NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Ezechiel Sangmeister’s Diary*

The written word always has had a magic influence on the credulity of the reader. An oral tradition is likely to be considered unreliable but when the information is written down, can be seen “black on white” it becomes almost sacrosanct. Not only intellectually inferior people have been an easy prey for the magic of the written or printed word, all groups of our society at all periods of the history of mankind have been guilty sometimes of a lack of vigilance, of accepting information as correct only because it had been written. Moreover, although we are apt to be skeptical with regard to recent information, when the nimbus of ancient provenience is added, or when the name of a famous person is quoted as the alleged author of a work, it seems almost heresy to doubt its authenticity. For this reason imposters have frequently chosen to publish their own opinions under the shelter of a distinguished name or to camouflage them with a pseudo-patina of old age.1

The numbers and the influence of forgeries of political documents and of works of literature are amazing. The so-called Donations of Constantine, for instance, determined the fate of medieval Europe.

* I am greatly indebted to Col. H. W. Shoemaker, State Archivist of Pennsylvania, for supplying the photostat of the Sangmeister letter preserved in the Pennsylvania Archives; to Mr. A. D. Keator, State Librarian, Harrisburg and to Mr. H. B. Anstaett, Librarian of Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, for giving me on inter-library loan for almost a year their copies of Sangmeister’s Das Leben; and to my colleague at the Foundation, Mr. E. Doll, for helpful criticism.

More than I can express I am indebted to Dr. A. E. Zucker, University of Maryland. Dr. Zucker, who had been for the last two years the Director of Research at the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, has followed my research with the greatest interest and sympathy. I had the opportunity to discuss with him frequently my findings and I had his help in checking my conclusions. In February, 1942, Dr. Zucker arranged a small meeting of various specialists in Pennsylvania history and gave me the opportunity to explain my Sangmeister theory. Dr. Zucker has followed the development of my investigation from the outset and I must ask him to share the responsibility for the findings with me.

1 The standard publication on literary forgeries is still J. A. Farrer, Literary Forgeries (London, Longmans Green & Co., 1907). The well-known rare book dealer Martin Breslauer had an excellent collection on books of this field. (Described in his fall catalogue, 1942.)
In the year 777 Pope Hadrian produced a document which supposedly had been signed by the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great and addressed to Pope Sylvester, and in which the entire imperial power of Rome was transferred to the Roman Church. The Pope became *de facto* Roman emperor and the power and the privileges of Senate and Consuls passed to the clergy. This forged document was one of the mightiest weapons of the papacy in its fight for supremacy during the Middle Ages. Nobody dared to doubt its reliability until the great Cardinal Nicolas de Cusa (1401–1464) exposed the falsification.

Another famous instance from medieval history is the Austrian *Privilegium Majus*. The Austrian Duke Rudolph IV (1358–1365) produced a document signed by no less a person than Julius Caesar, in which almost complete independence was given to the possessions of the Habsburgs. Furthermore the title Archduke was granted to all members of the family. Petrarch, whose opinion was asked by the Emperor Charles IV, denounced it immediately as a crude falsification. Although the privileges so kindly granted by Julius Caesar 1400 years after his death, have never been legalized, the title Archduke is still given to the members of the family.

The restoration of the Stuarts in the seventeenth century was greatly facilitated by a literary forgery. Shortly after the execution of Charles I, John Gauden published his *Eikon Basilike* over the name of the king. The reaction of the English public towards the Stuarts was so favorably influenced by this publication that it became one of the great assets of Charles II in his successful attempt to regain the kingdom. Farrer (*op. cit.*) remarks about the *Eikon*: "It may be doubted whether any book in the world's history ever had so decisive an effect on the tide of events."

Benjamin Franklin published two of his biting political pamphlets under a forged name. In September, 1773, he published in London under the name of Frederick II of Prussia *An Edict by the King of Prussia*. All the restrictions imposed on American trade and manufacturing by the different acts of Parliament are given here as new regulations by the "motherland Prussia to its colony the island of Britain." It is one of the most amusing of political satires, compa-
rable in its wit with the first part of the Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum. However, its influence on Council and Parliament was small and Franklin acknowledged his authorship soon after publication. Again, his authorship of a letter allegedly written by the Duke of Hesse to his commanding general in America after the battle of Trenton cannot be doubted. As the Duke was to receive a high bounty for every Hessian soldier killed in America, in this letter he asked his general to sacrifice as many troops as possible. As late as 1902 the letter was republished as authentic.

No written or printed source of information can be accepted as reliable before it has been subjected to a careful documentary critique. Skillfully and cautiously as a forger may have proceeded, there will always be something he missed, a gap he has forgotten to stop, a seemingly insignificant lapse of his pen, an anachronism or some other bit of internal evidence which proves that the work is a spurious one. Such a critique is especially necessary when several reports on some historical phenomenon differ in important points. Such is the case in the documentation for the history of Ephrata Cloister in Pennsylvania and for the life of its founder Conrad Beissel.

Ephrata Cloister, situated about twelve miles northeast of Lancaster, is one of the most interesting institutions of colonial America. It was founded in 1732 by a small group of German sectarians under the leadership of Conrad Beissel. Although an offspring of the German Baptist Brethren these men differed from the main body especially in two points. They kept the seventh day instead of Sunday; they discouraged matrimony and praised the complete suppression of all sexual desire. Brothers and sisters lived in separate houses and met only for worship. As in the Third Order of the Franciscans, married couples called Householders were accepted, and lived in small houses on the fringe of the Cloister ground.

The institution they founded is in many aspects similar to a medieval monastery. No individual property was permissible, the whole income of the group was derived from communal labor. When a member was accepted his old "worldly" name was changed to a

3 John Bigelow, ed., Franklin Works (New York, Putnam, 1904), VII, 191. See also Van Doren, B. Franklin, 575.

new monastic one. With the expectation of the second coming of the Lord in the near future, the entire life of the community was directed towards a mystical relation to God. All worldly pleasures were excluded and the members of the Ephrata community were trained to endure privations. Only a few hours of the night could be spent in sleep on wooden benches. The hours of worship were long and the work was accepted as an integral part of the divine service. Besides the labor necessary to fill the economic needs of the settlement, hymnbooks were written and illuminated, the choir was trained, and religious and secular education was offered to the neighborhood. The Cloister became a cultural center whose influence can hardly be over-estimated.

The leading personality of the group was Conrad Beissel. He set the goal, and although some members revolted (as it was bound to happen) he remained the spiritual leader till his death (1768). His successor Peter Miller (died 1796) guided the community for a score of years, but only a few new members were gained and in time the group died out. The State has now taken over the buildings and will restore them as a historical site.

Our two most important sources for the history of Ephrata are the *Chronicon Ephratense* and the diary of Ezechiel Sangmeister. These two sources contradict each other to a great extent. The *Chronicon* describes Conrad Beissel as a holy and very religious man; Sangmeister, however, has no appreciation for the "Vorsteher" and Beissel is depicted by him as a kind of colonial Rasputin. The *Chronicon* may be biased in favor of Beissel, as it was for the most part written by Peter Miller, who had a great affection and devotion for his religious teacher, but its authenticity cannot be doubted. The manuscript had been seen by impartial, contemporary witnesses and the book, although abridged, was printed in 1786 during the author's lifetime in Ephrata. On the other hand, the origin of Sangmeister's book is by no means clear, in fact it appeared under rather mysterious circumstances.


6 Ezechiel Sangmeister, *Das Leben und der Wandel des in Gott Ruhenden Bruders Ezechiel Sangmeister. Von ihm selbst beschrieben in 6 Teilen.* (Ephrata, Joseph Bauman, 1825–26, 4 parts.)

Reliable information about Sangmeister himself is rather scanty. The *Chronicon* briefly mentions his arrival at the Cloister in 1748:8 “William Young sent 1748 Henry Sangmeister and Anthony Hoellenthal. The first received the name Ezechiel.” He stayed only four years at the Cloister, and the *Chronicon* reports in 1752:9 “At that time the brothers Henry Sangmeister and Anthony Hoellenthal left the settlement and settled as hermits on the river Shenandoah in Virginia, but as they preferred an unfettered life to the discipline of God they joined the Eckerlins, for like joins like, whereby they became participants in the judgment which rested on these, although they had not yet committed as many offences in the settlement. This Sangmeister once brought a large manuscript of the Prior (Eckerlin) to the printer in the settlement, which contained an account of the falling away in Ephrata and desired to have it printed.”

Sangmeister must have returned later to the Cloister, because he died there December 30, 1784. To this bare outline we may add a few personal data from his diary. He reports his birthdate as August 9, 1723, in Beddig near Wolfenbuettel. Leaving home at the age of sixteen, he came to Philadelphia in 1743. Here he served four years as redemptioneer and subsequently worked as a joiner in Germantown. In Philadelphia he met Anton Hoellenthal (or Hellenthal); and William Young, who acted as a kind of representative for Beissel in Germantown, persuaded both men to join the settlement of the Seventh-Day Baptists in Ephrata. Sangmeister, too, gives the dates of his arrival in Ephrata as 1748, of his departure as 1752, and of his return as 1764. We have no reason to doubt the accuracy of these statements.

Sangmeister was one of those men who were, to say the least, very difficult to handle. He revolted against Beissel’s leadership and found fault with almost everybody. We have, as we shall see later, every reason to assume that he loved to write long letters, and there was a tradition in Ephrata (current long after his death) that he had been the author of many books.10 But no book of his was published during his lifetime. Only one man claimed to have seen a Sangmeister manuscript, Mr. Joseph Bauman of Ephrata. Mr. Bauman found

8 Hark’s edition, 202.
9 Ibid., 230.
10 *Heutiges Signal* (Ephrata, 1812), 30.
two—the most important Sangmeister manuscripts—but unfortu-
nately he lost them both. Just as they miraculously appeared to be
printed by the lucky finder, they disappeared in an equally mysteri-
ous fashion after they had been preserved in print.

The available information about the Bauman family is also very
incomplete. According to Sachse the plantation of Johann Baumann
adjoined the Cloister property. Sachse reports further that Johann
Baumann bought the entire printing plant of the Cloister in 1799.
From 1800 till 1808 at least six books appeared under the imprint of
Johannes Bauman, Ephrata. Joseph Bauman started his printing
press in Ephrata in 1819 and the latest imprint found so far is dated
1830. In the Cloister graveyard in Ephrata is a tombstone with the
inscription: "Joseph Bauman died February 24, 1859, aged 57 years,
1 month, 14 days." Another Joseph Bauman is mentioned in Notes
and Queries, 1899, with the dates of his birth and death given as
July 10, 1796—May 19, 1872. Mr. H. Minot Pitman, the compiler
of the great Fahnestock genealogy, mentions a Joseph Bauman,
"printer of Cocalico." This Joseph was a son of Christian Bauman
and his wife Sarah Fahnestock. As the mother died January 30, 1792,
we have a reliable terminus ante quem for the birth of Joseph. His
grandfather Peter Fahnestock was a member of the Ephrata
Brethren before his marriage.

I am unable to prove which of the three Joseph Baumans was the
printer of the Sangmeister diary, but I am inclined to accept the

II, 341.
12 Sachse, op. cit. I could not verify that information.
13 List of books printed by Johannes Bauman:
1800—Ein Gesprach betreffend des Sabbaths, zwischen einen Taeufer, Rogeraner, Roemischen
Katholic und Kirchenmann. 16 mo. 92 p.
1801—Das geistliche Vogel-Gesang von allerley Voegelen, was dieselben vor Natur und Wesen
an sich haben. 12 mo. 13 p.
1804—Bergholder, Nutzliche und erbauliche Anrede an die Jugend von der wahren Busse.
Zum zweytenmal herausgegeben. 12 mo. 92 p. (Baumann und Cleim).
1806—Jacob Stoll. Geistliches Gewuerz-gaertlein heilsuchender Seelen oder kurz gefasste
Betrachtungen ueber einige auserlesene Sprueche der Heiligen Schrift in gebunden Schlussreimen
und Geist-lichen Brosamen. 16 mo. 190 p.
14 Mrs. Charles M. Coldren, librarian of the Lancaster County Historical Society kindly
supplied these data.
15 Information kindly supplied by Mr. Pitman.
last named as the most probable. The list of the books he published proves his interest in mystical and religious literature. He was, however, a good enough businessman not to frown upon more popular works like Albertus Magnus' *Weiberbüchlein* and Hohman's famous "Powwow Book," *The Long Hidden Friend*.

Bauman's best coup as a publisher was undoubtedly the discovery and publication of the two Sangmeister manuscripts. The first book found was the *Mystische Theologie* published in 1819, this in the very beginning of his career as a publisher. Bauman is very discreet about the origins of the book, saying only that it had been hidden over thirty years and had now been miraculously discovered. (Durch eine sonderbare Fügung und Schickung).

The book itself consists of three parts which seemingly had been published and sold as a continuation. It is octavo in size and the printer had therefore to work in signatures of sixteen pages. Interestingly enough the text of the second part of the *Theologie* ends at page eighty-nine; there were, therefore, seven pages to be filled to complete the last signature. Seemingly Sangmeister in writing his book, had been able to predict that his future printer would need material for seven pages at just this point! And so he announced his intention of continuing the argument: "Because there is still some space left (Weil aber noch ein Wenig Raum übrig ist)." Editor Bauman, made a cautious footnote: "To wit there had been some space left in the author's manuscript. (Nämlich es war noch ein wenig Raum übrig in des Autors Traktat)."

This statement becomes suspect when the critic tries to visualize the mechanics of Sangmeister's composition of his book. The paper of the eighteenth century was cut in sheets and not bound in the small copybooks now found in stationery stores. Therefore, the space left unused could not have been more than a part of a page and perhaps the verso of the page. Even assuming that a writer is so thrifty that he makes full use of all vacant space, Sangmeister could not have had at his disposal more than the fraction of a sheet. No matter how small his script, he could not write so much text that it would fill seven closely printed pages. But Mr. Bauman asserts that there was space left in the author's manuscript for an appendix, which

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16 First edition, Reading, 1820. About a dozen German and English editions have appeared in the last hundred years.
incidentally filled exactly the seven pages of his form. Following the wise counsel *in dubio pro reo* we shall leave it at that.

However, we may blame the editor for not having read carefully the text he was to print. From Bauman’s footnote to Part II we learn, that the printer had sold the volume on a subscription basis promising that that part would contain an explanation of the Twenty-fourth Chapter of Matthew. But the text covers only verses 1–28 (instead of 1–51) and ends abruptly: “Thus far I was granted to write this time (So weit war es mir zum schreiben vor dismal gegeben).” Thereupon Bauman was forced to add an apology for not having recognized when he started printing, that only a part of the whole chapter was covered.

Bauman’s editorial technique with regard to Sangmeister’s manuscripts is here in its cradle period. Six years later when he found the great diary his method had fully developed. His elaborate description of the discovery of the manuscript is worth reading carefully.17

It is a remarkable document, the autobiography of the late blessed Brother Ezechiel Sangmeister, a manuscript in quarto containing somewhat over 1000 pages. It was found in a small box, well secured with a lid, in a room on the upper floor which served as his devotional chamber, where he spent secret hours in devotional exercises, but which served also as his bedroom and study. There was wainscoting all around the room. The box with the manuscript was very secretively hidden behind the wainscoting near the window, covered by means of a wooden strip fastened with nails, the chinks carefully covered with paper. Because in other rooms too the joints in the wainscoting were similarly covered with paper, there was no reason to suspect anything of the sort, nor to surmise a hidden object behind that wall.

Nevertheless and quite contrary to appearances, when the time which had been set for the discovery was approaching, it happened that before the discovery a young man was impelled to notice that the paper was loose at the very point where the box was hidden. (Just as if it asked to be discovered!) This caught his eye and therefore he tried to remove the paper where it had been loose and to scrape off the rest. He thought then that he could see something behind the wainscoting through a small crack in the joints. Thus he surmised that something might be hidden there. He meant to announce his find, but scarcely had he descended the stairs when he had forgotten it, and he did not know what he had wanted to say. And this very thing happened to him, as he said, several times. But then on the above mentioned day it happened that his sister came to ask for a piece of brass wire. She was told to look for it on the upper floor. Her brother followed her and as they both came upstairs it occurred to him to show her the place where he believed he had seen through a crack an object which did not belong to the wainscoting. His sister then

reported that apparently something was hidden there. An investigation was then made to determine whether there could be something to the report and the matter was held to be at least worth investigating. The moulding in question was removed and one found that the wooden board was fitted in so as to be removable. When the board was slid out, the box with the manuscript was found snugly fitted into the wall, ingeniously hidden by the board. There it had thus remained secreted throughout 40 years, until it was found at the very time and in that very place, as is told here.

Assuming that the Bauman story is absolutely correct, a few points deserve closer inspection. There is first the question of the wainscoting (getäfelte Bordwand). Wainscoting was by no means customary in Pennsylvania German farmhouses. Undoubtedly there was none in the Brother House in Ephrata. This alone is not decisive, because there remains the possibility that Sangmeister's house deviated from the general custom in the matter of wainscoting. But a paper manuscript hidden behind a wall near a window sill deteriorates in forty years and becomes the prey of bookworms, mice and the like. Assuming for the moment that favorable circumstances had preserved the manuscript after the author's death, yet what had happened to it during Sangmeister's lifetime?

A quarto manuscript of one thousand pages is a bulky book. Had Sangmeister carried this to the Indian frontier and back? Had it survived all the hardships of his travel? And where had he kept it after his return to Ephrata? An Ephrata monk did not have much privacy and Beissel, who was very suspicious, would surely have noticed it and objected to an antagonistic description of his life work. But not only did Beissel fail to see it; neither Peter Miller who had written the Chronicon, nor any of the many visitors who observed Ephrata with great interest, ever suspected the existence of so important a document. Seemingly, extraordinary fate not only preserved the manuscript for forty years after the author's death, but also concealed it from worldly eyes from 1754 on when, according to Sangmeister's own words, he started to write his autobiography. Maybe it did! But surely our credulity is taxed to the utmost. Our doubts are increased by Bauman's report that the manuscript was found after exactly forty years, for this figure forty appears frequently in the Scriptures. That the manuscript "wished to be found" after just forty years sounds rather too much like a Biblical parallel to be convincing.
Bauman’s introduction starts off with a sharp attack on the *Chronicon*. Miller’s book is called partisan and unreliable “and what is the worst that can be said about it, its only purpose is to praise Beissel.” (Was noch mehr und das ärgste und grösste Uebel daran ist; ist eben das, um den Conrad Beissel übers Ziel und Mass zu erheben zum Endzweck hat.) He finishes his remarks on Miller with the statement that his work had satisfied hardly anybody.\(^\text{18}\) After having thus settled the reliability of the *Chronicon* Bauman praises his own forthcoming publication. In his opinion the public was anxious to have an unbiased description of Ephrata. And here was Sangmeister’s diary, so miraculously found, to answer the need. Sangmeister’s description must be true, Bauman’s argument continued, or it would not have been preserved through forty years to be found just when there was a real need for such a book.

Und also erscheint nunmehro, ein solches Werck, von wahrhafter Aechtheit, worauf man sich verlassen kan; und wird also ohne dass man es je vermuthet hätte, ein solcher Wunsch noch endlich würcklich erfüllt; welches jedoch wie schon erinnert worden, nicht ohne die sonderbare Fügung Göttlicher Vorsehung hätte geschehen können Und beruhet nun das ganze Werck, also vor Augen gestellt, so wie sich die Sache an sich selbst und im Grunde vor Gott und seiner Allgegenwart befunden.

But there was still some difficulty. If Sangmeister’s work was to supersede the *Chronicon* completely, it had to contain a complete history of the settlement. But Sangmeister did not come to Ephrata until 1748 and, according to his own words, did not start the diary until May 6, 1754. Fortunately, Sangmeister seemingly knew exactly what his future publisher would need. He started the diary in 1754 but began his manuscript with a critical extract of the *Chronicon*, which according to his own statement he had seen in 1768. There can be no doubt that this extract was not written for Sangmeister’s own benefit but with a view to publication.\(^\text{19}\)

A short introduction may be indicated for those who might happen to read the following to give them a better understanding of the contents. (Es wird nicht undienlich sein, einen kleinen Vorbericht darzulegen, damit so jemand dieses folgende zu lesen bekäme, ein wenig einen Aufschluss davon bekommen, und dessen Inhalt desto besser begreifen könne.) Therefore I have extracted this part in all humility so that posterity may see that the story, even in their own words, deviated from their “current tradition.” (Dahero habe ich diese wenige in Einfalt herausgezogen, damit die Nachwelt sehen möge, dass sich die Sache ihrem eigenen Schreiben nach nicht so verhalten hat, als man jederzeit vorgegeben hat.)

\(^{18}\) Vol. I, 3.

\(^{19}\) Vol. I, 7.
Let us suppose that this is correct. Sangmeister saw the *Chronicon* after 1768 and felt the need for a critical comment. But logically he should have discussed the entire manuscript up to Beissel's death. This, however, would have complicated the publication plans of Bauman. The period, 1748–1768, was covered by the diary and to include additional comments about those years in the *Chronicon* critique would have meant an overlapping of ideas and material. Again, Sangmeister had foreseen the difficulty of his publisher and his *Chronicon* critique stops conveniently at 1748. Now these two parts fit together: the critique covers the years before 1748; the diary goes on till 1768, thus the entire period is considered.

Sangmeister says that the manuscript of the *Chronicon* which he had seen contained six hundred sheets. He adds that one-third had been burnt immediately by the Brethren, and that Peter Miller had sent an abstract of about thirty leaves to friends in Germany. There might be some truth in this information. The *Chronicon* stops at 1768 and it was finished in 1777. The printed edition of 1786 is an abridged one. When Peter Miller brought an English translation of the work to Christopher Marshall to have it corrected, the manuscript contained four hundred eighty-eight quarto pages. The printed edition has two hundred fifty quarto pages. Now if the pagination given in Sangmeister is correct, he used a manuscript of sixteen hundred pages. Since both the original manuscript of the *Chronicon* and the English translation are lost, we cannot verify Sangmeister's story. For the time it will suffice to note that he reports nothing new in his thirty-seven pages of critique. In an analysis of the main text of the diary we shall have further occasion to discuss the use of the unabridged *Chronicon* manuscript.

It is necessary to keep in mind the fact that according to Sangmeister's own words the whole work as published by Bauman is a diary which he started to write May 6, 1754, during his stay in the Shenandoah Valley. But neither the *Chronicon* critique written after 1768, nor the four page introduction fits into that picture. A diary is written in the present tense, and nobody would start his journal with the words: "I made the beginning." The introduction is not the beginning of a private diary but sounds as if it had been written

20 Marshall diary, Aug. 15, 21, Dec. 27, 1777.
much later as the preface to Memoirs prepared for the printer. Moreover, nobody can divide his diary in more or less equal parts; one generally just keeps on writing. But not Sangmeister. He was linked by some kind of elective affinity to his future publisher that enabled him to foresee how difficult it would be to print the whole diary in one volume. Therefore he obligingly divided the manuscript into equal parts and carefully wrote the appropriate final sentences: Here ends the first, second, third part, etcetera, of my diary.

It would seem difficult for someone writing decades before publication to predict whether the first part would fill completely the last signature of the printed book. But Sangmeister showed great consideration for his publisher. The text of Part I ends on page ninety-two, thus leaving four pages free. The same good fortune that had preserved the manuscript so miraculously had caused the diarist to supply copy for the empty pages, even furnishing a good title: "Short appendix." Sangmeister adds the explanation: "Because there is still some space left, I will report sundry events which I just happen to remember and then proceed to the second part." Needless to say, this appendix just rounds out the ninety-six pages!

At other times also Sangmeister lapsed from the usual style of writing a diary. He reports a saying from Beissel which he recalled from about the year 1750: "All diseases are caused by evil spirits. I was assured that I would never suffer from sickness." Sangmeister, supposedly writing shortly after 1754, slips into prophecy by adding: "But he was to find out otherwise before his death!" A similar error occurs in Sangmeister's description of an accident that happened to Brother Beno, to his account of which he adds the words: "Till he finally died as I shall report in the proper place" (Wie ich an seinem Orte melden werde). Similarly Sangmeister relates a number of dreams that have a prophetic character. Of these the most remarkable is his dream of February 9, 1769, in which the American Revolution is predicted: "I saw the whole country ablaze with war and all people killing each other. Which shall be a harbinger of the American misery."
men und immer einer den andern darnieder machen. Welches wohl ein Vorbote von dem amerikanischen Jammer sein wird.)

Two minor items do not seem to fit into our picture of colonial America. Under the year 1756 he mentions that he had met in Virginia a poor Hanoverian soldier with wife and child.\textsuperscript{26} I have not been able to find any information about the use of German troops in America before the Revolutionary War. Lord North told Thomas Hutchinson in November, 1774, that if necessary, Hessians and Hanoverians were to be employed in America.\textsuperscript{27} But as the King of England was also King of Hanover there is a slight possibility that Hanoverian volunteers were used during the French and Indian War. Under the year 1759\textsuperscript{28} Sangmeister complains about the vice of drinking too much coffee and tea ("every morning and every evening tea or coffee"). Such a situation, too, fits the period after 1800 better than that around 1760.

Taken by themselves none of the items quoted above could be considered a decisive proof that Sangmeister's diary is a falsification. But the mysterious appearance and disappearance of the manuscript, the interpolation of the \textit{Chronicon} critique, the division into convenient and equal parts, the addition of appendices to fill the last signatures, the inconsistency of the diary, the prediction of the Revolutionary War, justify considerable doubts about its authenticity. But if such a diary from Sangmeister's hand did not exist, who then wrote it? We cannot credit the finder and publisher of the manuscript, Mr. Bauman, with so much imagination as to have written the entire book. My hypothesis is that the Sangmeister diary is a compilation made by Mr. Bauman from the \textit{Chronicon Ephraetense} (perhaps from an unabridged manuscript) and from several letters of Sangmeister.

The relation between the \textit{Chronicon} and the Sangmeister book is a very close one. Both cover the same time period. Where the diary form could not be used a critique of the \textit{Chronicon} is added. The \textit{Chronicon} ends in 1768 and Sangmeister also stops at that time. Bauman gives as reason for that abrupt end the lack of interest of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Vol. II, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Thomas Hutchinson, \textit{Diary and Letters} (Boston, 1884--6), I, 397.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Vol. II, 93.
\end{itemize}
"The support we have received has not covered half of the expenses. The printer cannot carry such a big book without adequate subscription or sale. Therefore we decided to stop the work till we find more patrons to support the printing." (Indem aber die Unterstützung die Kosten nicht halb getragen haben und mit vielen Kosten verbunden ist und dem Drucker fast schwer fällt ein solch grosses Werk ohne Subscription oder hinlänglichen Abgang zu drucken so hat man sich entschlossen einen Stillstand zu machen bis sich mehr Liebhaber einfinden und den Druck befördern). Cautiously he defends the incompleteness of his publication by adding: "Incidentally, the work retains its full value. It is an excellent and useful book as it is well known to the patrons and experts. And probably in due time it will find more support for the publication of the other parts." (Uebrigens behält dieses Werk seinen volligen Wert und ist ein sehr gutes und nützliches Buch wie denen Liebhabern und Kennern dieses Werkes wohl bewusst ist. Und wird vermutlich zu seiner Zeit mehr Unterstützung gegeben werden zur Beförderung der übrigen Teile).

The identity of the dates of the beginning and the ending of the two books can hardly be termed a coincidence, especially since Bau- man in his introduction emphasizes that the Sangmeister opus replaces the *Chronicon*. In the *Chronicon* the time limit is organically linked with the whole construction of the book. This cannot be said of the diary. We can therefore conclude that the diary was constructed on the model of the *Chronicon*. Further, according to my hypothesis Bauman could not proceed beyond 1768, because his work is based on the text of the *Chronicon*.

The question now arises: did Bauman use the printed edition of 1786 or had he an unabridged manuscript at his disposal? If the pagination given in the *Chronicon* critique in volume one is correct, a more elaborate manuscript was used. This immediately raises the question: Did the manuscript contain essential information left out in the printed edition? A comparison of the description of Eckerlin’s captivity as given by Sangmeister and as found in the *Chronicon* suggests the answer. That event was selected because Sangmeister was nearer to the locality and spiritually closer to the Eckerlins than...
were the writers of the *Chronicon*. If his book anywhere contains valuable factual information not to be found in the *Chronicon* it should appear here.

**THE ECKERLIN CAPTIVITY**

according to *Chronicon Ephratense*
translated by J. M. Hark
(Lancaster, 1889), 232

THEY were not very far from their hermitage when seven hostile Mohawk Indians, under the command of a Frenchman, attacked it. The servant gave the alarm, but the Prior did not allow himself to be disturbed in his writing until they bound his hands on his back; they packed all their property on horses, of which these hermits possessed a great number, set the house on fire and decamped with their prisoners. Meanwhile Samuel Eckerlin arrived with the soldiers, while the fire was still glowing under the ashes. The distressing sight brought tears to his eyes; he stepped aside and allowed them to flow; an Indian who was concealed there, lying in wait according to their custom, to see whether anyone was looking after them, was moved by his tears to spare his life.

Now let us lay before the reader the further fortunes and misfortunes of the above-mentioned Prior and of his brother Jotham to their end, following the account obtained from their fellow prisoners. Because an English army, under General Forbes, was at the time on its march to besiege Fort Duquesne, the Indians made a wider detour to said fort to avoid the English. It took them eight days to make this journey, on

**THE ECKERLIN CAPTIVITY—**

**THE SANGMEISTER VERSION**

Ezekiel Sangmeister, *Leben und Wandel*, II, 80

In the year 1757 around harvest time the servant saw some Indians on the mountain. He told it immediately to the brethren who concluded that they were hostile Indians. There was only the possibility to submit to the will of God or to fight, but there were not enough men for the latter.

The resolution was hardly made when seven Indians led by a Frenchman invaded the house shouting terribly and making a devilish noise. They caught the two brothers and the servant, searched the whole house, took what they liked and loaded it on twelve horses. The other horses which they could not catch or were useless as draft horses were shot instantly. Afterwards they set the house on fire, so that two hours later everything was in ashes.

P.S. I had frequently admonished the brothers to give to the poor from their possessions. Yet they had answered, "who are the right poor?" But now God sent the Indians and the Frenchmen to haul away their possessions.

Afterwards they continued their travel towards Fort Duquesne. They chose a long way 'round about fearing the English might follow and catch up with them. They travelled seven days. The two brothers had little to eat during that time and their hands were tied. The servant, having been selected to replace an Indian who had been killed, had no fetters and received more food. He gave to the brothers from his portion
THE ECKERLIN CAPTIVITY

(Continued)

which they were sorely maltreated by
the Indians, who cut off the beard of one
of them so that a part of the cheek ad-
hered to it. At the said fort they sold
the two brothers to the French; but
their servant, Schillig by name, they
kept for themselves. During a severe
season the French took their prisoners
across the lakes to Montreal, where they
were for some time lodged in the Jesuit
College. From there they were sent to
Quebec, where they had to endure a
hard winter on poor fare; yet the Cana-
dians had so much respect for a hermit's
life, that they permitted them at times
to beg in the town, and thus they be-
came an object of pity to many, for
which God may reward them. They
wished to leave this unfriendly region
in the coming spring, but there were no
"flags of truce" there, such as used to go
from there to Halifax with prisoners, so
they resolved to let themselves be trans-
ported to France, along with other pris-
oners. They indeed arrived there, but
both afflicted with a distemper, which
also transported them to eternity. The
Prior, when he felt his end approaching,
had himself received as a member of an
Order of the Monks of the Roman
church, which is the more credible as he
had always entertained a particular es-
teeam for friars. They gave him the ton-
sure, and afterwards called him Bon
Chretien. Soon after both brothers de-
parted this life.

THE ECKERLIN CAPTIVITY—THE
SANGMEISTER VERSION (Continued)

which made the Indians angry. It was
easy to see that the Indians had had no
kindly intentions. Both brothers were
downhearted and spoke but little with
each other. But they asked the servant
forgiveness for having been the cause of
his captivity. Brother Samuel could
have freed his brothers if he had kept
his promise to the poor fellow. But he
did not although I begged and beseeched
him.

On the seventh day they came to the
fort and they asked the brothers to cut
their beards, but they did not want to
do it. Then they stripped them to shirt
and trousers and put them in a canoe.
When they were close to the shore they
were thrown into the water and had to
crawl to land as well as they could.
There was some argument among the
Frenchmen as to whether or not they
should be beaten but finally it was de-
cided in the affirmative. Frenchmen and
Indians beat the brothers with sticks
and stones. One Indian hit brother Israel
over the head with a stick causing him
to fall down like dead. Brother Gabriel
tried to raise him but they did the same
with him. The brothers had hardly re-
covered and once more stood up, when
they were beaten down again. This hap-
pened six or seven times. In this misery
they were coming to a little hill near the
fort, when an Indian, clutching his
knife, jumped on brother Gabriel and
cut a piece of flesh with the hair from his
cheek and beard. When Gabriel had
recovered from that shock he asked the
servant who had done that. He showed
him the man but he warned it would go
worse with him if he should not be satis-
fied etc.

Then came the commanding officer
from the fort, who put a stop to the
torture since they had received enough
ill treatment, whereupon they were
THE ECKERLIN CAPTIVITY—THE
SANGMEISTER VERSION (Continued)
taken to the fort. The servant too was led to the fort by an Indian but no harm was done to him. The Indians sold the two brothers to the Frenchmen for a new carpet and a pair of leggings each. The servant, however, they took along to the Indian tribe in their territory.

The two brothers were now in the captivity of the Frenchmen. They talked with them through an interpreter, and, on recognizing them to be monks clad in white. The servant remained with them at the fort for two days when he was taken away by the Indians. He remained in the Indian territory for three years and sundry months until he could escape. These tribulations did not help him to some human understanding, therefore I do not find it worth while to report more about him. But he had a hard life.

The last we heard about the brothers was that they were sent from the fort to Montreal and from there to Quebec. Here they suffered great need and hunger. From there they were sent to Rochelle in Old France together with two other prisoners. It is said that one of them died on the sea, the other in the hospital in great misery. We could not obtain more news.

The Sangmeister description is twice the length of Peter Miller’s story. It is richer in non-essential incidentals but does not give additional factual information. The *Chronicon* is the more useful, since it gives the name of the servant and tells definitely about the last years of the Eckerlins in France. This holds true also for every other comparison between the *Chronicon* and Sangmeister. Apart from the elaborate description of Beissel’s misbehavior, which obviously does not appear in the *Chronicon*, Sangmeister nowhere adds any piece of factual information. If Bauman did use an unabridged edition of the *Chronicon*, he evidently could not find any important details which
had been left out of the printed edition. Seemingly Peter Miller accomplished an excellent abridgment of the manuscript.

Editorial negligence on Bauman's part permits us to see the different places where Sangmeister's letters were inserted into the text thus supplying evidence of a second source for the "diary." For example, Bauman forgot to delete the complimentary close of the letters, so that we find in the middle of the "diary" phrases like the following: "Vale, Ezechiel Sangmeister." Again, Sangmeister favored long postscripts to his letters, starting with the abbreviation "p.s." and in many places throughout the text we still find "p.s."

One of Sangmeister's original letters has been preserved in the Pennsylvania State Archives in Harrisburg. The letter is written on both sides of a single sheet of paper 61/2" x 8", and on both sides (making four pages) of a folded sheet 8" x 12". The ink is brown and the paper a rather heavy grade. The date 1818 which appears at the end is in another hand and evidently was added later. Although we have no other example of Sangmeister's handwriting, I do not see any reason to doubt the authenticity of this letter. Samuel W. Pennypacker, from whose library it came, added the following statement, October 30, 1882: "These papers were secured by a Philadelphia bookseller in 1882 along with a number of the Ephrata publications and other works from the Cloister, including the printer's instruction in use there. The whole bore internal evidence of having been a part of the collection of Dr. Fahnestock . . . the original letter from Ezekiel Sangmeister to Conrad Beissel, the founder and head of the community, is particularly interesting."

The letter is all the more valuable from our point of view because it is evident that this is one of the documents which had been used by Bauman in compiling his Sangmeister diary. A comparison of the original with the printed version affords an excellent example of Bauman's editorial technique. The original letter is aggressive enough, but Bauman's interpolations make it worse. In every other sentence we find some little phrase changed, the diction sharpened,

30 For instance, see vol. IV, 41, 53, etc.
31 See vol. II, 64, 73, 80, etc.
32 The information about the letter was supplied by Col. Henry W. Shoemaker, State Archivist, who also put a photostat of the letter at my disposal.
33 Vol. IV, 21–23.
or a clause added. Note, for instance this description of Beissel’s drunkenness:

Original letter:
Further, my dear, what should one say or think. It is pitiable to hear about your drunkenness? Especially that once, during the night, you tottered around the house with your lantern and were unable to find the door—till finally a certain Brother led you back in.34

Bauman’s version:
Further, my dear, what should one now say and think about your drunkenness. Is it not pitiable just to hear about it? Especially that once, during the night, you were outside the house with your lantern; and, although the lantern was standing beside you, you were so drunken that you fumbled with your hands on the walls and were unable to find the door till finally a certain Brother came to your aid and led you in.35

It is interesting that Bauman substituted for the high German Laterne the dialect word Lutser. The word Lutser was used in the Swabian dialect only until the beginning of the eighteenth century, but it is still used today in Alsace-Lorraine and among the Pennsylvania Germans.

I am convinced that the Sangmeister diary does not, and did not, exist as an independent manuscript. But even if my hypothesis should not be generally accepted, there can be no doubt that as an editor Bauman cannot be trusted. Therefore the Sangmeister book cannot be considered a reliable primary source.

Unfortunately, Sangmeister’s description has tainted Ephrata historiography. Seidensticker, Sachse, Klein,36 all have been influenced

34 Sangmeister’s version reads: Ferner nun mein Lieber, was soll man sagen oder denken. Dein Vollsaufen ist jaemmerlich um nur davon zu hoeren? Besonders da du einsmals in der Nacht mit der Laterne ausser dem Hause herum krabbeltest und die Thuer nicht finden konntest, bis dass endlich ein gewisser Br. dich wiederum hinein fuehrte.

35 Printed version: Ferner nun mein Lieber, was soll man nun sagen und denken von Deinem Vollsaufen, ist es nicht jaemmerlich um nur davon zu hoeren. Besonders da du einsmals in der Nacht mit deinem Lutser ausser dem Hause u.sie neben dir stehen hattest u.so voll warest, dass du mit den Haenden an den Waenden krabbeltest und die Thuer nicht finden konntest, bis dass endlich ein gewisser Br. dir zu huelfe kam und dich hinein fuehrte.

by the slander against Beissel. Yet none of these scholars took Sangmeister at face value; they felt considerable disinclination to believe all his brutal and unpleasant stories. Walter C. Klein, who quotes extensively from the diary and is surely not biased in favor of Beissel, takes the word of Sangmeister with a grain of salt. Seidensticker said, "We can't believe him." Only Kriebel called it an "indispensable original source" giving the following reasons: "He was writing for himself and not for publication; also J. Bauman, the publisher of Sangmeister vouches for the truthfulness." The first statement is undoubtedly erroneous as we have seen from the introduction; and the second one is a case of setting a wolf to mind the sheep.

Quite a number of undoubtedly authentic contemporary sources contradict Sangmeister. Morgan Edwards says about Beissel: "He was very strict in his morals and practised self denial to an uncommon degree. Enthusiastic and whimsical he certainly was, but an apparent devoutness and sincerity ran through all his oddities." The famous "philosopher" of the Indies, Abbé Raynal, has a long and very favorable account of Ephrata. Educated as a member of the Jesuits, rather antagonistic to religion through his affiliation with Diderot and the Encyclopédie, Raynal was surely no partisan of the Seventh-Day Baptists. He has generally only mockery for monasteries and for the vow of celibacy "les deux sexes, isolés dans les cellules, ou, pour être heureux ils n'avaient qu'à se réunir." Throughout the whole Histoire philosophique the work of the church is treated in a rather unfriendly manner; its real heroes—true to the spirit of Rousseau—are the American aborigines. Raynal had not visited America, but he had read carefully all available descriptions and would not have concealed shortcomings of the administration of Ephrata had any come to his attention. His book was widely read

37 Seidensticker, op. cit.
38 H. W. Kriebel, Henry Sangmeister "The Ephrata Chronicler." In Lancaster Historical Society, XVI (1912), 129.
39 Dr. A. D. Graeff informed me that the late Mr. Charles B. Montgomery had had heavy doubts as to the authenticity of Sangmeister. His sickness prevented him from investigating the subject. Mr. Montgomery was one of the finest scholars in the field and I am particularly happy that he shared a similar opinion.
and frequently quoted, and the description of Ephrata was reprinted almost verbatim by Thomas Anburey in his *Travels Through America*.\(^{42}\)

Another contemporary description of Ephrata has been given by Jacob Duché.\(^{43}\) The following poem written by Francis Hopkinson and dedicated to Peter Miller shows how basically the author disagrees with the religious atmosphere of the Cloister.

> In Ephrata's deep gloom you fix your seat,  
> And seek Religion in the dark retreat;  
> In sable weeds you dress the heav'n-born maid,  
> And place her pensive in the lonely shade;  
> Recluse, unsocial, you your hours employ,  
> And fearful, banish every harmless joy.

Duché himself reports the Seventh-Day Baptists may be wrong in their conception of Christianity, but their sincerity and deep religiousness is not doubted. "They are in general industrious, cheerful and extremely sagacious." Duché praised highly the skill of the brethren and sisters, especially their "scripture in large letters curiously ornamented with flowers and foliage." He was deeply moved by Ephrata music:

The sisters invited us into their chapel, and, seating themselves in order, began to sing one of their devout hymns. The musick had little or no air or melody; but consisted of simply, long notes, combined in the richest harmony. The counter, treble, tenor, and bass were all sung by women, with sweet, shrill, and small voices; but with a truth and exactness in the time and intonation that was admirable. It is impossible to describe to your Lordship my feelings upon this occasion. The performers sat with their heads reclined, their countenances solemn and dejected, their faces pale and emaciated from their manner of living, their clothing exceedingly white and quite picturesque, and their musick such as thrilled to the very soul.—I almost began to think myself in the world of spirits, and that the objects before me were ethereal. In short, the impression this scene made upon my mind continued strong for many days, and I believe, will never be wholly obliterated.

The same favorable judgment is found in Ebeling's *History of America*.\(^{44}\) Ebeling's work is perhaps the most scholarly history of America before Bancroft. He had been in correspondence with all the

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\(^{42}\) W. J. Bell, Jr., Thomas Anburey's "Travels Through America." In *Papers of Bibliographical Society of America, XXXVII* (1943), 23.

\(^{43}\) Jacob Duché, "Journey to Ephrata. Particular account of the manners, principles and worship of the Dunkers," Letter V in *Caspiina's Letters*. (Bath, 1777.)

great Americans of his time and could base his history on original
documents. He mentions briefly one hostile comment on Ephrata in
an English magazine, but his final judgment is highly in favor of
Beissel’s work. 45

How can we decide who of our witnesses is right? Was Beissel a
great religious leader or was he a martinet without any moral in-
hibitions? The Ephrata settlement had been one of the great cultural
centers of colonial America. We may question (although I believe
without justification) the purity of their mores, but we cannot deny
their great influences in the cultural realm. Art and education have
been basically influenced by the work of the settlement. Such ever-
lasting values cannot be created under a leader who in Sangmeister’s
description appears as a repulsive brute without human dignity. I
have no intention of furthering any hero worship, but if we rewrite
Ephrata’s history by omitting all the information which is based on
Sangmeister’s work alone, Conrad Beissel will stand out as a truly
great personality.

Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation

Felix Reichmann

45 I have no intention of citing here all the contemporary descriptions of Ephrata. I have
carried myself to a few samples of important, but nevertheless rarely quoted sources. These
samples are reliable with regard to the main question: “Do contemporary sources duplicate
Sangmeister’s accusations?” An inclusive collection of colonial accounts of Ephrata, compiled
by Eugene Doll and the author, will be published shortly.