The Germans who come hither, observed Benjamin Franklin in his famous statement of 1753, are “generally the most stupid of their nation,” and in view of this opinion he naturally questioned the desirability of their immigration. But in the same year a British geographer, Lewis Evans, expressed a very different opinion from that entertained by the provincial leader. “It is pretty to behold our back Settlements, where the barns are large as palaces,” Evans declared, and then noted “how much we are indebted to the Gennans for the economy they have introduced and how serviceable they are in an infant colony.” More than a century later, in 1880, an unsympathetic critic wrote in The Nation that the Pennsylvania Germans had “sunk into a low and stagnant life,” their only cultural product “being that horrible jargon known as Pennsylvania Dutch.”

And in just that period, McMaster praised both the arts and accomplishments of the same people. Within the last few years, an-

* An address delivered before The Historical Society of Pennsylvania at the Annual Meeting on May 9, 1939.

other historian observed of the Pennsylvania Germans that they were "contentious, cantankerous, belligerent; everyone was glad to see them go West, and felt sorry only because the West was not further away." The words had hardly left his pen before Chitwood, dealing with the same question of westward migration, described the German settlers as happy and prosperous, and emphasized their desirability as permanent settlers.

One begins to sense in such comments a strange contrast, an antithesis between those who have derided the Pennsylvania Germans and those who have praised them mightily. The contrast, moreover, has been a persistent one. Despite more than two centuries of continuous identification with the life of Pennsylvania and nearby states, these people are still the subject of sharply divided opinions among their fellow Americans. To illustrate this one may employ a sampling procedure, noting the divergent interpretations which have been expressed in three distinct periods, the mid-eighteenth, the later nineteenth, and the twentieth centuries. If time permitted, one could fill in the gaps—since the subject seems to have been of perennial interest—but it is doubtful if this would change the general perspective on the theme.

Franklin's statement was, of course, the classic indictment of the mid-eighteenth century. It will be recalled that he found the "Palatine boors" credulous as well as stupid, and he felt keenly the enormity of their ignorance of the English tongue. His antipathies were shared by a number of those prominent in provincial politics. Secretary Logan had had some things to say against the Germans in 1727, and Dr. William Smith later remarked that the Germans were of such a poor sort that they were actually in danger "of sinking into barbarian ignorance." Other Philadelphians of British origin are said to have written home in similar vein, some declaring that the Germans were "so profoundly ignorant as to be unable to speak the English language, and were fast becoming like unto wood-born savages." Such condemnations were unaccompanied by any qualification save for the ad-

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4 Carl Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin* (N. Y., 1938), 218.
mission—which was obviously inconsistent—of the activity of German printing presses. Here, clearly, one has a beginning of the tradition anent the “dumb Dutch.”

In sharp contrast was the recognition by both official and unofficial observers of the eighteenth century, that the Germans were a hard-working, sober people who were most desirable as immigrants. Lieutenant Governor George Thomas, in a frequently cited appeal made before the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1738, declared that “the present flourishing condition” of the province “is in a great measure owing to the industry of these People.” He added a warning that any discouragement of their further immigration would lower land values and the general advance towards wealth.7

Governor Thomas was obviously impressed by the success of German farmers. Tributes to the superiority of their agriculture were paid from time to time by other English-speaking natives of Pennsylvania and by both German and non-German travelers from abroad. Among the German observers, the most detailed account is probably that of Schoepf (1788),8 but even more favorable were the impressions of Lewis Evans, the British geographer already quoted.9 Some forty years later, de Tocqueville noted the superior character of German husbandry and ascribed this to the continuous, intensive cultivation of certain areas in the state.10 Silent, but for that reason more convincing testimony to the superiority of Palatine farmers, was to be observed in the preference shown them by land speculators on the eastern seaboard. These settlers were deliberately sought by the large landholders of eastern Maryland, in order to introduce a superior

10 Quoted in George W. Pierson, Tocqueville and Beaumont in America (N. Y., 1938), 544–545. For further references to the travel literature see Emil Meynen, “Das pennsylvania-deutsche Bauernland,” which will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Deutsches Archiv für Landes-u. Volksforschung (S. Hirzel Verlag, Leipzig, 1939) 255, n. 4. This excellent and comprehensive study was not available when the present article was prepared.
diversified agriculture in the western part of their province; and it will be recalled that so conspicuous a person as Washington desired the same people for his western holdings.

It will be observed, however, that agriculture is only one of the arts, and that praise of the Pennsylvania Germans as farmers did not entirely answer the general indictment of their mentality and culture which had been expressed by Franklin and other critics. The classic reply on this score was made by another Philadelphian, Benjamin Rush, whose interests and achievements ramified further in some directions than did Franklin's and who was apparently better informed than the latter on many questions relating to the Germans. In 1789 Rush published his "Account of the Manners of the German Inhabitants of Pennsylvania," in which he not only extolled the husbandry of these people, but also noted the characteristics of their institutions and culture. He found much to praise in their religious and educational traditions, as well as in their arts and handicrafts; and did not hesitate at various points to compare their achievements favorably with those of their English-speaking compatriots.

It was particularly fortunate, from the German point of view, that Rush should have maintained at the University of Pennsylvania so favorable an opinion of their culture. For the University had just abandoned, about the time that he wrote, a bi-lingual system of instruction in which native German-speaking students were taught in their own language. Established in 1780, the German division had some sixty students in the preparatory classes by 1785—about double the number then in the English classes. Those who led in this work had also been active in the long continued effort of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches to maintain cultural contacts between Germany and Pennsylvania, and they doubtless saw in the University program one means to this end. It is easy to see now why their labors apparently failed. Germany was changing, and so was Pennsylvania. Yet the failure was not final, for when the work in German was abandoned in Philadelphia it was in effect transferred to the new German school


12 Included in his Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical (Phila., 1798), 226-248. The Pennsylvania Germans later thought so highly of this "vindication" that it was twice reprinted, 1875 and 1910. The second of these publications was edited, with valuable notes, by Theodore E. Schmauk for the Pennsylvania-German Society (Lancaster, 1910).
in Lancaster which, founded in 1787, eventually became known as Franklin and Marshall College. Here and at several other schools established in German areas, the old traditions were maintained until a revived interest in them became manifest a century later.

So much for eighteenth-century developments and commentaries. When one advances into the next century and attempts another rough cross section of American opinion, certain new factors are apparent, but the general contrast pro and con the Pennsylvania Germans continues. The most obvious historical developments were the arrival of a new tide of German immigrants after about 1840, and, second, the advent of a historical consciousness among the Pennsylvania Germans themselves.

The later immigrants from the Fatherland were frequently of middle-class origin, became widely distributed throughout the country, and were rapidly Americanized. All this meant that they soon became an English-literate group, and displayed a decided interest in their place in American society. Moreover, they represented—even though many were political refugees—a new Germany. Their intellectual leaders reflected the current romantic idealism, and their Weltanschauung had little in common with that of Pennsylvania Germans whose traditions were rooted in the pietism of post-Reformation days. Such differences tended to make each group keep its distance. The newcomers apparently thought the “Dutch” provincial and backward; while the latter—thoroughly American despite their language—seem to have looked down on the “’48ers” as foreigners.

It is not easy to determine, in consequence, just what the relationships were between the two groups of Germans in this country after 1840. There is occasional evidence of mutual harmony, in both a literal and figurative sense. At the first national Sängerfest held in Philadelphia in 1850, for example, groups attended from Bethlehem and Reading as well as from New York and Boston. There were also evidences of an exchange of scholarly interests. When Franz Löher

15 Mitteilungen des deutschen Pionier-Vereins von Philadelphia, (Phila., 1906), I. 3. I am indebted for their respective opinions on the relationships of the two groups, to Professor A. B. Faust of Cornell University, to Professor John A. Walz of Harvard University, and to Dean Carl Wittke of Oberlin College.
published at Cincinnati, in 1847, a history of the Germans in America, he emphasized the economic achievements of his early compatriots.\textsuperscript{16} A generation later Carl Schurz, in editing a series on the same theme, requested Oswald Seidensticker to write a volume on the Pennsylvania story.\textsuperscript{17}

On the other hand, some of the newcomers certainly overlooked the older stock. Thus the gifted Theresa Robinson (née Jacob), who became much interested in the history of her adopted country, ignored the earlier Volksdeutsch and devoted herself to such themes as colonial New England and the Indians.\textsuperscript{18} Again, when Gustav Körner published in 1880 a work on the German element, he omitted the colonial story and began with the year 1818.\textsuperscript{19} One of the reviewers found in this an implication of inferiority for the pioneer German settlers. He acclaimed the new immigrants as a "purified" and superior group, but found their predecessors in contrast a decadent folk.\textsuperscript{20} Even more positive was another neo-German writer, Daniel Hertle, who wrote of the "Pennsylvania Dutch" in 1865: "Sie sind ein wilder Schössling an dem Stammbaume der deutschen Nation" and more to that effect.\textsuperscript{21} This theme cannot be followed further in detail, but it may be noted finally that M. D. Learned—whose scholarly reputation will be mentioned below—was of the opinion that the later Germans largely lost their colonial predecessors from view.\textsuperscript{22}

Meanwhile, native American historians of the mid-century were even less inclined to recognize this latter element than were writers of German origin. Bancroft ignored them entirely, and Hildreth paused only long enough to observe that the sad lack of education in provincial Pennsylvania had been due to the confusion of these diverse sects and races.\textsuperscript{23} While Pennsylvania Germans were thus ignored by the better-known American writers, there is evidence of continued

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika} (1847), i–xiii ff.
  \item \textit{Bilder aus der Deutsch-pennsylvanischen Geschichte} (N. Y., 1885).
  \item Robinson, Mrs. Theresa (Talv), \textit{Geschichte der Colonisation von Neu-England, u. s. w.} (Leipzig, 1847).
  \item \textit{Das deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, 1818-1848} (Cincinnati, 1880).
  \item Review in \textit{The Nation}, XXX (N. Y., 1880), 311.
  \item \textit{Die Deutschen in Nordamerika}, u. s. w. (Chicago, 1865), 11, 12.
  \item M. D. Learned, "The German Barn in America," \textit{Univ. of Penna. Public Lectures}, 1913, 1914 (Phila., 1915), 338.
  \item Richard Hildreth, \textit{The History of the United States of America} (N. Y., 1856), II. 412, 413.
\end{itemize}
popular scorn for the "dumb Dutch" in their own immediate environment. Perhaps the best place to observe this was in Philadelphia where some of the townspeople—even those of German origin—were inclined to feel superior to the plodding farmers up-state. Occasionally this gave rise to comments even more severe than those recorded in colonial days, and one such instance may be employed to illustrate the degree of disdain involved.

It so happened that during the eighties Philadelphia was in the midst of one of its earlier struggles against political corruption. One thing led to another and soon there was much debate on municipal affairs—not an unfamiliar note in the history of the city. For years, local critics felt, Philadelphia had been slipping. Its economic pre-eminence had been lost to New York, its cultural to Boston. Those who granted all this, inevitably raised the question: Why? Some thought it due to such complicated economic factors as the protective tariff. Others, perhaps less imaginative, simply blamed the situation on the Pennsylvania Railroad and let it go at that. But most emphatic were the critics who traced all their troubles to the social groups which had been conspicuous in the history of the city, to the Quakers and to their old allies the "Pennsylvania Dutch." The Quakers, it was granted, were bad enough. No progress can come from them, wrote one contributor, because they resist all change. "They never doubt and they never investigate. They are incapable of intellectual inquiry and they hate it."24 But the "Pennsylvania Dutch," he declared, are inferior even to the Quakers. Though thrifty, the former never rise higher than grubbing in the soil. Not only is their language outlandish, but their religious ideas are so strange as to pass belief. They have little natural ability, and with them progress is a simple impossibility. No wonder, this critic concluded, that Pennsylvania—always full of Quakers and Dutchmen—is a state without pride and devoid of intellectual ambition. No wonder that, of all the original thirteen, Pennsylvania alone has produced no great men at all. "It is true that Benjamin Franklin lived in Philadelphia, but he had to be imported from Boston!"25

24 Cf. Cornelius Weygandt, The Blue Hills (N. Y., 1936), 157, who declares that "The Quakers are a forward-looking group. They . . . believe that the world can be quickly made better than it is."

25 Letter (signed D. G.) to The Nation, XLI (1885), 484, 485. See other comments, ibid., 439, 440. This last remark, extreme as it may sound, has been repeated in somewhat different form in so recent a work as Van Wyck Brooks' Flowering of New England.
All these comments were typical of the disdain which was still felt for the Pennsylvania Germans towards the end of the last century. By this time, certain criticisms—for example, that the “Dutch” were peculiarly superstitious, that they made slaves of their women and children, and so on—had become so stereotyped that even now it is difficult to question them. Matters were not improved when direct criticism was interspersed with ridicule, for the quaint provincialisms of the “Dutch” naturally appeared amusing or ridiculous to superficial observers. English-speaking neighbors, forgetful of the essentially hybrid origin of their own language, found the mixture of German and English elements in the local dialect simply too funny for words!

None of these reactions were new in this period, but there was one novel factor which entered into the situation here and became increasingly important after the turn of the century. This was the reaction of Pennsylvania Germans themselves to the whole blend of indifference, disdain, and ridicule which had been heaped upon them. By this time the majority of them were bilingual, if they had not actually lost their German speech entirely. They were what their colonial forebears had not been, articulate in English. They knew what was being said about them in that language and they could “talk back.” Moreover, some of the intellectuals among them had been trained in universities here and abroad, and could appreciate the tradition with which eighteenth-century German works and such later studies as that of Löher had provided them.

There ensued what might be termed a renaissance in Pennsylvania German life and culture, with which most of us are more or less familiar. Among the first signs was the appearance of state and local histories, written by Pennsylvania Germans during the first generation after the Civil War, in which they displayed a distinct pride in their own tradition. The major movement, which may be dated approximately from about 1880, naturally began on a note of protest. There was rising irritation at continued criticism, which seemed to them but ignorant calumny. A growing sensitiveness even to the use


27 Meynen observes in his Bibliography listed below (n. 38), that three-fourths of all the items therein noted were published after 1885.
of the old name "Dutch" was in itself an interesting sign of changing attitudes. This term was regretted, not only because it had become misleading, but because through long usage it seemed inextricably associated with the very slanders which it was hoped could be terminated. J. H. Dubbs, writing in 1885, recalled that his father had once boxed his ears for so much as referring to the "Pennsylvania Dutch."

A sectional note was introduced into these protests by Frank R. Diffenderffer, who claimed that New Englanders had been especially active in spreading "scurrilous falsehoods" about his people and his state, at the same time that they had been so active in glorifying the history of their own region. He replied with some feeling by reminding them that it had been the puritan saints rather than the "dumb Dutch" who had engaged in witch hunts, and that the latter had condemned slavery long before the "sensitive soul" of New England had found anything objectionable therein. New England critics, indeed, seem to have particularly irritated the Pennsylvanians, who retaliated in much the same manner as Southerners once had had under similar provocation. The German element, wrote one of their number in 1898, are a much finer people physically than are the "crotchety, one-idead dyspeptic, thin cadaverous New England brethren." Hence the Germans are largely free from the "thousand and one intellectual vagaries which are born of their [the Yankees'] abnormal physical conditions."

Such statements represented, of course, only the controversial fringe of a serious movement. Societies were founded, and publications appeared. Notable were the Pennsylvania German Society, the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, and the Society for the His-

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28 Opinions still differ on this point. Professor Cornelius Weygandt, author of *The Red Hills* (Phila., 1929), considers the old expression "Pennsylvania Dutch" preferable on the grounds that the English word "Dutch" originally meant "German," that it is sanctioned by usage, and that its real meaning is generally clear. It is my own experience, however, that the phrase is widely believed—outside of Pennsylvania—to relate to "Holland Dutch."


30 Frank R. Diffenderffer, writing in *The Pennsylvania German*, X, 117, 136, 137. See also the unfavorable article by Professor A. B. Hart, printed in *The Pennsylvania German*, VIII (Lebanon, Pa., 1907), 539 ff.; and the reply thereto by M. A. Gruber, *ibid.*, IX (1908), 21 ff.

tory of the Germans in Maryland. The first named, founded in 1891, issued a long list of important proceedings; and the second has in recent years inaugurated what promises to be an attractive and valuable series. Also available to those writing on the subject were several special periodicals. Among them was the oldest general historical journal in the country, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, which has been published continuously since 1877. Many of those who wrote for these publications were not experts and made no claim to that effect, but they did seek out original materials. Their activities, which reflected to some extent a general quickening of historical interest throughout the country, gradually brought together local antiquarians and trained scholars in Pennsylvania—presumably to their mutual benefit. This in turn stimulated interest in the preservation and publication of old German records. Among the most valuable of the local collections were those of the Schwenkfelder Historical Library at Pennsburg, and the Moravian records at Bethlehem and at Winston-Salem. The latter were arranged and edited by Adelaide Fries, and eventually published through the efficient North Carolina Historical Commission.

Meanwhile, several of the county historical societies in German areas established museums displaying the native arts and crafts. Perhaps the best known of these has been that of the Bucks County Historical Society at Doylestown, but other valuable collections were assembled at such centers as Lancaster and Reading. As interest in the genuine folk art of the Germans increased, special sections devoted to it were opened in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City.

It is true that almost until the turn of the century, much that was written on the history and culture of the Pennsylvania Germans was of a sentimental, even of a superficial character. Professional historians continued, as a rule, to ignore the theme, and it remained for

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32 As early as 1880, the *Hallische Nachrichten* (containing accounts of the late eighteenth century cultural efforts) were published in Philadelphia by the Lutheran Publication Society.


34 The Berks County Historical Society was founded at Reading in 1869; the Bucks County Society in 1880; the Lancaster County Society in 1886. Other collections have been assembled in Northampton County, Lehigh County, etc.
Germanic scholars to develop it in more serious fashion. It was quite appropriate, in view of the earlier history of their departments, that a most active part was played here by the faculties of Franklin and Marshall, of Muhlenberg, and of the University of Pennsylvania. Outstanding leaders were Professors Oswald Seidensticker and Marion D. Learned. The latter not only prepared valuable studies himself, but served as a constructive critic for the whole movement. As a philologist, Learned was naturally first concerned with the *Deitsch* language and in 1889 he completed a careful philological analysis; but from this theme his interest broadened to include the whole history of the people. Soon he was protesting against the indifference of American scholars—meaning, presumably, the historians. He thought it paradoxical that although the latter had learned their own critical methods in Germany, they had never applied these to the Germans in America. But the Pennsylvania professor was most concerned with encouraging able studies by linguistic scholars or by any others who could be interested in the field. In 1901 he declared that Oscar Kuhns' work on the German settlements struck a new note, in combining an intimate understanding of the people themselves with a knowledge of the best contemporary German scholarship.

It may be noted, in this connection, that Pennsylvania authors not only benefited from the contemporary German scholarship of such writers as E. H. Meyer, but may in turn have stimulated further German interest in the history of the race in America. At any rate, a number of general histories of the Germans in this country were published in the Fatherland early in the present century, notably those by Bosse (Stuttgart, 1908) and by Cronau (Berlin, 1909), both of which accorded attention to the colonial as well as to the nineteenth-century migrations. This interest overseas has resulted within the last few

85 *The Pennsylvania German Dialect* (Baltimore, 1889). An earlier descriptive study had been made by S. S. Haldeman in 1872. H. L. Mencken later gave the dialect considerable attention in his work on *The American Language* (N. Y., 1929). For recent studies in Germany, see the writings of Heinz Kloss, as listed in Meynen's *Bibliography*.


87 Georg von Bosse, *Das deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten, u. s. w.*; and Rudolf Cronau, *Drei Jahrhunderte deutschen Lebens in Amerika*. 
years in two works of importance to all American historians, Friederici's comprehensive study of European colonization, and Meynen's impressive bibliography of the German settlements in North America. The latter relates especially to "The Pennsylvania Germans and Their Descendants," and the extent of the literature which it reveals will surprise those who are unfamiliar with the subject.

Meanwhile, in 1904, Mrs. Catherine Seipp of Chicago had offered substantial prizes for the best history of the German element in the United States; and the first prize was awarded to Professor A. B. Faust of Cornell University. His work gave detailed attention to the early settlers, and became the standard descriptive account in the field; but critical monographs—such as Fogel's study of superstitions (1915), and the work by Knauss on social conditions (1922)—have added valuable materials to those available when Faust's study first appeared.

The development of sound scholarship in the field may also be illustrated by the elaboration of special themes, and by the appearance of guides and other bibliographical studies. In illustration of the first category, one may recall the successive studies on the redemptioners which culminated in Cheesman A. Herrick's comprehensive White Servitude in Pennsylvania (1926). The pioneer bibliographical study was Oswald Seidensticker's First Century of German Printing in America, 1728-1830, an enlightening work published in 1893. By 1904 the rapid growth of the literature led to the compilation of A. P. C. Griffin's List of Works Relating to the Germans in the United States. Several years later, Faust also covered this field; while another list of more local application appeared in the eleventh volume of The Pennsylvania-German. The last word on the

40 Edwin Fogel, Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans (Phila., 1915).
41 James O. Knauss, Jr., Social Conditions among the Pennsylvania Germans in the Eighteenth Century as revealed in the German Newspapers Published in America (Lancaster, 1922).
42 There were earlier works by Frank R. Diffenderffer (1900) and by Karl F. Geiser (1901).
subject in both the literal and figurative senses, is to be found in Meynen's work already noted.

In recent years, a number of professional historians have come into the picture. Among the first evidences of an interest in this quarter was the appearance of a number of doctoral theses in the field. In 1916, for example, Abdel R. Wentz published a study of the Germans in York County. Since an emphasis upon "the frontier thesis" was then in vogue among American historians, he found the German settlers chiefly significant as frontiersmen—although it had to be recognized that they did not entirely fit into the usual pattern in this regard.\textsuperscript{43} As a result of this approach their peculiar culture and contributions were not stressed, despite the fact that Learned had already called attention to the unusual importance of their "new mode of farming" in American life.\textsuperscript{44} The latter theme was subsequently given some attention in another thesis, that by Henry F. James entitled\textit{The Agricultural Industry of Southeastern Pennsylvania}. This was primarily a geographical rather than a historical study, but accorded recognition to the unusual qualifications of the German farmers.\textsuperscript{45} Since the publication of the latter monograph, several well-known historians have occupied themselves with the broader problems to which Germanic scholars had long been devoted. Notable among the former are Dean Carl Wittke of Oberlin whose interest is in the German-Americans in general, and Professor Thomas J. Wertenbaker of Princeton who is concerned with the Pennsylvania Germans in particular.\textsuperscript{46}

The latest development in the field is the preparation of a special book on the Pennsylvania Germans by the Federal Writers Project organization. This work is being conducted under the general supervision of Mr. Paul C. French, the State Director, with the advice of

\textsuperscript{43}Wentz, \textit{The Beginnings of the German Element in York County, Pennsylvania} (Lancaster, 1916), 193. (Thesis, George Washington Univ.)


\textsuperscript{46}Wertenbaker's \textit{Founding of American Civilization: The Middle Colonies} (N. Y., 1938) devotes two out of nine chapters to a detailed consideration of Pennsylvania German culture, and in this respect expresses what is still an unusual degree of interest on the part of professional historians.
Dr. Arthur D. Graeff. Applying as this study does the newer methods of cooperative research, its completion will be anticipated with much interest.

When the scholarly literature is examined, it naturally reveals an attempt to do critically what local antiquarians had frequently done in less exact manner. First, the narrative history of the migrations and settlements is recorded. There is also some tracing of the subsequent story, particularly through the colonial and Revolutionary periods. Second, there is a detailed account of the later economic, social, and cultural life of the Pennsylvania Germans, apparently prepared with a view to demonstrating their contributions to American life.

As the evidence of the later studies accumulated, it became apparent that most of the original settlers had been poor farmers and artisans, though a considerable number owed their poverty to the trickery of British agents or ship captains. It also seemed that these farmers frequently lost, in the American environment, the village organization with which their cultural life had been long associated. This was the same difficulty which English settlers in the rural South experienced. But, in addition, the German-Americans had obviously suffered from two especial handicaps. They were cut off from other Americans by linguistic barriers, and from their Fatherland by political boundaries. Thus restricted, Pennsylvania-German culture had turned in upon itself, and inevitably became provincial and conservative in nature. Moreover, the "Dutch" were the victims of their own virtues. Just because they farmed intensively they acquired wealth and its advantages slowly. In these circumstances can be found the germs of truth which inhere in the accusations of boorishness and backwardness which have been directed against them.

Despite all this, it was really not difficult for such writers as Learned, Diffenderffer, and Faust to show that the colonial Germans had preserved and developed a general culture which often compared favorably with that of their Anglo-American neighbors. Intensive agriculture, animal husbandry, skilled artisanship, printing presses, theology, science, music, folk arts—all have been duly recorded. Superstitions and eccentricities have also been revealed, but these attributes are shared with many other groups of Americans. It is hardly
too much to say that an entire culture, largely unknown or forgotten, has been brought to life. Particularly intriguing has been the revelation that certain things thought of as typical of the frontier—such as the "covered wagon," the "Kentucky rifle," and perhaps even the "log cabin"—came largely from the German tradition. Also engaging was the discovery that so many distinguished leaders in Philadelphia were imported, not from Boston, but from no farther than the surrounding counties. One of the three Americans whom Thomas Jefferson thought worthy to rank with the ablest European intellects of his day, was none other than a "dumb Dutchman."

All this has not been without its effect. Before the turn of the century, McMaster recognized the superiority of German agriculture; and John Fiske—although accused of unfavorable opinions—noted the learning and the arts of the Mennonites and of the Ephrata cloisters.47 True, some historians continue to overlook them, or to hold relatively unfavorable opinions of their record. Several able contemporary scholars imply that German colonial farming was no better than that of the English;48 and Carl Van Doren declares that the Palatines were "economically below English standards."

49 Rather remarkable is the survival in rare instances of extremely unfavorable views, such as the statement quoted at the beginning of this paper, or the even more recent remark that the German colonials composed simply "a tenant farmer class, removed by an infinite social chasm" from their betters.50 But the point is that such condescension is now the exception rather than the rule. One of the best of the current college history texts announces, without qualification, that the Pennsylvania Germans "were by far the best husbandmen in America."51

47 John B. McMaster, History of the People of the United States (N. Y., 1888), II. 556; John Fiske, The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America (Boston, 1899), 408.
49 Benjamin Franklin (N. Y., 1938), 218. The meaning of the phrase here, however, is not entirely clear.
We may assume, then, that the major purpose of those writing on the Pennsylvania Germans has been in part accomplished, and will probably be realized to a greater degree in the near future. Gaps in American history have been filled, and some justice has been done to a hitherto unappreciated minority. These ends are clearly important in themselves. Yet they do involve certain limitations or dangers. The attempt to do justice to a neglected group easily passes over, by way of compensation, into special pleading. If the majority underestimates, the minority is tempted into overestimation. Hence the Pennsylvania Germans still suffer, though to a lesser degree since the appearance of the more scholarly studies, from eulogy within their group as well as from damnation without.

It were well, therefore, to look beyond the matter of "contributions" or of justice, to further meanings in this story. We should raise quite seriously the question: How are we to explain, after all, the long misunderstanding of these people? The answer may throw some light upon our historiography, on the modes of thought which have obtained among historians themselves. It is also in order to inquire as to what uses can be made of our present enlightenment. It is conceivable that there are implications here for American history as a whole.

In considering the first question, a number of hypotheses immediately suggest themselves. First of all, it would seem that the Deitsch language was inevitably responsible for certain misconceptions. As a dialect, it was not likely to promote cultural relations even with the Fatherland—especially in the early period when dialects were not in vogue. Moreover, the linguistic question was bound to be of some concern to the English-speaking majority. Franklin's criticisms were obviously motivated, for example, by the fear that non-English speaking immigrants could not be properly assimilated, and efforts were made in his day to persuade the Germans to abandon their dialect. Rush noted at the time that this might be a mistake, and recent studies have supported his view—since non-English speech may actually serve for a time as a means to rather than an obstacle against

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52 See Wilhelm Heiderich, "Ein deutsches Schicksal in Pennsylvanien," Folk u. Rasse, VI (1931), noted in Social Science Abstracts, IV (N. Y., 1932), no. 6599; and Preston A. Barba, in his introduction to John Birmelin, "Gezwitscher: A Book of Pennsylvania German Verse" (The Pennsylvania German Folklore Soc., Allentown, 1938), III.
There is some evidence that the over-hurried attempts of early patriots drove the Pennsylvania Germans into a conscious defense of their tongue, and thus actually contributed to its survival. By the later nineteenth century, their descendants were torn between a pride in the vernacular and a fear that it was primarily responsible for persistent misunderstandings.

The history of the dialect itself has been an interesting one. For more than a century after the main colonial immigration Deitsch was only a spoken language. It was constantly predicted that even in this form it would die, but it never did. Those who spoke it did all their writing in High German, and it is quite possible that many Pennsylvanians would themselves have agreed with Edward Everett’s view, expressed in 1820, that there never could be any real German-American literature. After the Civil War, however, a spontaneous dialect literature began to appear in the work of such poets as Henry Harbaugh and Henry L. Fischer. Although this was paralleled by a literary revival of the Palatine dialect in Germany, the two movements seem to have been largely of independent origin. The Pennsylvania literature displayed the vitality of a real folk art, and was eventually interpreted as such in Harry H. Reichard’s *Pennsylvania-German Dialect Writings and their Writers* (1918). Recently this literature has also been taken back, as it were, to the Fatherland, in such publications as Heinz Kloss’ *Lewendische Schtimme aus Pennsilveni* (Stuttgart, 1929) and the anthology entitled *Ich Schwetz in der Muttersprooch* (Bad Dürkheim, 1936) which has been prepared for secondary schools in Germany.

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53 See, e.g. such a use of German to promote Americanization, in Johannes Schreyack (John Shryock) *Auszug vom General Washington’s Circular-Schreiben An Die Gouverneure eines jeden Staates, beym Schlusse der Americanischen Revolution. Die Constitution der Vereinigten Staaten und die Constitution vom Staate Pennsylvanien, u. s. w.* (Chambersburg, Pa., 1816). For a general discussion of the question see Donald Y. Young, *American Minority Peoples* (N. Y., 1932).

54 George F. Baer declared in 1876, that the language was the cause of all the popular misconceptions, *The Pennsylvania Germans* (Reading, 1876), 25. [E. Everett], in the *North Amer. Rev.*, n. s., II (Boston, 1820). 1 ff. I am assuming here that a marginal notation of Everett’s name as author, in the copy of the Review employed, is correct.

56 Preston A. Barba, *loc. cit.* Several dictionaries, showing a vocabulary of about eight thousand non-English words, have been published. On the difficult problems in orthography involved in reducing Deitsch to written form, see Arthur D. Graeff, “Standardizing Pennsylvania German Orthography,” *Hist. Rev. of Berks County*, IV, No. 3, 82 ff.
Despite these interesting developments, there would seem to be little question that the dialect and even writings in High German as well, have been a barrier at times to mutual understanding. There is no better illustration of this than is afforded by historians themselves. A considerable literature in German developed in Pennsylvania and in the Fatherland, but English-speaking historians rarely consulted it. New England Puritan theology was an open book to them, but that emanating from Ephrata and Germantown was relatively unknown. By a process at which we are all too adept, scholars apparently projected their own ignorance of the culture into the culture itself. If they were not familiar with German theology, or art, or artisanship, there just wasn’t any. Q. E. D., the “Dutch” were an earthy people.

As if this were not enough, a second circumstance tended to deprive the Germans of credit for their intellectual achievements. When a New England boy acquired fame, he was naturally credited to that section. But when a Pennsylvania German “went to town”—literally and figuratively—he promptly ceased to be a “Dutchman” and became simply an “American.” (Few realize, to cite several contemporary examples, that the only living ex-president, the commander-in-chief of the American forces in the World War, the latest American recipient of the Nobel prize in literature—or, for that matter, the most popular of contemporary “movie” heroes—are of “Pennsylvania Dutch” origin.) In this way the process of Americanization has tended, automatically, to deny leadership to these people. Q. E. D., they never produced any leaders.

This tendency, incidentally, also reflects the national inclination to define the American tradition in exclusively English-speaking terms. If a Pennsylvania-German author praises the record of his people, there is an obvious lifting of eyebrows. Plainly the man is motivated by racial bias. Yet no one thinks of applying this type of criticism to the literature on our English-speaking forebears. A Virginian of English descent who writes with sympathy of “the Old Dominion” is not thereby suspected of pro-English prejudice. He is simply a patriotic American writing of Americans. This point may be brought into focus by suggesting that hereafter colonial historians

57 Several of these are noted in the recent essays on “Pennsylvania Dutch” impressions by Ann Hark, Hex Marks the Spot (Phila., 1938), 96.
might cease to think in terms of “Americans” and “Pennsylvania Germans,” and speak rather of Anglo-Americans and German-Americans.

Such distinctions, unhappily, are not always easy to follow. “Anglo-American” is by no means a clear-cut conception, and the phrase “German-American” is confusion worse confounded. It might be used for the colonial peoples, but provides no distinction between them and the later immigrants. One is rather forced back on the familiar usage, but even then there are difficulties. For just who, after all, were the Pennsylvania Germans? It has been tacitly assumed here that they were those Germans who immigrated into that province or state prior to about 1812, plus their descendants there and in nearby regions.\(^58\)

Such an answer still leaves open the old choice between racial and cultural criteria. Those who speak the dialect today sometimes wish to restrict inclusion on that basis—along with associated folk ways—although at the same time they are likely to claim as brethren distinguished leaders who have long since lost these qualifications. They would also include, necessarily, some people of non-German ancestry whose families became Germanized in certain areas. It is this cultural conception which was really denoted by the term “Dutch.” It has been rejected here for several reasons already mentioned, but primarily because it tends to obscure the total part played by the German settlers and their descendants in the history of their country. In a word, “Pennsylvania German” has been employed here to include both the German and the English-speaking descendants of the original German settlers.\(^59\)

To return to the problem of historical interpretations, it must be added that the Pennsylvania Germans have also been the unintended victims of our whole tradition of historical writing. This factor is subtle but most pervasive. It happened that throughout the greater

\(^58\) Including areas as distant as the Carolinas, Iowa, and Ontario.

\(^59\) As a matter of fact, this can be justified on cultural as well as upon racial grounds. English-speaking farmers of German descent may continue certain agricultural traditions long after losing the language with which they were originally associated, and this may be of considerable historical significance. The same may be true of a religious tradition, etc. Hence it is possible to exaggerate the significance of the language factor, important as it is. Cf. Emil Meynen, “Das pennsylvanien-deutsche Bauernland,” \textit{loc. cit.}, 253.
part of the last century, historians emphasized those phases of life with which these particular Germans were little concerned, and neglected just those in which they excelled. Partly because of the language barrier, for example, these people were relatively indifferent to politics; and politically-minded historians overlooked them in consequence. Conversely, their superior music was ignored by scholars having little interest in the history of the fine arts. Yet it were perfectly logical to employ music as a criterion of culture, rather than politics or theology. If we did so, the results might be surprising. Bethlehem might well replace Boston or Philadelphia as the cultural pinnacle of provincial society.  

As has already been suggested, when historians did begin to bring the Pennsylvania Germans into their narratives, it was chiefly in terms of the frontier interpretation. This treatment not only omitted their peculiar cultural contributions, but in some cases even distorted their rôle as frontiersmen. There was a tendency to lump them as a group with the Scots-Irish, for the simple reason that both frequently settled in the same areas, and then to assume that if the Scots-Irish ignored land rights or made trouble in other ways the Germans must have done the same. As a matter of fact, the latter may often have been quite the opposite of the Scots-Irish in these respects; and nothing could better illustrate the need for discrimination in applying the frontier hypothesis than assumptions of this nature.

So much, then, for the factors which may have influenced historians—doubtless unconsciously—in their handling of this theme. There may have been others: for example, the lack of social prestige in Bethlehem and Allentown as compared with colonial New York or Williamsburg. But enough has been said to suggest the thesis.

It must be admitted in all fairness that some of the apparent misinterpretations or conflicting views have been due to the complexity of the subject itself. The Pennsylvania Germans—like the French Canadians, whose history is partly analogous—present all the difficul-


This association of the two racial groups apparently accounts for the generalization in Riegel noted above. See for another illustration, Edward C. Kirkland's excellent History of American Economic Life (N. Y., 1936), 30.
ties usually associated with a permanent minority. In addition, the former were not an entirely homogeneous group themselves. Some of the sharply divergent opinions held of them may be accounted for by an emphasis upon certain aspects of their history or upon the story of particular groups. Those writers who thought only of Moravians or of the Ephrata cloisters naturally drew a different picture than did those who had in mind the rank and file.

Finally, what new perspectives on American history may be found in an adequate knowledge of the Pennsylvania-German story? Here the writer would only repeat a suggestion made in earlier papers. We may conceivably use this information not only to prove the Germans inferior to or superior to the Anglo-American majority, but also to learn more about the latter people themselves. For the Germans afford the best possible comparison with the British, in colonial times, by means of which we can possibly see the majority in a new light. Were the dominant Anglo-American economic systems, manners, customs and institutions inevitable in this environment? Were they or were they not the most effective which could have been developed? Possible answers may be found by comparing all these cultural paraphernalia with those developed by the Germans in the same setting. Such a contrast might conceivably indicate, for example, that the British who emigrated to colonial America were well suited to such a maritime environment as was afforded by New England, but ill adapted to a rural region such as that found in Pennsylvania and the South. Germans or other Continental peoples might have done better in these latter areas. This projects the story on to an international plane, however, and here for the time being one had best call a halt.

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