

THE PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN SOCIETY

BY THOMAS R. BRENDLE*

THE following account of the origin of The Pennsylvania German Society appears in Volume I of its publications:

During the months of December, 1890, and January, 1891, articles appeared in various journals throughout Eastern Pennsylvania, the earliest being in THE LEBANON DAILY REPORT, followed by THE NEW ERA, of Lancaster, and the Philadelphia INQUIRER, advocating the formation of a Pennsylvania-German Society. A correspondence on the subject was finally opened by Mr. Frank R. Diffenderffer, one of the editors of THE NEW ERA, with Dr. William H. Egle, State Librarian, and he was invited to come to Lancaster to discuss the question. The result was that on February 14, 1891, he came to Lancaster, and, in the editorial rooms of THE NEW ERA found John S. Stahr, D.D., J. Max Hark, D.D., R. K. Buehrle, Ph.D., E. O. Lyte, Ph.D., and Frank R. Diffenderffer, who had been invited to meet him. After a full and free discussion of the whole question, it was decided to invite a number of representative men in the German counties of Eastern Pennsylvania to an informal conference in the city of Lancaster, on the 26th of February.

This was done, and on the above mentioned day the conference met in the study of Dr. Hark, in the Moravian parsonage. It was found that nine counties were represented, namely:

Carbon County—E. H. Rauch.

Chester County—Julius F. Sachse.

Dauphin County—W. H. Egle, E. W. S. Parthemore,
Maurice C. Eby.

Lancaster County—J. Max Hark, H. A. Brickenstein,
Frank R. Diffenderffer.

Lebanon County—Theodore E. Schmauk, Lee I. Grumbine.

*Rev. Thomas R. Brendle, Secretary of the Pennsylvania German Society, is co-author with Claude W. Unger of "Folk Medicine of the Pennsylvania Germans," with David E. Lick of "Plant Names and Plant Lore," and with William S. Troxell of "Pennsylvania German Folk Tales, Legends, and Once-upon-a-Time Stories."

Lehigh County—Edwin Albright, A. R. Horne.

Luzerne County—F. K. Levan.

Northampton County—Jeremiah H. Hess, Paul de-Schweinitz.

Dr. Egle was called to preside over the meeting, and in doing so succinctly stated the purpose and importance of the contemplated movement. Frank R. Diffenderffer was chosen as temporary Secretary. A large number of letters were read from prominent citizens of the State, who were unavoidably absent, but who nevertheless felt a deep interest in the step under consideration, and were anxious to promote it in every possible way. Encouragement came from all sides, and co-operation was promised on every hand.

It was found that the universal feeling was towards a permanent organization, having for its aim the collection and preservation of all landmarks and records relative to the early German and Swiss immigrants to Pennsylvania and the development of a friendly and fraternal spirit among all united by the ties of a common ancestry.

An animated discussion arose over the name to be given to the proposed organization, the names "Pennsylvania-German Society" and "Pennsylvania-Dutch Society" being warmly supported. A suggestion to defer the matter to a subsequent meeting was not agreed to, and a resolution to use the name Pennsylvania-German Society in the call for a general Convention was finally adopted. Lebanon, Philadelphia and Lancaster were severally proposed as the place where the Convention should be held. The last named city was finally decided upon and the 15th of the following April was selected as the time.

The convention was held at the time and place chosen, and a permanent organization with the name "The Pennsylvania-German Society" was effected.

The Society has been in continuous existence from the day of its organization to the present time. On April 19, 1930, it was chartered by the Lancaster County Court.

In the petition for incorporation the purposes of the Society are given: "to collect, study, preserve, and make known the characteristics, language, arts, folk-lore, customs, biography, genealogy, and the religious and general history of the early settlers in Pennsylvania of Germanic origin, and of their descendants; by preserv-

ing the land-marks, monuments, books, records, manuscripts, documents, source material, and objects of cognate historical character or interest; and by means of historical research and the preparation and publication of source material, essays, theses, addresses, and articles relating thereto; and to promote social intercourse among its members."

Membership in the Society consists of three classes, Active, Associate, and Honorary. Active membership rests upon direct descent from an emigrant of Germanic origin who came to Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century or in the first decade of the nineteenth. Associate members are elected, upon application, by the Board of Directors. They enjoy the same rights and privileges as the Active members with the exception of the right to vote. Honorary members are elected by the Board of Directors in recognition of distinguished service rendered to the Society.

There is one annual meeting which is held in the fall of the year.

The president is elected out of the membership of the Society by the Board of Directors for a term of one year. He is eligible for re-election. Many men prominent in the affairs of the State of Pennsylvania have held this office.

List of Presidents

- 1891—Hon. George F. Baer
- 1892—William H. Egle, M.D.
- 1893—Henry L. Fisher, Esq.
- 1894—Rev. George C. Heckman, D.D.
- 1895—Hon. Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker
- 1896—Frank R. Diffenderffer, Litt.D.
- 1897—Rev. Theodore E. Schmauck, D.D.
- 1898—Rev. Nathan C. Schaeffer, Ph.D., D.D.
- 1899—E. Winfield Scott Parthemore
- 1900—Rev. Franklin J. F. Schantz, D.D.
- 1901—Rev. Thomas C. Porter, D.D.
- 1902—Charles F. Himes, Ph.D.
- 1902—Rev. Joseph H. Dubbs, D.D.
- 1903—Rev. Joseph A. Seiss, D.D.
- 1904—Rev. John S. Stahr, Ph.D., D.D.
- 1905—Hon. James A. Beaver
- 1906—Hon. Gustav A. Endlich
- 1907—Benjamin M. Nead, Esq.
- 1908—Hon. John Wanamaker
- 1909—Thomas C. Zimmerman, Litt.D.

- 1910—General John E. Roller
- 1911—Rev. Henry E. Jacobs, D.D.
- 1912—Capt. Henry M. M. Richards, Litt.D.
- 1913—Benjamin F. Fackenthal, Jr., Sc.D.
- 1914—Julius F. Sachse, Litt.D.
- 1915—Hon. William U. Hensel, Litt.D.
- 1915—William F. Muhlenberg, M.D.
- 1915—Hon. Harmon Yerkes
- 1916—George T. Ettinger, Ph.D.
- 1917—Rev. Jacob Fry, D.D.
- 1918—Rev. L. Kryder Evans, D.D.
- 1919—Rev. Paul deSchweinitz, D.D.
- 1920—General Harry Trexler
- 1921—Rev. George W. Sandt, D.D.
- 1922—Edgar Fahs Smith, Ph.D.
- 1923—Edgar Dubbs Shimer, Ph.D.
- 1924—Hon. Charles I. Landis
- 1925—Rev. Charles B. Schneder, D.D.
- 1926—Rev. Elmer E. S. Johnson, Ph.D., D.D.
- 1927—Hon. Martin G. Brumbaugh
- 1928-40—Ralph Beaver Strassburger, LL.D.
- 1940-51—Henry S. Borneman, LL.D.
- 1952—William S. Troxell

In the sixty-four years of its existence the Society has published fifty-six volumes on the history and the life of the Pennsylvania Germans.

It is needless to list all of them, but some should be mentioned to show into what categories the publications fall so that one may see the breadth of the interests of the Society and the way in which it is carrying out the purposes of its organization.

THE IMMIGRATION

- Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, 3 vols., edited by William J. Hinke.
- The Redemptioners*, by Frank Ried-Diffenderffer.
- The Settlement of Germantown, Pennsylvania, and the Beginning of German Immigration to North America*, by Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker.

RELIGION

- The German Baptist Brethren or Dunkers*, by George N. Falkenstein.
- The Reformed Church in Pennsylvania*, by Joseph Henry Dubbs.

- The Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania*, by Theodore Emanuel Schmauk.
- The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century*, by C. Henry Smith.
- The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania, a Historical Sketch*, by Howard Wiegner Kriebel.
- The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County*, by Calvin George Bachman.

GENEALOGY

- Birth and Baptismal Register of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa.*
- Birth and Baptismal Register of The First Reformed Church, Lancaster, Pa.*

THE DIALECT

- A Dictionary of the Non-English Words of the Pennsylvania German Dialect, with an Appendix*, by Marcus Bachman Lambert.
- Anthology of Pennsylvania German Verse*, by Harry Hess Reichard.

FOLKLORE

- The Folklore of the Pennsylvania German*, by John Baer Stoudt.
- Proverbs of the Pennsylvania Germans*, by Edwin Miller Fogel.
- Folk Medicine of the Pennsylvania Germans*, by Thomas R. Brendle and Claude W. Unger.
- Pennsylvania German Folk Tales*, by Thomas R. Brendle and William S. Troxell.
- Bird Names and Bird Lore among the Pennsylvania Germans*, by William J. Rupp.

ARCHITECTURE

- Colonial Architecture of the Pennsylvania Germans*, by G. Edwin Brumbaugh.

ART

- Pennsylvania German Illuminated Manuscripts*, by Henry S. Borneman.

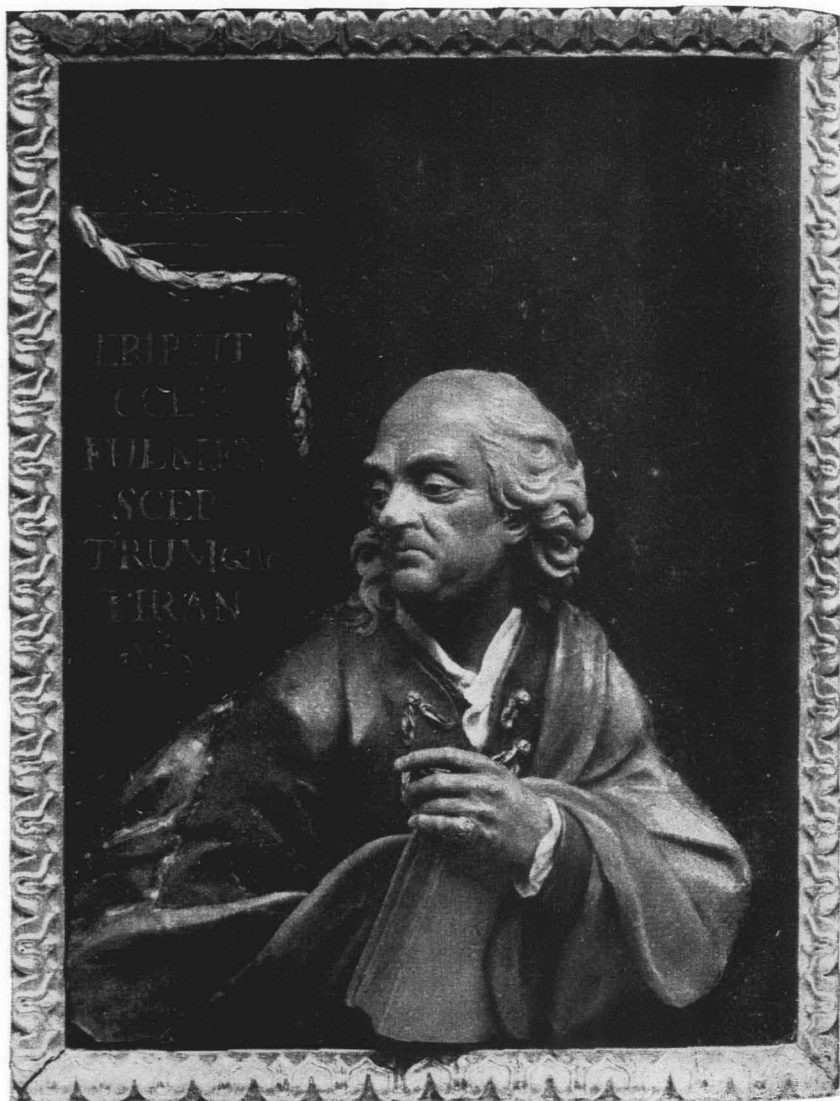
DOMESTIC LIFE

The Domestic Life and Characteristics of the Pennsylvania Germans, by F. J. F. Schantz.

BIOGRAPHY

John Casper Stoeever, Colonial Pastor and Founder of Churches, by R. L. Winters.

Henry Harbaugh, Pennsylvania Dutchman, 1817-1867, by Elizabeth Clarke Kieffer.



POLYCHROMED WAX PORTRAIT OF FRANKLIN
Ascribed to either the German Hardy or the Swiss Curtius.
From the collection of J. Bennett Nolan
Courtesy the magazine Antiques