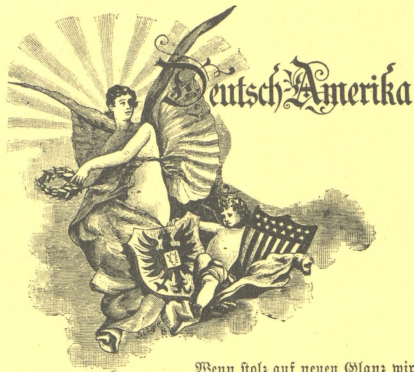


# Journal of German-American Studies

A JOURNAL OF HISTORY, LITERATURE,  
BIOGRAPHY AND GENEALOGY



Wenn stolz auf neuen Glanz wir blicke  
Der auf das Sternenbanner fällt,  
So baut das Herz oft gold'ne Brücken  
Sinüber in die alte Welt.

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IN THIS ISSUE

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- Alexander Waldenrath, **The Emergence of Pennsylvania-German in the 18th Century: A Mixture of English and German?** ..... 1
- Peter C. Merrill, **The Serial Novel in the German-American Press of the 19th Century.** ..... 16
- Victoria Wilson, **Early Parishioners of St. Matthias Parish, Greenfield, Wis.** 23
- Don Heinrich Tolzmann, **Reviews** (Inside and outside of back cover) ..... 23

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**THE EMERGENCE OF PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN  
IN THE 18TH CENTURY:  
A MIXTURE OF ENGLISH AND GERMAN?\***

By

ALEXANDER WALDENRATH

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Pennsylvania was being transformed in the eighteenth century from an English language colony to a German one. At least it seemed so to many observers of the day. Governor Thomas estimated that the Germans comprised three-fifths of the colony's population; Benjamin Franklin set the percentage lower, at one-third. The exact numerical strength of the German population at that time cannot be determined with certainty; however, it did make up a sizeable part of the colony's total and was the majority population in rural southeastern Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia and the environs of the city. The large German immigration to Pennsylvania resulted from the disastrous conditions in their homeland and the advantageous ones in Pennsylvania coupled with her religious freedom.

Benjamin Franklin viewed the extensive settlement of Pennsylvania by Germans with concern. In 1753 he wrote to Peter Collins in England: "I am perfectly of your mind that measures of great temper are necessary with the Germans, and am not without apprehensions that . . . great disorder may one day arise among us."<sup>1</sup> Franklin's skepticism towards them seems, in part at least, a result of his fear that they might well dominate the political development of the colony. For a variety of reasons they had been, in general, rather a-political in the earlier decades of the century, ". . . now they come in droves and carry all before them except in one or two counties."

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\*Presented at the meeting of the Society for German-American Studies held at the American German Institute of Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio, June 4, 1977.

Franklin's fears culminate with ". . . unless the stream of importation could be turned from this to other colonies, as you very judiciously propose, they will soon so out number us that all advantages we have will, in my opinion, be not able to preserve our language and even our government will become precarious."

Sentiments such as those expressed by Franklin have tended to foster beliefs in cultural uniformity in America. At times this has resulted in skepticism and suspicion of anything not communicated in the English language and even in a disdain towards all that which did not conform to Anglo-American traditions. Only within the last years does a more cosmopolitan attitude seem to be superseding such a parochial one.

Germans comprised the first major European ethnic minority in the British colonies of North America which subsequently comprised the United States. They were also the first to experience the pangs of prejudice because of their customs and their language which differed from those of the majority of their fellow Americans.

The majority of the German emigrants came from the southwestern regions of German-speaking Central Europe, most from the Rhenish Palatinate. "However, the western German cantons of Switzerland, the part of Hesse south of the Main River, and the western part of Württemberg also furnished large contingents of settlers. Smaller numbers came from Alsace, Baden, Lorraine, the part of Hesse just north of the Main, and from the Rhineland lying north of the Palatinate."<sup>2</sup>

The dialects which the emigrants from these areas of Central Europe brought with them and their encounter with the environment of the New World forged in Pennsylvania her own characteristic German language. The position in which German found itself in the Colony was, to say the least, novel. The prominent Philadelphia physician, Dr. Benjamin Rush, wrote in 1789 that "The intercourse of the Germans with each other is kept up chiefly in their own language; but most of their men who visit the capital and or trading or country towns

of the state, speak the English language.”<sup>3</sup> Further, “A certain number of the laws are now printed in German, for the benefit of those of them who cannot read English. A large number of German newspapers are likewise circulated through the State, through which knowledge and intelligence have been conveyed, much to the advantage of the government. There is scarcely an instance of a German, of either sex, in Pennsylvania, that cannot read; . . .” The language spoken by most of these Germans, essentially farmers, was quite naturally their native dialect.

These German pioneers had, as it were, two languages when they came. The first, Standard High German, was read; this is documented by the high circulation figures of German language newspapers and the extensive importation of books from Germany. The other, a dialect, was the common means of verbal communication.<sup>4</sup> English slowly became a third language for some and as it made inroads, Standard High German receded and became less important and in urban areas finally was replaced by English.

The retrenchment of Standard High German at this time was celebrated by the lack of any significant new German immigration from about 1776, when the American Revolution began, to 1815, the end of the Napoleonic era, i.e., for approximately two generations.

The more educated and the more travelled German tended to meet Anglo-American society on its own terms, consequently often employed English; members of the less mobile rural population, which had little interest in becoming integrated, remained essentially speakers of German. The German of rural southeastern Pennsylvania, however, accommodated itself by using new vocabulary, as British English had done to evolve into American English, yet the German of Pennsylvania maintained its own linguistic integrity.

In 1783-1784, Johann Schoepf, who had served as a physician among the German mercenary troops in America, journeyed through the new nation and recorded his observations:

Die Sprache, deren sich unsere Deutsche Landsleute bedienen, ist ein erbarmlich geradbrechter Mischmasch der Englischen und Deutschen, in Ansetzung der Worte so wol als ihrer Fügungen. Erwachsene Personen welche aus Deutschland hinüber kommen, vergessen ihre Muttersprache zum Theil, indem sie eine neue zu lernen sich vergeblich bemühen. Die Eingebornen lernen ihre Muttersprache fast niemals ordentlich und rein. Die Kinder der Deutschen, besonders in den Städten, gewöhnen sich aus dem Gassenumgang an das Englische—von ihrer Eltern werden sie in der einen Sprache angedet, und sie antworten ihnen in der andern. Die nahe Verwandtschaft, die die Englische mit der Deutschen Sprache hat, hilft die Verwirrung befördern. Wenn jemand nicht sogleich das benötigte Deutsche Wort finden kan, nimmt er ohne Bedenken, das nächste beste Englische dafür, und viele Englische Worte sind ihnen so geläufig, dass sie solche für zuverlässig echt Deutsch halten. In allen Gerichts—gesetzlichen und Staatsangelegenheiten bedient man sich der Englischen Sprache. Diese wird daher den Deutschen Familien notwendig, und durch Umgang und Nachahmung geläufig, so dass sie auch vielfach unter sich bald elend Deutsch, bald noch elender Englisch schwatzen, denn sie haben den besonderen Vorzug vor andern Nationen, dass sie im eigentlichen Verstande weder der einen noch der andern mächtig sind. Die einige Gelegenheit, wo die Deutschen einen ordentlichen Vortrag in ihrer eigenen Sprache hören (denn lesen ist ihre Sache nicht) ist in der Kirche. Es sind einige wenige abgesonderte Ortschaften, und einzelne wohnende Landleute im Gebirge, die wenigen Umgang mit Engländern pflegen, und daher zwar zuweilen gar kein Englisch verstehen, aber deswegen doch auch nicht besser Deutsch sprechen. Das reinste und schönste Deutsche erhält sich in den Colonien der Mährischen Brüder . . . .<sup>5</sup>

Schoepf's observations concerning the language probably have to be qualified. It should not be forgotten that he was not trained in languages or linguistics and perhaps did not appre-

ciate the fact that most Germans in Pennsylvania were speaking essentially a dialect similar to the one they would have used in their original homeland. The borrowing of English vocabulary, where necessary, can only be condemned when it is not realized that a distinct language which will differ from its mother dialect was emerging. Such borrowing was necessary in accommodating German to the New World; it also served to enrich the language. Consequently, it is not valid to claim that these German pioneers spoke a bad German and a worse English because of language mixtures unheard of in Germany, e.g. the employment of idiomatic expressions which were translated directly from the English but had no parallels in Standard High German or syntactical structures which were unknown in Standard High German. Schoepf seems not to have understood that a distinct German language was emerging in Pennsylvania. Schoepf's praise for the language among the Moravians would further seem to support the belief that he did not recognize the evolving of a new German dialect. The Moravians had often enjoyed more education than the average German immigrant; they were usually not from southwestern Germany; their speech patterns tended more to approximate Standard High German. What is, though, so surprising is the fact that by the mid-nineteenth century, the Standard High German language spoken in Bethlehem, the center of the Moravians in Pennsylvania, was experiencing a rapid alteration. It could not withstand the influence exercised by the vernacular Pennsylvania-German spoken in almost all the neighboring towns. Therefore, also in Bethlehem, the standard language was being replaced by Pennsylvania-German.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the proliferation of various German dialects and the limited use of spoken Standard High German, an inability to communicate with one another hardly arose. These eighteenth century pioneers tended to settle in their own language enclaves, i.e. usually among speakers of their own dialect. In the course of time a process of synthesis occurred as interaction among various sections became more common. Evidence indicates that a relatively unified spoken language had

emerged already by the beginning of the nineteenth century. This new tongue would combine various dialect features of the original linguistic patterns of the pioneers but was in the main “. . . the speech of the Palatine, especially that of the eastern half of the Palatinate.”<sup>7</sup> The evolvement of Pennsylvania-German came about through the linguistic process known as levelling, i.e. the interaction of various dialects upon one another through which a more integrated language results. A reconstruction of such occurrences is impossible; however, it may be assumed that language features found in merely one of two dialects became eliminated while those found in many were retained.

Schoepf claimed to have heard the following conversation among the Germans:

Ich hab' wollen mit einem Nachbar joinen, und ein Stück geklart Land purchasen. Wir hatten no doubt ein guten Bargain gemacht und hatten können gut drauf ausmachen. Ich war aber nicht capable so'ne Summe Geld aufzumachen, und konnt nicht länger expecten. Das that mein Nachbar nit gleichen, und er fing an aus mich übel zu usen. So dacht ich, si's besser du thust mirt aus.<sup>8</sup>

One of the earliest scholars of the Pennsylvania-German language expressed doubts as to the authenticity of such language patterns and wrote “. . . this example is probably spurious and a joke.”<sup>9</sup> Another scholar expressed similar skepticism more recently, “. . . but the man does not exist who would acknowledge this as his dialect, or who would recognize it as a native idiom at all.”<sup>10</sup>

Schoepf further maintained that these Pennsylvanians merely absorbed English arbitrarily into their speech, for example:

e.g. schmart (smart, active, clever)—serben, geserbt haben (serve etc.); they go farther and translate literally, as absetzen, instead of abreisen, such auf den Weg machen, from the English “set off”; einen auf den



Weg sezen, einen auf den rechten Weg bringen, from the English "put one in the road"; abdrehen, sich vom Weg abwenden, from the English "turn off"; aufkommen mit einem, jemanden auf den Weg einholen, from the English "come up with one."<sup>11</sup>

Further, it was claimed, they employed German words, the sounds of which paralleled English ones, with the English meaning, for example:

as das belangt zu mir, das gehört mir, from the English "this belongs to me," although "belangen" and "belong" have entirely different meanings; or ich thue das nicht gleichen, from the English "I do not like that," instead of das gefällt mir nicht.<sup>12</sup>

The observations Schoepf made were not isolated ones. Charles Murry, a Briton, traveling through the United States some years later (1834-1836) noted:

This part of the country (about Lancaster) was chiefly settled by Germans; indeed many of them speak very little English. They have German preachers, and a German printing press; and yet so corrupted is their dialect that I very much doubt a Saxon, a Brunswicker, or a Hanovarian would understand them readily. One old man with whom I spoke, was the third in descent, American born, his great grandfather having come from Frankfort; he could speak neither language intelligibly; his son, however, a well educated young man, joined in the conversation and said, "Sir, you will not easily understand this dialect, but I will speak to you in *Luther's German*" upon which he addressed several sentences to me in a language tolerably pure, both in grammar and pronunciation.<sup>13</sup>

Murry's observations support the belief that Pennsylvania-German was the normal means of communication in rural southwestern Pennsylvania. The statement "he could speak neither language intelligently" refers, of course, to English and

Standard High German. When he writes "so corrupted is their dialect" it is suggested that Murry would probably have little, if any, knowledge of Franconian and Allemanic dialects either from Germany or Pennsylvania, i.e. not be a reliable authority on Pennsylvania-German. In addition, the statement that Saxons, Brunswickers or Hanovarians would not comprehend this language is probably correct, but doesn't impair Pennsylvania-German in any way; after all these southwestern German speakers would also scarcely have understood the Northerners if they were to speak their Low German dialects. Christoph Saur notes the following anecdote in his journal: "Mein Stallion ist über die Fens getcheupt, und hat dem Nachbar sein Whiet abscheulich gedamatscht." Since Saur was such a strong advocate of the preservation of German language and culture in Pennsylvania, these sentences were probably spurious and served rather as a warning to his fellow Germans of what could happen, if the integrity of the German language and of Pennsylvania-German were not maintained.

The extent to which such language confusion did occur will probably never be reliably known. Traveling through the Commonwealth several decades later, however, Johann Georg Kohl from Germany produced a plausible fragment from a man he met in a stage coach: "Ah, du bist Deutsch? I klaupt, du worhrst Englisch! um sagte dann einer von ihnen, indem er auf einmal von seinem ziemlich guten und wohllautenden English in ein äusserst inhumanes und barbarisches Buschdeutsch übersprang. Mir machte die ungefähr denselben Effekt, wie wenn ein gebildeter Berneroberlander auf einmal aus dem ziemlich gut gehandhabten Französisch in sein gaumendbürstendes und zungenbrecherisches Eisgletscher und Bergkaterkten-Grindelwalddeutsch losbricht. I klaupt, sagte er . . . du wohrst Englisch! Well! da kennen m'r ja Deutsch schwaze, s' isch m'r glei (gleich). I sproach Englisch un Deutsch. Doch 's Deutsch isch m'r handiger. I bin von German Dessent. Mein Noam verrath mi scho — Baummaier. Hob die Ehre."

Kohl summarized his impressions on the state of the German language: "Ihr Dahin scheiden ist nicht so anmutig wie

das eines gewissen Fisches, der beim Sterben noch in allerlei bunten und reizenden Farben spielt." 14

A weakness for the borrowed word was not confined only to the less educated. In the journals of Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg, for example, one reads: "Es wurde mir allowiert . . . Mr. Keple war damit nicht gepleaset . . . Welches in meinem Kirche Buch recorded ist." 15 These were written forms; in speech he probably employed them even more widely.

In 1812, Heinrich Muhlenberg, pastor of the German Lutheran Church in Lancaster, together with Benedict J. Schipper, teacher of languages at Franklin Academy, a forerunner of Franklin and Marshall College, published the *Deutsch/Englisches und Englisch/Deutsches Wörterbuch* in Lancaster. 16 German was still widely spoken at that time since the authors mentioned the reasons for producing their work in the foreword: ". . . besonders da die verschiedenen Bewohner dieser Staaten täglich mit einander umgehen müssen, die Deutschen mit den Englischen, und die Englischen mit den Deutschen." Further they wrote: "Durch den beständigen Umgang mit den Englischen, kommen wir Deutsche so in die Gewohnheit hier und da ein Englisches Wort im Gespräch zu gebrauchen, dass wir . . . oft nicht wissen, ob es Deutsch oder Englisch ist." An appendix of five hundred such English-German words accompanied the volume because "wahrscheinlich giebt es wenige Englische Wörter, die nicht ein oder der andere Deutsche manchmal in seine Sprache aufnimmt . . ."

The commentary in the appendix gives a further justification for its publication: "Solche Wörter, die wir Deutsche, theils wegen dem häufigen Gebrauch der englischen Sprache, theils notgedrungen um neue Gegenstände zu benennen, so zu sagen in unsre Muttersprache aufgenommen haben." To a large extent the vocabulary consists of legal terms or refers to things with which they were not acquainted before departure from their European homeland, for example: adjournen, Arbitrehschen, Beylah, counterfit, Constituent, Dschury-mann, endorsen, Fordsch, Gedsch (gauge), Mäntelpies, Peinbords, skalpen, Turnkoht, twisten, vermorgedschen.

In the German newspaper of early Pennsylvania curiosities in language can also be found. English expressions were, at times, simply rendered in German form: Bill of Sääl, Loan affis, Schappkieper, gentlemaenner, Fensen, Laas, Lieses. "Donnerwetter" often meant thunderstorm, and "gültig" meant guilty. Features of their dialect pronunciation too appeared in spelling: bekleiden for begleiten, Freieind for Freund, Vatter for Vater, Pabst for Papst, gelidten for gelitten, Fliegel for Flügel, Boland for Polen.

These loan words support Muhlenberg's contention. They are either of a technical nature or a rather familiar one. The more isolated German groups were, the more their language would approximate that of the original settlers. The more the Germans had contact with life beyond their own community, the greater became the infusion of English. Since English was the main language of the new country, the Germans recognized the necessity of being able to transact business in that language. As the official language of the country, official expressions, i.e. for laws and government, would have to be known in English.

The German language probably died a horrible death in some areas, especially in large urban centers and in rural sections where only few speakers of German lived.

It might be assumed that some of the conversations Schoepf recorded were heard in such places i.e. from regions not in the traditional Pennsylvania-German belt. The elder Muhlenberg's tendency to use loan words, usually ones which have not become fixed in the Pennsylvania-German language, suggests that those more mobile individuals (Muhlenberg traveled extensively) leaned towards a greater assimilation of such words. A German language newspaper in Philadelphia, the *Philadelphische Correspondenz*, reported that the children of German-born parents usually read English-language newspapers rather than German ones (August 29, 1781). In a speech before the German Society of Pennsylvania, Friedrich August Conrad Muhlenberg criticized the younger German generation born in America for its desire to become completely assimilated as rapidly as possible into Anglo-American society

and, thereby, abandon their ancestral language (September 20, 1784).<sup>17</sup> Muhlenberg emphasized the necessity for the preservation of the German language in Pennsylvania and believed it should be fostered in the schools which German children attended. Muhlenberg, though, did not recognize the significance of the emerging Pennsylvania-German dialect, and remarked “. . . so verdient die so genannte Pennsylvania-Deutsche Sprache wirklich den Namen der Deutschen nicht.” Muhlenberg also pleaded for the learning of English by all Germans in the state. He suggested that the teaching language should be German up to and only to the time when the pupil has been taught to read and speak German with facility; thereafter, English was to be employed. He further requested that church services be conducted in the future, not in German but in English. His mentioning of the Swedish Lutheran Church, in this speech, as an example to be emulated, should be questionable, if for no other reason than a pragmatic one. When the transition in the Swedish Lutheran Church from Swedish to English occurred, the Church ceased to exist and became part of the Anglican Community.

Earlier in the 18th century attempts were undertaken to replace German completely with English in the schools. This resulted from sentiment in Britain and in Anglo-America for the establishment of cultural uniformity in the colonies. The strongest movement of Anglicizing the Germans would seem to have been the creation of the “Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge among the Poor Germans” which was founded in London in 1754.<sup>18</sup> Its aims lay in a socio-political sphere. Many Germans were supporting the Quaker party in elections and were felt, consequently, to be a hindrance in the creation of a strong militia in the colony. Leaders of the so-called War Party were incensed by this German support for their opponents. Every possible charge was leveled against them, including the one that they were instruments of Roman Catholic-French policy.

The Rev. Dr. Williams Smith headed the Charity School Movement which to some appeared as a beneficial charitable

undertaking but really set as its basic goal the protection of the government and the supremacy of the English language. The leaders of the movement went so far as to try to influence Parliament in London to adopt the following regulations: 1) to deny Germans the right to vote for twenty years until they would have sufficient knowledge of the English language and English political traditions; 2) to make all legal documents, bonds, wills, contracts, etc., void unless written in English; 3) to make illegal the printing and circulation of newspapers, almanacs, or other materials in any other language besides English.

Several prominent Germans in the colony initially supported the Charity School Movement because they believed it presented the best possibility of offering educational opportunities to all, even to those living far out in the wilderness who, under the prevailing conditions of the times, could not partake of education. However, the movement was finally recognized as an attempt to Anglicize the German community and to assimilate it into English-speaking Pennsylvania.

The Saur press, the most influential German-language press prior to the establishment of Heinrich Miller's, waged an unrelenting editorial campaign against the movement. Saur, presumably, saw it as an attempt to establish a state directed school system. Sectarians, usually pacifists, were excluded from the governing boards of these schools and the directorship lay in the hands of members associated with the so-called War Party. Saur's efforts helped in major proportion to defuse this belligerent, i.e. anti-German movement which then collapsed in 1761.

Kohl's analysis clarifies the language situation:

Die Leute wunderten sich sehr, da ich so rein deutsch sprach, und dass sie mich so gut verstehen konnten. Sie sagten, sie hätten eine junge Emigrantin, ein Mädchen vom Rhein, in Dienste die spräche ein solches Kauderwelsches Deutsch, dass sie die grösste Mühe mit ihr hätten. Mit den ungebildeten, frisch eingewanderten Landleuten aus Deutschland sagten sie, sey diess ge-

wöhnlich der Fall. — Und ich muss gestehen, wenn ich mich zusammen nahm und über einige wells, "einige schwamms" und andere stets beigemischte Anglicism hinweg sah, so kam mir selbst diese pennsylvanische Bauern Sprache nicht so eingefleischt dialekthaft, nicht so urschwarzwälderisch vor. Dasselbe fiel mir nachher noch bei Unterredungen mit anderen Bauern dieser Gegend (near Bethlehem) auf. Vielleicht war mir alles, was mich bei den Gebildeten, bei jenem Prediger in Wilkesbarre, bei jenem Beamten auf dem Postwagen so sehr beleidigte, im Munde der Bauern erträglicher. Vielleicht aber mag bei den Gebildeten und Halbgebildeten, namentlich bei dem Beamten, die mit den Englischredenden in viel häufigere Berührung kommen, das Deutsche auch weit mehr ausgeartet seyn, und vielleicht mag der deutsche Bauer, der wieder nur mit deutschen Bauern verkehrt, sich in seiner Weise die Sprache reiner erhalten haben. Ja, da er hier nicht in so hohem Grade *glebae adscriptus* war, wie in Deutschland, da er sich im Lande in verschiedenen Verhältnissen umher tummelte, so mag dabei in gewisser Hinsicht seine Sprache, obwohl "Buschdeutsch" genannt, etwas an Politur gewonnen haben. Ich vergleiche hier wieder in Gedanken meine canadische Franzosen, die sich in einer ähnliche Lage befinden, wie die pennsylvanisch Deutschen, und bei denen ebenfalls der gröbere Landesdialekt unter den Gebildeten mir unangenehmer auffiel, als unter den Bauern.<sup>19</sup>

English has, as it has been here shown, had an influence upon Pennsylvania-German but by no means to the extent which the popularization of the Pennsylvania-German culture has led some to believe.

What is so curious has been the vitality during the past two hundred and fifty years of the language itself in the midst of an English-speaking America. Standard High German has not maintained itself in Pennsylvania as a viable language. However, had World War I not evoked such hysteria against everything German in the United States, who knows, it might still be prevalent in Pennsylvania. After all, some of the Ger-

man language newspapers of the Commonwealth reached their highest circulation in the first and second decades of this century. The new language, Pennsylvania-German, has retained its vitality into our era. Its most prominent phase was probably the second half of the nineteenth century. At this time, Dr. Abraham Reeser Horne, one of the leading educators in the Commonwealth in his day, even proposed a tri-lingual system of education: English; Standard High German; Pennsylvania-German. Today, admittedly, it is dying out and within another generation or two in all likelihood only isolated and limited enclaves will continue to be found in Pennsylvania. Yet the culture of the Pennsylvania-Germans will remain an indispensable and integral component of this Commonwealth which owes so much to its early German pioneers.

NOTES

1. Cf. **The Papers of Benjamin Franklin**, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, Connecticut, 1961) Vol. IV, page 479ff. This letter is dated in Philadelphia, May 9, 1753.
2. Lester W. J. Seifert, "The Word Geography of Pennsylvania German: Extent and Causes," **The German Language in America**, ed. Glenn G. Gilbert (Austin, Texas and London, 1971) pp. 17-18.
3. Benjamin Rush, **An Account of the Manners of the German Inhabitants of Pennsylvania**, ed. I. Daniel Rupp (Philadelphia, 1875) p. 55.
4. See Karl J. R. Arndt, May E. Olson, **German-American Newspapers and Periodicals** (Heidelberg, Germany, 1961) and Robert E. Cazden, "The Provision of German Books in America during the Eighteenth Century," **Libri** (Copenhagen, 1973) Vol. 23:2, pp. 81-108.
5. Johann David Schoepf, **Travels in the Confederation 1783-1784**, ed. Alfred J. Morrison (Philadelphia, 1911) Vol. I, p. 107.
6. Marion Dexter Learned, **The Pennsylvania German Dialect** (Baltimore, 1889) p. 72.
7. See Albert E. Buffington, "Pennsylvania German; Its Relation to Other German Dialects," **American Speech** (New York, 1938) Vol. XIII, pp. 276-286.
8. Johann David Schoepf, op. cit., p. 108.
9. Samuel S. Haldemann, **Pennsylvania Dutch, a Dialect of Southern Germany, with an Infusion of English** (Philadelphia, 1872) p. 28.
10. Harry Hess Reichard, **Pennsylvania-German Dialect Writings and their Writers** (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1918) p. 31.



11. Johann David Schoepf, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. Charles August Murry, **Travels in North America** (London, England, 1839) p. 187.
  14. Johann Georg Kohl, **Reisen in Kanada und durch die Staaten New York und Pennsylvanien** (Stuttgart, 1856) p. 36, pp. 538-539.
  15. **The Journals of Henry Melchior Mühlenberg**, tr. Theodore G. Tappert, John W. Doberstein (Philadelphia, 1942) Introduction.
  16. Henry Mühlenberg, B. J. Schipper, **Deutsch-Englisches und Englisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch** (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1812).
  17. See Charles Evans, **American Bibliography** (New York, 1942) Vol. 9, No. 27355.
  18. Samuel Edwin Weber, **The Charity School Movement in Colonial Pennsylvania** (New York, 1969).
  19. Johann Georg Kohl, *op. cit.*, pp. 538-539.
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## GERMAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

by Don Heinrich Tolzmann

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**THE SERIAL NOVEL  
IN THE GERMAN-AMERICAN PRESS  
OF THE 19TH CENTURY\***

By

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In this paper I wish to amplify on two points: the importance of newspaper research for the study of German-American belletristic prose and the relevance of current research on the serialized novel to German-American studies. In addressing the first question, let me begin by drawing attention to a significant but often overlooked fact, namely that a large proportion of the German-American novels produced in the nineteenth century were written by persons who were newspaper editors. Heinrich Börnstein, Samuel Ludwigh, Rudolph Lexow, Friedrich Hassaurek, Willibald Winckler, Otto Ruppis, and Mathilde Franziska Anneke are all examples of this now all but extinct species, the editor-novelist. For the editor-novelist, the arrangement was a convenient one. The taste of the newspaper public for novels in serialized form made the newspaper a ready vehicle for publication, and the newspaper presses could even be used for the publication of novels in book form. In many instances, newspaper publication appears to have preceded publication in book form, as was the case, for example, with Rudolph Lexow's novel *Amerikanische Criminal-Mysterien*, published as a book in 1854 but previously issued serially in his *Belletristisches Journal*. The same was also true of Otto Ruppis' *Das Vermächtnis des Pedlars*, which appeared in Lexow's *Belletristisches Journal* in 1858, but was not published as a book until the following year. In other cases, however, it is quite possible that novels may have appeared in newspapers without ever being subsequently reprinted as books.

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\*Presented at the meeting of the Society for German-American Studies held at the American German Institute of Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio, June 4, 1977.

Of course, not all nineteenth-century German-American novels were written by newspaper editors. But even when this was not the case, it is surprising how often the newspapers encouraged, in one way or another, the publication of novels with German-American content. For example, the newspapers sometimes offered prizes for novels dealing with German-American life. This was the case with Ernst Solger's famous *Anton in Amerika*, originally written for a competition sponsored by the *Belletristisches Journal*. Likewise, Adolph Douai's *Fata Morgana* was the prizewinner in a competition sponsored by the *Anzeiger des Westens* in 1858.

The fact that the newspapers were so deeply involved in the promotion and publication of German-American belletristic prose has, I think, certain significant implications for the student of German-American bibliography. There are quite a few problems in German-American literary research that may someday be clarified through close attention to the literary contents of newspapers. As a first example, let me take the case of two works reportedly written by Udo Brachvogel.<sup>1</sup> Two novels, *Der Trödler* and *König Korn* have been attributed to Brachvogel, but neither is known to have been published as a book. Brachvogel, who came to the United States in 1866, was a co-editor of the *Belletristisches Journal* in 1876 and had previously been associated with several other New York newspapers. Likewise, at some time between 1866 and 1876, he had served for a time as co-editor of the *Westliche Post* in St. Louis. Consequently, one can easily form a tentative idea of at least some of the newspaper files that might be searched in order to check for a possible newspaper serialization of Brachvogel's novels. If even one of these novels could be retrieved from oblivion, it could be a significant contribution to our knowledge not only of this writer but of German-American prose fiction in general.

The case of Udo Brachvogel's missing novels is by no means unique. George Condoyannis, in his 1953 dissertation on German-American prose fiction, lists the titles of more than fifty works which, although alleged to exist, could not be located in book form. Since Condoyannis did not extend his investigation

to a search for newspaper serialization, there is a good chance that at least some of the works he was unable to find may yet come to light through newspaper research.

Even in cases where no specific novel title has been reported, there exists the possibility that new examples of nineteenth-century fiction will someday be made available for study as a result of newspaper research. For example, Franz Brümmer's *Lexikon der deutschen Dichter und Prosaisten* (1913) states that several novels by Samuel Ludwig were published in his newspaper, *Die Fackel*.<sup>2</sup> Although Ludwig is known for several prose works, including an autobiography and a short story, no novels by this author have been found in book form. Again, this is an instance in which a check of available newspaper files may eventually provide a solution to the problem.

As a final example of the kind of bibliographic enigma which newspaper research may serve to clarify, let me cite the case of Heinrich Börnstein's well-known novel, *Die Geheimnisse von St. Louis*. Condoyannis, whose analysis of this work is based on a book edition of 1859, states that he was able to find only one volume of this novel and was not able to ascertain whether any further volumes were ever published. There is, however, some possibility that this particular novel appeared as a newspaper serial before being published as a book. For one thing, William Frederic Kamman's 1917 study of socialism in German-American literature reports that Börnstein's novel appeared as early as 1851.<sup>3</sup> Since this antedates the earliest known book edition by several years, one is led to surmise that the date given by Kamman may, if correct, refer to a newspaper serialization. If *Die Geheimnisse von St. Louis* was, in fact, serialized in a newspaper, the newspaper in question might well have been the *Anzeiger des Westens*, which Börnstein edited. If a newspaper version of the novel could be brought to light and compared with the book version, this might settle the question of the novel's full length and might even reveal new, hitherto unstudied parts of the work.

In my remarks up to this point I have tried to underscore the relevance of newspaper research to the investigation of the

history and bibliography of the nineteenth-century German-American novel. I would now like to address the second question raised at the outset of this paper and direct attention to some recent research which may be of interest to students of *Germanica Americana*.

Two years ago it came to my attention that a group of several scholars, most of them connected with the Technische Universität in West Berlin, had launched a collaborative research effort for the investigation of the German newspaper novel. This group of investigators, including particularly Friedrich Knilli, Norbert Miller, and Karl Riha, have approached the serialized novel from the perspective of literary sociology. Their studies have been particularly concerned with the comparative analysis of socialist and nonsocialist newspapers in Germany and their specific attention has been focused on newspapers published in Germany and Austria between 1890 and 1930. In their general approach to the analysis of prose fiction in the newspapers, they have sought to identify general trends, such as changes in the fashionability of specific types of subject matter. In seeking to lay a foundation for such socio-literary content studies, the Berlin group has recognized the importance of systematically cataloging the serialized novels and other literary contributions which have appeared in selected newspapers. They have accordingly undertaken to produce a number of such inventories, a good example being Ernst K. Herlitzka's catalog of the literary works which appeared in the Vienna *Arbeiterzeitung* between 1895 and 1934.

Stimulated by the work of the "Projekt Zeitungsroman" in West Berlin, I began some time ago to make a systematic inventory of all literary prose contributions printed in the Milwaukee *Banner und Volksfreund* and in its successor, the *Freie Presse*. At the present time, the inventory has been completed for the period between 1879 and 1885, during which time a total of 694 literary pieces appeared in these newspapers. Of these, 63 were serialized works, though only twelve were novels, the remaining serialized pieces being *Novellen*, long short stories, serialized travel sketches, and the

like. The twelve novels all turned out to be works by writers such as Friedrich Spielhagen, writers living in Germany who wrote primarily for European publication. The only novel with any American association is Henriette Perl's *Heirat aus Verzweiflung*, which is subtitled "Roman aus dem Amerikanischen." Presumably this is a free adaptation of an American source which, in line with a commonly observed custom of the time, was not disclosed.<sup>4</sup>

The absence of any distinctly German-American works among these twelve novels serves to underscore the fact that novels by German-American writers were, after all, something rather exceptional. In fact, the German-language press in America did, to a considerable extent, simply print the same belletristic reading matter as was appearing in the German-language press in Europe at the time. This fact has no doubt discouraged many researchers in the field of German-American studies from taking a greater interest in the literary content of newspapers. Carl Wittke's study of the German-language press in America, for example, is notable for the fact that it attempts no detailed appraisal of the literary content of the newspapers he studied. And yet, on the whole, the literary prose contained in the German-American press was more than an unaltered reprint of what was appearing in Europe. This becomes immediately apparent when we take stock of the many shorter prose contributions which were not novels. In the survey of the *Banner und Volksfreund* and *Freie Presse*, for example, it was found that at least seven of the works which appeared were original contributions by well-known German-American writers. There were, first of all, four of Sara Hutzler's sketches of German-American life as well as two pieces by Otto Soubron, *Herberts Frau* and *Geheime Ehescheidungen*, the latter subtitled "Chicagoer Skizze". I would be interested to know whether either of these pieces by Soubron are known to have been published elsewhere or have previously come to the attention of researchers who have taken an interest in Soubron's work. In addition to the contributions by Hutzler and Soubron, the *Banner und Volksfreund* also ran an autobiographical reminiscence by Caspar Alexander Hon-

thumb, who is perhaps best known for his German translation of Friedrich Hassaurek's English-language novel, *The Secret of the Andes*.

Besides the works by German-American writers, eight short pieces were found which had an obviously American setting but which may or may not have been written by authors with first-hand experience of the United States. One such author is Jakob Otzen Hansen (1842-1905), who generally used the pseudonym "Felix Lilla" but sometimes published under his own name. Hansen was a prolific writer of tales with an American setting, one of his contributions in this vein to the *Freie Presse* being *Durch eigene Schuld—Lebensbild aus Wisconsin*. Other obscure contributors who wrote stories with an American locale are Friedrich Zimmermann, author of *Old Jimmys Brautwerbung — Amerikanische Skizze*; Emil Jasper, author of *Der chronische Korrespondent — New Yorker Skizze*; and J. J. Messner, author of *Die mutigen Seifensiederinnen — Eine amerikanische Erzählung*.

If, however, there is any one peculiarity which gives a unique character to the German-language press in America, it is the frequency with which one finds German translations of works by American writers. I found no less than twenty-four such pieces. The most frequently translated American authors were Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Josh Billings, while other well-known American writers whose works were translated include Edgar Allen Poe, Frank R. Stockton, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and John Habberton. However, some of the translated authors appearing in these newspapers are quiet obscure or are not even identified by name. Thus, one finds such curiously identified pieces as *Eine Spukgeschichte — Nach dem Amerikanischen* by J. Seehof or *Der verrückte Anatom — Aus dem Amerikanischen* by Robby Jones. Where well-known American writers are translated, the translator's identity is seldom given. However, Udo Brachvogel was identified as the translator of one of the pieces by Mark Twain.

In conclusion, let me briefly summarize the ways in which I think newspaper research can make a contribution to the study of German-American prose fiction. To begin with, a study of

literary contributions to the German-American press may bring to light lost or even unsuspected works by well-known German-American writers. Secondly, a study of the more obscure literary contributors may lead us to conclude that for some, at least, obscurity was not entirely deserved. Finally, by cataloging the literary contributions to selected newspapers, it will eventually become possible to investigate a number of questions within the realm of literary sociology. For future research, it might be worth looking into some of the problems which are now engaging the attention of European researchers, notably the question of how the ideological orientation of certain newspapers exercised an effect on their preferences as to literary content. On the other hand, students of Germanica Americana will no doubt be particularly interested in seeking to define the extent to which the German-language press in America was different from the press in Europe. Judging from what has so far been found in the Milwaukee newspapers which I have studied, I am inclined to suspect that the literary content of the German-American press was in general more adapted to its American environment than has generally been recognized.

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#### NOTES

1. For a discussion of this problem, see Condoyannis (1953), p. 102.
2. Brümmer (1913), vol. 4, p. 322.
3. Kamman (1917), p. 118.
4. Other contributors to the **Freie Presse** who specialized in the free adaption of vaguely specified American sources were Caspar A. Honthumb, J. von Böttcher, and Alfred Mürenberg.

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## EARLY PARISHIONERS OF ST. MATTHIAS PARISH, GREENFIELD, WIS.

By

VICTORIA WILSON

Milwaukee, Wis.

This parish, originally called Holy Cross, was renamed after Rev. Matthias Steiger, who was pastor in 1849-1850.

In 1850 Rev. J. A. Stein was given the task of organizing St. Matthias Parish. The site (three acres) was donated (one acre each) by Herman Sauer, Joseph Schmid and Garhart Zingsheim. The church was finished in June 1851 at a total cost of \$717.33. In 1852 a rectory was built for Father Stein at the cost of \$271.

The following are listed as early parishioners:

Adam Annen	George Gleberger
Jacob Annen	Peter Goergen
Casper Arnold	Hubert Graf
Peter Arnold	Peter J. Graf
Conrad Artus	
	Joseph Hahn
Herman Bauer	Witibald (Willibald?) Hansen
John Beres	Andrew Heim
Adam Biwer	Peter Heinz
John Biwer	
Philip Brohl	John Jacobs
Matthias Brust	Frank Jacoby
Jacob Burbach	Jacob Jaeger
	John Jaeger
Anton Charles	Matthias Jaeger
	Joseph C. James
Sebastian Dagelen	William Jordan
Joseph Debmaier	John Jugen
Michael Delfeld	
Joseph Ditzler	Henry Kader
	Jacob Kampmann
Joseph Felsner	George Kasper
Wolfgan(g) Fischer	Anton Kau
John Fuss	Bertram Kau

John Kolvenbach	Christian Sauer
Hilary Kraemer	Hilder Schlinger
Raymond Kuenzle	Hilger Schloemmer
Hubert Kurt	Frank Schlosser
William Kurt	Joseph Schmid
Michael (Lehncher?) Lenhcher	Witibald (Willibald?)
Peter Leser	Schmid
Wolfgang Mages	Michael Schmidling
Thomas Mahlberg	Baptist Schmitz
Joseph Marx	Frank Schmitz
Ignatius Meier	John Schmitz
John Mueller	Peter J. Schmitz
Christian Nauerz	John Schultz
Matthias Oberbillig	Joseph Schultz
Frank Ott	Nicholas Schumacher
John J. Palmersheim	Frederick Schwab
Joseph Palmersheim	Nicholas Theis
Martin Palmersheim	Matthias Till
Michael Pardoum	Peter Trimborn
John Paulus	Henry Weber
George Petry	Witibald Wenzels
Matthias Quantius	Joseph Wisner
Henry Reizel	Gebhard Zingsheim
Leonard Rercht	Hubert Zingsheim
Herman Rueppchen	Matthias Zingsheim
	Michael Zingsheim
	Peter Zirbes

*(Information from History of St. Matthias Parish.)*

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**DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN.....**

REVIEWS

Norbert Krapf, Finding the Grain: Pioneer Journals, Franconian Folktales, Ancestral Poems. Jasper, Indiana: Dubois Historical Society, 1977.

Finding the Grain, a collection of pioneer journals, German folklore translations, ancestral documents, pictures and poems, was one of the projects sponsored by the Dubois County Bicentennial Committee. Norbert Krapf, a professor of English and American literature at Long Island University, was born and raised in the German section of southern Indiana. He studied German in Schwaebisch Hall, Germany at the Goethe Institute and since that time has been engaged in genealogical and local historical research. This book represents a masterful attempt to present family history within the context of the German heritage of Indiana.

Krapf includes original German documents, letters, journals and passports of German immigrant ancestors who came to Indiana. English translations are also provided. These materials offer insight into the problems the Germans encountered as they entered the U.S. The difficulty in translating this must have been complex since the writing was unpunctuated in some cases, the vocabulary archaic or dialect, the grammar inconsistent and the writing difficult to decipher. The volume contains maps of where the Germans settled in southern Indiana as well as illustrations from villages in Germany from whence the immigrants came. Krapf includes a number of German folktales in German and English. "The German versions are included to remind Dubois County readers that, for most of them, their ancestral heritage cannot be discovered and preserved through American English alone." Mr. Krapf writes "This need to search out my German heritage probably has something to do with my regret at never having been able to speak with people like my great aunt. I often wonder now what she and her generations could have told me about the world of their parents had I spoken their language..." He eventually learned German and rediscovered his ancestral heritage.

Hopefully more pioneer journals and letters will surface as a result of this excellent book and lead to further publications that combine local history and genealogy.

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Emil Meynen, Bibliography on German settlements in Colonial North America... Reprint of the 1937 edition: Detroit: Gale, 1966. \$20.

This is the major bibliographical guide to publications on the Germans in the colonial era. It lists 7,762 books, articles, addresses etc. written before 1937. Much of this deals with the Palatines in America. One section deals with "The Palatine Emigration and German Settlements in New York Province" while other sections cover such topics as "The Palatine Colonies in Ireland" and "The Palatine-Irish-Americans." Meynen also lists over a thousand colonial German-American genealogies, many of which are Palatine. Also of great use is the local history section which lists all the histories of the Germans in the following states: Pennsylvania, Maryland, the Virginias, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, North Dakota and also Canada. This is a basic guide which anyone researching German ancestry from the colonial era should consult.

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Robert R. Robinson-Zwahr, Die Bremerverwandtschaft in Deutschland und in Texas (The Bremers and Their Kin in Germany and in Texas). Volume One. Wichita, Texas: Nortex Press, 1977. 652 p.

The fabric of American history has been woven together from the research of numerous local historians and genealogists and Robinson-Zwahr's family history will certainly become a basic reference source on the German-Texans. Robert Robinson-Zwahr is a fifth generation member of three German-Texan pioneer families who traveled under the auspices of the Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas) to the Republic of Texas in 1844-45.

Many genealogies are of interest only to the immediate families concerned. However, Robinson-Zwahr has placed the story of his people within the broad context of German-American history in general and German-Texana in particular. It is without doubt the major German-American genealogical publication of the year. Genealogists interested in publishing their family history could not consult a finer source in terms of style, format, research techniques etc. This an excellent model for all who are compiling a German genealogy.

Volume Two will contain a surname index with 10,000 names and a bibliography on the Germans in Texas. The Appendix in Volume One contains numerous documents, letters, etc. from his family, but most importantly it also reprints two German language books written and published in Texas by his ancestor Fritz Goldbeck, a noted German-Texan poet. The book bears a German title and contains quite a bit of German language material, but is basically an English language publication. However, the book will probably sell well in Germany, Texas and across America because of the masterful research techniques that it displays.

The price of Robinson-Zwahr's fine book has not been set yet, but interested readers may contact The Nortex Press, Box 1369, Wichita Falls, Texas 76307.

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Clifford Neal Smith and Anna Piszczan-Czaja Smith, Encyclopedia of German-American Genealogical Research. New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1976.

The primary purpose of this reference work, according to the authors, is to survey the materials available to genealogists searching for roots in the German-speaking areas of Europe. Since German-American genealogical research has not been systematically studied in the past, this work serves as an inventory of some of the basic reference tools. A further purpose is to provide American researchers with background material on German customs, sociological stratification, governmental organization, and ethnographic considerations having a bearing on immigrant ancestors. As Smith notes, the Germans are the largest ethnic group in the U.S. Certainly in the period 1820-1957 they far outnumbered those from Great Britain.

This encyclopedia offers the researcher valuable information and data on reference materials available: lists, bibliographies, statistical tables, records, primary sources, historical data etc. Sections of the book cover such topics as: German Ethnic Religious Bodies in America; Language and Onomastics; Genealogy in Germany; Heraldry; and German-American Genealogy. With reference to the Palatines Smith lists six pages of publications which deal with Palatines who immigrated to America.

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