

Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language, by Mark L. Loudon. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016. 504 pp. Hard cover. ISBN: 978-1421418-28-5. \$59.99.

Prof. Mark L. Loudon's latest book, *Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language*, is the number-one book to read for all who are deeply interested in the Pennsylvania Dutch/German dialect as well as anyone wanting to better understand this key aspect of Pennsylvania Dutch-speaking fellow citizens, both Plain and non-Plain ("those curious, fancy old Dutch in the other counties"). In this thoroughly researched and solidly built work of scholarship, the reader is taken on a fascinating, insightful journey into the past and present worlds of these "speakers of a language as old as the United States itself." Surely this book had to turn out well, as Mark Loudon, professor of German at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is known to be the leading authority on the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect.

The book's seven chapters are presented in an essentially chronological order, according to the historical periods of Pennsylvania Dutch development: The first chapter, "What Is Pennsylvania Dutch?" examines the language's roots in various southwest German dialects and its current relationship to them, the influence of the English language on Pennsylvania Dutch, addresses the question of whether or not modern Pennsylvania Dutch is (still) a dialect of German or "a language unto itself," and the various groups who spoke/still speak it. Chapter two, "Early History of Pennsylvania Dutch," looks at Pennsylvania Dutch's beginnings in the 1700s in early America and its place in the lives of its many colonial-era "German Pennsylvanian" speakers. Chapter three, "Pennsylvania Dutch, 1800-1860," examines its further development and the interrelationship of spoken Pennsylvania Dutch and written "Pennsylvania High German"—that is, the language of church and press during the early 1800s; the difference between these two varieties versus the more-standardized European German of the many new German immigrants who arrived during the nineteenth century; as well as the often negative attitudes of these later immigrants toward the language and its speakers.

"Profiles in Pennsylvania Dutch Literature," the fourth chapter, looks in detail at the development in the second half of the 1800s of written Pennsylvania Dutch through the lives and literary works of important Pennsylvania Dutch authors of that period: Ludwig A. Wollenweber, Rev. Henry Harbaugh,

Edward H. Rauch, and Abraham R. Horne.

The following chapter, "Pennsylvania Dutch in the Public Eye," covers a broad range of time and topics. The discussion starts from references and reporting on Pennsylvania Dutch and its speakers in the American English-language press, beginning in the early 1800s, from the English-language popular print pieces written about the Pennsylvania Dutch, to anecdotal stories about Pennsylvania Dutch speakers during the two world wars. It also considers the early development of Pennsylvania Dutch-focused tourism in Pennsylvania and the creation of organizations and events by the Pennsylvania Dutch to promote their dialect and culture, such as groundhog lodges. Up to this point in the book, the Pennsylvania Dutch-speaking population being discussed is essentially the non-Plain, church-based "fancy/worldly Dutch," who made up the vast majority of Pennsylvania Dutch speakers until the mid-twentieth century.

Chapter six, "Pennsylvania Dutch and the Amish and Mennonites," is where the author brings his full focus and attention to the current status of Pennsylvania Dutch and its speakers. Here he relates how the largely Swiss-originating Amish and Mennonites came to be "Pennsylvania Dutch," adopting a Palatinate-based, rather than a Swiss, dialect as their own; how they and their non-Plain Pennsylvania Dutch neighbors, who once lived in much closer cultural contact in rural Pennsylvania, have since grown apart, along with their Plain and non-Plain Pennsylvania Dutch dialect varieties (especially because of the increasing influence of English on Plain Pennsylvania Dutch); and on the status and usage of Pennsylvania Dutch, German and English among the Amish.

The concluding chapter, "An American Story," is a discussion of the important role of Pennsylvania Dutch in Amish and Old Order Mennonite identity today: Along with the (Pennsylvania) High German they use for religious purposes, Pennsylvania Dutch serves as a "symbol of their social and religious identity apart from the world." In closing, the author predicts a "bright future" for Pennsylvania Dutch, not just in Pennsylvania but as a "portable language" spoken by an ever-growing number of Amish and Old Order Mennonite communities throughout the country.

Indeed, this is a one-of-a-kind, exceptionally valuable book. And every serious Dutchman and devotee of the good old "Mudderschprooch" will want to get a copy and thoroughly "study" it. (There's enough information in it for several books or for a full-semester college course!) So, scrape your pennies together, and go buy this book—before it's sold out! There is only one change I might have made to this book: the addition of a "glossary of grammar terms used" (for us Dutchmen who slept through that class back in school).

Butch Reigart
Columbia, Pennsylvania