In my country we talked about the new world; And it is really a new world to me; Because everything is simply totally different here from where I used to live.

—Christoph Saur, *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender* (Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1751)\(^1\)

The *Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender* (High German American Almanac) forecast heavy losses for 1755. Penned by full-time separatist and printer, occasional pamphleteer, and frequent polemicist Christoph Saur (1695–1758), the popular almanac offered a medium for sustained reflection on the various kinds of loss experienced by German migrants to British North America.\(^2\) Provocatively, Saur’s almanac told Pennsylvania Germans not only that they suffered loss, but that they caused it.

Having migrated to Pennsylvania with a wife and young son in 1724, Saur was at the forefront of an influx into the American colony that was fast becoming the preferred destination of German settlers.\(^3\) He began the almanac in 1738 in Germantown, Pennsylvania; by the 1750s, he could draw on over three decades of experience in this new world where everything was “simply totally different” (schier alles

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\(^1\) “Man hat in meinem Land von der Neuen Welt geredet; Und es ist mir wohl eine Neue Welt; Dann es ist hier schier alles gantz anderst als wo ich gewohnet habe.” All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

\(^2\) Like most German names in the colonies, the spelling of Saur’s last name varies. “Saur” is the name the printer used on most of his title pages. The name is also frequently spelled Sauer and, in an Anglicized form, Sower.

4 His almanac offered its readers remedies for bewilderment and hints for orientation. Its advice is nowhere more plain than in a column that ran in the almanac from 1751 to 1758 written as a dialogue between a resident and a newcomer. Saur used the column to prophesy the radical losses that he feared new migrants’ arrival spelled. Recent German arrivals to Pennsylvania, Saur wrote repeatedly, failed to appreciate the legacy bequeathed them by English Quaker founder, William Penn. Foretelling the instrumentalization of military emergency to curtail the freedoms guaranteed Pennsylvanians in the colony’s founding frame of government, the printer’s prognostications drew heavy fire in their day.

While the small number of German migrants who had sought out Pennsylvania before the 1720s did so primarily for freedom of conscience, more recent arrivals had moved there to alleviate more earthly problems.5 Propelled by economic hardship, these new Pennsylvania Germans, Saur lamented, purchased new world prosperity at a terrible price. Land around Philadelphia and Germantown grew increasingly expensive. Eager to acquire their own piece of the new world, newcomers pushed further into the “backcountry.” But this was hardly empty land—it was already claimed by various Native American and European nations. Newcomers feared the violence along always contested colonial American borders, Saur knew, but arming the frontier would take a still more terrible toll. Sorting through the many losses mediated by Saur’s almanac, this essay’s first part discusses the almanac and the remedies it offered Germans still adrift in the new world. Its second part explores the advice column’s excoriations of “Pfaffen,” the men of the cloth whom the non-conformist printer held responsible for introducing so many “old Adams” into this new world.

Losing the Peace

Saur began the almanac upon opening his print shop for business on Germantown’s central artery. Then fourteen years in the colony, Saur

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4 Christoph Saur, *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender* (Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1751). Saur’s *Calender* is unpaginated. All references are identified simply by the year listed on the title page.

5 Wokeck makes a compelling case for this periodization. The years from 1749–54—overlapping with Saur’s inclusion of the advice column in the almanac—saw particularly heavy traffic in German migrants. Wokeck, *Trade*, 45–46.