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Advice to Prospective Immigrants: Two Communications to Germany from Pennsylvania in the 1730s

In her superbly-documented recent book, *Trade in Strangers* (1999), Marianne S. Wokeck describes in detail the "beginnings of mass migration to North America."[1] Though early immigration from England extending through the seventeenth century had set the predominant cultural and political pattern for colonial America, from the inception there was ethnic diversity, especially in the Middle Colonies. The French Jesuit Isaac Jogues (1607-46) observed in 1643 about Dutch-administered New Amsterdam: "No religion is publicly exercised but the Calvinist [Dutch Reformed], and orders are to admit none but Calvinists. But this is not observed, for there are, besides Calvinists, in the colony, Catholics, English Puritans, Lutherans, [and] Anabaptists, here called Mennonites." He was told by the Dutch governor that eighteen different languages could be heard on and nearby the island of Manhattan.[2]

In the eighteenth century it was the mass influx from German-speaking areas—by the best reckoning some 111,000 came before 1776—that dominated the immigration scene. As is well-known, so many of them came from the troubled Electoral Palatinate during this period that "Palatine" became the generic name for all of these newcomers.[3]

Wokeck provides great detail in limning "The Ordeal of Relocation" (chap. 4); this began with the onerous, expensive and bureaucratic procedure of obtaining permission to leave (causing many to leave illegally and surreptitiously), the tortuous passage on the Rhine River (with its ubiquitous customs barriers), and the difficulties of securing adequate Atlantic passage in Rotterdam (from which a large majority of the emigrants left). This culminated in the often harrowing sea voyage itself, caused by of overcrowding, inadequate facilities for hygiene, skimpy and polluted provisions, and often extended duration. This ordeal ended, finally, in the confusing process of disembarkation, and the cruel necessity of making a new life in a strange New World.[4]

Veterans and survivors of this epochal effort were understandably eager to provide guidance for family relations and others who anticipated their own departure from Europe. Many of the new settlers sent letters back home to provide helpful information; some resorted to publications.[5] Two, in particular, were mined effectively by Wokeck

in her descriptions. Although discovered, translated, and published in 1967 by the present author, they had hitherto been largely ignored by scholars of immigration.

The first document, a letter written in 1736 by a religious dissenter in Pennsylvania to a cousin still in Europe, gave practical information but little direct encouragement. The second document, published in Frankfurt am Main in 1739 but signed by leading GermanAmericans from the Philadelphia area, was a pointed and graphic warning against ill-considered emigration. The cautionary effort was motivated by the catastrophic experiences of many ocean travelers in 1738, "the year of the destroying angels" as one contemporary dubbed it.

Andreas Bohni to His Cousin Martin Bohni

The weaver Andreas Bohni or Boni (1673-1741) was a native of Frenkendorf, a village in the Canton of Basel. During his journeyman years he resided in Heidelberg, capital of the Electoral Palatinate. He and his wife Maria Sarah took up citizenship there in 1702. It was during this period that Bohni, baptized as a matter of course as an infant into the Swiss Reformed faith, encountered and adopted the beliefs of Pietism and Anabaptism.[7]

Anabaptism, the central movement within the Radical Reformation of the sixteenth century, is widely held to have initiated the Believers or Free Church, breaking with the traditional scheme of church establishment by gathering adult converts into disciplined and covenanted congregations. Believers baptism and nonresistance characterized this dissenting movement, which was thought to be so dangerous that it was sharply persecuted by both Catholic and Protestant authorities. By the eighteenth century, when Bohni came into contact with Anabaptists, it was perpetuated by Mennonites. A number of Mennonite congregations in the Palatinate were tolerated by the Electoral Palatine regime, though only under severe limitation, because of their prowess as master farmers.[8]

Pietism, understood by some scholars as a continuation in milder form of basic Anabaptist understandings, emerged in the seventeenth century as a reform and renewal movement among both Reformed and Lutheran state churches. While holding largely to the doctrinal tenets of these forms of Magisterial Protestantism, Pietists emphasized the importance of Christian lifestyle, a heart-filled and emotional faith, and the mutual edification of like-minded persons in small conventicles *(ecclesiolae in ecclesia).* In just this period in this region, Mennonites were strongly under Pietist influence.[9]

After Maria Sarah Bohni died in 1704, the widower Andreas Bohni returned to the Basel area. He soon came to the attention of the local authorities when he was successful in converting relatives and other residents to his dissenting religious views. Frenkendorf officials promptly complained to their superiors in Basel that Bohni refused to perform military service, take oaths, and participate in the sacramental eucharist. Bohni left again for the Palatinate but returned in 1706. His activity was so extensive that a major research project now underway has as its focus Bohni and his circle as the center of Anabaptist and Pietist activity well into the eighteenth century in several Swiss cantons.[10]

Continued religious activity by Andreas Bohni led to his imprisonment in Basel, along with his younger brother Martin. Andreas Bohni, as the ringleader, was expelled, then traveled in the Bernese area for a time, but returned to the Basel canton. He was imprisoned, pilloried, and expelled once more. This time Bohni went to the Duchy of Wittgenstein, north of Frankfurt am Main where the tolerant policy of a pietist-minded count attracted large numbers of separatists and radicals.[11]

Bohni was thus present in the Wittgenstein area in 1708 as one of the eight founding members (along with his second wife Anna Noethiger Bohni) of the Brethren, a neo-Anabaptist movement called *Neue Täufer* or *Tunck-Täufer* by contemporaries. The terms derive from the most striking practice of the Brethren, the baptism of adult converts by a three-fold forward immersion, following, as they understood it, the mode of the early Christian church.[12]

Andreas Bohni traveled as a leader on behalf of the new dissenting movement. Among other efforts he was active in helping to free Brethren leader Christian Liebe (1679-1757) and two Mennonite elders from their harrowing sentence as galley slaves in the Mediterranean in 1715. This effort involved an intriguing ecumenical mix of Swiss Pietists, Dutch Mennonites, an Anglican bishop, and German Brethren.[13]

When the Wittgenstein Brethren relocated to Friesland in 1720, the Bohnis accompanied them. Basel Canton records document that Andreas Bohni, at that time a resident of "Serusstarnen" (actually, Surhuisterveen) transferred by letter on 8 August 1726 his inheritance to his siblings, Martin, Hans, and Maria. The Bohnis then became part of the large company of Brethren who migrated to Pennsylvania from Friesland in 1729, following the first Brethren group who left ten years earlier from Krefeld. Bohni lived at Kingsessing, near Germantown, north of Philadelphia, working presumably as a weaver, until his death in 1741.[14]

On 16 October 1736 Andreas penned a letter to his cousin Martin Bohni, a lengthy excerpt of which has been preserved in the archives of Baden-Württemberg.[15] He began on a negative note, reminding the cousin that he had already warned Martin to weigh carefully the consequences of the latter's stated wish to emigrate; as Andreas Bohni phrased it, "I can hardly encourage anyone to come because of the great, long, and difficult journey." However, if Martin were determined, he was willing to provide advice that would make the journey less difficult.

Young people rather than older persons could survive the trip more readily. In the first place, because of their greater strength and energy, they could avoid great expense by going on foot to Rotterdam to take ship, instead of the usual route down the Rhine River with its numerous and expensive custom barriers. Additionally, once arrived in Pennsylvania, they could easily find well-paid jobs as day laborers in the textile pursuits of spinning and weaving, for "young and industrious people are welcome."

Whether traveling by foot to Rotterdam or by boat on the Rhine, those bound to the seaport could expect material aid and good counsel in Krefeld on the Lower Rhine from Christian Liebe, a merchant there. Once in Rotterdam, where they might have to wait a considerable length of time until a ship would be ready to depart, prospective emigrants should inquire for Pieter De Koker in the Kornmarkt, who

could arrange temporary work and otherwise sustain them; they had, however, to take care not to demand help. De Koker was a prosperous merchant affiliated with the Brethren; De Koker relatives became well-known for their connection with John Wesley (1703-91), founder of the Methodists.[16]

Ocean passage could be secured for six doubloons, or those with little money could indenture themselves to secure passage. The money thus advanced could be worked off in North America for a negotiated number of years. If the passage were paid, "the skipper provides the victuals, food, and drink," so that little money is needed on board ship. However, passengers would do well to provide themselves with additional provender, "a whole ham for every one or two persons and a jug of vinegar." Another argument for traveling by foot to Rotterdam instead of journeying by boat is that the money saved from the cost of the Rhine River boat could be used to stock up with supplies in Rotterdam. Bohni advised buying bedding, a pillow or a blanket, for the trip.

Bohni warned his cousin against kidnappers in Rotterdam, who frequent places where young men or journeymen gather at night. "Then they use their practice of gently luring them away to sell them." He further cautioned against taking passage for South Carolina. According to trustworthy reports, the weather there was hot, the land was sandy, water was scarce, and the diet was poor. Some relatives he knew from the Basel area were said have migrated there. On the other hand, those traveling to New York or to Philadelphia would do well. New York had the advantage that trade goods could be brought ashore there with little difficulty, whereas in Philadelphia such goods were confiscated. All in all, so Bohni, "if it please God, I would certainly wish you here." It is not known if Martin Bohni made good on his emigration plans.

The 1739 Warning to Prospective Emigrants

Among the flood of pamphlets published in the German states in the first decades of the eighteenth century that portrayed the benefits of relocation in the New World, one appeared in 1739 that painted a different story. It was signed by fifteen prominent German leaders resident in Philadelphia and its environs. The motivation for their initiative was the grievous loss of life among passengers of emigrant ships during the 1738 season. Their concern was to warn their former countrymen against an ill-considered decision to emigrate. While not totally discouraging immigration, they provided horrific detail of the terrors that trans-Atlantic voyage could entail.

The expansive title of the rare pamphlet well describes both its content and intent; in English translation it reads:

> Authentic Open Letter from Pennsylvania in America, wherein are contained several thorough accounts of 1) the nature of the land; 2) the migration, sea voyage, and arrivals of the European passengers in general; and 3) in particular, some conscientious and authenticated accounts of the last and numerous but also miserable and pitiful migration of the year 1738, etc. Written out of ardent love and sympathy as a warning to their European,

and especially to their German, countrymen, and attested to with their own seals by some well-meaning persons there, etc. . . . (Frankfurt/Main, 1739), [to be had] at Just[us] Heinr[ich] Wigand's, bookbinder on the market place at the Three Romans.[17]

The German publisher of the tract is not known; in the published version it is simply addressed to "Very esteemed Sir and Friend." The signers indicated that few of them knew the recipient in person. They urged the recipient to see that their message was published and distributed. It might have been Dr. Heinrich Ehrenfried Luther (1700-70), court councilor *(Hofrat)*, lawyer, and influential businessman in Frankfurt. As the proprietor of a type-foundry, Luther was also a business associate and correspondent of Johann Christoph Sauer (1695-1768), one of the signers of the "Open Letter" and possibly its instigator. Luther had supplied the type fonts used by the Germantown printer to initiate his print-shop in 1738. The Frankfurt resident was himself later deeply involved in emigration schemes to North America, especially to New England. Another possibility was Andreas Gross (ca.1685-ca.1750), a separatist leader in Frankfurt, who was active as a bookseller and publisher. It was Gross who facilitated the sale of fonts to Sauer from the Luther type-foundry.[18]

Earlier letters from Sauer in Germantown, following his own emigration in 1724, to associates in Germany had stimulated many to leave for Pennsylvania. In 1755 he reported to Governor Robert Hunter Morris of Pennsylvania contrasting the burdensome obligations of subjects who had to labor six days a week for their lords with the freedom in America: "[W]hen I came to this province and found everything to the Contrary from where I came from, I wrote Largely to all my friends and acquaintances of the Civil and religious Libertys, [and] Privileges and of all the goodness I have hear' d and Seen." The result was "that my letters was printed and re and reprinted, and provocked many a tousand People to Come to this Province, and manny thancked the Lord for it, and desired their friends also again to Come here." In part because of this, the printer took responsibility for the welfare of immigrants, often reporting problems in his newspapers.

He repeatedly intervened with authorities in Pennsylvania on behalf of the newcomers, openly attacking unfair business practices and urging the colony officials to ensure that justice was done to them. The occasion for writing two letters to the governor in 1755 was to urge him to support a bill introduced into the assembly entitled "An Act for Preventing the Importation of Germans or Other Passengers or Servants in Too Great Numbers in Any Ship or Vessel, and for Preventing the Spreading of Contagious Distempers within the Province." For his long-standing efforts on behalf of the suffering German immigrants, he was called the "Good Samaritan of Germantown."[19]

The "Open Letter" pamphlet begins with earnest questions directed to those "filled with such a strong desire to migrate to this land." These persons are urged to consider very carefully "such an indescribably difficult move with your families." Are they primarily motivated by fear of difficulties in their home lands, by "an imagined hope for an earthly paradise which might be attained?" The authors suspected that

the machinations of others are at work, in particular the so-called "Newlanders" who exaggerate the supposed pleasures of the New World to induce emigration for their own financial benefit.

An early section laid out briefly the story of the creation of the colony by William Penn (1644-1718) to provide "foreigners and refugees persecuted here and there in Europe and in Old England" a place where they could "support themselves by their hands and diligence under divine protection and blessing." The first settlers—Swedes, Englishmen, Germans, and Dutch—after initial difficulties "lived a long time in considerable fear of God, righteousness, and genuine neighborly love as well as untiring industry" which presented an "exemplary pattern of their first love and unpartisan mutual friendship toward all nationalities," still in the remembrance of older settlers.[20]

However, as word spread of the advantages of the colony, others came with little regard to the objectives of the founder. These latecomers "sought to gain much property and land and at the same time accumulate great wealth." Among this later contingent were Germans who sought to emigrate for unworthy economic purposes. "However, already several times . . . the stars in their courses have crossed them through divine judgment, and hundreds, yes, even thousands, of them have been buried at sea without seeing the imagined promised land."

It is indeed true that the land has had "its generous blessing for hearts and stomachs," with its "timber and water, bread and meat, flax and wool" sufficient to provide for inhabitants. Nevertheless, the great influx of many ethnic groups, including the English, Irish, Scots, Germans, to say nothing of the slaves, has created crowding. This overpopulation has resulted in a shortage of money, causing extensive borrowing and "frequent failure to repay." Even worse, the large numbers of immigrants has caused good land to become rare. "It is considered good fortune when someone finds a good piece of land with all of the necessities provided, for which, accordingly, he must pay a high enough price even if it is far from Philadelphia, the only large city in the land." Property that several decades ago went for sixty to ninety guilders now cost between four hundred to two thousand guilders, even for uncultivated land. Locations near the city are of course even more expensive, for purchase or renting. It is true that good land can be obtained in Maryland and Virginia, but the distance from the city means that a settler has to "travel two, three, or four weeks by horse and wagon in order to sell his crops and buy other necessities."[21]

These developments are the reason that "those who are not longtime, wealthy, debt-free residents or very rich newcomers, must work strenuously" and "are hard put to make a living." Needed craftsmen, physicians, and schools are seldom found locally. Therefore, "even wealthy people who are immigrating these days have regretted their move and wish themselves back over there once again." Many would not hesitate to return to the old country if the journey were not so difficult. Even so, "some have already done this and are content with poorer circumstances than they once had."

The Pennsylvanians then turned their attention to the process of emigration itself. The first problem was the inaccuracy of many of the letters received in Europe from those who have resettled in Pennsylvania. They "send letters with exaggerated praises of their supposedly good positions to their relatives and acquaintances over

there." They knew of cases of falsification of letters entrusted to Newlanders returning to Germany. It often happened that these recruiting agents "open the letters that were sent along with them, and which had been properly and dearly paid for;" when they find "that everything is not described in grand enough terms, they make large numbers out of small, and add that they are to be paid so much more per letter over there."[22]

Many of the Newlanders have contracts with shippers on the Neckar and Rhine Rivers, so that for their own profit they "stir the people up out of selfish and greedy motives and fan more and more excitement." They further gain from per head commissions from the sea captains and from free passage for their own goods. What is worse, they mislead their recruits about what provisions they should take along, so that when food and drink run short during the voyage, the Newlanders and the captains can further profit by selling victuals on board to the hapless emigrants. This causes them "to run up greater debts than they already have, all to increase their greedy profits the more."

Typically, because of misinformation and expecting to occupy a "Canaan all prepared for them," the emigrants do not conduct themselves wisely as they travel on the Rhine towards Rotterdam. "They dance themselves silly, fiddle, scuffle, guzzle, and fight. In other words, they prepare a sure foundation . . . for the inevitable illnesses at sea by their intemperance and irregular life." Their lack of cleanliness at this stage is an "ill preparation for the almost unavoidable uncleanliness at sea."

When the emigrants arrive at the Dutch border they are met by agents and sea captains who persuade them (often with forged recommendations) to sign contracts. Because of earlier difficulties when hordes of aspirants to emigration burdened Dutch seaports, with many destitute and orphans left behind, the Estates General mandated in 1722 and again in 1734 that no Rhine passengers could proceed past their border unless bonded merchants or factors guaranteed their speedy departure from land. The Hope and Stedman merchant families of Rotterdam achieved a virtual monopoly on Palatine emigration by the late 1730s.[23]

Often a lengthy stay at the seaport in inadequate housing was necessary before the ships were ready for departure. Once on board they find that "they are packed in like herring, so that many a man whose family numbers eight or more has hardly a space six feet long and wide and three feet high." In this space, "he and his family with their bedding, linens, cooking utensils, and victuals are imprisoned for six weeks;" in fact the voyage can extend to fifteen or twenty weeks or more. There is no room for crates or furniture, which must either be abandoned or, if left for a later ship, be subject to looting and destruction. Because the sea captains and the Newlanders wish to have room for their own goods, they leave less for the passengers.

Many of the emigrants try to bring along merchandise, to sell upon arrival and thus pay for their passage. However, this often does not work well. If the goods actually arrive, which is most uncertain, they do not meet expectations: "There is already a surplus of merchandise which is imported frequently. Often they hardly get their money out of it."[24]

> The major evil with the crowding [comes] when the slightest illness spreads. With such numbers and their continual and unchanged air and exhalations (inasmuch as they have to lie two or three levels high), such illnesses can easily change into a contagious epidemic, which sweeps away the poor people in large numbers, especially the small children. Very few of them have survived the trip this year; they are always taken first.
>
> From Holland, then, the voyage goes toward England, where the misery begins. Then the excessive meals that had been eaten are violently vomited. It is soon quiet on the ship, especially when a small gale arises. Then those people who had previously quarreled a bit with the captain and the sailors are even worse off, for they are in their hands. They can make their lives miserable for them in many ways, as many, even good-natured, men have already experienced.

In England the passengers must pass customs, where those seeking to transport merchandise often pay dearly. After the ships eventually leave the English ports, hopes arise for a speedy passage, but these are quickly dashed.

> After sailing for two months (for out of twenty ships hardly one arrives after two months . . .) then [the sailors] begin to speak of only the first half of the distance or somewhat more. By that time the provisions of the people are usually gone because they had eaten and wasted them as if there would be no end to them. Also, the captain must reduce a bit the ration of water and all other victuals, which the people up to that time had often contemptuously and disdainfully thrown overboard instead of saving them carefully. When people are still quite healthy, their stomachs get hungry.[25]
>
> If in a gale the ship is blown off the course, the rations are reduced even more. Then comes a miserable crying, lamenting, regret, and hunger, and especially thirst, but to no avail. Then envy and enmity arise openly if perhaps one still has provisions and his neighbor has nothing. The best of friends and neighbors become the bitterest enemies. The wind, as earlier the belly, is their god, to which alone they look. Finally, after ten, twelve, even up to sixteen weeks, land and bottom are found. After much sailing about, healthy or (usually) ill, they sail into the river and up toward land. Then there is jubilation and joy and plenty until they arrive at Philadelphia.

Disembarkation is a stressful time. Children, the elderly, and the ill are hard put to find placements. "It takes a long time for feeble people to find a place and often they are not taken at all. Then they have to sell themselves as the captain is able and willing." Especially difficult were cases where erstwhile emigrants died during the course of the passage. Survivors had to pay for their passages as well, if they had not paid in advance. Even those who have means become unhappy. First, they "boast and swagger about the land . . . acting as if everything ought to fall at their feet and welcome them. This does not last long. There begins cursing and damning of the

land and of those who advised to the move . . . , if they do not find it to their taste (no vineyards or German ways in the cities and the villages, etc.)." It is worse for those with no money for the passage, for they "are torn from each other— parents from children, man from wife, one here, the other there—and sold for several years [as indentured servants]. Often much is promised in words but not put into writing or kept."

"Those coming from the ships smell and stink, are full of lice, filth, and dirt (especially those who were ill or still are) so that no one will touch their clothing out of disgust except for good friends or relatives who take care of some. Then all, stranger and native, bewail the money and the deceased parents, children, and friends."

After this tale of woe, the writers of the pamphlet deliver one of their punch lines. "Here, then, is the truth about the migration and arrival of the Europeans, briefly described, *when all goes well*" [emphasis added].

A direct admonition followed:

> From this you, our countrymen, whose thoughts are full of travel ideas, can decide and judge for yourselves whether the rich and prosperous are doing right—even if all goes well—to spend such a large sum as this journey requires during a half-year with great privations and difficulty, and then to come to a strange land where, after considerable time and paying dearly for their lessons, they finally find out things. And whether it is profitable for the poor, elderly, those burdened with small children . . . to bind themselves and their children into years of servitude after such a difficult journey (for it is seldom, if all goes well, that a family arrives without loss, either at sea or here).

Would it not be better, the authors proposed, if those with wealth would remain at home in peace and those without wealth would also stay home and earn their livelihood in the sweat of their brow, which, in any case, they would have to do in North America as well?

The Horror of Migration in 1738

The remaining pages of the pamphlet are devoted to the grim account of the mishaps of the "miserable migrations of this year and its consequences." Certainly, the writers admit, there had been catastrophic sea voyages before—four years previously two-thirds of the Palatines on the ship *Love and Unity* starved to death on a passage which lasted a shocking nine months; during the latter part of the trip a lively trade in rats and mice developed. During the previous year a shipload of wealthy Englishmen was wrecked off the coast of New England, with the loss of more than one hundred drowned. Yet, the fate of emigrants in 1738 surpassed anything heretofore experienced. "By moderate reckoning, of fourteen ships which have so far arrived, and two are still missing [with one underway for more than twenty-four weeks], more than eighteen hundred [persons] have died at sea and here in Philadelphia."[26]

Problems began already in Holland. Prospective emigrants were housed in tents at Kralingen, near Rotterdam, awaiting passage. Because of unwise diet, and cold rains followed by great heat, many suffered dysentery and high fevers. Some eighty infants died during that period. Then the emigrants were parceled out to the ships, from two hundred in some to four hundred in others. "Then they were packed in so tightly and so crowded into each other that throughout at least one-third too many were lodged on the ships. Everywhere the bedsteads were double-deckers, in some indeed they were triple-decked above each other. The crates of many were either smashed, and the people had to store their goods as best they could (because the captains and the Newlanders had themselves so many crates and goods) or were left behind and sent along on other ships."

The convoy sailed to the English port of Cowes to pass customs, generally taking between three to five weeks to arrive. "Some harbingers of suffering" were seen already during this brief passage, so that there were burials at sea and at Cowes. After tarrying there for seven weeks, the convoy entered upon the Atlantic crossing "where illness, suffering, and misery soon became general." On one ship, after three weeks the captain and the first mate died, followed by the sailors "along with a large number of Germans, so that during the fourteen-week-long sea voyage almost two-thirds of them died." It was the ship's carpenter who brought the survivors up the Delaware River to Philadelphia.

Rations were in short supply: "The stinking water had to be the refreshment of the ill, for most of the captains were very merciless. Butter was soon gone, so that whoever had not provided enough victuals for himself and used his food sparingly had to suffer need and want enough in sick conditions." Even John and Charles Stedman, two captains with excellent reputations for their care and good management, experienced great loss. Some 120 passengers were lost on the *St. Andrew* captained by John Stedman, even though he had selected the healthiest party of emigrants at the Dutch border. His journey lasted twelve weeks. At Philadelphia the local health official reported that a careful examination of the ship revealed a "great number laboring under a malignant, eruptive fever;" they were barred from immediate landing for fear of contagion.[27] On the other ship, ironically named the *Charming Nancy,* captained by Charles Stedman, 250 souls died at sea, during a trip hampered by heavy storms. Only sixty-four men fifteen years of age or older (of more than three hundred original passengers) were able to appear at the required oath-taking ceremony. Captain Stedman himself was gravely ill when the ship arrived at port.

Only two ships of the convoy arrived "fairly safe and sound," but even on these two, the fatality among small children was heavy. "On a ship with sickness it is a rarity to see a small child of two or three years, regardless of the number who were aboard originally."

Houses outside the city were rented to accommodate the sick, by order of the authorities who feared that the contagion (generally called the "Palatine Fever," likely a form of typhoid) would spread among the citizens. In some households where new arrivals were taken in, the residents "caught the same illness and already several have died very suddenly."

The signers of the "Open Letter" concluded the account with these words:

> You see, dear countrymen, the misery and suffering this year was so great among us and your fellows who had immigrated from over there that it can hardly be described or related. Thus God's judgments are visited on those [who traveled carelessly on the Rhine] in pursuit of their hoped-for earthly paradise. Oh, how many rich and poor alike, with few exceptions, regret it, what tears one sees of widows and orphans, lengthy chest illnesses and quinsy, swollen bodies, scorbutic boils, swollen lame legs—these are the least relics which accompany the ill and those who had otherwise been well.

The signers took care to reassure their readers that they had no wish to discourage others to come, so that they, the earlier arrivals, could enjoy the benefits of the New World without competition. Rather, they felt duty-bound to give a faithful account of the dangers of ill-considered emigration. "Despite this, so that those among you, who still have some fear of the Lord and who are either for conscience' sake or actual outward necessity forced to migrate, may not remain entirely without advice, we therefore remind you in a well meaning way to make sure that your cause is right and divinely intended," so that they could, like Abraham, leave home with God's blessing. If their migration is clearly in God's will, then God will protect them from the hazards of the voyage. Otherwise, "if you have secondary motives such as escaping pressure and suffering or accumulating wealth or wanting an easier life, then you will certainly not succeed."

> Finally, we report that the above-related things and events are of such a nature that we have sufficient cause and reason to set our names, places of residence, and seals as a witness to the truth of this letter, for many as told us to do, as follows:
>
> (seal) Henrich Graff in Amwell[28]
> (seal) Christoph Sauer in Germantown[29]
> (seal) Johannes Bechtel in Germantown[30]
> (seal) Johann Adam Gruber in Germantown[31]
> (seal) Lorentz Schweitzer in Germantown[32]
> (seal) Johannes Eckstein in Germantown[33]
> (seal) Jacob Baumann in Germantown[34]
> (seal) David Deschler in Philadelphia[35]
> (seal) Johannes Wüster in Philadelphia[36]
> (seal) Christoph Meng in Germantown[37]
> (seal) Johann Henrich Kalcklößer in Germantown[38]
> (seal) Georg Bentzel in Germantown[39]
> (seal) Blasius Daniel Mackineth in Germantown[40]
> (seal) Anthonius Benezet in Philadephia[41]
> (seal) Johann Benedictus Müntz in Falkner's Swamp[42]

These signers were all prominent within the German element in Philadelphia and Germantown. Amwell, in New Jersey, was the most distant residence among those listed. Many were merchants. Of the fifteen, Sauer, Wüster, and Anthony Benezet became the best known, Sauer for his printing operation, Wüster for his mercantile achievements, and Benezet for efforts as a Quaker humanitarian and reformer. Many of the signatories served as executors of the estates of those immiprants who died en route or shortly after arrival. They, therefore, had intimate knowledge of the problems accruing from the emigration/immigration process.

Conclusion

The Bohni document had only a limited impact on emigration, so far as is known. The "Open Letter," however, along with other dire reports, might well have influenced German emigration in major ways. Of course, conditions (such as military conflict) in the homelands always affected the rate of migrations. The possible influence of the news of tragic events of 1738 is suggested by the statistics of ship arrivals. After an early peak of sixteen ships in 1738, the number sank to eight in 1739, six in 1740, and hovered under ten per year in succeeding years, until an upsurge to twenty-two in 1749. According to one tabulation, 4,230 immigrants survived the 1738 migration, while 2,260 did not. An unknown number turned back at some point before embarkation. Thus the death toll of that terrible season was almost 35 percent.

Taken together, the Bohni letter to his counsin Martin and the 1739 "Open Letter" provide useful insights into the motivations, procedures, practical problems, and, especially, hazards of emigration from German-speaking areas to North America in the mid-eighteenth century.

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Notes

[1] Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

[2] J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Narratives of New Netherlands, 1609-1664* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 122ff.; Randall H. Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion: Dutch Religion and English Culture in the Middle Colonies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), vii; William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 87; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 200.

[3] See Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers* (1999), 1-58, for the latest overview, with extensive citation of sources. See also Aaron S. Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press and Pennsylvania German Society, 1996) and A. Gregg Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) for detailed and documented analyses, differing in some ways from Wokeck's conclusions.

[4] Wokeck, *Trade in Stranger (1999)*, 113-66.

[5] An early and helpful listing is found in Emil Meynen, ed., *Bibliography on the Colonial Germans of North America* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1982), 23-28, reprinted from the original edition, *Bibliography*

on German Settlements in Colonial North America (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1936).

[6] The two documents are: 1), a letter by Andreas Bohni to his cousin Martin (1736); and 2), *Glaubhafftes Send-Schreiben aus* Pensylvania *in* America . . . (Frankfurt am Mayn: 1739), signed by fifteen prominent leaders of the Pennsylvania Germans in the Philadelphia area. They were published in English translation in D. F. Durnbaugh, ed., *The Brethren in Colonial America: A Source Book on the Transplantation and Development of the Church of the Brethren in the Eighteenth Century* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1967), 39-53. See Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers* (1999), 34ff. The 1739 *Send-Schreiben* was used by one other scholar, *Klaus* Wust, in his article, "The Emigration Season of 1738—Year of the Destroying Angel," *The Report: A Journal of German-American History* 40 (1986): 21-56, part of an ongoing study of emigration from Central Europe to all of the North American colonies.

[7] For biographical information on Andreas Bohni, consult the following publications, all written or edited by D. F. Durnbaugh: *European Origins of the Brethren: A Source Book on the Beginnings of the Church of the Brethren in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Elgin, IL: Brethren *Press*, 1958), esp. 87-105; *Brethren in Colonial America* (1967), 39ff.; "Boni (Bohni, Boney), Andreas," in *The Brethren Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia and Oak Brook, IL: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1983-84), 159; *Brethren Beginnings: The Origin of the Church of the Brethren in Early Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1992), 15-18ff. References to Bohni in European literature are found in Eduard Thurneysen, "Die Basler Separatisten im ersten Viertel des achtzeduten Jahrhunderts," *[Basler] Jahrbuch* (1895): 30-78, (1896): 54-106; Paul Burckhardt, *Die Basler Täufer: Ein Beitrag zur schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte* (Basel: A. Reich, 1898), 61; Rudolf Ernst Grob, *Die separatistischen Strömungen im XVIII. Jahrhundert* (Zürich: Christlicher Verein, 1907), 18-21; Paul Wernle, *Der schweizerische Protestantismus im XVIII. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1923), 114, 196; Thomas Hanimann, *Züricher Nonkonformisten im 18. Jahrhundert* (Zürich: TVZ, 1990), 247; and Hanspeter Jecker, *Ketzer—Rebellen—Heilige: Das Basler Täufertum von 1580-1700* (Basel: Verlag des Kantons Basel-Landschaft, 1998), 518, 532, 576.

[8] Recent summaries of the voluminous literature on Anabaptism and the Mennonites are: Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History: A Popular History of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites*, 3d ed. (Scottdale, PA: Herald *Press*, 1996); William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*, 3d rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William R. Eerdmans, 1996); C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1996).

[9] The definitive multi-volume history of Pietism is now underway in Germany; thus far two volumes have been published: Martin Brecht, ed., *Geschichte des Pietismus, Band 1: Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993) and Martin Brecht and Klaus Deppermann, eds., *Geschichte des Pietismus, Band 2: Der Pietismus im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995). Dependable surveys of Pietism in English are Dale W. Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, rev. ed. (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1996); Ted A. Campbell, *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991); F. Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) and *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973); W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). The latest analysis of Anabaptist and Pietist interaction among German Mennonites is John Roth, "Pietism and the Anabaptist Soul," *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 25 (1999): 182-202.

[10] Hanspeter Jecker, "Religiöser Non-Konformismus in Basel im frühen 18. Jahrhundert: Der Fall des Andreas Bohni von Frenkendorf," funded for 1999-2001 by the Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung, Abteilung I: Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften.

[11] The documents on these transactions are found in English translation in Durnbaugh, *European Origins* (1958), 87-105. Information on the conditions in Wittgenstein is given in the same volume, 107-9. See also Heinz Renkewitz, *Hochmann von Hochenau (1670-1721): Quellenstudien zur Geschichte des Pietismus*, 2d ed. (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1969), 88-91.

[12] The latest treatment of these events is D. F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1997).

[13] The imprisonment, diplomatic efforts, and eventual liberation are described in Durnbaugh, *European Origins (1958)*, 217-40 (documents), and Durnbaugh, *Brethren Beginnings* (1992), 43-46.

[14] Durnbaugh, *European Origins* (1958), 291-92, 297-98; from Ralph B. Strassburger, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, ed. William J. Hinke (Norristown, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1934), 1: 27-28—"Andreas Ponne" and "Joanna Margaret Ponne." There is a curious, undocumented reference to an Andreas Bonij

(Boney) resident in Germantown before 1710 in William I. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania* Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, 2 (Swarthmore, PA: Swarthmore College, 1935), 412. Although Hull was a careful scholar, this reference is probably mistaken.

[15] The document is found in Fasz. 9897, fol. 18, Abt. 74, Baden Generalia, Badisches Generallandesarchiv, Karlsruhe. Because the document is an extract from the original letter, the residence of Martin Bohni is not given. The existence of the extract in the Karlsrube archive could indicate that the cousin was resident in one of the German states, but it is also possible that he was still in his native Basel Canton.

[16] Christian Liebe was the former galley-slave whom Bohni helped to liberate. He was a controversial figure in early Brethren history; his activities led to a serious schism in the Brethren congregation in Krefeld, one of the precipitants for the first company of Brethren to emigrate to Pennsylvania in 1719. See Durnbaugh, *European Origins* (1958), 282-83; Durnbaugh, *Brethren Beginnings* (1992), 51-54. On the De Kokers, see Durnbaugh, *European Origins* (1958), 262-64; Durnbaugh, *Brethren Beginings* (1992), 56-58.

[17] The original title is: *Glaubhafftes/ Send-Schreiben/ Aus/ Pensylvania in America/ Worinnen/ Einige gründliche Nachrichten/ (1) Von de Beschaffenheit des Landes// (2) Von dem Zug, Seefa[h]rt und Ueberkunfft/ der Europaeischen Passagire insgemein// und /(3) Insonderheit einige gewissenhafte und/ erweisliche Nachricht von dem letzten/ zwar häufigen/ / aber auch elenden und/ Jammer-vollen Zug des Jahres 1738./ enthalten ist etc./ Aus dringender Liebe und Mitleyden zur/ Warnung heraus geschrieben, und mit eigenen/ Insiegelen bekrafftiget von einigen Gutgesinnten/ all da, an ihre Europaeische und insonderheit/ Hochteutsche Lands-Leute etc.... / Franckfurth am Mayn, 1739. / Bey Just. Heinr. Wigand Buchbinder auff dem/ Marckt in den drey Römern.* For many years there was only one known copy of the pamphlet, that in the private collection of Dr. Martha Haeberlin, Bad Nauheim, a descendant of Dr. Heinrich Ehrenfried Luther. A recent Internet search of German libraries revealed one other copy in the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar.

[18] On the connection between Dr. Luther and Sauer, see D. F. Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer: Pennsylvania-German Printer: His Youth in Germany and Later Relationships with Europe," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 82 (July 1958): 316-40; see also Edward W. Hocker, "The Founding of the Sauer Press," *Germantown History* 2 (1938): 6: 137-54. For Dr. Luther's interest in emigration matters, consult Harry Gerber, "Der Hofrat Dr. Heinrich Ehrenfried Luther und die deutsche Auswanderung nach Nordamerika," *Alt-Frankfurt: Geschichtliche Zeitschrift fur Frankfurt am Main und seine Umgebung* 2 (June 1929): 61-66, and Heinrich A. Rattermann, "Geschichte des deutschen Elements im Staat Maine," *Der Deutsche Pionier: Erinnerungen aus dem Pionier-Leben der Deutschen in Amerika* 14-16 (1882-84). The latest information on Andreas Gross is found in Hans Schneider, "Der radikale Pietismus im 18. Jahrhundert," in Brecht and Deppermann, *Geschichte des Pietismus: Band* 2 (1995), 159-60, with extensive bibliographical citation, 191-92.

[19] Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial* America (1967), 32; Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers* (1999), 27ff. The letters were published in Gerhard Friedrich, "The Good Samaritan of Germantown: Two Christoph Saur Letters," *The German-American Review* 7 (February 1941): 15-19, 33. An early recounting of Sauer's efforts on behalf of immigrants is found in Oswald Seidensticker, "Die deutsch-amerikanische Druckerfamilie Saur," in his *Bilder aus der Deutsch-Pennsylvanischen Geschichte* (New York: Ernst Steiger, 1885), in the section titled "Christoph Saur sen. über die Mißbräuche des Passagier-Transports."

[20] See on this point Jean R. Sunderland, ed., *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680-1684:* A *Documentary History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press/Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1983).

[21] See on these issues James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor* Man's *Country:* A *Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972).

[22] Details on the activities of the Newlanders are found in Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers* (1999), esp. 30-34.

[23] Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers* (1999), 59-112 (chap. 3, "Trade in Migrants") provides extensive information on this development. See also Farley Grubb, "The Market Structure of Shipping German Immigrants to Colonial America," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 111 (January 1987): 27-48. A good general overview is presented in Sally Schwartz, *"A Mixed Multitude": The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), chap. 4 "Immigration," 81-119.

[24] Sauer had earlier given advice on profitable goods that might be imported: D. F. Durnbaugh, ed., "Two Early Letters from Germantown," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 84 (1960): 220-33, reprinted in Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America (1967)*, 24-39.

[25] For details on these problems, see Klaus Wust, "Feeding the Palatines: Shipboard Diet in the

Eighteenth Century," *The Report: A Journal of German-American History* 39 (1984): 32-42.

[26] Compare throughout this section the detailed study by Wust, "Emigration Season of 1738," 21-56.

[27] Quoted from Wust, "Emigration Season of 1738," 34.

[28] Graff has not been identified.

[29] Sauer is discussed above.

[30] Best known as a Reformed pastor in Germantown, Bechtel (1690-1777) was active in the Reformed-Moravian controversies involving Count Zinzendorf in 1741-42; he later joined the Moravian Church. See Charles H. Glatfelter, *Pastors and People: German Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Pennsylvania Field, 1717-1793* (Breinigsville, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1980), 18; William J. Hinke, *Ministers of the German Reformed Congregations in Pennsylvania and Other Colonies in the Eighteenth Century* (Lancaster, PA: Historical Commission of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 1951), 296-99.

[31] Gruber (1693-1763) was a leader of the Community of True Inspiration in Germany before emigrating to Pennsylvania in 1726. He remained in close contact with co-religionists in Europe through correspondence. Many of his writings opposing the activities of Count Zinzendorf were reprinted or first published in Germany. See D. F. Durnbaugh, "Johann Adam Gruber: Pennsylvania-German Prophet and Poet," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 83 (1989): 382-408.

[32] Schweitzer (whose dates are unknown) was a church leader among the Germantown Brethren (Dunkers). See Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America* (1967), 53, 201, 599

[33] Eckstein figures in the journals of Heinrich Melchior Mühenberg as receiving correspondence via Sauer. See Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein, eds., *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1942), 1:646, 651.

[34] Baumann, a Lutheran layman, died before 1783. See Tappert and Doberstein, *Journals* (1942), 1:615.

[35] Deschler (also Däschler) was a prominent merchant in Philadelphia; he figured in contacts between Germany and North America. See Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America* (1967), 53, 55.

[36] Wüster (also Wister, Wistar) came to Pennsylvania in 1727 and became a well-to-do wine merchant and dealer in real estate in Philadelphia; he was the brother of the famous glass manufacturer Caspar Wistar. In 1771 he took as his third wife the former celibate sister Anastasia from Ephrata (Anna Margaretha Thoma from Switzerland). See Anna Lane Lingelbach, "Wister, Sallie," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 20:434; E. G. Alderfer, *The Ephrata Commune: An Early American Counterculture* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 74; Leo Schelbert, "People of Choice: Decision Making in an Eighteenth Century Swiss-German Peasant Family," *The Report: A Journal of German-American History* 40 (1986): 77-93.

[37] Meng was an active Lutheran churchman in Germantown; he was one of the sponsors of a public school in Germantown, decided at a meeting in Mackinet's inn. See Tappert and Doberstein, *Journals* (1942), 1:596, 614-15; Edward W. Hocker, *Germantown, 1683-1933* (Philadelphia: privately printed, 1933), 81-82.

[38] Kalckglöser also Kalckgläser (1678-1748) was a leader among the Brethren in Germany and North America, before joining the Ephrata Society in 1739. See Durnbaugh, *Brethren in Colonial America* (1967), esp. 94-95.

[39] Bentzel has not been identified. A Charles Bensil was one of the sponsors of a school in Germantown in 1759. See Hocker, *Germantown, 1683-1933*, 81-82.

[40] Mackineth, or usually, Mackinet (d. 1761) was active in the Inspired movement in Germany, for a short time as a prophet and then as a scribe. He often accompanied Johann Adam Gruber on his extensive journeys. After emigrating to Pennsylvania, he was a merchant and innkeeper (the Saddler's Arms, later renamed the Green Tree Inn which still exists). In 1755 Sauer proposed him as a competent supervisor of immigration for Philadelphia, describing him as a "shopkeeper in philad. who Speacks dutch and english." See Durnbaugh, "Johann Adam Gruber," 382-408; Ulf-Michael Schneider, *Propheten der Goethezeit: Sprache, Literatur and Wirkung der Inspirierten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 29, 42, 129ff.; Thomas A. Ebaugh, *Ancestors of George McNett and Susan Armentrout and Their Known Descendants and Some Related Families* (New Orleans: privately printed, 1961), 14-15, 21-23; Friedrich, "Good Samaritan," 16.

[41] Benezet (1713-84), a native of France, came to North America in 1731. By vocation a teacher, he was active in many philanthropic endeavors, in particular his anti-slavery agitation, helping to found the first abolitionist society in America. See George S. Brookes, *Friend Anthony Benezet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937); Margaret Hope Bacon, *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1985), 76, 96, 100-2.

[42] Müntz has not been identified.