Pennsylvania Germans

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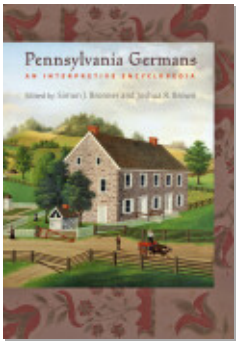

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Part 2 Culture and Society

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4 The Pennsylvania German Language

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The story of the Pennsylvania German language is an unusual one across the sociolinguistic landscape of North America. Worldwide, languages spoken today by minority populations are in a critical situation, with most in serious danger of becoming extinct. Indeed, of the approximately 7,000 languages spoken across the globe, at least half are predicted to lose their native speakers by the turn of the century. Yet Pennsylvania German, spoken by a minuscule 0.08 percent of the U.S. population, is exceptional. Despite the fact that it is an oral vernacular language lacking in any official recognition or support, it thrives today in the United States of America, the heartland of the world's dominant engine of economic and cultural globalization, whose majority language, English, has become the international lingua franca. And although the linguistic roots of Pennsylvania German lie in central Europe, its speakers have always viewed themselves every bit as American as their English-monolingual neighbors.

Pennsylvania Dutch or Pennsylvania German? Language or Dialect?

Pennsylvania German (PG) is a North American language that developed during the eighteenth century in colonial Pennsylvania as the result of the immigration of several thousand speakers from mainly southwestern German-speaking Europe, especially the linguistic and cultural area known as the Palatinate (German *Pfalz*). Although the term Pennsylvania German is used in this essay and throughout this book, most PG speakers, past and present, have preferred to describe their native language in English as Pennsylvania Dutch. Contrary to widespread belief among both nonscholars and scholars, the term Pennsylvania Dutch is not a historical mistranslation of the PG word for the language, *Deitsch* (also *Pennsilfaanisch Deitsch* or *Pennsylvania-Deitsch*). Although the PG and English words *Deitsch* and *Dutch* do share a common Germanic etymology, both terms were used in earlier American English to refer to what are identified today as German (as distinct from Netherlandic) dialects. *German* traditionally had a more neu-

tral or formal connotation, while *Dutch* was used in familiar and informal ("folksier") contexts. Since most active PG speakers have historically been farmers and craftspeople, it is thus clear why *Dutch* has been their label of choice (D. Yoder 1980b).

The words *dialect* and *language* are both used to refer to PG. Among linguists, there are no absolute criteria to distinguish languages from dialects. Though many would argue that mutually intelligible linguistic varieties should be labeled dialects of some more general language as, for example, British and American English, there are numerous examples of languages whose speakers can understand each other quite well (e.g., Norwegian and Swedish; Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian), as well as mutually unintelligible dialects (e.g., Mandarin vs. Cantonese). The decision to label a linguistic variety as either a language or a dialect (and in many situations, speakers themselves will disagree) is ultimately an arbitrary one, based often on the cultural and political autonomy of the speakers of the language or dialect in question. In the PG case, most speakers and outsiders have described it as a dialect of German, mainly because it developed from regional (mostly Palatine) varieties of German that are similarly viewed as dialects (in German, *Mundarten*, *Dialekte*) that are distinct from the prescriptive written standard variety—what is misleadingly referred to as High German (in German, *Hochdeutsch*; in PG, *Hochdeitsch*). My own preference for calling PG a language is based on its structural, geographic, and cultural independence from modern European German, both the standard and regional dialects. PG is not mutually intelligible with most of these varieties, and even modern Palatine German speakers have some difficulty understanding their distant North American cousins, owing to the historical divergence since the eighteenth century of Palatine and Pennsylvania German from their shared origin.

Structural Features of Pennsylvania German

The basic grammar of any language consists of four major components: a phonology, specifying how individual sounds are produced and combined with one another; a morphology, which determines how words are formed and modified; a syntax, the system according to which words are combined to form phrases and clauses; and an inventory of words, called either its vocabulary or lexicon. In all four structural components, modern PG demonstrates an overwhelmingly Palatine character, that is, it shares most features in common with the European German dialects spoken in the Palatinate region. Already in 1872, in the earliest scholarly treatment of PG, Samuel Stehman Haldeman's *Pennsylvania Dutch: A Dialect of South German with an Infusion of English*, the author correctly pointed out that despite the diversity of German dialects brought by immigrants to colonial Pennsylvania, which included not only Palatine but also Swabian and other Alemannic dialects (from southwestern Germany, eastern France, and German-speaking Switzerland), PG is most similar to Palatine German. Later work, notably

by Albert F. Buffington (1939) of the Pennsylvania State University and his student Earl C. Haag (1956), as well as the German dialectologist Werner H. Veith (1968), narrowed the dialectal origins even further to the (south)eastern Palatinate (*Vorderpfalz* in German), specifically to dialects spoken in and around the city of Mannheim. In fact, with the exception of two features, the diminutive suffix *-li* (e.g., *Koppli* 'little cup') and the second-person plural pronoun *dihr* 'you' (pl.), which are almost certainly of Swiss German origin, the phonology, morphology, syntax, and native (i.e., not English-derived) vocabulary of PG can be shown to originate in the Palatinate.

Like all living languages, PG has, over the past two and a half centuries, developed beyond its Palatine German roots. In the area of its sound system, the vowels of PG have been more susceptible to change than its consonants, which is consistent with what we find in the history of languages generally. PG morphology, that is, how new words are formed and how all words, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, are modified according to grammatical context (inflected), has been remarkably stable. PG syntax, on the other hand, has shown some measure of change, but most of that is limited to the varieties spoken by Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonite sectarians since the first half of the twentieth century. Finally, PG vocabulary has shown the greatest amount of change since the eighteenth century, a natural and inevitable phenomenon in all human languages, especially those whose speakers are bi- or multilingual. Much of this change is due to the borrowing of lexical items from American English, a fact that has been noted since the earliest descriptions of nascent PG in the eighteenth century. The size of the English-derived component of PG vocabulary has been grossly overstated, however. Although stereotypes about the language would have one believe that the language is a "mishmash of English and German" (Schöpf 1788, 156) due to the presence of loan vocabulary, an objective analysis of the actual percentage of English-derived words in PG yields a total of between just 10 and 15 percent, depending on the topic, which is a very modest amount, crosslinguistically speaking. Because contact with English has had essentially no effect on the phonology and morphology of PG, and only limited influence on its syntax, the "infusion of English" in PG referred to in the title of Haldeman's 1872 monograph is minimal.

The objective fact that the influence of English on PG is relatively limited stands in stark contrast to long-standing popular stereotypes about the language. The earliest detailed description of PG and the verbal behavior of its speakers, which was made by a German-born physician and polymath, Johann David Schöpf, begins as follows (see Louden 2003a for a detailed discussion of Schöpf's full remarks): "The language used by our German countrymen [in Pennsylvania] is a miserably broken mishmash of English and German, with respect to words as well as their combination. Adults coming over from Germany partially forget their mother tongue as they attempt, unsuccessfully, to learn a new language; those born here almost never learn German correctly and purely" (Schöpf 1788, 156). The view that contact with

English has been a subtractive process for PG, a fall from the linguistic grace of its European German origins, is a widespread but false one. On the contrary, the PG lexicon has expanded and become semantically enriched by the borrowing of vocabulary from English.

An example of lexical borrowing from English into PG is found on a coaster from the Old Reading Beer company, which was located in the heart of the Dutch Country and as a local brewery presumably had a large PG-speaking customer base (fig. 4.1). At the top of the coaster, the sentence *Die Fraa waert die Hosse* is a verbatim translation of the American English idiom "The wife wears the pants," an example of what is called a "loan translation." Within that sentence, the verb *waert* 'wears' is a borrowing from English, a form of the infinitive *waere* 'to wear'. Given the fact that it is highly unlikely that early PG speakers lacked a Palatine German-derived word meaning "to wear," it is fair to ask whether *waere* displaced an older, native lexical item. The answer is no. In earlier PG, "to wear" was expressed by the Palatine German *draage*, which also meant "to carry," parallel to its cognate in modern German, *tragen*. *Draage* is still used in PG, though only with the meaning "to carry." The borrowing of *waere* into English has thus not displaced *draage* but only narrowed its semantic scope. Such borrowings, of which there are dozens if not hundreds in PG, are an example of the economy of lexical borrowing from English into PG. Language contact, viewed in this light, is a form of linguistic enrichment: the size of the PG lexicon is increased through the inclusion of new words that do not displace older ones. Furthermore, borrowings from English have no effect on the core structures of PG. In the present example, *waere* behaves like any other verb and follows the phonological and morphological rules of the language, which are all inherited from Palatine German.

Fig. 4.1. Coaster advertising Old Reading Beer

Who Speaks Pennsylvania German Today and Where?

For many people, the terms *Pennsylvania Dutch* and *Amish* are almost synonymous, and for good reason: most of today's active speakers of PG are members of Old Order Amish churches and their children, who currently number more than 300,000 across North America (*Amish Population by State/Province* 2016). The only other sizable group of speakers are the closely related horse-and-buggy-driving Old Order Mennonites (who number more than 37,000 in the United States and Canada). Among these religious groups—which are the largest and most visible among several conservative Anabaptist sects in North America—the PG language serves as the major medium for oral, intracommunity communication. Due to the high growth rate and geographic mobility among Old Order sectarians, the PG language is now spoken by more people outside of Pennsylvania than within it (Keiser 2012). Old Order communities (i.e., concentrations of PG speakers) are to be found today in thirty-one U.S. states and three Canadian provinces (*Amish Population by State/Province* 2016). The following chapter by Kraybill, Nolt, and Burdge addresses the use of Pennsylvania German among these groups.

The ancestors of these "Plain people," however, for much of the history of PG constituted only a very small fraction of the total PG-speaking population. The historical majority comprised speakers of mainly Lutheran and German Reformed background who lived in rural southeastern and south-central Pennsylvania—that is, in or near the heart of the traditional Dutch Country, with especially large concentrations in Lehigh, Berks, Lebanon, and Lancaster counties. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, demographic changes affecting rural America generally, including Pennsylvania, laid the groundwork for widespread attrition away from PG among nonsectarians, such that today effectively all non–Old Order speakers who grew up with the language are now elderly and most of them no longer use the language actively. Estimates of the number of nonsectarian speakers are difficult to come by. The 2000 U.S. Census found the number of PG speakers in Pennsylvania to be 39,605, but there is no way of knowing how many of these speakers might be Old Order sectarians. It seems reasonable, then, to assume that the nonsectarian PG-speaking population is today fewer than 40,000. Given the fact that all fluent speakers are elderly, it is safe to say that within the next twenty to thirty years PG will be spoken almost exclusively by Old Order sectarians.

Why is it that sectarian speakers continue to maintain PG, while among nonsectarians the language has become moribund and is on the verge of disappearing? Since the eighteenth century, the social and demographic factors that correlate with maintenance of PG have been largely the same for both nonsectarians and sectarians. The typical active speaker of PG is a person who lives in a rural area with a high concentration of other PG speakers and who is engaged in occupations such as farming, carpentry, or oth-

er trades connected to rural life. Endogamy—that is, marrying within the PG-speaking community—is another crucial factor in determining whether the language is actively maintained in the home and larger community. Maintenance of PG is thus closely linked to the limited geographic and social mobility of its speakers. Ethnic Pennsylvania Germans who acquired the language in childhood but as adults have gone on to pursue careers that have taken them out of the country or have married a non-PG-speaker typically shift to active use of English instead of PG. This has been the case for virtually all nonsectarian speakers living today, with the added fact that the areas of rural Pennsylvania where they live are now more connected—geographically, economically, and culturally—to non-PG speakers and to nearby towns and cities where use of English is the norm. The Old Order sectarians, on the other hand, as a result of their rurally based, endogamous, socioreligious lifestyle, have naturally maintained PG (alongside English, it should be pointed out) without any special effort, in effect "by inertia" (Louden 2003b). However, the relatively few people (approximately 15 percent) who are born into Old Order families but as adults choose not to join (or remain in) Old Order churches often shift to using English predominantly or exclusively after leaving. Maintenance of PG is thus strongly linked to Old Order identity.

Early History of Pennsylvania German (1710–1800)

Although the first German settlement in Pennsylvania was the community of Germantown, founded in what is now part of Philadelphia in 1683, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any connection between the language(s) of these first settlers and what became PG. On the basis of eighteenth-century shipping records, the historian Marianne Wokeck (1999, 44–46) estimates that just under 81,000 German-speakers entered the port of Philadelphia between approximately 1710 and the outbreak of the Revolution in 1775. While we do not know precisely where all these 81,000 immigrants ended up, it is presumed that most settled in a fanlike area to the north and west of Philadelphia, especially in what are now the counties of Lehigh, Berks, Lebanon, and Lancaster, which compose the bulk of the Dutch Country. More than two-thirds of these immigrants (58,000) arrived between 1710 and 1755, of whom 35,000 (43 percent) came during the period 1749–54 (Wokeck 1999, 44). From 1755 until 1775, immigration to Pennsylvania from German-speaking Europe dropped off significantly and did not resume until about 1820, after the hostilities between Britain and the United States (including those during the War of 1812) had ceased.

For the purpose of reconstructing the history of PG, the years between 1750 and 1775 and, secondarily, from 1775 until the early nineteenth century are crucial. On the basis of what we know of the linguistic outcome of German-speaking immigration to colonial Pennsylvania—Pennsylvania German, a language closely related to southeastern Palatine German dialects, though not identical to any one of them—it is reasonable to assume

that many if not most of the 35,000 immigrants between 1749 and 1754 hailed from the southeastern Palatinate. Since major linguistic change typically proceeds generationally, that is, as the result of child language acquisition, it may be further presumed that the children of immigrants born around the middle of the eighteenth century, who would have been young adults at the outbreak of the Revolution, were the main agents in creating earliest PG. We thus infer that PG existed as a distinct language by around 1780. This inference is supported by contemporary accounts of the speech of Pennsylvania Germans from the early 1780s, including the relatively detailed description provided by Johann David Schöpf, which was based on his firsthand observations in 1783 and 1784 (Schöpf 1788; see also Louden 2003a).

Another piece of early documentary evidence for the existence of PG is an article from the German-language *Gemeinnützige Philadelphische Correspondenz* published on October 26, 1784. This article was a parody of rural-dwelling German Pennsylvanians that mocked their presumed heavy use of English loanwords. In the following passage, none other than Frederick August Muhlenberg, a member of the ethnic German social elite of Philadelphia who went on to become the first speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, plays the role of a rural "Dutchman" defending himself against the disrespect of a standard German speaker (Louden 2008, 6).

> Hey da! *Certainly* wer sie jetzt reden hört, dem ist *easy* zu wissen, daß sie ein grober *Dutchman* sind. Wissen sie nicht, daß ich ein *Gentleman* bin, und einen *Gentleman* einen Thoren zu nennen, das ist *meaner* als *mean*; aber es ist nicht *worth while*, viel *Notice* davon zu nehmen, *because* ich werde doch bleiben, wer ich bin.
>
> [Hey there! Certainly whoever hears you speaking now will know easily that you are a coarse Dutchman. Do you not know that I am a gentleman, and to call a gentleman a fool, that is meaner than mean. But it is not worthwhile to take much notice of this because I will remain who I am.]

Later in the parody, one of Muhlenberg's interlocutors responds with a statement that includes the earliest documented reference to a distinct "Pennsylvania German dialect":

> Ich dachte halb, daß unser lustiger Freund nur spashaft seyn wollte, da er anfing den Pennsylvanischen Deutschen *Dialect* zu reden; denn ich weiß, daß er sonst so rein Deutsch spricht, als einer von uns.
>
> [I figured that our merry friend was just being silly when he began speaking the Pennsylvania German dialect, since I know that he otherwise speaks German just as purely as any of us.]

The accounts of Schöpf and Muhlenberg and his friends underscore a crucial sociolinguistic fact about PG that endures to the present—namely, its lack of overt prestige, as the vernacular medium of common people living in rural areas. The difference of PG from standard (High) German, including its acceptance of loanwords from English (which, as discussed earlier, com-

pose a much lower percentage of the PG lexicon than assumed by unsympathetic observers such as Schöpf and Muhlenberg), as well as its association with speakers of modest social status, has led to its stigmatization as the "miserably broken mishmash of English and German" described by Schöpf.

Recalling now our earlier discussion of the long-standing dichotomy within PG-speaking society between speakers of Lutheran and Reformed background (nonsectarians; also "Church people" or "Fancy Dutch") and the members of Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonite communities (sectarians; also "Plain people"), it is important to consider sociolinguistic aspects of the relations between these two groups in the eighteenth century. Interestingly, over much of the history of PG, the contacts between these two groups of PG speakers have been limited, mainly due to the fact that they have lived in geographically separate areas. Nonsectarian speakers of PG were concentrated in the Dutch Country of southeastern Pennsylvania, but especially in counties such as Lehigh, Berks, and Lebanon, and also in York, Dauphin, and Northumberland counties where, until recently, sectarian communities were few in number. The three Pennsylvania counties with significant and long-standing sectarian populations, Lancaster, Somerset, and Mifflin, were home historically to very low numbers of nonsectarian PG speakers. Only in the past thirty years or so, as the Old Order population, especially in Lancaster County, has grown and sectarians have settled in other parts of the state have PG speakers from the two groups come into contact with one another to any extent. Despite their shared language, mutual lack of knowledge about the historical connections among their ancestors is the norm. Reinforcing this divide between sectarians and nonsectarians has been the expansion of PG speakers, for the past two centuries, out of Pennsylvania, especially into the American Midwest (Keiser 2012). Many midwestern Amish and Mennonite speakers of PG are not even aware that there are (or were, historically) speakers of the language anywhere who are not of sectarian background.

Yet the basic fact that nonsectarian and sectarian varieties of PG are mutually intelligible, with only minor lexical and pronunciation differences between them, points to the fact that sectarian and nonsectarian Pennsylvania Germans must have lived in close proximity to one another during the crucial period of language genesis between 1750 and 1775. This is supported by historical research, including the studies of MacMaster (1985) and Fogleman (1996). It is important to note how few sectarians there were among the 81,000 total German-speaking immigrants to colonial Pennsylvania. Fogleman (1996, 104–5) estimates there were just over 3,200 sectarians among the original immigrants, of whom roughly half were Mennonites and Amish (1,536 and 265, respectively). Thus, approximately 4 percent of the first Pennsylvania Germans were sectarians and only 2 percent were the progenitors of today's Old Order speakers (Krahn, Bender, and Friesen 1989). The demographic majority was composed of people of Lutheran and German Reformed affiliation. As MacMaster (1985, 138–56) lays out in de-

tail in an important revision of what he terms an "isolationist interpretation" (139) of sectarian-nonsectarian relations in colonial Pennsylvania, eighteenth-century Mennonite and Amish congregations were located in areas with sizable Lutheran and Reformed (as well as Scots-Irish) populations (e.g., in Berks County), and the diverse groups were bound to one another by numerous social, economic, and educational ties, often stemming from the exigencies of pioneer life (likely including resistance from local Native American groups to the incursion of white settlers).

By the turn of the nineteenth century, however, as the turmoil of the Revolution and the early years of the Republic subsided, sectarian and nonsectarian PG speakers became concentrated in different areas of Pennsylvania, with sectarians heavily represented in parts of Lancaster County. From about 1800 on, regular contacts between sectarians and nonsectarians in Pennsylvania declined significantly owing to their geographic distance, a situation that has only recently changed somewhat with the expansion of Old Order communities into traditionally nonsectarian parts of Pennsylvania. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, sectarians also began migrating outside of Pennsylvania, including to Waterloo County, Ontario (1800), and Holmes County, Ohio (1809). The Waterloo County Mennonite settlement is particularly interesting for PG linguistic history since it is the oldest major daughter settlement out of Pennsylvania. The modern variety of the PG spoken in Ontario today (cf. Burridge 1989) is, aside from minor lexical and pronunciation differences, structurally identical to nonsectarian and other sectarian varieties with which there has been little or no contact since the eighteenth century. This underscores the proximity of the earliest sectarian and nonsectarian PG speakers during the crucial period between 1750 and 1775 when the language developed.

By way of concluding this discussion of the genesis and early history of PG, we should note that we have essentially no direct written evidence of the language itself aside from the fanciful and negative characterizations of folk speech made by non-PG speakers such as Johann David Schöpf and Frederick August Muhlenberg. In a study of eighteenth-century Pennsylvania German society as described in contemporary newspapers, James Owen Knauss (1922, 105) found just one example of printed dialect, from the *Neue Unpartheyische Readinger Zeitung*, April 30, 1794. While there are differences between the language of this text and later PG, its features are still basically Palatine German. The use of PG as a literary medium did not begin until the nineteenth century, but even then most PG speakers preferred to read and write in English or German. Up to the present day, PG has remained a predominantly oral language. During the eighteenth century, knowledge of written standard (High) German was widespread, as evidenced in the circulation figures for German-language newspapers. In colonial Philadelphia, a small German-speaking social elite (to which the Muhlenbergs, for example, belonged) cultivated High German, though by 1800 the city had become largely anglicized. Although the standard language was never wide-

spread as an oral vernacular among rural-dwelling Pennsylvania Germans, German-language newspapers with mainly PG-speaking readerships (e.g., the *Reading Adler* [Eagle]) were published as late as the early twentieth century. And knowledge of what became known as "Pennsylvania High German" (R. Wood 1945) was also promoted by German-speaking churches, both nonsectarian and sectarian (Helffrich 1906).

The relatively secondary status of Pennsylvania High German in the verbal repertoire of Pennsylvania Germans during the eighteenth century and beyond is attested to by the fact that the standard variety has had no structural influence on PG: the core phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures of the language are wholly Palatine dialectal. Even in the area of vocabulary, the most malleable component of any language, the few High German–derived words are largely limited to religious domains and had almost certainly been part of the Palatine German lexicon before immigration to America. Two examples of High German–derived lexical items in PG compared with historically related, phonologically Palatine words are *Heiland* 'savior' (lit. 'healer') versus PG *heele* 'to heal'; and *Glaabensbekenntnis* 'confession of faith' versus *Glaawe* 'faith'.

Pennsylvania German in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century witnessed the flowering of a rich Pennsylvania German folk culture, the major products of which were in some way connected to the PG language. It was a time during which PG became a vehicle for literary expression, even as the negative stereotypes of it held by outsiders (and not a few insiders) endured. Although identified PG writers composed only a small fraction of the total PG-speaking population, the texts they produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are a valuable resource for students of Pennsylvania German history. PG speakers created for themselves a linguistic and cultural identity that was distinct not only from that of German-speaking Europe but also from an emergent German American culture, the standard-bearers for which were new immigrants and their descendants concentrated especially in eastern cities and rural and urban areas of the Midwest. Tellingly, the Pennsylvania Germans dubbed these relative newcomers *Deitschlenner* "Germans, Germany-people" as opposed to *Deitsche* "(Pennsylvania) Dutch" (D. Yoder 1988). At the same time, despite their enduring self-image as "old stock" Americans, Pennsylvania Germans (more properly, Pennsylvania Dutch) continued to view themselves as different from their English-speaking neighbors, language but not ethnicity being the salient marker of their differentness. By the turn of the twentieth century, PG reached its demographic high point with an estimated three-quarters of a million active speakers in the United States and Canada, approximately 600,000 of whom lived in Pennsylvania (Seifert 1971, 16–17).

The decades leading up to the Civil War are described by Earl F. Robacker (1943, 38–71), in his study of Pennsylvania German literature, as a "period of

transition" for Pennsylvania German culture. Linguistically, knowledge of High German receded and, with it, a connection to the culture and spiritual life of German-speaking Europe. At the same time, Robacker states that overall economic prosperity during the years of the Early Republic afforded Pennsylvania Germans a measure of autonomy from their English-speaking neighbors, allowing them to create a space in which their folk culture could develop.

> After the second or third generation in America, High German had become almost a foreign language to many. It was used in the pulpit and in the devotional literature of the Church, but it was only spoken, to any extent, by the newcomers, since the dialect, increasingly modified by English, was employed for all the everyday purposes of life.
>
> Actually, the Pennsylvania Germans had no real need either for pure German or pure English. Pure German could not meet their needs in a land which called for an agricultural, economic, and political terminology unknown to Europeans. And as for English, there was seemingly no more cause for the solid bloc of Germans in Pennsylvania to learn English than there was for the English to learn German. Few, if any, had the vision of a continent united by one people and one language, and there appeared to be no reason why, in the face of prosperity, anything should ever be different from what it was right then. (Robacker 1943, 43)

The cultural autonomy of Pennsylvania Germans during the nineteenth century should not, however, be viewed as a result of their ignorance of what was going on in the rest of Pennsylvania and American society. On the contrary, as reflected in their own writings, especially local newspapers and, later in the century, literary and nonliterary texts produced in PG, they were profoundly aware of the larger community of which they were a part, albeit a distinct part. The historian Steven M. Nolt, in writing about the political culture of Pennsylvania Germans during the first half of the nineteenth century, speaks of their "peasant republicanism," a blend of attitudes and behaviors inherited to some extent from central Europe but strongly shaped by the ideals of the American Revolution.

> Peasant republicanism regarded true liberty in negative terms—that is, as freedom from intrusive agents of change. Its proponents resisted the efforts of distant power brokers to meddle in their local and traditional affairs, yet ancient privileges and the authority structures that guarded them received honor and deferential respect, and peasant subjects dutifully filled their roles in a vertically organized society. . . . Peasant republicanism endorsed a collective self-interest derived from a strong local base. It could produce seemingly passive subjects who compliantly yielded to hierarchies of merit, but its advocates actually based their actions on political principles that could also evoke stiff opposition and vigorous protest. (Nolt 2002, 31)

This spirit of Pennsylvania Germans exercising what they saw as their fundamentally American right to be allowed to determine their own affairs enabled them to carve out for themselves a cultural territory within which their

distinctive language—neither German nor English, yet related to both—could flourish. This was language maintenance born not of isolation but of a controlled distance between an independent-minded minority community and the sociolinguistic mainstream.

However, it was difficult for most non–Pennsylvania Germans, both Anglo- and German American, to view the Dutch as anything other than stubborn, backward people who spoke a "bastard jargon." As one German observer, Franz Löher, wrote in 1847:

> These Germans have, since the end of the Revolution and up to the War of 1812, preserved part of the Germany of the eighteenth century, such that our recent literary achievements and Germany's entire spiritual rebirth since the eighteenth century are either totally unknown to them or have had no effect on them. In fact, they have forgotten the land of their ancestors and have come to consider themselves the only Germans in the world. A friend [from Germany] told me once that, twenty years ago, he took a trip through rural Pennsylvania. A Dutchman said to him: "You talk pretty good German; how long have you been in this country?" "About six months." "Wow, that's amazing that you've already learned such good German!" I myself have found only the vaguest memories of Germany among the Pennsylvania Dutch, which consisted mainly of the following: that things are jollier in Germany, a lot of wine is produced there, and the people are not deceiving Yankees, but honest and pious.
>
> . . . Good German ended in America when preachers no longer came over from Germany; it lived on only in a few books. Our countrymen here could not preserve the ponderous German way of speaking; they had to develop something more lively. Maintaining the pure German language was too hard for them, so that is how the curious Pennsylvania language came about, which preserves the humor and directness of German dialects, here the Palatine dialects, but mixed in a crazy way with English-derived business talk and expressions adapted to German. Before the Pennsylvania Dutch shifted from German to English, they preferred to speak English (which they could not avoid) with a German accent. Pennsylvania Dutch is certainly the most curious among the many dialects of German and has the distinction, along with Holland Low German [i.e., Dutch], of becoming a written language. Whoever becomes familiar with this language cannot help but be amused by its "leaps" and "stings," even though it has developed into something that will make the fruits of German learning less accessible to Pennsylvanians. (Löher 1847, 200; my translation)

Unaffected by, yet also in reaction to, the negative views that outsiders such as Franz Löher held of them, a small but visible number of nineteenth-century Pennsylvania Germans produced thousands of texts in their vernacular language that offer us a unique window on their self-identity and culture. These were pieces of prose and poetry, some lighthearted and humorous, others profoundly serious, that were written by and for members of the PG-speaking community. Thus, when we read them today, we are, in a sense, listening in on private conversations that took place generations ago.

Among the earliest published works in PG were short texts, poems, letters to the editor, and interesting anecdotes that appeared in the first decades

of the nineteenth century in small, usually German-language newspapers serving rural Pennsylvania. Many of the writers were anonymous, but several individuals achieved a degree of local fame as dialect writers. Harry Hess Reichard (1918; 1940; Buffington 1962), whose documentation of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century PG prose and poetry is invaluable for its scope, identified more than 100 authors, the oldest of whom was Louis (or Lewis) Miller, who was born in 1795 and died in 1882 (Reichard 1918, 46–48). The sole work of Miller, a lifelong resident of York County, Pennsylvania, to survive is a poem about bringing goods to the markets of Baltimore by Conestoga wagon. The first stanza is given below with original spelling:

Nooch Baltimore geht unser Fuhr
Mit dem bedeckte Waage;
Der Turnpike zeigt uns die Geschpur,
Die Gäul sin gut beschlaage.
En guter Schluck, Glück zu der Reiss,
Der Dramm, der steigt un fallt in Preis—
So bloose die Posauner—
Hot, Schimmel, hot! ei, Brauner!

[To Baltimore goes our team
With the covered wagon;
The turnpike shows us the way,
The horses are well shod.
A good drink, for luck on the journey,
The rum rises and falls in price—
So blow the horns—
Giddy-up, white horse, giddy up! hey, brown one!]

The twentieth-century folklorist Alfred L. Shoemaker (1951a) found a handful of PG texts in German-language newspapers dating as far back as 1804. One early piece appeared in the March 25, 1815, issue of the *Northumberland Republicaner*, published in Sunbury, Pennsylvania. Although there are differences between the language in this text and later PG, modern speakers would have no difficulty understanding it. The "peace" referred to here is evidently the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812 and went into effect on February 18, 1815, just weeks before this article appeared.

Du Drucker,

Was gebts doch net närsche Leut in der Welt—do war ich nächti Owed im Werthshaus un hab do en Schnaps kaaft, eb i en zahlt hab odder net, deß geht jo ken nicks ah, as wi der Werth un mich. Well awer do war en Kirl dart, der hot gscheit gnunck guckt, awer wi i gmahnt ho, so hot der verdeickert närrsch geblaudert; do hot er gsaat vum Friede, daß die Americaner wäre gzwunge gwest Friede mit de Englische z'mache.

[Printer,

Are there ever crazy people in the world. Last night I was at the tavern and bought a drink there; whether I paid for it or not, that's between the innkeeper

and me. Well, there was a fellow there who looked intelligent enough, but as I recall, he rambled on mighty crazy. He talked about the peace . . . that the Americans were forced to make peace with the English.]

In the years immediately following the Civil War, the first books containing PG prose and poetry appeared. The earliest of these were two anthologies that were published in 1869. The first was *Gemälde aus dem pennsylvanischen Volksleben* (Sketches of domestic life in Pennsylvania; Wollenweber 1869), which is discussed later. The second book to appear in 1869 was a collection of English and PG poems written by Rachel Bahn (1829–1902), who was notable since she is one of the few known female dialect writers in the nineteenth century. Bahn's life story was also particularly poignant for the fact that she was bedridden for fifty years (Lockyer 1979). In 1870, one year after Bahn's *Poems* appeared, a posthumous collection of PG poems written by Henry Harbaugh, a distant cousin of Rachel Bahn, was published. Harbaugh (1817–67), dubbed "The Father of Pennsylvania German Literature" by Earl C. Haag (1988, 33), was a well-known minister and theologian in the Reformed Church whose PG poetry composed just a small part of his published works, most of which were in English and dealt with religious topics (Kieffer 1945).

The proliferation of PG prose and poetic texts in periodicals and books during the second half of the nineteenth century speaks to the growing popularity of the written language among PG speakers, even if most still preferred to read and write in English. While many dialect writings were of a lighthearted, entertaining nature, several had a distinctly nostalgic quality. Pennsylvania Germans born in the first decades of the nineteenth century had witnessed significant changes over their lifetimes as their young nation grew to be a world power, and technological advances, notably the railroad, marked the beginning of an industrial age that many rural Americans, not just Pennsylvania Germans, viewed with suspicion. The centennial celebrations of 1876, for example, were tempered by a severe economic recession—the worst in the nation's history up to that point—as well as political scandals, all of which engendered a melancholy mood among traditionally peasant republican Pennsylvania Germans whose world was rapidly changing around them. It is no surprise then that many PG writers evoked romanticized images of the simpler, happier times of their youth. The most famous poem of Henry Harbaugh, "Das alt Schulhaus an der Krick" (The old schoolhouse at the creek), exemplifies this nostalgia. The poem's first three stanzas are given here:

Heit is 's 'xäctly zwansig Johr,
  Dass ich bin owwe naus;
Nau bin ich widder lewig z'rick
Un schteh am Schulhaus an d'r Krick,
  Juscht neekscht an's Dady's Haus.

Ich bin in hunnert Heiser g'west,
  Vun Märbelstee' un Brick,

Un alles was sie hen, die Leit,
Dhet ich verschwappe eenig Zeit
For's Schulhaus an der Krick.

Wer mied deheem is, un will fort,
So loss ihn numme geh'—
Ich sag ihm awwer vorne naus
Es is all Humbuk owwe draus,
Un er werd's selwert seh'! (Harbaugh 1870, 13)

[Today it is exactly twenty years ago
That I went away;
Now I have returned alive
And stand by the schoolhouse at the creek
Close by Dad's house.

I have been in hundreds of buildings,
Made of marble and brick,
And everything I have seen
I would trade any day
For the schoolhouse at the creek.

Whoever is tired with being home and wants to go away,
Let him go;
But I will tell him up front
It is all humbug out there,
As he will see for himself.]

Nearly all known literature in PG produced in the nineteenth century was written by nonsectarians, with a notable exception, John H. Oberholtzer (1809–95). Aside from his importance in the history of PG, Oberholtzer, a native of Berks County, is an important figure in the early history of the Mennonite church in North America (Fretz 1987). A gifted preacher and prolific writer in High German and English, Oberholtzer edited the first Mennonite periodical in America, the German-language newspaper *Der Religiöse Botschafter* (1852–55), as well as its successor *Das Christliche Volks-Blatt* (1856–67), which included a handful of articles in PG that he wrote pseudonymously. An excerpt from one such article, "Vom naus Heira" (On marrying outside the faith; Oberholtzer 1862), is given here with translations of both the High German introduction and the first paragraph (fig. 4.2). Note that the spelling of Oberholtzer's PG has been amended to follow modern conventions.

The following has been submitted in the name of an old "Pennsylvanian," and we hope, as coarsely and simply Pennsylvania-style as he has written, our readers will not be put off, since he makes some points in his message that are not without some relevance if one reflects on them. Here is his piece:

"Vum Nausheiere"

Den Marrige hab ich so iwwer allerhand noh geconsidert un bin so an's Nausheiere kumme, un do hab ich gedenkt und gedenkt un hab des eefeldich

Ding schiergar nimmi los waerre kenne. Un weil ich's Volksblatt als lees, un sie als iwwer allerlei Sache gschriwwe, so hab ich gedenkt: du gehscht yuscht so gut emol draa un schreibscht e Schtick fer's Volksblatt, grad wege dem aus der Gmeeschaft Nausheiere.

["On Marrying outside the Faith"

This morning I was reflecting about a number of things, including marrying outside the faith. I was thinking and thinking and just could not get this simple thing out of my head. Since I read the *Volksblatt* regularly, and have written them [*sic*] about different topics, I thought: you should just go ahead and write a piece for the *Volksblatt* about marrying outside of the faith.]

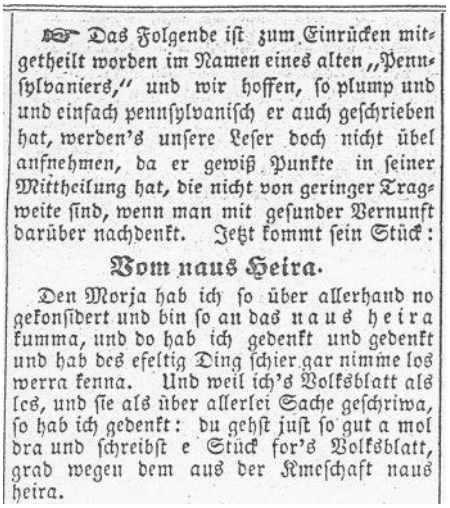
Especially interesting here is Oberholtzer's editorial note to readers almost apologizing for writing in the "coarse and simple" PG instead of German. Clearly, though, PG had an important stylistic function here—namely, to convey a serious message to readers in an informal and accessible way.

As mentioned earlier, most texts in PG were written by native speakers for a native-speaking audience. There are a few notable exceptions to this trend, including three books that all appeared within a decade of one another. The first of these was Ludwig Wollenweber's *Gemälde aus dem Pennsylvanischen Volksleben* mentioned earlier. Wollenweber was exceptional in many regards. Although a *Deitschlenner* (nineteenth-century immigrant German American), Wollenweber became a "Pennsylvania-German by preference" (Reichard 1918, iii; cf. also 100–104). Born near Zweibrücken in the western Palatinate in 1807, Wollenweber emigrated to Philadelphia in the 1830s and worked for many years in the newspaper business. Wollenweber took a strong, sympathetic interest in rural Pennsylvania German life, including many local-color stories and legends he heard. His *Gemälde* contains poems and short prose texts, many of which he wrote himself in his own variety of PG, which differs somewhat from that of native speakers. The first stanza of the first poem in the collection, "Eine Beteurung" (An affirmation), translated here, expresses Wollenweber's affection for his adopted home.

I am a Pennsylvanian,
I am proud and happy about that
The country is beautiful, the people are nice,
By jinks! I would bet anyone
That no other country in the world can beat it!

The title page of Wollenweber's book listed both Philadelphia and Leipzig as places of publication, though it is not known whether the book did in fact appear in Germany. In any case, it is clear that Wollenweber sought to disseminate PG language and culture among both German and American readers. Unlike earlier European-born observers of Pennsylvania German life, such as Johann David Schöpf, Wollenweber treated his subject with respect and admiration.

In 1875 another book of special importance in the history of PG appeared, the *Pennsylvania German Manual* by Abraham Reeser Horne (1834–1902). Born



☞ Das Folgende iſt zum Einrücken mitgetheilt worden im Namen eines alten „Pennſylvaniers," und wir hoffen, ſo plump und und einfach pennſylvaniſch er auch geſchrieben hat, werden's unſere Leſer doch nicht übel aufnehmen, da er gewiß Punkte in ſeiner Mittheilung hat, die nicht von geringer Tragweite ſind, wenn man mit geſunder Vernunft darüber nachdenkt. Jetzt kommt ſein Stück:

Vom naus Heira.

Den Morja hab ich ſo über allerhand no gekonſidert und bin ſo an das naus heira kumma, und do hab ich gedenkt und gedenkt und hab des efeltig Ding ſchier gar nimme los werra kenna. Und weil ich's Volksblatt als les, und ſie als über allerlei Sache geſchriwa, ſo hab ich gedenkt: du gehſt juſt ſo gut a mol dra und ſchreibſt e Stück for's Volksblatt, grad wegen dem aus der Kmeſchaft naus heira.

Fig. 4.2. Excerpt from 1862 article by John H. Oberholtzer

on a farm in rural Bucks County, Horne was a progressive figure in education, both in Pennsylvania and nationally. Aside from years of practical experience as a teacher in rural Pennsylvania schools, he directed the Kutztown State Normal School (today Kutztown University) and for more than forty years published and edited the *National Educator* (Donner 2000). From his life experience, Horne knew firsthand how PG-speaking children struggled in school, stigmatized as they were as "dumb Dutch" by unsympathetic English-speaking teachers. His *Manual*, which was subtitled "For Pronouncing, Speaking, and Writing English," was premised on the sound pedagogical view that children could acquire English more effectively through a contrastive approach. That is, if PG-speaking children could first learn to read their native language phonetically, that would enable them to anticipate the pitfalls (especially phonetic) associated with the target language English. An ancillary benefit to this contrastive approach was promoting literacy in High German, which in Horne's time was the most commonly taught "living language" in schools. A sample page from Horne's *Manual* is given in figure 4.3.

Horne's dedication to the improvement of the situation of Pennsylvania German children in schools was part of his broader desire to elevate the status of his native language and culture. To that end, Horne included in his *Manual* a wealth of material from Pennsylvania German history, folklore, and literature, not to mention an extensive PG-English dictionary, making the book an invaluable resource for scholars today (Kopp 2010). That Horne's *Manual* went through three editions and four printings between 1875 to 1910 points to its popularity and likely distinguishes it as the most successful PG-language publication in history.

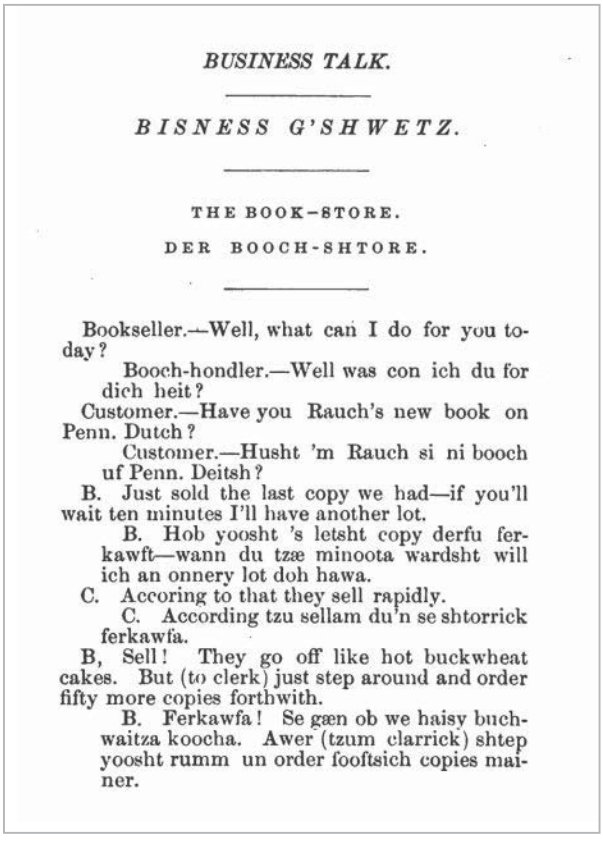
A third important book to appear around the time of Wollenweber's *Gemälde* and Horne's *Manual* is the *Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-Book* (1879) by Edward Henry Rauch (1820–1902). Born in Lancaster County, Rauch had a

Fig. 4.3. Sample page from A. R. Horne's *Pennsylvania German Manual*

long and successful career as a journalist and newspaper publisher (Louden 2003c; 2006b). An ardent Radical Republican, Rauch assisted with the work of the Underground Railroad and later served as an officer in the Civil War. Much of his writings, including those in PG, were connected with his strong political views, which were matched only by his advocacy for PG language and culture. Rauch's *Hand-Book* overlapped in content to some degree with Horne's *Manual* (the two men were friends), yet the aims of these books differed. Whereas Horne's goal was to facilitate PG-speaking children's acqui-

sition of English, Rauch sought to help English speakers in Pennsylvania learn the language of their Dutch neighbors. Both books were concerned with demonstrating the legitimacy and expressive power of PG, for example, by including an extensive dictionary and numerous literary texts, in both the original and translations from English. Horne, the teacher and educational theorist, adopted a more didactic approach than his political activist and man-of-the-people friend Rauch. It is no accident, then, that Horne used the more formal sounding "Pennsylvania German" to describe their native language, while Rauch preferred "Pennsylvania Dutch." A sample page from the section in Rauch's *Hand-Book* on "Business Talk/Bisness G'shwetz" is given in figure 4.4.

That the second half of the nineteenth century marked the demographic high point for PG was reflected in the proliferation of publications in the language during this time. And to be sure, the popularity of PG literature reflected the measure of pride (in the non-sinful sense) that many Pennsylvania Germans came to feel about their language and heritage. With the turn of the century, however, it became clear that a new and very different chapter in the story of the PG language was about to be written.



BUSINESS TALK.

BISNESS G'SHWETZ.

THE BOOK-STORE.

DER BOOCH-SHTORE.

Bookseller.—Well, what can I do for you to-day?

Booch-hondler.—Well was con ich du for dich heit?

Customer.—Have you Rauch's new book on Penn. Dutch?

Customer.—Husht 'm Rauch si ni booch uf Penn. Deitsh?

B. Just sold the last copy we had—if you'll wait ten minutes I'll have another lot.

B. Hob yoosht 's letsht copy derfu ferkawft—wann du tzæ minoota wardsht will ich an onnery lot doh hawa.

C. Accoring to that they sell rapidly.

C. According tzu sellam du'n se shtorrick ferkawfa.

B, Sell! They go off like hot buckwheat cakes. But (to clerk) just step around and order fifty more copies forthwith.

B. Ferkawfa! Se gæn ob we haisy buchwaitza koocha. Awer (tzum clarrick) shtep yoosht rumm un order fooftsich copies mainer.

Fig. 4.4. Sample page from E. H. Rauch's *Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-Book*

Decline and Growth of Pennsylvania German in the Twentieth Century

Throughout the nineteenth century, PG-speaking Mennonite and Amish sectarians played a marginal role in the development of the Pennsylvania German folk culture, especially PG-language literature. To be sure, that was partially due to their small numbers. In 1890 it was estimated that there were only 3,700 Amish spread across the three largest settlements in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; Holmes County, Ohio; and Elkhart County, Indiana (J. Hostetler 1993, 97). This contrasts with the estimate cited earlier of approximately 750,000 PG speakers total in North America at about the same time. Adding Mennonite PG speakers to the 3,700 Amish would not likely have increased the sectarian total by a significant amount. Small population size aside, sectarian and nonsectarian Pennsylvania Germans grew apart from one another during the nineteenth century, both geographically and culturally, even if their respective varieties of PG did not diverge to the point of mutual unintelligibility.

The major sociolinguistic development affecting PG in the twentieth century has already been noted, namely the widespread attrition of nonsectarians from PG and, at the same time, the dramatic growth in the number of sectarian speakers due to natural increase (Huffines 1980). The turning point came around 1920 or 1930. Children who were born into nonsectarian PG-speaking families in rural Pennsylvania at that time rarely maintained active use of the language through adulthood. By the 1940s and 1950s, when these native speakers of PG began marrying and having children, in very few cases did PG remain the dominant home language. The result is that today virtually all fluent nonsectarian speakers are aged seventy and older, and most have spoken English more frequently than PG for many years now. Among Old Order sectarians, on the other hand, the situation is strikingly different. PG continues to be the first language sectarian children acquire, and it is the preferred medium of oral communication within Old Order communities. What happened, then, in the 1920s and 1930s, to have led to the near extinction of PG among nonsectarians but not among sectarians?

The answer to this question lies in the sociodemographic factors that have correlated with maintenance of PG since the eighteenth century, namely ruralness, limited social and geographic mobility, and endogamy. The economic and attendant social changes brought about by industrialization in Pennsylvania and across the United States after the Civil War, which were observed and often lamented by PG writers during that time, dramatically affected the rural areas of southeastern and south-central Pennsylvania where nonsectarians were concentrated. More and more men (and women) left farming and rural-based trades for factory work, and many commuted or moved to cities and towns; somewhat later, English-monolingual city-dwellers began moving out into the Dutch Country. Educational levels were raised, and with

that the entry of Pennsylvania Germans into English-dominant occupations accelerated. Increasing numbers of PG speakers came into contact with and married non-PG-speaking partners, including across ethnic and religious boundaries that in earlier times were less commonly surmounted. The overall result of these changes was that after about 1940 it was no longer possible for nonsectarian PG speakers to grow up, marry, work, worship, and raise children in the ethnically and socially homogeneous rural communities in which their parents and grandparents had grown up, communities where PG had been the vital vernacular language.

The accelerating decline in the active use of PG in the early decades of the twentieth century did not go unnoticed by nonsectarian Pennsylvania Germans. The most important reaction against the trend was the Grundsow (Groundhog) Lodge movement in 1934 (Donner 2002; D. Yoder 2003, 65–84). Patterned to some extent on the model of older American fraternal organizations such as the Moose and the Elks, the all-male Grundsow Lodges were founded to promote Pennsylvania German language and culture through annual gatherings that take place on or around Groundhog Day (February 2), the now quasi-official Pennsylvania German holiday (D. Yoder 2003). Featuring a program of rituals, speeches, skits, singing, and a multicourse meal—conducted in PG—Grundsow Lodge meetings are important expressions of the desire to preserve the language and rich heritage of nonsectarian Pennsylvania Germans. Despite the near extinction of PG in the everyday lives of nonsectarians, the Grundsow Lodges and related *fersommlinge* (similar evening "assemblies" that take place at times other than Groundhog Day) continue to the present day (Rosenberger 1966, 194–99).

A leading figure in the establishment of the Grundsow Lodges and the promotion of the PG language in the twentieth century more generally was William S. "Pumpernickle Bill" Troxell (1893–1957). A tireless advocate for Pennsylvania German culture, Troxell is especially important for continuing the nineteenth-century tradition of "dialect columns" in local Pennsylvania newspapers. Don Yoder (2003, 66) notes that Troxell's column appeared in the Allentown *Morning Call* six times a week for more than three decades, earning him the distinction as "the most prolific writer of the dialect of all time." When Troxell passed away in 1957, a memorial poem composed in PG by James A. Koch appeared in the *Morning Call*, the last three verses of which are reproduced here, followed by their translation by Troxell's lifelong friend and fellow language advocate, Melville J. Boyer (Rosenberger 1966, 310–11)

Die Mudderschprooch war ihm im Hatz,
Er schreibt sie dann uff weiss un schwatz,—
  Er eschdimiert sie hoch.

Mer kennt viel schreiwe un viel saage,—
Doch heit sin Dreene in viel Aaage,—
  Mer duhne nix dezu.

Die Fedder un Babier leit schtill,—
Dann saag ich: Pumpernickle Bill
Gott geb dir selichi Ruh.

[The "mother tongue" was in his heart,
In black and white he penned it,—
Held it in high esteem.

Much might we write and say,
Full of tears are many eyes,—
But let us add no more.

His pen and paper quiet lie,—
Just let us say: "Pumpernickle Bill,
God grant you peaceful rest!"]

Aside from the inception of the Grundsow Lodges, the 1930s witnessed other activities related to the promotion of PG, including the founding of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society in 1935 (Rosenberger 1966, 206) and the Pennsylvania German Folk Festival at Allentown in 1936, an important forerunner of the later Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festivals and the modern Kutztown Folk Festival. And in 1935, in Pumpernickle Bill's outlet, the Allentown *Morning Call*, the weekly "'S Pennsylfawnisch Deitsch Eck" (Pennsylvania Dutch Corner) was begun by a native PG-speaking professor of German at Muhlenberg College, Preston A. Barba (1883–1971) (Hanson 2009b; Rosenberger 1966, 206). The "Eck," which Barba brought out from 1935 to 1969, is an unmatched archive of material related to Pennsylvania German language, culture, and history. It was reinstituted five years after Barba's death, in 1976, by C. Richard Beam (b. 1925), who like Barba, was a native Pennsylvania Dutchman and professor of German (at Millersville University). Beam, a member of the last generation of nonsectarian children to grow up hearing PG actively used, continues to play a leading role in the documentation and promotion of PG. His *Comprehensive Pennsylvania German Dictionary* (Beam et al. 2004–11) is a reference work of unparalleled importance.

The various efforts to promote Pennsylvania German language and culture during what Don Yoder (2003, 67) terms the "Pennsylvania Dutch Renaissance of the 1930s" did little, however, to stem the tide of attrition by nonsectarians away from active use of PG. However, the Grundsow Lodges, the folk festivals, and columns such as those of Troxell and Barba have been crucially important in documenting and preserving the products of Pennsylvania German culture and raising both public and scholarly awareness of their significance in American history and society. Concomitant with the "tidal wave of popular interest in the Pennsylvania Germans" (Rosenberger 1966, 194ff.) that built during the 1930s and 1940s was the production of an important body of scholarship documenting the PG language and its folk culture. In linguistic studies, the doctoral dissertations of Albert F. Buffington (1937), Alfred L. Shoemaker (1940), J. William Frey (1941), Carroll E. Reed (1941), and Lester W. J. Seifert (1941) were groundbreaking in their

description and analysis of the structure of PG and its regional variation (Louden 2001). Two of these linguists, Shoemaker and Frey, later collaborated with Don Yoder (1921–2015), himself a leading figure in the development of folklife/folklore as an academic discipline in the United States, to found the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center at Franklin and Marshall College in 1949. Yoder's prolific research output distinguishes him as the premier scholar in the history of Pennsylvania German studies (D. Yoder 2001a).

A major goal of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center was to counter the misinformation about Pennsylvania Germans and their culture that was being disseminated by merchandisers catering to tourists in the wake of the "tidal wave of popular interest" (Weaver-Zercher 2001, 114–21). Regarding the language, popular characterizations of PG were no more flattering in the twentieth century than they had been in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead of comparing PG negatively to High German, however, tea-towel and trivet manufacturers came to focus on the "dutchified" or "ferhoodled" (PG *verhuddelt* 'confused') English supposedly spoken by Pennsylvania Germans. An example of what was presented as "Pennsylvania Dutch talk" is shown in the postcard from the 1940s in figure 4.5.

While it is true that some native speakers of PG did "dutchify" their English to some extent through their pronunciation and use of certain lexical items and expressions, some of which have become part of regional Pennsylvania English (e.g., *rutsch* 'squirm', *The cake is all* 'The cake is all gone'), the extent to which PG speakers' English has been influenced by their first language has been overstated. The myth of Ferhoodled English became so widespread that some observers began to equate it with PG itself, as reflected in the lyrics of a popular song "Mama from the Train," which was written in 1956 by Irving Gordon and made a hit by Patti Page.

> Throw mama from the train a kiss, a kiss,
> Wave mama from the train a goodbye;
> Throw mama from the train a kiss, a kiss,
> And don't cry, my baby, don't cry.
>
> How I miss that sweet lady with her old-country touch,
> Miss her quaint broken English called Pennsylvania Dutch;
> I can still see her there at the station that day,
> Calling out to her baby as the train pulled away.

One of the most commercially successful authors of tourist literature during this time—and somewhat of a lightning rod for the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center, especially its director, Alfred L. Shoemaker—was a Harrisburg bookseller, A. Monroe Aurand Jr. (1895–1956) (Deibler 1988–89; 1989). In 1939 Aurand published two pamphlets on language that were popular and are still available today: *Pennsylvania-German Dialect: Stories and Poems* (Aurand 1939a) and *Quaint Idioms and Expressions of the Pennsylvania Germans* (Aurand 1939b). Though much of what Aurand wrote about the languages of Pennsylvania Germans was reasonably accurate, the overall impression he

Fig. 4.5. "Pennsylvania Dutch talk" postcard, 1940s

conveyed about their verbal behavior was one of humor. For example, in a section from *Quaint Idioms and Expressions* titled "On Making Ourselves Understood!" Aurand writes the following:

> While it may be a novelty to hear Pennsylvania-Germans speak in the "dialect," it is no less entertaining to hear, shall we say, two such women, who might perchance be gossips, speaking in their rural English, occasionally including one, or perhaps several of those odd words that seemingly have no orthodox origin.
>
> Surely some of these, when used in conversation in a community where they are understood, find their usage justified—especially when to all intents and purposes they express so much better than English or German, what the speakers have in mind. (Aurand 1939b, 3–4)

Unfortunately, what the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center produced on language was not always an improvement over what Aurand had written. In

1951 the center published a pamphlet by J. William Frey titled *That Amazing Pennsylvania Dutch Language*, the cover of which is shown in figure 4.6. Although few were as informed about the history and structure of PG as the scholar Frey, a professor of German and Russian for many years at Franklin and Marshall College, important facts about the language are difficult to find amid the humor in this pamphlet. Compare, for example, what Frey states in the section titled "Different Terms for the Same Thing."

> But this example [words for a "sowbug"] does not demonstrate the freedom of expression nearly so well as do the various terms for the oil-gland, or uropygial gland of the chicken—that's the part, you know, in which the tail feathers are stuck, or we say, "the piece that went over the fence last!" Very well, here's what you may call it in Pennsylvania Dutch: TSIPPEL, BOTZEL, SHWONS-GRIP, SHMELS-PON, AIL-KENNLY, AIL-KEVVICH, AIL-TSEPPLY, FETT-SHNEPPEL, SHMOOTZ-HEFFLY, SHMOOTZ-KENNLY, FETT-HEFFLY, FETT-PON, SHNEVLY, and last but by no means least, POOP-NOCKER!!! (Frey 1951, 6)

The pamphlet ends with Frey suggesting that it might be a good idea for the United Nations to adopt PG as its "universal language." If the international body were to do this, Frey speculates that "one good barnyard story at the beginning of each meeting would give all members a hearty laugh and a good send-off for better understanding among themselves!" (Frey 1951, 12).

Old Order sectarians, today the last active speakers of PG, have remained largely unruffled by the ever-growing tourist industry that markets their image. They are also generally uninvolved with nonsectarian efforts, such as the Grundsow Lodges, to preserve and promote the Pennsylvania German heritage. However, PG is in no way endangered within their community. The Old Orders maintain PG naturally, without any special effort, much as generations of rural, endogamous nonsectarian PG speakers did for nearly two centuries. However, the economic and attendant social changes that sounded the death knell for PG among nonsectarians in the early twentieth century were not without consequence for Old Order verbal behavior. Although sectarians have withstood the pressure to shift to English monolingualism by remaining rural and endogamous and by maintaining a measure of distance between themselves and the social mainstream for spiritual reasons, their varieties of PG reflect limited but clear patterns of change since the 1930s and 1940s. Old Order speakers of PG, like their nonsectarian counterparts, were always bilingual, yet in the twentieth century their use of English as an oral medium of communication has intensified as their regular face-to-face contacts with English monolinguals have increased, largely for economic reasons (Kraybill and Nolt 2004).

The effects of their intensified bilingual situation can be found in varieties of PG spoken by Old Orders sectarians, especially those born after 1940. Such effects are most clearly seen in the area of vocabulary (Louden 1988). While there has always been a tendency for PG speakers to borrow English loanwords in order to achieve one-to-one pairings between words

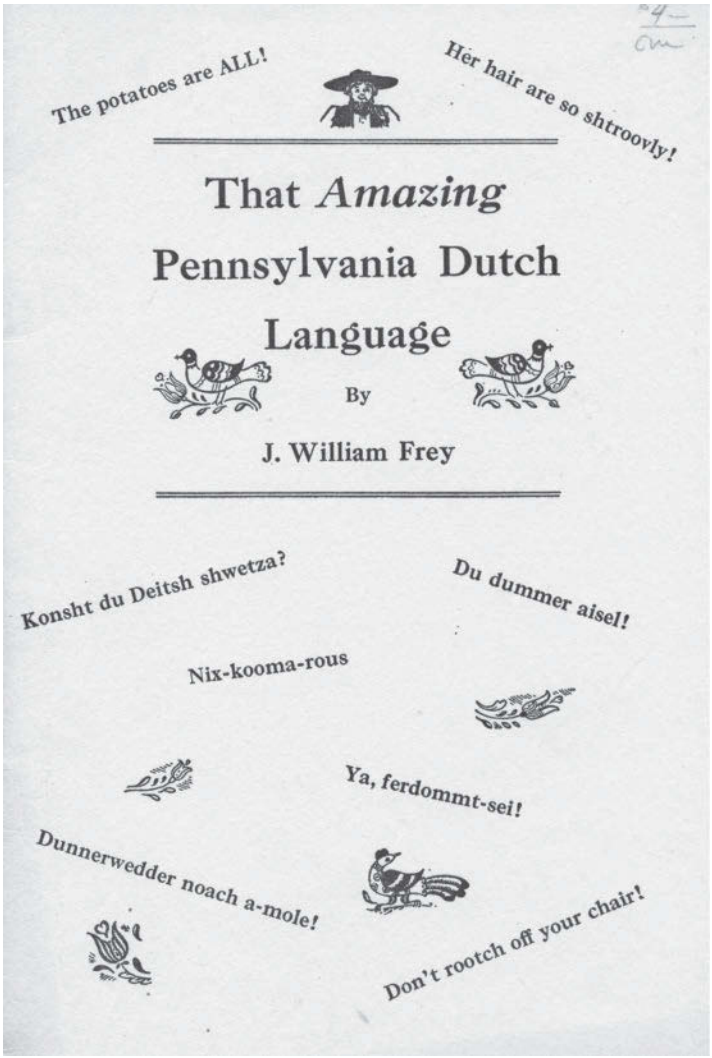


Fig. 4.6. Pamphlet on Pennsylvania Dutch language by J. William Frey, 1951

and meanings (e.g., the *waere/draage* example), the trend toward making PG lexical items line up semantically with English equivalents has gathered speed. Two simple examples illustrate this. In earlier PG, to say "It's ten past two" one traditionally said *S'is zehe iwwer zwee*, using the preposition *iwwer* 'over'. Most younger sectarian speakers now say *S'is zehe verbei zwee*. Whereas *verbei* was used formerly only as an adverb in PG meaning "past, over" as in "They drove past" and "The meeting is now over," in modern PG it may also be used as a preposition, as in English. A second example of the recent semantic convergence of modern sectarian PG toward English deals with ways to express the concept of knowing something. In earlier PG, there were three verbs that corresponded to English *know*: *wisse* 'to know a fact', *kenne*

'to be familiar with', and the homophonous but differently conjugated *kenne* 'to know a language'. Many younger sectarian speakers, on the model of English, have generalized *wisse* across all three usages: *Ich wees sell/ihn/Deitsch* 'I know that/him/Pennsylvania Dutch'.

The semantic alignment of modern sectarian varieties of PG with English is thus a result of the bilingual situation of today's Old Order speakers, who find themselves making more active use of both languages in everyday life than did earlier generations of sectarian and nonsectarian PG speakers. Indeed, English is a very important part of the linguistic ecology in Old Order society, serving not only as the necessary medium of communication with outsiders but also as the dominant vehicle of literacy within their community. Few sectarians ever read anything in PG, and even fewer bother to write more than a few words in it. The rich body of dialect literature from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is largely unfamiliar to them. It should be noted, however, that the Bible has been translated into sectarian PG by a committee of native speakers who grew up in Old Order Amish communities (*Di Heilich Shrift* 2013; cf. also *Vella Deitsh* 1997). Although virtually all adult sectarians have a basic reading knowledge of the High German of the Bible, prayer books, and hymnals, their preferred language of literacy (and also the exclusive medium of instruction in their parochial schools) is English.

From shopping lists, to diaries, to letters to friends and relatives, English plays a vital role in the Old Order linguistic repertoire, though not at the expense of PG. Despite its restriction to oral, in-group domains of use, PG is one of the most salient markers of Old Order identity. Some Amish children, for example, refer to their language as *Amisch* rather than *Deitsch*. Indeed, maintaining German in both its Pennsylvania and High varieties connects Old Orders with a spiritual heritage that they cherish and hope to pass on to their descendants. An Amish writer describes the natural bilingualism of his community as follows.

> English is the language of our country. But we, the descendants of immigrants from German-speaking Europe, have clung to a language that has become largely our own. Over the years that our people have lived alongside English-speaking neighbors, we have naturally and gradually accepted numerous English words into our German dialect. The Pennsylvania Dutch we speak now is really a slowly changing language. It is somewhat different now than it was a hundred years ago, and it is not even exactly the same in different parts of the country.
>
> . . . The case of [the Jews in New Testament times] was much like ours today. They had the traditional Hebrew for their worship just like we use the German Bible in our homes and churches. They had the Aramaic, a language spoken in their homes, but hardly popular as a written language at that time, much like we use our everyday Pennsylvania Dutch. Then for their writings and correspondence, they had the common Greek, the easy-to-write language of world commerce and business, somewhat similar to the way we use the English language in our day. . . .

> Knowing two languages is a privilege God has provided for us, and we can put them to good use. Although we have knowledge of two languages, it would be wrong not to make an effort to express ourselves better in the English language. But it would be just as wrong to fail to keep and pass on the German to our children—that rich language our forebears left for us. It is a well-known fact that losing our mother tongue and drifting into the world usually go together.
>
> Anybody who speaks English around home when just family members are around, or while working or visiting with others who know Pennsylvania Dutch is putting in a vote to drop a rich heritage that will never again be brought back if we lose it. The value of that heritage is so great that we can't afford to lose it. (B. Blank 1986, 12, 13, 16)

With the beginning of the new millennium, the Pennsylvania German language moved into its third century of existence. Although it has now nearly disappeared from active use among the historical majority of its speakers, its future is secure as the vital in-group language of Old Order sectarians. To be sure, it is lamentable that the world of Rachel Bahn, Henry Harbaugh, Edward H. Rauch, and Pumpernickle Bill Troxell is now largely gone. Yet the efforts of groups such as the Grundsow Lodges and the Pennsylvania German Society, as well as newer organizations—the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center at Kutztown University and the German-Pennsylvanian Association (Deutsch-Pennsylvanischer Arbeitskreis), to name two—show that it is possible to perpetuate a cultural heritage even if the language that once served as its vehicle has receded. In this way, the situation of PG resembles that of Yiddish in the "postvernacular" phase of its history (Shandler 2006). Although no longer widely spoken by the descendants of secular Ashkenazic Jews, who produced a great body of literature and other cultural products in the language, Yiddish thrives in relatively small but rapidly growing Haredi communities. The parallel between the Yiddish and Pennsylvania German sociolinguistic situations is clear. Yet, while interest in secular Yiddish culture is booming worldwide, on the Pennsylvania German side it is the Amish and not the poems of Rachel Bahn and Henry Harbaugh in the global spotlight.

One very important task in the twenty-first century is to identify and preserve texts written by native speakers of PG in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most of these texts appeared in local Pennsylvania newspapers, as "dialect columns." Literally thousands of such texts exist, most of which have not been looked at since they first appeared, let alone analyzed by scholars. While some of the periodicals in which they were printed have been digitally preserved, others, including German-language Pennsylvania newspapers, remain tucked away in libraries, archives, and historical societies awaiting attention from researchers. The value of these historic materials written in PG is not only linguistic, providing us with a clearer sense of how the language developed over time, but also social and cultural. The writers of these texts were keen observers of the times in which they lived. Their views on the social and political currents of the day shed light on community life in

nineteenth-century rural America from the vantage point of one of the nation's oldest cultural groups. Since nearly all these writings were produced by nonsectarian Pennsylvania Germans, most of whose descendants no longer use the language actively, it is critical that they be preserved for future generations.

Here again, a look to the Yiddish world is instructive. The successes of such laudable organizations as the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, show how the fruits of a culture associated with a language in a postvernacular phase may be rescued from history and shared with scholars and a curious public. Some years ago, an eminent Yiddish linguist remarked that people had been saying for over a hundred years that Yiddish is a dying language. His response: May Yiddish continue to die for another hundred years. Likewise, the reports of the death of Pennsylvania German are greatly exaggerated. While it may be moribund among nonsectarians, they have not lost it altogether; and among Old Order sectarians, the language is in a robust state of health. Though we have no way of knowing precisely what the future holds for the Pennsylvania German language, the next chapter of its history has yet to be written.