschrieben nebst dem Leben der mit ihm vermählten Fräulein Clara Elisabeth von Callenberg, Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland, Düsseldorf, BM 4/1, 294, quoted in Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer," 324. On de Marsay and his wife, see Schneider, *German Radical Pietism*, 95-97.

family in the records of two nearby towns, Laasphe and Berleburg, has led historians to posit that the widowed Anna Christine moved to Wittgenstein with her children soon after her husband's death. Around 1720 Sauer married Marie Christine Gross (née Gruber), the widow of a Reformed pastor, and the couple moved to Laasphe, where they welcomed the birth of their only child, Johann Christoph II, on September 26, 1721.<sup>1</sup>

During the years that Sauer lived in Wittgenstein, it had become a center of refuge for radical Pietists like Ernst Christoph Hochmann von Hochenau (1670-1721) and Alexander Mack (1679-1735), who founded the Schwarzenau Brethren in 1708. (Because of their practice of adult immersion baptism, the Brethren became known as "New Baptists" or "Dunkers," and, in colonial America, as "German Baptists".) Sauer had personal contacts with Mack in Schwarzenau, and the absence of Sauer's son from the baptism rolls of the local parishes likely indicates that Sauer had become a separatist by 1721. There is no record that Sauer ever became a member of the Brethren, but his sympathies toward the group were apparent in his writings, and his son eventually became a bishop for the German Baptists in Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup> Sauer's contacts within the networks of German Pietists and other sectarians proved integral to his later printing career.

In autumn 1724, Sauer left the German lands with his wife and son, arriving in Philadelphia on November 1. Writing to friends in Wittgenstein one month after his arrival, Sauer recounted the journey favorably and described Pennsylvania as a "very good and blessed land, like an earthly Paradise."<sup>3</sup> ("... so ist dieses Land für vielen einen andern Ländern ein sehr gutes und gesegnetes Land, und gleichsam ein weltliches Paradies . . .") This would be the first of many dispatches from Sauer that gained a wide audience among the sectarians of his home region.<sup>4</sup> One contemporary in Wittgenstein, the French mystic Charles Hector Marquis St. George de Marsay, recorded in his diary in 1725 that at least one hundred persons from the area had resolved to leave for Pennsylvania after learning from Sauer's letters that "One could live there as a good Christian in solitude, as one pleased," and that if "one wants to work a little, especially craftsmen . . . then one could earn his livelihood with abundance."<sup>5</sup> Toward the end of his life, Sauer claimed that his letters from Germantown, describing the "civil and religious liberty" that he found there, had been "printed and reprinted" in Germany and

“provoked many a thousand people” to emigrate to the Pennsylvania colony.<sup>6</sup>

As for earning his own livelihood, Sauer set his tailoring craft largely aside once he was in Germantown and instead began making clocks and repairing pots and pans. He explained to friends in Wittgenstein that tailoring in Pennsylvania required working in people’s homes rather than in his own shop, necessitating too much travel from Germantown to find enough business. Marie Christine also combed wool to provide the family with some supplemental income. Wages, Sauer estimated, were two to four times higher in Germantown than they were in the German lands, and a day laborer or artisan without any debts could buy one hundred acres and a “soundly built” stone house within two or three years.<sup>7</sup>

For Sauer it took less than two years to buy his own property. In 1726, Sauer purchased a fifty-acre farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, another area where many sectarian German immigrants were settling. But a significant family change led him to abandon farming and return to Germantown in 1731: Marie Christine left Sauer and their young son to pursue a contemplative life alongside Conrad Beissel (1691-1768) in the woods of northeastern Lancaster County. Beissel, initially a leader of the German Baptists in Lancaster County, had split from the church after he began advocating celibacy and worship on the Sabbath. As one of Beissel’s earliest followers, Marie helped him form the religious community of the Seventh-Day Baptist Brethren in nearby Ephrata and eventually became the assistant prioress of the “Sisterhood” there, taking on the name “Sister Marcella.” It was not unusual for married partners to join the Ephrata community and commit themselves to celibacy. But Sauer distrusted Beissel’s unique theology and accused him of displaying messianic tendencies and a “mercurial” spirit.<sup>8</sup> Even so, Sauer’s connections to the Ephrata community proved very beneficial: when he took up printing, the Seventh-Day Baptist Brethren provided him with his earliest contractual work, and after the Brethren developed their own print shop in the mid-1540s, he partnered with them on several projects. Marie Christine returned to her family in Germantown in November 1744 and died eight years later on Dec. 14, 1752.<sup>9</sup>

When Sauer gave up farming in Lancaster County, he continued to pursue clock-making and added a number of other trades. A letter from one acquaintance in Pennsylvania to another in Germany reported that Sauer had opened an apothecary shop,

6 Sauer to Gov. Robert Hunter Morris (Germantown, Mar. 15, 1755), Cassell Collection, Juniata College, Huntington, PA, MS 95, printed at Martin Grove Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Mount Morris, IL, 1899), 377, and Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., *The Brethren in Colonial America* (Elgin, IL, 1967), 32.

7 Sauer to friends and acquaintances at Schwarzenau, Berleburg, Laasphe and Christianseck (Germantown, Aug. 1, 1725), Fürstliches Archiv zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg, Bad Berleburg, K 36, translation at Donald F. Durnbaugh, “Two Early Letters from Germantown,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 84 (1960): 219-33, here 229, 230, 232; Durnbaugh, “Christopher Sauer,” 324.

8 In 1739, Sauer wrote a pamphlet to air his objections to Beissel’s self-image. *Ein abgenöthigter Bericht, Oder: Zum öfftern begehrte Antwort. . .* (Germantown: Christoph Sauer, 1739). See also Jeff Bach, *Voices of the Turtledoves: The Sacred World of Ephrata* (University Park, PA, 2002), 42, 85, 111. The controversy between Sauer and Beissel is well-documented in Julius Friedrich Sachse, *The German Sectarrians of Pennsylvania: A Critical and Legendary History of the Ephrata Cloister and the Dunkers* (Philadelphia, 1899-1900), 328-44.

9 Brumbaugh, *German Baptist Brethren*, 352-53.



**Figure 1: Contemporary photograph of the Saal (meetinghouse) and Saron (communal residence for the monastic sisters) at the Seventh-Day Baptist Brethren's Ephrata Cloister near Ephrata, Pennsylvania. The Saal is on the left-hand side of the image and the Saron on the right-hand side. Used under Creative Commons.**

performed bloodletting and surgeries,<sup>10</sup> erected a lathe shop next to his home where he made spinning-wheels and cabinets, and built a glazier shop where he made frames and lead grooves. These ventures, along with the sale of his farmland in Lancaster County, apparently earned him a comfortable income: by 1739, soon after he

began printing, he had built along the main road in Germantown a two-story stone house, which was described as “very spacious.” In the absence of his wife, he paid an elderly woman to keep house for him and his teenage son.<sup>11</sup>

By his last decade, his reputation as “a conscientious and ingenious man” (“*ein ehrlicher gewissenhafter schickter Mann*”) was well-established on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>12</sup> As one of the leading journals of ecclesiastical history in Germany introduced him in 1751, “He went to America as a tailor, and has become printer, apothecary, surgeon, botanist, maker of small and large clocks, cabinetmaker, bookbinder, editor of newspapers . . . maker of lead and wire, paper-maker, and so forth.”<sup>13</sup>

### Business Development

Sauer’s desire to become a printer merged his mechanical know-how with his religious interests. In the decade before he established his printing press in 1738, he had already become tied into a network of religious book-dealing that spanned the Atlantic. In 1729 he wrote to Christoph Schütz (1689-1750), the prolific hymn-writer for the Inspirationist community based in Homburg vor der Höhe (which became the forerunner to the Amana Church Society in America), to ask if he might send some of his hymnals or other religious books

10 An apothecary recipe book that once belonged to Sauer is held at the Abraham H. Cassell Collection (Collection 1610), Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Ms. 22.

11 Christoph Schütz to Heinrich Ehrenfried Luther (Homburg vor der Höhe, Oct. 3, 1740), printed in *Die Egenolff-Luthersche Schriftgiesserei in Frankfurt am Main und ihre geschäftlichen Verbindungen mit den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Frankfurt am Main, 1926), 36-37 (quoting a letter from a fellow correspondent in Springfield Manor, Pennsylvania, Oct. 6, 1739), partial translation at Edward W. Hocker, *The Sower Printing House of Colonial Times* (Norristown, PA, 1948), 17-18.

12 Ibid., 36.

13 “Copey eines merkwürdigen Schreiben des Herrn Sauers in America,” *Acta*

*historico-ecclesiastica* 15 (Weimar, 1751): 210-26, translation at Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America*, 120. This

introduction preceded the publication of a letter that Sauer had sent to a Frankfurt book dealer.

for poor German immigrants who were not getting sufficient exposure to spiritual literature. At the time, there was almost no German-language printing in America. Only the year before did the Philadelphia printers Andrew Bradford (1686-1742) and Benjamin Franklin (1705/1706-1790) begin to publish the first German prints in America, but between 1728 and 1738 they managed to put out fewer than a dozen German books and hymnals.<sup>14</sup> Bradford also printed a German-language almanac between 1730 and 1732,<sup>15</sup> and Benjamin Franklin put out a short-lived German newspaper in 1732.<sup>16</sup> Both used Roman (*antiqua*) type, which most Germans were unaccustomed to reading. Schütz responded to Sauer's petition by sending over eight hundred pounds of Bibles and other devotional works at his own expense, which Sauer then distributed to the poor for free or, for families with some means, for a nominal cost that went towards further charitable endeavors. As church organizations in the German lands received more petitions from the colonies for donated religious literature, Sauer became a regular middleman for distributing the books.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, Sauer also set his sights on a more permanent solution to the shortage of German-language books in the colonies. He expressed to Schütz his desire to found a small press in Germantown to address what he identified as the two great needs of German colonists: theological matter and home remedies for illnesses. If he could obtain a set of German type, he wrote, he envisioned printing an almanac that would include reading material on both topics.<sup>18</sup>

Sauer had no training in printing, a profession that men usually joined only after serving long years of apprenticeship. That this German custom was no impediment to taking up the trade at will, however, was one of the aspects of American life that Sauer most appreciated: in one of his first letters to the German lands, he listed first among the advantages of life in Pennsylvania the fact that "there are neither guilds nor burdens from the authorities."<sup>19</sup> To get his start as a printer, he turned to his Pietist connections in the German lands, writing in 1735 to Gotthilf August Francke (1696-1769), whose father — the renowned Pietist theologian, Biblical scholar, and philanthropist, August Herman Francke (1663-1727) — had run a printing press in Halle in order to disseminate inexpensive Bibles. Sauer sought Francke's help in purchasing and exporting a set of Gothic (*Fraktur*) type. Francke expressed

15 *Der Teutsche Pilgrim: Mitbringende Einen Sitten-Calender . . .* (Philadelphia, 1730-1732).

16 *Philadelphische Zeitung* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, May 6-June 24, 1732).

17 Schütz to Luther (Oct. 3, 1740), at Egenolff-*Luthersche Schriftgiesserei*, 35; Robert E. Cazden, *A Social History of the German Book Trade in America to the Civil War I* (Columbia, SC, 1984), 3-6.

18 *Ibid.*, 36.

14 Karl John Richard Arndt & Reimer C. Eck, eds., *The First Century of German*

*Language Printing in the United States of America I: 1728-1807*, comp. by

Gerd-J. Bötte and Werner Tannhof (Göttingen, 1989), 1-6.

19 Sauer to Friends (Aug. 1, 1725), at Durnbaugh, "Two Early Letters," 228.

20 Gottlieb August Francke to Friedrich Michael Ziegenhagen (1735) (referring to a letter from Sauer to Francke, dated June 15, 1735), printed in W.J. Mann und B.M. Schmucker, eds., *Nachrichten von den Vereinigten Deutschen Evangelisch Lutherischen Gemeinen in Nord-America, absonderlich in Pensylvanien*, 2 vols. (Allentown, PA, 1886-1895), 1:58-59, also quoted in Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer," 325-26. On Francke and Ziegenhagen's desire to keep Pietist printing tightly controlled from Halle, see Thomas Müller-Bahlke, "Communication at Risk: The Beginnings of the Halle Correspondence with the Pennsylvania Lutherans," in Hartmut Lehmann, Hermann Wellenreuther & Renate Wilson, eds., *In Search of Peace and Prosperity: New German Settlement in Eighteenth-Century Europe and America* (University Park, PA, 2000), 139-55.

21 Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer," 328; *Egenolff-Lutherische Schriftgiesserei*, 30.

22 Sauer to Heinrich Ehrenfried Luther (Germantown, Oct. 11, 1740), in *Egenolff-Lutherische Schriftgiesserei*, 39; *The Pennsylvania Town and Countrymen's Almanac 1755* (Germantown, 1754), 40.

23 Comp. Patrick Erben, "William Rittenhouse," in *IE*.

24 In Franklin's account book for 1738, he made entries for two extensions of credit totalling more than £96 (approximately \$12,500 in 2011 dollars) to Conrad Weiser for the purchase of 178 reams of paper, including 52 reams from Genoa. George Simpson Eddy, ed., *Account Books kept by Benjamin Franklin*, 2 vols. (New York, 1928), 1:52; cited in Paul A. W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: Friend to Colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia, 1945), 103; see also Sachse, *German Sectarians*, 319-320, 326-328; John Samuel Flory, *Literary Activity of the German Baptist Brethren in the Eighteenth Century* »

"doubt whether a printing press in the West Indies would be of any particular value" ("... so zweifle ich auch, daß durch eine Drückerei in Westindien sonderlicher Nutzen geschafft werden möchte"),<sup>20</sup> but Sauer found interest three years later from individuals in Frankfurt am Main, the other main center of German Pietist activity. With Christoph Schütz's mediation, Sauer successfully petitioned Dr. Heinrich Ehrenfried Luther (1700-1770), the owner of a Frankfurt type foundry, to ship five to six hundredweight of type in the autumn of 1738. Although Sauer discovered that some of it was defective, leading to some difficulties in his first publications, Luther sent replacements and, in 1740, a set of *antiqua* type as well.<sup>21</sup>

While Sauer needed to procure his type from Germany, he did not need to import a press. Instead, he put his cabinet and clock-making skills to work to build his own. He also employed his knowledge of chemistry to mix his own lampblack for the press, which he later marketed to the public as "Sauer's Curious Pennsylvania Ink-Powder."<sup>22</sup> Maintaining a sufficient supply of paper proved to be the most troublesome piece of the printing process. Andrew Bradford's family had a long-standing business relationship with the Rittenhouse paper mill, giving him first option to buy paper for his press.<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Franklin, on the other hand, had a close relationship with Dutch immigrant entrepreneur William Dewees (ca. 1677-1745), the only other local source of paper in 1738. In order to complete his first book, a large hymnal for the Seventh-Day Baptist Brethren called the *Zionitischer Weyrauch-Hügel, oder: Myrrhen Berg*, Sauer obtained the paper from Franklin at wholesale. But the cost of the paper was so high that the colonial diplomat Conrad Weiser (1696-1760), who had joined the Ephrata community, had to travel to Philadelphia to make the purchase on Sauer's behalf. Franklin, who had printed Ephrata's earlier hymnals, was willing to extend credit to Weiser for the large purchase, but not to Sauer. The hymnal was printed, in part, with paper that Franklin imported from Genoa, and since Franklin himself had to pay cash for the imported paper, he likely needed assurance that payment would follow more quickly than Sauer was able to provide.<sup>24</sup> By 1744, however, Franklin accepted Sauer's credit, and Sauer took out smaller orders of paper from him each year before paying his

» (Elgin, IL, 1908), 60-61, 78. My thanks to James N. Green, Librarian of the Library Company of Philadelphia, for directing me to Eddy's *Account Books* and for describing

Franklin's paper trade. Green has also alerted me to a strong documentary link between Weiser's paper purchase and the *Zionitischer Weyrauch-Hügel*: within the holdings

of the Library Company of Philadelphia is an uncut, unfolded sheet from the hymnal bearing the distinctive watermark of Franklin's Genoa paper manufacturer.

account in full in 1748.<sup>25</sup> Like Franklin, Sauer frequently advertised for rags from his readers, which he gave to local mills to produce paper at a discount. To gain more control over his paper supply, Sauer's son eventually built his own paper mill on the Schuylkill River.<sup>26</sup>

Through his choice of publications, Sauer wedded his religious convictions with astute identification of the kind of reading that many Pennsylvania German immigrants were seeking. In his correspondence with Dr. Luther, Sauer wrote of his press as a type of religious and humanitarian mission. He held strong opinions that his press should not be used to create mere diversions for the reading public, but rather provide texts that would be for the "glory of God and the physical or eternal good of my neighbors." "Whatever does not meet these standards," he claimed, "I will not print . . . I am happier when I can distribute something of value among the people for a small price, than if I had a large profit without a good conscience."<sup>27</sup>

These standards appear to have guided both the content of his publications and his business model. His early printing projects were almost entirely religious in character and predominantly oriented toward radical Pietism and Anabaptism. The first publication to roll off Sauer's press was a German translation of a religious broadside by Benjamina Padley (1658/1659-1687), a female Quaker prophet from England. Establishing a pattern that can be traced for many of his publications, the translation was reprinted one year later in the Rhineland, indicating that Sauer's press served as an important link in the transmission of ideas between English and German Pietist groups on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>28</sup>

Sauer's first two books soon followed — an "ABC Book" likely written by the local Mennonite schoolteacher, Christopher Dock (1738),<sup>29</sup> and the hymnal for the Ephrata community, including many of Conrad Beissel's original works (1738-39). Soon other German churches came to Sauer to print their own collections of hymns. Sauer is thus the publisher of the first American hymnal for the Mennonites and Amish (*Ausbund*, 1742), the Moravians (*Hirten Lieder von Bethlehem*, 1742), the German Baptists (*Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel der Kinder Zions*, 1744), the German Reformed (*Geistreiche Lieder*, 1752), and the Lutherans (*Vollstaendiges Marburger Gesang-buch*, 1757). His son also completed the publication of the Schwenkfelders' first American hymnal (*Neu-Eingerichtetes Gesang-Buch*, 1762).

Additionally, Sauer supplied many of the doctrinal and devotional texts most valued by the German churches: for the Lutherans and Reformed,

25 Eddy, *Account Books*, 2:113-14.

26 Eddy, *Account Books*, 2:16-18; Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 84.

27 Sauer to Luther (Oct. 11, 1740), in *Egenolff-Luthersche Schrifftgiesserei*, 39; quoted in Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer," 329.

28 Sauer's edition, however, named the author as a male: Benjamin Padlin, *Eine ernstliche Ermahnung, an Junge und Alte: zu einer angeheuchelten Prüfung ihres Hertzens und Zustandes* (Germantown, 1738).

29 [Ein ABC Buch bey allen Religionen ohne billigen Anstoß zu gebrauchen (Germantown: Christoph Sauer, 1738) (no known copies survive)], as advertised in *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender 1739* (Germantown, 1738), 23; Arndt & Eck, *German Language Printing*, 6; Walter Klinefeldter, *The ABC Books of the Pennsylvania Germans* (Breinigsville, PA, 1973), 10-14; Cazden, *German Book Trade 1*, 269.



**Figure 2: Frontispiece of Sauer's *Hoch-Deutsch-Americanischer Kalender* for the year 1747. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.**

he published the first American editions of Luther's *Small Catechism* (1744) and the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1748); for Pietists, he printed texts by theologians like Gerhard Tersteegen and John Wesley (1744, 1747, 1748); for Anabaptists, he published the martyr Thomas von Imbroich's *Confessio* (1751) and works by Georg Frell and Christian Hoburg (1748); and for all groups he reprinted German translations of classics like Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* (1742, 1749, 1750) and part of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1755).<sup>30</sup>

Sauer also quickly implemented his plans to publish an annual almanac, which he titled *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender*. First published in the fall of 1738 for the upcoming year, it predictably included the aspects and phases of the moon and plan-

ets, times of sunrise and sunset, general weather forecasts, practical advice for using herbs as medicinal aids, dates for court sessions and market fairs in the mid-Atlantic colonies, historical anecdotes, and, eventually, blank pages for each month where farmers could keep their accounts. Beginning with twenty-four pages, the almanacs gradually grew in size until they featured forty-eight pages in 1750. The almanacs initially cost nine pence (approximately \$5.25 in 2011 dollars),<sup>31</sup> but after 1748 Sauer also offered a two-colored version for one shilling each (approximately \$6 in 2011 dollars).<sup>32</sup> The almanacs received a loyal following among German-speaking farmers throughout the American colonies, reaching far beyond the Pennsylvania sectarian communities who made up the core market for his book publishing. By the time his son published the

30 See bibliography of Sauer's prints at Anna Kathryn Oller, "Christopher Saur, Colonial Printer: A Study of the Publications of the Press, 1738-1758," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1963, 288-302.

31 Colonial-era currency figures are, unless stated otherwise, in pounds Pennsylvania. Conversions to US Dollar values are based on the relevant average monthly or annual exchange rates between the pound Pennsylvania and British pound Sterling provided in John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook* (Chapel Hill, 1978), 183-86, 315-17. Relative 2011 values for pounds Sterling were then calculated through the website »

» "Measuring Worth" (<http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare>), using the "purchasing power" or "historic standard of living" value derived from the pound Sterling's "retail price index." Conversions from pound Sterling to 2011 US Dollar values were based on the average exchange rate for 2011 of

1.541 US Dollars per GB Pound. Financial historians, however, continue to debate the comparative purchasing power of colonial currency in light of standard of living differences between the colonies and Great Britain. For an introduction to the debates and evidentiary difficulties, see Ron Michener,

"Money in the American Colonies," in Robert Whaples, ed., *Economic History Association Encyclopedia*, Oct. 18, 2013, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/money-in-the-american-colonies> (accessed Dec. 12, 2013).

32 Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 19-21, 23.

last issue in 1777, the almanac had an annual circulation of almost ten thousand.<sup>33</sup>

In his first almanac, Sauer addressed public speculation that he would use his new press for a newspaper. At that time he rejected the idea, writing that fixation on the news was a waste of “precious time” and that such periodicals were often filled with falsehoods. (“. . . daß mir gar nicht gesinnet ist, die edle Zeit solcher Gestalt zu verderben.”) Instead, he preferred to publish broadsides and distribute them gratuitously at churches and other public places when some “use” might arise for rapid dissemination of the news.<sup>34</sup> But by the following year he acquiesced, announcing in the *Calender* his plans to begin running “a collection of useful and remarkable events . . . in these times of wars and rumors of wars.”<sup>35</sup>

On August 20, 1739, the first issue of the newspaper appeared, titled *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber, oder Sammlung Wichtiger Nachrichten aus der Natur und Kirchen-Reich* (*High German Pennsylvania Recorder of Events, or Collection of Important News from the Realms of Nature and the Church.*) In 1745, Sauer changed the name to *Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Berichte*, and from 1762 to 1777 his son published it under the name *Germantowner Zeitung*. The paper typically included news from Europe, others colonies, Pennsylvania politics, a local crime report, and occasional editorial comments from Sauer. Sauer culled his foreign news from a collection of sixteen newspapers that he received each month from Europe, making his newspaper the prime conduit of information from across the Atlantic for the German-speaking population in America.<sup>36</sup>

Sauer presented the newspaper largely as a public service to the German-speaking community. Even the advertisements, for which Sauer did not initially charge, were primarily public service announcements, notifying readers of a lost coat, for example, or a stray animal. When advertisement submissions became too numerous, he began charging non-subscribers: five shillings (approx. \$28 in 2011 dollars) for an advertisement in three issues, with the possibility of a rebate if the goal of the advertisement was accomplished after the first or second issue. In 1741, he began listing a price of three shillings (approx. \$18 in 2011 dollars) for a year-long subscription, but he did not seem to make strenuous efforts to obtain payment from subscribers. By 1751, according to an editorial, Sauer had four thousand subscribers. But many of them, he lamented, had neglected to pay for their subscriptions even after receiving the paper for several years. At that

33 Edwin Wolf II, *Germantown and the Germans: An Exhibition of Books, Manuscripts, Prints and Photographs from the Collections of the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1983), 96.

34 *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender 1739* (Germantown, 1738), 23.

35 *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender 1740* (Germantown, 1739), 23.

36 *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber*, July 16, 1743; Abraham H. Cassel, *A History of Sower's Newspaper* (unpaginated manuscript, Sept. 1, 1885), Collection Am. 1596, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

time, Sauer noted that 330 issues were being transported inland by a distributor along the Conestoga Road, where German settlements were growing quickly. Bundles of newspapers would be dropped off at centrally-located shops. Initially Sauer paid for the transport, but because of insufficient subscription payments, he asked the rural recipients to pay for the cost of the shipping. To facilitate payment, Sauer developed a network of agents in towns along the inland road. The distributor eventually ceased delivering papers for subscribers who did not pay for his services.<sup>37</sup> That Sauer himself did not more quickly cease to send papers to delinquent subscribers indicates that he thought more was to be gained by keeping a larger number of papers in circulation throughout the areas of the colony where many new settlers were arriving.

The success of the paper can be measured in its increasing frequency and size. For the first decade, it was a monthly publication. But beginning in 1748 Sauer often printed two issues per month to accommodate the large number of advertisements and announcements he was receiving. By 1751, he printed two issues per month on a regular schedule. Apparently the advertisements paid for the cost of the extra issue because Sauer never raised the price of the subscriptions, despite doubling his labor time and use of paper. In 1756, he arranged with Gotthard Armbrüster, a former apprentice who had moved to Philadelphia, to begin supplying a German paper each week: while Sauer continued to print an issue on the first and sixteenth day of each month, Armbrüster printed issues for the alternate weeks. Initially printed on one folded sheet, providing four 8x13-inch pages of print, Sauer and his son increased the size of the paper almost every decade until it featured 16x22-inch pages in 1775.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the newspaper's growth, Sauer remained conflicted over the potential for the news business to be morally misleading. In an editorial from 1743, he resisted the idea of issuing a weekly paper because so much "news" turned out to be mere rumor; more rapid publication, he thought, would increase the chance of promulgating incomplete or false stories. He already had a difficult time finding enough material bearing the marks of "truth and usefulness" to fill his monthly issue, he claimed. After he changed the name of the newspaper to *Pensylvanische Berichte* in October 1745, he explained that the new name was preferable because he did not want to claim too much authority for the news that he printed: "*Geschicht*" described a historical "event," but so often, despite his care, he learned that what he had printed did not in fact occur exactly as initial reports

37 *Pensylvanische Berichte*, Nov. 1, 1751; Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 32.

38 *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber*, July 16, 1743; Cassel, *Sower's Newspaper*; Flory, *Literary Activity*, 124-26.

had claimed. By replacing “*Geschichts-Schreiber*” with “*Berichte*,” he hoped to clarify that he was merely publishing “reports” that could be proved wrong with better information.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to the news, Sauer’s greatest printing interest was the publication of a German Bible, whose cost to import from Germany he considered too high for many families in the American colonies. Sauer had been an authorized agent to sell the “Berleburg Bible,” which was produced in eight volumes by the radical Pietists from 1726 to 1742 in his old home region. Deeming it too large and expensive, he based his edition on the popular “Halle Bible,” a one-volume Pietist rendering of Martin Luther’s translation that Francke had designed to be affordable. To advance purchasers, however, Sauer offered the option to add the third and fourth books of Ezra and the third book of Maccabees, as they appeared in the Berleburg Bible. Completed in 1743, the full version of Bible totaled 1,284 quarto-sized pages.<sup>40</sup>

Publishing such a large Bible with finer paper required a significant capital investment. Therefore, Sauer advertised for “subscriptions” so that he could estimate the number of copies to print in advance: buyers could make a deposit of three shillings, six pence (approx. \$22 in 2011 dollars) to reserve a copy. He also solicited charitable donations to help underwrite the costs so that it could be affordable enough for poorer families to own a Bible.<sup>41</sup> Besides advertising the Bible with a sample page in his own newspaper, Sauer arranged for an announcement about the subscriptions to go out in the two main English newspapers of Philadelphia, Franklin’s *Pennsylvania Gazette* and Bradford’s *Weekly Mercury*. He also made Franklin and Bradford authorized dealers of the Bible at whose shops interested parties could make their deposit. With sufficient charitable support, Sauer pledged that the final price would not be greater than fourteen shillings (approx. \$85 in 2011 dollars).<sup>42</sup>

Already in 1740 Sauer had several commitments from donors, including George Whitefield (1714-1770), the British revivalist preacher who came through Germantown in November 1739, preaching to five or six thousand people.<sup>43</sup> Following the wave of local interest in Whitefield, Sauer printed German translations of his sermons in three volumes.<sup>44</sup> As Sauer reported to Dr. Luther in the fall of 1740, the English minister was very encouraging of the Bible project. Whitefield had pledged to petition a charitable society in London to underwrite the costs of the Bible’s paper, which would be shipped from England.<sup>45</sup> But in the end, the support from England did not come through, and Sauer

39 *Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Berichte*, Jan. 1, 1746; Cassel, Sower’s Newspaper.

40 *Biblia, Das ist: Die Heilige Schrift Altes und Neues Testaments . . .* (Germantown, 1743). On the Berleburg Bible, see Schneider, *German Radical Pietism*, 151-53.

41 Prospectus in *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber*, Aug. 16, 1743.

42 *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Mar. 31, 1742, reprinted at Flory, *Literary Activity*, 75-76.

43 Edward W. Hocker, *Germantown 1683-1933* (Germantown, PA, 1933), 71; *George Whitefield’s Journals* (Guildford, reprint 1960), 357.

44 *Von Georg Weitfields Predigten . . .* (Germantown, 1740).

45 Sauer to Luther (Germantown, Sept. 1740), at *Egenolff-Luthersche Schriftgiesserei*, 38; Sauer to Luther (Oct. 11, 1740), at *ibid.*, 39.

reported that only two small donations had been received. The final price was twelve shillings (approx. \$80 in 2011 dollars) for unbound copies or eighteen shillings (approx. \$120 in 2011 dollars) for copies bound at the workshop of the Seventh-Day Baptist Brethren in Ephrata. The paper alone cost seven shillings, six pence per copy (approx. \$50 in 2011 dollars). Though he had fewer than three hundred subscriptions, Sauer produced twelve hundred copies.<sup>46</sup>

46 Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 39-44.

47 Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg to Gotthilf August Francke and Friedrich Michael Ziegenhagen (Philadelphia, Mar. 6, 1745), in Kurt Aland, ed., *Die Korrespondenz Heinrich Melchior Mühlens: aus der Anfangszeit des deutschen Luthertums in Nordamerika*, 5 vols. (Berlin, 1986-1993), 1:150.

48 Theodore G. Tappert & John W. Doberstein, eds., *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1942-58), 1:153, 312-13. On Sauer and Muhlenberg's relationship, see Donald F. Durnbaugh, "J.C. Sauer and H.M. Muhlenberg: German-American Protagonists in Colonial North America," in Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, *Halle Pietism, Colonial North America, and the Young United States* (Stuttgart, 2008), 93-112.

49 *Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Berichte*, Oct. 16, 1745; Muhlenberg to Francke and Ziegenhagen (Mar. 6, 1745), in Aland, *Korrespondenz*, 1:150; Flory, *Literary Activity*, 95-96.

50 *Biblia, das ist: die Heilige Schrift Altes und Neues Testaments*. . . (Germantown: Christoph Sauer, 1763); *Biblia, das ist: die ganze göttliche Heilige Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments*. . . (Germantown, 1776). Sauer Jr. named the periodical *Ein Geistliches Magazien* and published it between 1764 and 1772. Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 74-75.

News of Sauer's Bible spread throughout Europe, and it became a point of pride for many Germans that a Luther Bible was the first European-language Bible to be published in America — second only to John Eliot's "Indian Bible" of 1663. But it also faced serious opposition from Lutheran and German Reformed clergy, who condemned it because of Sauer's sectarian commentary and additions from the Berleburg Bible. The German clergy already regarded Sauer as a major challenge for their work in the colonies because of the anti-clerical bias of his editorial comments in his almanac and newspaper. For example, the leader of the Lutheran Church in colonial America, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787), once wrote back to church overseers in Halle to complain that Sauer "disparaged the Lutheran denomination at every opportunity."<sup>47</sup> He also noted in his journals that Sauer delighted to report scandals and immoral behavior among the high church pastors.<sup>48</sup> Both Lutheran and Reformed ministers warned their parishioners not to buy Sauer's Bible, but to await donations of versions authorized by their churches in Europe instead.<sup>49</sup> Their opposition might have had an impact on the Bible's sales: it took Sauer and his son almost twenty years to sell all his unsubscribed copies. But thereafter, Sauer's son published second and third editions in 1763 and 1776, which reaped such a surprising income that he began publishing a new theological periodical and distributing it for free so that he would not feel he had profited from the sale of the Bible.<sup>50</sup>

If Sauer's editorializing detracted from the rapid and broad sale of his first Bible, the newspaper and almanac still created marketing synergies that Sauer exploited for his multiple publications. For instance, he distributed the first issue of his newspaper *gratis* as an insert in his *Calendar* for 1740, which went to press at the same time. Thereby he was able to solicit his first subscribers from among his current customers at no extra cost for transportation. Likewise, when he solicited subscriptions for his Bible, he included an advertisement and a sample page as an insert in his newspaper, ensuring that news of his undertaking would travel far beyond Germantown. Both the

almanac and newspaper regularly announced books available for sale at his print shop (both his own as well as imported ones), advertising them at “low prices” or for “free to those who cannot pay.” The books offered at no cost were likely the donations that benefactors in Germany had entrusted to Sauer.<sup>51</sup>

By 1749, Sauer used his Roman (*antiqua*) type to venture into English-language printing, providing several spiritual texts that appealed in particular to Quakers, like the writings of François Fenelon (1750, 1756) and John Everard (1756). This further developed a sense of common purpose between German sectarians and Quakers, which Sauer was cultivating through his political advocacy. Christoph Sauer Jr., who unlike his father was fluent in both German and English, oversaw the English publications, adding an English almanac, *The Pennsylvania Town and Country-man’s Almanack*, in 1753. German-language texts, however, remained the focus of the Sauer printing house until it was shut down and seized by the Pennsylvania government during the Revolutionary War.

Whether printing made Sauer a financially successful businessman is difficult to judge. The press was, to say the least, certainly not a non-profit endeavor. One associate claimed that Sauer earned at least one thousand florins (approx. \$12,500 in 2011 dollars) within his first year of printing,<sup>52</sup> but with a considerable expansion of his output after the first year, Sauer’s profits likely rose considerably as well. By 1751, with four thousand subscribers to his newspaper, his gross annual income would have been twelve thousand shillings (approx. \$70,000 in 2011 dollars) from newspaper subscriptions alone — if he had collected all that he was due. Paid advertisements, the almanac, and contract book-printing would have also brought in additional revenue. According to the pricing notes that a local surveyor made in his diary in 1751, Sauer would have earned £125 (approx. \$14,600 in 2011 dollars) to print five hundred copies of a large hymnal-size book requiring fifty sheets of paper.<sup>53</sup> Sauer employed young men to work on the press, but records do not reveal how much he paid out in total labor costs and apprentice stipends each year. What is certain is that by 1778, when the Sauer press was confiscated by the revolutionary Pennsylvania government, Sauer’s son possessed a very large estate, including over 200 acres of land in Germantown and nearby townships and the paper mill on the Schuylkill River. The commonwealth carefully documented the sale prices for all of his seized real estate and moveable property over the following three years, totaling almost £75,000 (in the depreciated wartime Pennsylvania currency).<sup>54</sup> When Sauer’s grandson submitted claims

51 *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender 1739* (Germantown, 1738), 23.

52 Schütz to Luther (Oct. 3, 1740), at *Egenolff-Luthersche Schriftgiesserei*, 36 (quoting fellow correspondent in Springfield Manor, Pennsylvania, Oct. 6, 1739); Hocker, “Sower Printing House,” 17.

53 Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 58.

54 Inventory of seized property and auction returns reprinted at Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 99–106. Because of volatile inflation rates for colonial currencies during the Revolutionary War, it is notoriously difficult to determine a historical exchange value between the Pound Pennsylvania and Pound Sterling. The sum named here compiles sales in Pennsylvania currency over the course of three years and thus reflects different exchange values vis-à-vis the Pound Sterling.

55 Christopher Sauer III entered claims for indemnification in 1785 after his flight to England at the end of the Revolutionary War. James O. Knauss, "Christopher Saur, The Third," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 41 (1932): 235-53, here 241-43; Willi Paul Adams, "The Colonial German-Language Press and the American Revolution," in Bernard Bailyn & John B. Hench, eds., *The Press and the American Revolution* (Worcester, MA, 1980), 151-228, here 172-73. Though the conversion dollar value provided here is based on an "historic standard of living" estimate, an alternative "economic status" or "prestige" value for a £7,000 Sterling estate would estimate it as equivalent to \$18 million in 2011 dollars. See "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount" (<http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php>).

56 A probate study found that the median net worth of decedents in the Middle Colonies in 1774 was approximately £360 in Pennsylvania's currency or £212 Sterling (approximately \$33,750 in 2011 dollars), while median net worth for decedents in Philadelphia County, where Germantown lies, was £424 in the local currency (approximately \$39,800 in 2011 dollars). Alice Hanson Jones, "Wealth Estimates for the American Middle Colonies, 1774," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 18 (1970): 1-172, here 49, 54. Sauer III's claim would not have reflected the full value of his father's estate because of restrictions on what property the British claims commission considered. See Eugene R. Fingerhut, "Uses and Abuses of the American Loyalists' Claims: A Critique of Quantitative Analyses," *William & Mary Quarterly* 25 (1968): 245-58, here 246-47.

for indemnification from the British crown for his losses, he estimated the value at £7,000 Sterling (approx. \$1.1 million in 2011 dollars).<sup>55</sup> Though that sum would not have accounted for the full value of the family's property, this alone was thirty-three times the median net worth bequeathed by residents of the Mid-Atlantic colonies in the 1770s.<sup>56</sup> For his own part, however, Sauer claimed that making a profit was never his goal. Instead, he consistently expressed his esteem for the press according to the religious and civic function it fulfilled. As he wrote towards the beginning of his printing endeavors, his satisfaction would come when the poor could buy a Bible "and the miser could not excuse himself from putting something useful in the hands of his children." With good humor and confidence, he added, "I will have bread enough."<sup>57</sup>

### Social Status, Networks, Family and Public Life

Through the success of his newspaper and almanac, Sauer gained a strategic position in Pennsylvania politics and culture. As Henry Melchior Muhlenberg wrote in 1754, Sauer's newspaper was "universally read by the Germans all over Pennsylvania and the neighboring Colonies."<sup>58</sup> Like Benjamin Franklin, his great rival in both printing and politics, Sauer found that his position as a primary information broker gave him the opportunity to influence public morality and political decision-making.

Early in his publishing career, Sauer showed an interest in addressing several issues of social morality. In 1741, he wrote and published *A Consideration of the Vice of Drunkenness* and he began to use his newspapers and almanacs to condemn the practice of slavery. In his 1742 *Calender*, for instance, Sauer wrote of slavery as America's "especially loathsome sin": "So many poor black slaves are stolen from Africa and sold just like merchants' other wares or like cattle, even though they are humans just like all Adam's children, regardless of the color of their skin." He condemned the fact that Germans in America were adopting the English "vice" of buying slaves and warned his readers with a passage from the prophet Jeremiah about the curse that was due those who made others work without pay.<sup>59</sup>

57 Sauer to Luther (Oct. 11, 1740), at *Egenolff-Luther'sche Schriftgiesserei*, 39; see also Sauer to Luther (Sept. 1740), *ibid.*, 38.

58 Muhlenberg, Minutes of the Society for the Relief and Instruction of Poor

Germans (Providence, Aug. 3, 1754), in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 5 (New Haven, 1962), 418; Ralph Frasca, "To Rescue the Germans Out of Sauer's Hands": Benjamin Franklin's German-Language Printing Part-

nerships," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 121 (1997): 329-50, here 345.

59 *Der Hoch-Deutsche Americanische Calender 1742* (Germantown, 1741), 20, quoting Jeremiah 22:13.

Sauer was struck by the offensiveness of German participation in the slave trade, in particular, because many German immigrants had themselves just recently emerged from being “half-slaves” in their homeland, where they, too, could not reap the full value of their labor.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, many Germans arrived in America under their own conditions of indentured servitude. Sauer had become increasingly concerned about their lot as well. He began to report on abusive treatment of immigrants by the captains and merchants of the ships that brought them to America. He also warned potential emigrants of the ways they could be taken advantage of during their journey. In 1739, he signed an open letter that was published in the German lands, advising prospective emigrants to consider the disadvantages of trans-Atlantic migration carefully before heading to the New World. There had been numerous tragedies on the ocean passage in the prior year, and Sauer worried that the optimistic descriptions of his earlier dispatches had led the victims to their deaths.<sup>61</sup> The signatories to the letter wanted to dispel any fantasies that immigrants would find life easy once they arrived on American soil. Prices for land had become much higher than they once were, they reported, and the admirable moral earnestness and humanitarian spirit of Pennsylvania’s first settlers had been diluted by the more recent influx of fortune seekers who did not share the founding ethos of the colony.<sup>62</sup>

Nevertheless, increasing numbers of Germans were undeterred. Sauer responded to the massive spike in German immigration between 1745 and 1755 by publishing advice in his almanacs to help newcomers acclimate themselves to life in the colony. In 1751, he published a manual for German-speakers to learn English, and he often included short English lessons in his almanacs.<sup>63</sup> After Thomas Penn (1702-1775), the controlling proprietor of the colony, raised the price for vacant land and closed the General Loan Office (through which many German immigrants were able to purchase their first lots), Sauer began printing articles to educate Germans about how to buy and bequeath land under English law. He emphasized, in particular, the importance of paying debts on time, an expectation among the English that Germans settlers were apparently less accustomed to meeting.<sup>64</sup> When the business of the trans-Atlantic passage showed no signs of reform, Sauer lobbied actively for laws to improve the conditions on ships carrying immigrants from Germany. Alarmed by the number of deaths that were occurring onboard due to unsanitary and crowded conditions, Sauer wrote twice to Pennsylvania Governor Robert Hunter Morris (1700-1764) to object that ship captains

60 Ibid., 21.

61 See Sauer to Gov. Morris (March, 15, 1755), at Brumbaugh, *German Baptist Brethren*, 377.

62 *Glaubhaftes Send-Schreiben aus Pennsylvania in America. . . welchen beygefüget ein anderer merckwürdiger Brieff aus bemeldten Landen. . .* (Frankfurt am Main, 1739) (letter dated Nov. 25, 1738), trans. Durmbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America*, 41-53. On the diminishing opportunities to buy land and the looser religious commitments of mid-eighteenth-century German settlers, see Marianne S. Wokeck, “German Settlements in the British North American Colonies: A Patchwork of Cultural Assimilation and Persistence,” in Lehmann, Wellenreuther & Wilson, *In Search of Peace and Prosperity*, 191-216, here 202-205.

63 *Eine Nützliche Anweisung oder Beyhülfe Vor die Teutschen um English zu lernen . . .* (Germantown, 1751).

64 Spencer Aaron Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia, 1996), 97-99, 134, 141-42; Hermann Wellenreuther, “Contexts for Migration in the Early Modern World: Public Policy, European Migrating Experiences, Transatlantic Migration, and the Genesis of American Culture,” in Lehmann, Wellenreuther & Wilson, *In Search of Peace and Prosperity*, 3-35, here 31-32.

- 65 Sauer to Gov. Morris (Mar. 15, 1755) and Sauer to Gov. Morris (May 12, 1755), at Brumbaugh, *German Baptist Brethren*, 376-387, here, 377; Sally Schwartz, "A Mixed Multitude": *The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York, 1987), 196-200.
- 66 Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 131-42, Jan Stievermann, "A 'Plain, Rejected Little Flock': The Politics of Martyrological Self-Fashioning among Pennsylvania's German Peace Churches, 1739-65," *William and Mary Quarterly* 66 (2009): 287-324, here 317-20.
- 67 For a contemporary assessment of Sauer's editorializing to this effect, see Tappert & Doberstein, *Journals of Muhlenberg*, 2:191.
- 68 William Penn, *Der Neue Charter. Oder Schriftliche Versicherung, Der Freyheiten* (Germantown, 1743 [1744]).
- 69 Patrick M. Erben, *A Harmony of the Spirits: Translation and the Language of Community in Early Pennsylvania* (Chapel Hill, 2012), 244-45; Stievermann, "Little Flock," 317-18; Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude*, 159-60, 162-63.
- 70 [Benjamin Franklin], *Die Lautere Wahrheit, Oder Ernstliche Betrachtung des gegenwärtigen Zustandes Der Stadt Philadelphia in der Provintz Pennsylvania. . .* [Philadelphia, 1747]; [Christopher Sauer], *Klare und Gewisse Wahrheit. . . von einem Teutschen Geringen Handwercks Mann* (Germantown, 1747); [Christopher Sauer], *Ein Gründliches Zeugniß gegen das kürztlich herausgegebene Büchlein, genandt Plain Truth* (1748); [Christopher Sauer] *Verschiedene Christlich Wahrheiten, und Kurtze Betrachtung über das kürztlich herausgegebene Büchlein, Genandt Lautere Wahrheit* (Germantown, 1748). Erben, *Harmony of Spirits*, 247-51; Stievermann, "Little Flock," 287-324.
- "lodge the poor passengers like herring" and carried insufficient food and water in the event that weather made the journey longer than anticipated.<sup>65</sup>
- Beginning in the mid-1740s, Sauer also campaigned for Germans in Pennsylvania to become naturalized citizens in order to have a role in provincial policymaking.<sup>66</sup> It was the prospect of militarization that led Sauer to become more explicit in his political advocacy. As settlers on the Pennsylvania frontier began to call for an organized defense against Indians, Sauer urged his readers to support the pacifist Quakers in elections for the provincial assembly. If the Quakers lost the reins of government, Sauer warned, Germans could lose the religious liberties that many had come to Pennsylvania to enjoy, such as freedom from military conscription and state-church assessments.<sup>67</sup> In order to educate more recent German immigrants on the rights they enjoyed under the Quakers, Sauer published a German translation of William Penn's 1701 "Charter of Liberties" and distributed copies free of charge to all the subscribers of his newspaper.<sup>68</sup> In his newspaper editorials, he portrayed the Quaker Party as the guardian of Penn's founding vision, which had made Pennsylvania a religious haven for his readers — a place of peace where pious people could carry out their religion in freedom while living amicably with the Indians. This vision was becoming remote, he believed, because too many newcomers with worldly motives for their settlement in the colony did not respect contractual dealings with the native tribes.<sup>69</sup>
- After England began to fight King George's War in 1747, fears became more acute that the local Indian tribes would ally with the French and attack Pennsylvania colonists' settlements. Because the Quaker-controlled Assembly had not raised a common defense, Benjamin Franklin called for citizens to join a voluntary militia. When Franklin published propaganda in German to attract support among the Germans for the militia, Sauer countered with several pamphlets. He did not rely solely on the pacifist theology of the Anabaptist sects, but also tried to sway Lutherans and Reformed by appealing to Germans' common memory of manorialism: a militarized state, he predicted, would assess more and more fees in the name of defense, just as German lords had done, and before long Pennsylvania Germans would become vassals again — now to their English proprietors.<sup>70</sup>
- Thanks in part to German immigrant voters, the Quaker Party stayed in power throughout the war. The issue of raising a militia, however, did not go away. Frustrated by their inability to capture much of the

German vote, the anti-Quaker faction attempted at several points to begin German-language newspapers that would, as Lutheran leader Muhlenberg put it, “rescue the Germans out of Sauer’s hands.”<sup>71</sup> Between 1743 and 1755 there were five attempts to publish other German or bilingual newspapers in the Philadelphia area. But Sauer continued to corner the market, and each of them failed. Sauer’s success was one of the underlying sources of frustration that led Franklin to pen his notorious sentiments in 1751 regarding the “Palatine Boors” who “by herding together establish their Language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours.”<sup>72</sup> Franklin felt that Sauer’s press was inhibiting German immigrants not only from assimilating, but also from appreciating the political and military necessities of governance. He apparently did not recognize Sauer’s own efforts to instruct German immigrants about English customs, laws, and language.

To overcome Germans’ reliance on Sauer for information and opinion, Franklin and his allies also formed a society in 1753 to found “charity schools” that would teach German immigrant children the English language and customs. Sauer led the opposition to the plan, calling it an attempt by high churchmen to indoctrinate poor children and pry them away from the religion of their parents. Though the schools were to be led by prominent Lutheran and Reformed pastors, Sauer warned that the schools cared little about religion and were mainly intended to produce Germans who would be willing to defend the property of the English proprietors in their stead. On this issue, too, Sauer swayed the sentiments of most of the German settlers. Few families enrolled their children, and none of the schools lasted more than a decade.<sup>73</sup>

It was during the same decade, however, that Sauer’s influence among German immigrants reached its limit. Because many German Lutherans and Reformed were settling in the Pennsylvania backcountry among Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, they increasingly viewed Sauer’s advocacy of nonresistance to be inimical to their interests.<sup>74</sup> When the French and Indian War broke out and raids on European settlements increased, preventing a colonial militia became a losing battle for Sauer and the Quakers. But even after Governor Morris declared war on the Delaware tribe in 1756, Sauer worked with the Quaker leader Israel Pemberton, Jr. (1715-1779) to continue to advocate for mediation with the Indians, blaming the recent raids on Europeans’ greed for land and abrogation of the contractual relationships that earlier Pennsylvanian leaders had forged. He helped to

71 Muhlenberg to the Society for the Relief and Instruction of Poor Germans (Aug. 3, 1754), in *Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 5:418-19; quoted in Frasca, “To Rescue the Germans Out of Sauer’s Hands,” 329, 345.

72 “Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind” (1751), *Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 4:225-35, here para. 23.

73 Samuel Edwin Weber, *The Charity School Movement in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: George Lasher, 1905), 38-39, 53-62; Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., “Benjamin Franklin and the German Charity Schools,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 99 (1955): 381-87; Glenn Weaver, “Benjamin Franklin and the Pennsylvania Germans,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 14 (1957): 536-59; Alan Tully, *Forming American Politics: Ideals, Interests, and Institutions in Colonial New York and Pennsylvania* (Baltimore, 1994), 109, 111, 156; Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude*, 216; Sharon Braslaw Sundue, “Confining the Poor to Ignorance? Eighteenth-Century American Experiments with Charity Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 47 (2007): 123-48, here 135-36.

74 Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 140-41. For an early German retort to Sauer, see Kurtze *Verteidigung Der Lautern Wahrheit gegen die so genannte Unterschiedliche Christlich Wahrheiten, Welche der Buchdrucker C.S. in Germantown ohnlängst ausgestreuet* [Philadelphia, 1748].

raise significant donations from German sectarians for Pemberton's "Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures" and employed texts from both the Anabaptists' and Quakers' martyrological traditions to engender solidarity among both groups and to help them prepare for the persecution that might come if they held on to their peace stance.<sup>75</sup>

It was not until after Sauer's death that the Sauer family's stronghold over German media was broken. In 1762, Henrich Miller founded a German newspaper that gained a following among Germans who supported a militaristic response to the Indians.<sup>76</sup> Still, under Johann Christoph Sauer Jr. the family printing business continued to flourish. Known as one of the wealthiest men in Pennsylvania, Sauer Jr. was a major benefactor and board president of the Germantown Academy, founded in 1760. As a bishop of the German Baptists, he continued his father's special interest in radical Pietist texts as well as his advocacy of peaceful relations with the Indians.<sup>77</sup>

So prominent was Sauer Jr.'s pacifism that he became a target for Revolutionary patriots during the war for American independence. Sauer Jr. did not hide his disapproval of the revolutionaries' choice of war to redress their grievances. His sons, Christoph III and Peter, went further: when the British Army captured Germantown in 1777, they collaborated with General Howe to print Loyalist propaganda for the local Germans and Hessian soldiers from a shop in Philadelphia. Once the British were pushed out of Pennsylvania, they retreated to New York with General William Howe (1729-1814), where Christoph III served as both printer and spy for the British. After the war, he evacuated with the troops to England, where he was rewarded for his services to the crown. Named royal printer and deputy postmaster for the province of New Brunswick, he spent most of his life there after 1785, founding two English newspapers. Peter, meanwhile, became a physician in the British West Indies.<sup>78</sup>

Sauer Jr., however, suffered a dramatic setback for printing his objections to the revolution. Acting on a proclamation of treason by the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council in 1778, the Continental Army arrested Sauer, seized his press, ejected him from his Germantown home, and confiscated all other properties in his estate. Upon his arrest, he was stripped of his clothes and coated in paint as humiliation. The contents of the print shop were sold off for a fraction of their value to other printers, including Henrich Miller, who had sided with the revolutionaries. Having lost his home and fortune, Sauer Jr.

75 For translations of Sauer's writings related to the "Friendly Association," see Richard K. MacMaster, Samuel L. Horst, and Robert F. Ulle, eds., *Conscience in Crisis: Mennonites and Other Peace Churches in America, Interpretation and Documents* (Scottsdale, PA, 1979), 135-56; Stievermann, "Martyrological Self-Fashioning," 317-23; Erben, *Harmony of Spirits*, 275-83.

76 Patrick Erben, "Henrich Miller," in *IE*.

77 Flory, *Literary Activity*, 148-57; Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 66-90; Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America*, 386.

78 Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America*, 405-23; Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 110-15; Knauss, "Christopher Saur, The Third," 235-53.

was reduced to dependence on in-laws for lodging for several years and, without a press, had to make a living as a bookbinder until he died six years later.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the end of the Germantown press, two of Sauer Jr.'s younger sons continued printing in Pennsylvania: David founded the first newspaper for Norristown, Pennsylvania, and Samuel restarted an almanac and newspaper from nearby Chestnut Hill, later moving his press to Philadelphia and Baltimore. Subsequent generations of the Sauer family ran printing presses in Philadelphia, Norristown, Baltimore, and Leesburg, Virginia, into the early twentieth century.<sup>80</sup>

## Conclusion

On his way to developing the most successful German-language press in colonial America, Johann Christoph Sauer drew deeply on the trans-Atlantic networks of radical Pietist and Anabaptist groups to forge business relationships and cultivate a readership that shared his religious inclinations. He and his son amassed enormous good will among the German sectarians for bringing their theological and devotional works into print and articulating their ethical convictions in the public sphere. By printing many German translations of Quaker and English Pietist texts in German for the first time, he also enabled greater religious exchange and a sense of shared purpose among the Quakers and German peace churches — an alliance that had important political consequences in the 1740s and 1750s.

While Sauer shrewdly appealed to all German-speaking immigrants in his humanitarian and political advocacy, he did not feel compelled to display an ecumenical or ironic sensibility toward all Germans in his publications. He distrusted the leadership of the Lutheran and Reformed churches as much in America as he did in Germany, and he viewed non-sectarian, non-pacifist German immigrants as contributing to the dissolution of the Quakers' founding vision for Pennsylvania. His religious convictions and loyalty to that political ideal took precedence over his ethnic identity. That this was little impediment to his business success testified to the demographic strength of the German sectarians during the early and mid-eighteenth century: his alliance of German and English Pietists placed him at the nexus of a populous and influential group of people. By the time that his son and grandsons were working as printers, however, they encountered the adverse consequences of being part of an outnumbered sect. Yet thanks in part to the strength of Pennsylvania's tradition of religious

79 Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council, A Proclamation [May 21, 1778] (Lancaster, PA, [1778]). Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America*, 396-405; Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 99-106.

80 Wolf, *Germantown and the Germans*, 107-10; Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 115-23.

liberties, which the Sauers arduously defended, the new nation that formed at the cost of their press and family fortune proved to be more respectful of religious minorities and free expression than the Sauers had feared.

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