AMERICAN-GERMANS OR GERMAN AMERICANS?:
DEFINING THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH, 1891-1918

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Faced with rising anti-German sentiment during the winter of 1916 due to the war in Europe, the intellectual leaders of the Pennsylvania Dutch community presented the case of the Pennsylvania-Germans to the national press. In the pages of the *New York Times* and *The Outlook* magazine, Dr. Henry Harbaugh Apple and Pennsylvania Governor Martin Grove Brumbaugh argued that the members of their ethnic group were unstintingly loyal Americans and had been for generations. The evidence presented to prove their arguments was the Revolutionary War service and rich societal contributions of the early German settlers in Pennsylvania, demonstrated by the scholarly activities of the societies and magazines dedicated to the purpose of promoting and preserving Pennsylvania-German culture in the United States. It was necessary for Brumbaugh and Apple to defend their people, as from an outside perspective all that was visible was the “-German” portion of their appellation. Despite their protestations to the contrary, the Pennsylvania-Germans were being viewed as part of the monolithic and threatening German element in the United States.

The designation of the Pennsylvania Dutch ethnic group as the Pennsylvania-Germans was the result of a largely intellectual movement dating from the 1890s, motivated by several different factors. As demonstrated by scholar Wilbur Zelinsky, “ethnic” and “ethnicity” are rather recent terms.¹ Zelinsky defines an ethnic group as “any substantial aggregation of persons who are perceived by themselves and/or others to share a unique set of cultural and historical commonalities,” a definition which certainly applies to the Pennsylvania Dutch community’s shared historical background, dialect language, and folkloric traditions.² In the vernacular of the

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² Ibid, 43.
19th century, the Pennsylvania Dutch sought to define exactly where their particular “race-element” fit into the larger social fabric of the United States.

That element was formed when the ancestors of the Pennsylvania Dutch arrived in the colony of Pennsylvania as part of a concentrated wave of immigration that originated primarily in the Palatinate, beginning in 1727 and ending with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. As an ethnic group, the Pennsylvania Dutch are rather understudied in the academic sense. Most books chronicling this ethnic group are authored by Pennsylvania Dutchmen and suffer from filiopietism; the exceptions are work done by folklorist Don Yoder, considered a foremost expert in the field of Pennsylvania German studies, as well as William Parsons, author of *The Pennsylvania Dutch: A Persistent Minority*. Yoder particularly argues that the Pennsylvania Dutch forged a common cultural and ethnic identity after arriving in America that was expressed through the continued maintenance of High German and their own German dialect, as well as particular German cultural traditions. The largest proportion of settlers belonged to the Protestant German Reformed and German Lutheran churches, while smaller numbers adhered to the pacifistic Mennonite, Amish, and Brethren faiths. In the dialect these people referred to themselves as the *Pennsilaanisch Deitsch* (or *Pennysylvanisch Deutsch*), a name that their English and Scotch-Irish neighbors anglicized to Pennsylvania Dutch.

Labeled the “Palatine boors” by Benjamin Franklin, the Pennsylvania Dutch nonetheless established an agricultural foothold in Pennsylvania and were subsequently praised highly by

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Benjamin Rush for their husbandry skills. Their bountiful farms helped to supply Washington’s Army during the Revolutionary War, while their sons fought for independence. The Pennsylvania Dutch comprised 25% of the forces fielded by Pennsylvania and ultimately 12% of Washington’s total forces. A study of the Pennsylvania Dutch in the period of the early Republic, Steven Nolt’s *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, explores how the community acclimated to American society and participated in its political structures without assimilating. In the decades following the Revolutionary War, Nolt theorizes that the Pennsylvania Dutch adopted the American ideals of liberty and citizenship and applied them in defense of their community’s cultural particularism; they successfully maintained their cultural distinctiveness while becoming Americans against the grain of a society that largely demanded conformity to the Anglo-American ideal.

In *Damn Dutch: Pennsylvania Germans at Gettysburg*, David L. Valuska and Christian B. Keller provide an exploration of minority ethnic identity in Pennsylvania during the Civil War, by tracing how the war and other societal factors affected ethnic identity among both the Pennsylvania Dutch and the later German-Americans living in the state. Prior to the Civil War, the Pennsylvania Dutch lived quietly in their established ethnic enclave until the conflict pushed them into contact with the outside world, particularly during the Confederate incursions into south-central Pennsylvania. Keller quotes a Confederate officer in calling the Pennsylvania Dutch “an ignorant offshoot of a certain class of Germans long settled there.” Keller and

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Valuska conclude their study by theorizing that the Civil War was a catalyst for the growing ethnic consciousness of both the Pennsylvania Dutch and the wider German-American community during the 1860s and 1870s. In the Pennsylvania Dutch case, that ethnicity was expressed through the establishment of a dialect literature movement by the first Pennsilfaanisch Deitsch dialect poet, Henry Harbaugh. In the German-American case, that consciousness would emerge to be dedicated to the preservation and extension of German language and culture within the Little Germanies established by the later immigrants.

Stereotypes of the Pennsylvania Dutch as conservative, stodgy, and dumb—hence the alliterative insult “Damn Dutch” utilized by Keller and Valuska—continued to proliferate throughout the press during the Gilded Age. Dr. G. G. Groff, writing an article for a national magazine in 1891, opened his piece with a summation of some of those stereotypes: “Everyone who has heard of Pennsylvania has also heard of the Pennsylvania ‘Dutch’ farmer. These men are often looked upon as thick-headed, unprogressive, and antiquated in ideas, manners, and dress.”

At a time when historical consciousness and an interest in genealogy were rising across the United States, the Pennsylvania Dutch were subject to the same impulses, especially when it came to claiming a place for their own people in the nation’s historical tableau. This became particularly important for the Pennsylvania Dutch and other ethnic minorities after the Centennial celebrations of 1876 started the trend in moving the nation towards the commemoration of one common, Anglo-Saxon dominated history. The surge in Pennsylvania Dutch ethnic consciousness and the need to repudiate negative stereotypes resulted in a desire

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among Pennsylvania Dutch intellectuals to identify, understand, and promote their unique history within the United States.

Simultaneously, the German-Americans were promoting their own version of German history in America. The German-American ethnic experience in the United States has been chronicled by a variety of scholars; most comprehensively in Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh’s two volume compilation, *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred Year History*. The particular experience of German-Americans during World War I has also been dealt with by a number of authors. In *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I*, Frederick Luebke utilizes contemporary press reports and quantitative research to understand the group’s actions and beliefs before and during the conflict. Luebke focuses primarily on cultural factors and social attitudes with a strong emphasis on German-American communities in the Midwest. The actions and reactions of the Pennsylvania Dutch ethnic community during World War I—with its linguistic and cultural ties to Germany—have not been studied in detail; only a few short chapters in ethnic histories of the Pennsylvania Dutch have been written. Russell Kazal, in his exploration of the German-American population in Philadelphia, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity*, postulates briefly that the “Pennsylvania Germans’ portrayal of themselves as old-line Americans made it easier for some descendants of nineteenth century German immigrants to reshape themselves as such Americans after the First World War.” Kazal’s assertion, however, does not take into account the struggle the Pennsylvania Dutch endured during the Gilded Age to define their own ethnicity nor that their great effort to prove their American heritage was precipitated by their very

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German-ness during the World War I period. The Pennsylvania Dutch did not just portray themselves as old-line Americans; they had to fight to prove their loyalty to the United States and they chose to do so by proving their legitimacy through their historical background.

The Pennsylvania Dutch stressed their attachment to their German heritage during the late nineteenth century as a way to reject the negative stereotypes attached to their people and as a means to benefit from the positive associations enjoyed by the German-American community in American society. They were so successful at publicly associating themselves with the German-American community—despite avid pronouncements of their status as Americans first—that they were perceived as Germans during the anti-German hysteria caused by World War I. The view of the Pennsylvania Dutch as Germans—the reviled Huns—forced them to reconcile their German ethnicity with their American identity. As anti-German hysteria swept the country, Pennsylvania Dutch intellectuals struggled to develop a public narrative that would convincingly persuade the American public to accept their American heritage.

**Defining Their Own Ethnicity: The Founding of the Pennsylvania-German Society**

The visible desire among Pennsylvania Dutch intellectuals to identify, understand, and promote their own unique history within the United States resulted in the founding of the Pennsylvania German Society in 1891. Newspaper editor Lee Grumbine of Lebanon’s *Daily Report* published a series of editorials commenting on the occasion of Forefather’s Day (a celebration held in New England commemorating the landing at Plymouth Rock), that chiefly lamented the fact that there was no such equivalent for the Pennsylvania German nor any
recognition of their “Forefathers from the Fatherland.”

In an era that prized traditions and knowledge of one’s ancestors, associations that celebrated lineage proliferated across the United States, most prominently the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Society of the Mayflower Descendants. The Pennsylvania Dutch definitely lacked their own such distinguished filiopietistic organization, but Grumbine had a plan to fill the void. He identified “the need of fostering a feeling of ancestral pride and a spirit of loyalty to the blood of the German born pilgrims from whom so many of our people have descended” and proposed, as a vehicle for creating and harnessing such pride and spirit, the founding of an “organization of a society of the descendants of the German Palatines.”

With impetus from an endorsement by the Philadelphia Inquirer, prominent men throughout the Pennsylvania Dutch counties in Pennsylvania came together in February of 1891 to discuss forming an association.

The sixteen men who gathered together to discuss forming such an association were pillars of their respective communities; among them were newspaper editors (including Lee Grumbine), college presidents, educators, and clergymen. While everyone in attendance agreed that a society of the descendants of the early German settlers was both an admirable goal and necessary to preserve the history of the group, they quibbled over what to actually title the society. Those discussions, summarized in a column written for the Reformed Church Messenger, encapsulate the debate over exactly how Pennsylvania Dutch ethnicity should be defined and presented to the public at large. All of the men in attendance were themselves Pennsylvania Dutchmen, and so their debate also points to how they saw their ethnic group in

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14 Kammen, 218.
15 Rosenberger, 77.
16 Ibid, 78.
relation to wider American society. E.H. Rauch of Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania (author of the 1879 publication *Rauch’s Pennsylvania Dutch Hand-book/Rauch’s Pennsylvania Deitsch Hand-Booch*) believed that the name “Pennsylvania Dutch Society” would “best answer all the conditions of the proposed society’s name.”\(^{17}\) His suggestion caused a storm of protest. Other participants suggested that the name “Dutch” was a misnomer—“to say the best of it”—and added that in New York City the word “Dutch” was used as a term of derision.\(^{18}\) An unwieldy compromise, “A German, Dutch, and Swiss Congress of Descendants of Early German Settlers of Pennsylvania,” covered all of the bases: it included a reference to the commonly used “Dutch,” addressed the fact that a number of the original settlers came from German speaking areas that were later incorporated into Switzerland, and also placed ‘German’ in the top billing. Their ultimate decision—to use “the best and most true name”—was spurred by various factors.\(^{19}\)

The main goal of the new Pennsylvania-German Society was to claim its people’s appropriate place in history and to educate other Pennsylvania Dutch and the rest of the American people about the group’s origins and importance. Their refusal to refer to the linguistic quirk that produced “Pennsylvania Dutch” in English made it clear, right from the beginning, that the society celebrating the *Pennsiliaanisch Deitsch* was serious about claiming and publicizing its German heritage. It also removed them from direct association with the stereotype of the Dumb Dutch, while associating themselves with the American public’s positive perception of Germans. At the time, German immigrants and German-Americans were highly valued for


\(^{18}\) Ibid

\(^{19}\) Ibid
their positive cultural contributions, loyalty to the United States, and general reputability as an ethnic group; the most prominent elements associated with German-Americans were thrift, industry, and honesty. These beliefs were undergirded by a variety of surveys (of dubious scientific validity in relation to today’s standards) that evaluated German-Americans highly.

The Pennsylvania-German Society assumed the responsibility of defining Pennsylvania Dutch ethnicity and history to the outside world and to its own people. In order to do so successfully, the founders had to advertise their new association and attract participants from across Pennsylvania Dutch country. In a broadside that came to be known as the “call,” the founders addressed “The Descendants of the early German and Swiss Settlers in Pennsylvania, Wheresoever Dispersed,” and invited all men who fit the heritage requirement to attend the first general meeting, to be held in Lancaster on April 15, 1891. The call clearly (if hyperbolically) stated the society’s mission. The society would

show the offspring of other nationalities that they are not behind them in any of the attributes which go to make up the best citizens of the best State in the best Government of the world. In the art of printing, in the realm of science and letters, in religious fervor, in pure statesmanship, in war and in peace, the Pennsylvania German-Swiss element has equaled any other race.

The call was signed by each of the sixteen men in attendance at the preliminary meeting and widely distributed in newspapers and by mail. It was, evidently, successful, as the first general meeting of the Pennsylvania-German society went on as planned in Lancaster, opened by the singing of German folk songs by a local choir.

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22 Rosenberger, 80.
In the opening speeches, the goals of the society were again elucidated. E.K. Martin of Lancaster made a point of listing all of the heritage societies maintained by other groups in the United States, including the Holland Society of New York, the Huguenots who “yearly assemble,” and the New England Society, of which “at least an issue of the New York Tribune would not be complete without some account of their meeting somewhere.” Martin’s speech particularly emphasizes that in relation to other ethnic groups in the United States, the Pennsylvania Dutch felt that they were unrecognized and definitely unorganized, and the Pennsylvania-German Society was designed to fix those problems. Martin concluded by saying that “the Pennsylvania-German, who has been called a sleeping giant, is about to bestir himself, and I welcome you to our midst to inaugurate the great undertaking.” Following Martin, George F. Baer, who was nominated and confirmed as the first Chairman of the Pennsylvania-German Society, gave his first speech to the society. Baer laid a portion of the blame for the disappearance of the Pennsylvania Germans into American history at the feet of their descendants:

Have we not been indifferent to the good deeds and fame of our ancestry? Have not many of us in acquiring an English tongue, lost all interest in our Teutonic ancestors, and become disposed to regard the general order of our American national life as an English development pure and simple?

Baer followed his rhetorical query with an explanation of how the Pennsylvania Dutch faded into relative obscurity. As an ethnic and linguistic minority in a colony, and later state, run by an English speaking majority via English law, the Pennsylvania Dutch were not the ones who were writing the history books or initially holding government office.

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24 Ibid, 18.
American-Germans or German-Americans?: Placing the Pennsylvania Dutch in Context with the German-American Community

Baer’s long introductory speech to the Pennsylvania-German Society not only served to outline the history of the ethnic group and delineate the purpose of the new society but also to place it in proper relation to the larger German-American community. The highly publicized call to attend the April meeting reached the attention of members of the German Society of Pennsylvania, who proceeded to send two representatives bearing good wishes to the convention. The German Society of Pennsylvania had been founded in 1764 to provide aide to newly arrived (and often destitute) German immigrants. As the large wave of German immigration fell off, it also established a German-language library and sponsored German-speaking theology students at the University of Pennsylvania. The German Society eventually started keeping records in both English and German until it made English its official language in 1818. With the second wave of German immigration, gradually more recent German immigrants took over leadership of the German Society and resumed the use of the German language for Society business. Prompted to immigrate by the failure of the liberal Revolutions of 1848 that advocated for fundamental reform (and henceforth given the nickname of the “Forty-Eighters”), German immigrants who arrived in the United States after 1848 were largely responsible for the creation of the typical, urban bourgeois German-American culture that flourished in cities like St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. They brought a love of Goethe, opera, and liberal political philosophies to the United States and often settled in “Little Germanies.” In addition to joining already existing mutual aid societies, the Forty-Eighters were responsible for founding

27 Ibid, 19.
turnvereine (athletic clubs), gesangsvereine (singing societies) and for frequenting local beer gardens.  

While they maintained the practice of assisting recent German immigrants, the Forty-Eighters who took control of the German Society also expanded its mission by promoting and celebrating German culture. The culture that the German Society of Pennsylvania was promoting was the Germany of Goethe and Schiller. As Frank Trommler demonstrates, the Germans had emerged as strong proponents of “worshipping aesthetic culture as a way to enhance prestige,” and the German-Americans demonstrated their social status by supporting German music, philosophy, art, and literature. In contrast, the Pennsylvania-German Society was being formed to promote the history of the Pennsylvania Dutch via stories about Conrad Weiser, intrepid Indian translator, and Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Revolutionary Patriot and renowned Lutheran Reverend. The Pennsylvania-German Society was not interested in the highbrow cultural experiments of the German Society, preferring to celebrate their own traditions and cultural heroes that had emerged in America. Regardless of the differences, the German Society sent Dr. Oswald Seidenstricker and General Louis Wagner to the April meeting in Lancaster, where they were admitted to the floor and given permission to participate in the Convention. Oswald Seidenstricker, who had been born in Germany, was the head of the German Department at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of several works about the Germans in Pennsylvania, including The First German Immigration to America and the Founding of Germantown in 1683, a work that explored the arrival of the Pennsylvania Dutch and a considerable contribution to the history that the Pennsylvania-German Society was formed

29 Pfleger, 21.
30 Trommler, 117.
to promote. General Louis Wagner arrived in the United States from Germany at the age of eleven and went on to serve in the Union Army during the Civil War. Both Seidenstricker and Wagner were dedicated members of the German Society and two of its most prominent members. From the German Society’s perspective, their attendance at the Pennsylvania German Society’s convention would have been an honor. At the convention they were able to listen to all of the speeches and debates, including the conclusion of George F. Baer’s first address. Baer essentially defined the Pennsylvania Dutch as a uniquely American ethnic group, declaring that “although the [Pennsylvania-Germans] came here from Germany, they were as truly American as the English speaking people. They have never claimed any other nationality.” He followed this statement with a barb likely directed towards the German Society and their representatives:

In the same spirit, we do not propose to organize a German Society, to praise our ancestors as Germans, or to bother with foreign German problems, or customs. We have too many organizations in this land whose sole concern is with Old World Conditions. We are Americans, and as such let us frown upon the insolence that seeks to exalt any other than the American flag.  

The Pennsylvania-German Society’s determination to separate themselves from the larger German-American community at its inception was further emphasized as the rules for membership came up for debate as the society voted on its proposed constitution. The constitution as originally proposed stated that “No one shall be eligible as a regular member unless he be of full age, of good moral character, and a direct descendant of early German or Swiss emigrants to Pennsylvania.” It was argued that the admission of men born in Germany or Switzerland would make the Pennsylvania-German Society no different than a German society,

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32 Rosenberger, 85.
and that “there must be a distinction between foreign-born and American-born Germans.”\textsuperscript{33} It was acknowledged that some foreign born Germans had studied and written about the Pennsylvania Dutch and were genuinely interested in the cause, like Dr. Seidenstricker. In order to satisfy that criticism, a provision was made to offer associate membership to those naturalized Germans resident in Pennsylvania for at least ten years or more, with all privileges except for voting and holding office. General Wagner was considerably affronted by the decision to exclude German born members from full membership. He felt it was clear that he, as a foreign-born German, was not welcome in the Pennsylvania-German Society and as a result, he left the floor of the convention.\textsuperscript{34}

As revealed by the interactions between Wagner and the Pennsylvania-German Society, real tensions existed between the Pennsylvania Dutch and the German immigrants who arrived in ever greater numbers after 1848. Gradually the new German immigrants became aware of the Pennsylvania Dutch, just as the Pennsylvania Dutch became aware of the creation of a new, German speaking, German-American culture in the large cities of the Eastern Seaboard and the Midwest. As Historian Don Yoder writes, the Pennsylvania Dutch viewed these newcomers as foreigners, Germany-Germans, or, in dialect, \textit{Deitschlenner}.\textsuperscript{35} When the European Germans came into contact with the Pennsylvania Dutch their reactions were extremely negative and often ultra-critical, particularly in regards to the dialect’s adoption of English words and the “Germanizing” of English expressions in German newspapers.\textsuperscript{36} The European Germans in some cases expressed the very opinions that helped to push Pennsylvania Dutch intellectuals to create

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, 84.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, 84.
\textsuperscript{35} Don Yoder, “‘the Dutchman’ and the ‘\textit{Deitschlenner}’: The New World Confronts the Old,” \textit{Yearbook of German-American Studies} 23(1988): 2.
\textsuperscript{36} Yoder, “‘the Dutchman’ and the ‘\textit{Deitschlenner},’” 2.
the Pennsylvania-German Society. When he first arrived in Pennsylvania, influential historian
Phillip Schaff (author of *The History of the Christian Church*) expressed the following in a
lecture to the Schiller Society:

American Germany [referring to the Pennsylvania Dutch]…possesses not a single college
that may be said to represent the German interest in a manner worthy of the mother
country; she has no national literature, yea, does not even know that of her own kindred
so well as its friends and admirers in New England. Her language, for the most part, is an
almost unintelligible and characterless gibberish, made up of the most different German
dialects thoroughly interwoven with Anglicisms and Barbarisms. No wonder that *Dutch*
and *vulgar, German and rude* have become, in many places, convertible terms.37

Birte Pfleger, who chronicles the German Society of Pennsylvania in her monograph *Ethnicity
Matters: A History of the German Society of Pennsylvania*, confirms that the “so-called
Pennsylvania Dutch traditions…were generally looked upon with disdain by the Forty-Eighters”
who refused to recognize the Pennsylvania Dutch as “authentically ‘German.’”38

The Pennsylvania Dutch, for their part, felt no connection to the world that the German
immigrants created for themselves of turnverein, beer gardens, and singing societies.39 Rather
than joining these types of German cultural societies, the Pennsylvania Dutch could be found
populating the Odd Fellows and Elks lodges of their respective small towns.40 In the area of
religion, where the large majority of non-sectarian Pennsylvania Dutch filled the pews in
German Lutheran and German Reformed churches, contact with the newer Germans resulted in
denominational schisms, most notably in the Lutheran Church.41 The arrival of the newer
German immigrants and the development of a German-American culture illustrated to the

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37 Yoder, “‘the Dutchman’ and the ‘Deitschlenner,’” 3.
38 Pfleger, 21.
39 Valuska and Keller, 15.
40 Yoder, “‘the Dutchman’ and the ‘Deitschlenner,’” 2.
41 Ibid, 6.
Pennsylvania Dutch that their own traditions, while German in origin, had evolved into a uniquely American regional culture. The decision of the Pennsylvania-German Society to exclude foreign-born Germans from full membership was a manifestation of the group’s desire to define themselves as Pennsylvania Dutch ethnics, separate from the highly visible, intellectually based German-American culture of Philadelphia and the other big cities. As historian (and later member of the Pennsylvania-German Society) Homer Tope Rosenberger explains, the decision allowed the Pennsylvania-German Society to avoid “the danger of joining closely with those later Germans who were more German-American than American-German.”

Occasionally membership in the two societies overlapped, most notably in the case of Pennsylvania Governor Samuel Pennypacker, but generally the societies maintained a “politely distant” relationship. For a few years the Pennsylvania-German Society remained the sole arbiter of Pennsylvania Dutch ethnicity, but in 1900 they were joined by the writers and editors of The Pennsylvania-German magazine.

**The Transformation of The Pennsylvania-German into The Penn-Germania: A Different Approach**

Declaring that it “has a story to tell that has never yet been fully or correctly told,” The Pennsylvania-German magazine was published for the first time in January 1900. Editor P.C. Croll of Lebanon decided that The Pennsylvania-German magazine would accomplish its mission by “chat[ting] of the bygones by conducting…periodic historical pilgrimages through

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42 Rosenberger, 87.
43 Pfleger, 21.
the very heart of Pennsylvania Germandom.”⁴⁵ Croll, like the members of the Pennsylvania-German Society, wanted to publicize the previously unknown history of the early German settlers of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania-German magazine helped to further define the characteristics and ethnicity of the Pennsylvania Dutch. The magazine and the Society cooperated and collaborated in that mission, as the magazine regularly published articles and speeches given by Society members. The magazine also published one of the first histories of the Pennsylvania-German Society, stating:

A mere glance at the list of those who make up its roll of membership is evidence of their high-standing, not only in the community but in the State as well, and even in the nation; the day has come when, instead of shrinkedly and shamefacedly retiring into the shadows of human activity, we can unhesitatingly step into the full light of publicity, and exclaim with pride: “I, too, am a Pennsylvania-German!”⁴⁶

The magazine compiled a selection of speeches given and newspaper articles published about the Pennsylvania Dutch, along with regular features on famous Pennsylvania Dutchmen (like Christopher Sower, Molly Pitcher, and Samuel Haldeman), the genealogy of prominent families (Weisers, Meyers, Gottschalls, among many others), book reviews, and poems published in both the dialect and English. Corrections and rebuttals of articles and books published in the mainstream media about the Pennsylvania Dutch were also included. Under the stewardship of P.C. Croll, The Pennsylvania-German magazine was an enlightening and educational publication that distributed Pennsylvania Dutch history to “a reasonably large audience of interested readers,” according to Harry Hess Reichard, author of Pennsylvania-German Dialect Writings

⁴⁵ Phillip C. Croll, “Introductory,” The Pennsylvania-German, 1, no.1 (1900), 1.
Yoder, in fact, referred to *The Pennsylvania-German* as “the most influential Pennsylvania Dutch cultural journal in English.”

Despite the popularity and common usage of “Pennsylvania Dutch” within the larger community, the intellectual leadership of the group preferred Pennsylvania-German, saying of Dutch that “this term still clings to us and we cannot shake it off.” *The Pennsylvania-German* magazine dealt with the question of the name of the ethnic group, much like the Society had...

Clearly, the editors fell into the camp that Pennsylvania-German was vastly preferable to Pennsylvania Dutch; and letters from citizens argued that point as well. Perhaps the clearest explanation of their position regarding the naming battle can be found in a short Editorial Department response to an article entitled “Pennsylvania-Dutch,” written by Harvard Professor Albert Bushnell Hart:

Professor Hart has preferred to call us “Pennsylvania-Dutch,” tho [sic] he states quite truly that this term is taken rather ill by educated people, who prefer to be known as “Pennsylvania-Germans.” The former term is very popular among our people themselves and not likely to ever become obsolete.

Public proclamations of their “German-ness,” as well as intellectual leaders’ insistence on referring to their ethnic group as Pennsylvania-German, helped to align the Pennsylvania-Dutch more closely with the larger German-American community—at least in public perception. The transformation of *The Pennsylvania-German* magazine into *The Penn-Germania* would turn that perception into reality, in at least one case.

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48 Yoder, “‘the Dutchman’ and the ‘Deitschlenner.’”
49 Editorial Department, “An Incorrect Name that Sticks,” *The Pennsylvania-German* 7 (November 1907), 563.
50 Ibid, 563.
The transformation of *The Pennsylvania-German* into the *The Penn-Germania* was the delayed result of a change in editorial staff and largely done at the initiative of one man: Howard W. Kriebel. In 1906 P.C. Croll handed the reins and editorial direction of the magazine over to Kriebel and Henry A. Schuler. Kriebel (and Schuler until his death in 1908) originally aimed “to move forward along the lines laid down by the founder of this magazine, gradually developing new features…”\(^{51}\) Kriebel, a historian, had had his study of the Schwenkfelders in America published by the Pennsylvania-German Society in 1904.\(^{52}\) From all appearances, Kriebel was a strong supporter of the Pennsylvania-German Society and its mission of preserving Pennsylvania Dutch history, as he had acted as the first curator of the Schwenkfelder Historical Library from its founding in 1885 before stepping down in 1907.\(^{53}\) However; in 1911. Kriebel proposed taking *The Pennsylvania-German* in a new direction by publicly aligning it with the National German-American Alliance, a German-American organization with strong ties to Germany.

Dominated by the “Germany-Germans,” The National German-American Alliance (NGAA) was founded in 1901 to promote and preserve German culture, but it quickly evolved into a highly political lobbying group. The founders of the NGAA feared that German culture in the United States was on the decline due to decreasing immigration and increasing assimilation on the parts of second-generation German-Americans.\(^{54}\) Their constitution called for cultural preservation and advancement as well as political initiatives. Domestically the NGAA focused on fighting against the Progressive push for prohibition (bankrolled primarily by wealthy

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\(^{52}\) The Schwenkfelders are the descendants of the followers of Caspar Schwenkfeld von Ossig, who preached in southwestern Germany during the Protestant Reformation. The Schwenkfelders immigrated in groups to Pennsylvania during the 1730s.


\(^{54}\) Charles Johnson, *Culture at Twilight: The National German-American Alliance, 1901-1918.* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 16.
German brewers), while internationally they advocated for a closer relationship between the United States and Germany as a counterweight to the rising antagonism between Great Britain and Germany. The NGAA, while it was a huge proponent of German culture and advocated for increased ties to Germany, made sure to emphasize that it was an American organization. However, its work did not go unnoticed by German leaders. Kaiser Wilhelm sent greetings to the NGAA’s 1909 Convention, and in a case of extremely unfortunate timing, conferred the Order of the Eagle Fourth Class on founder and President Charles Hexamer as a “friend of the German people” in late summer 1914.

The NGAA was the type of German cultural organization that had been largely rejected by the Pennsylvania Dutch community during the 1890s, but one element of the NGAA’s program proved to be attractive to some members. Under the leadership of Charles Hexamer, the NGAA was making a concerted effort to define the historical contributions of the German people to the United States. Here, the goals of Howard Kriebel and Charles Hexamer overlapped. Hexamer explicitly stated that American history should be rewritten to include the German contributions to the development of the United States, and he strove to popularize that history through speeches and the erection of monuments commemorating prominent German-Americans like Baron von Steuben. One of Hexamer’s main objectives as President of the NGAA was to promote German-Americans as “old stock” Americans in contrast to the surges of new immigrants coming to the United States from Southern and Eastern Europe; a purpose which led him to stress German contributions to American history in speeches and essays and which overlapped rather conveniently with Pennsylvania Dutch intellectuals’ concerted efforts to bring

55 Johnson, 1-20
56 Ibid, 96.
57 Kazal, 134-136.
to light their Revolutionary War contributions to American society. Yoder states that “German-American historians and publicists appropriated Pennsylvania German history, from Germantown on, as the first phase of a larger overarching German-American historical panorama.” Oswald Seidenstricker’s *The First German Immigration to America and the Founding of Germantown in 1683* is a prime example of this phenomenon. Albert Bernhardt Faust’s two volume study, *The German Element in the United States*, was the first historical survey of the topic. Published in 1909, Faust incorporated the history of the Pennsylvania-Dutch into a larger interpretation of the entire German-American community. He devotes an entire chapter to the Germans of Pennsylvania, describing in great detail the settlement and religious development of the area, acknowledging briefly that “the German settler became a recognized type of frontiersman, and because most numerous in Pennsylvania, or most frequently coming from there, he received the name Pennsylvania Dutch, or Pennsylvania German.” In his second volume exploring the “political, moral, social, and educational influence” of the German population of the United States Faust includes a small section on “the refreshing and historically valuable dialect literature of the Pennsylvania-Germans.” The efforts of Faust and other German-American historians to publicize “the prominence of the Germans as a formative element of the American people” dovetails on the surface with the efforts of the Pennsylvania-German Society and *The Pennsylvania-German* magazine to distinguish the contributions of their Pennsylvania Dutch ancestors to the United States. However, the overall acknowledgement of the Pennsylvania Dutch community in German-American historiography is largely limited to

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58 Johnson, 96. Charles Hexamer at this time simultaneously served as the President of the German Society of Pennsylvania and linked the two organizations together, despite the GSP’s disapproval of the political nature of the NGAA.
59 Yoder, “‘The Dutchman’ and the ‘Deitschlenner,’” 9.
61 Ibid, 340.
their colonial and revolutionary era activities. Despite these limits, Howard Kriebel enthusiastically dedicated himself to the German cultural ideals of the National German-American Alliance.

Kriebel used the October 1911 issue of *The Pennsylvania-German* to both explain and justify his decision to ally the magazine with the NGAA to his Pennsylvania Dutch readers. The issue opened with an article written by Kriebel entitled “The National German-American Alliance,” in which he described his attendance at their recent national convention, the aims of the organization, and the worthiness of its cause. Kriebel argued “It were well [sic] for people of German ancestry everywhere in our country to make themselves fully acquainted with the activities of the Alliance and in addition through membership become directly identified with it.” Included directly following Kriebel’s introduction to the National-German Alliance was the address he delivered at the convention, saluting their “most worthy, a sublime cause.” Kriebel’s sentiments regarding the National German-American Alliance were unusual among his community, but as the editor of a circulated popular magazine he enjoyed a position uniquely suited to influencing those Pennsylvania Dutchmen who subscribed to and perhaps passed along their copies of *The Pennsylvania-German*. In his speech to the National German-American Alliance, Kriebel promised “to so conduct the *The Pennsylvania-German* as to serve the National German-American Alliance” by providing a forum for scholars toiling in the field of *Deuchstum* as well as a home for Alliance propaganda materials. Kriebel revealed his admiration for the German-American community at the NGAA’s national convention:

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You are the heirs of two thousand years of struggle for life and light and love among men and hence endowed with great riches and limitless possibilities. In view of your history the world’s millions have a claim on you; humanity needs your German idealism, your German conscience, your German ‘Grundlichkeit and Gemuthlichkeit’; generations unborn will bless you for the crumbs from your bountiful table.64

Kriebel’s effusive praise was followed by more overwrought oratory, but it is clear that he intended to dedicate himself and *The Pennsylvania-German* to telling the history and promoting the culture of all of the Germans in America. He was “find[ing] common bonds of union” with the wider German-American community despite “manifest divergences and differences” between the Pennsylvania Dutch and their more recently arrived compatriots.65

In order to better communicate the new mission of his magazine and to appeal to the broader German-American audience, Kriebel re-titled it *The Penn-Germania: A Popular Journal of German History and Ideals in the United States*. The January 1912 debut issue opened with an illustration of America and Germania shaking hands across a statue of William Penn and an announcement:

This periodical, born twelve years ago of Pennsylvania German stock…being ambitious to widen its circle of acquaintanceship, influence, and service, makes with this issue its journalistic bow as a “popular” monthly journal for and about the German Element of the United States.66

Kriebel reminded his Pennsylvania Dutch subscribers that “citizens of German ancestry [should] do well to remember the rock whence they are hewn and help our country benefit by what two thousand years of existence as a people has taught the Fatherland.” Kriebel’s intentions to dedicate his magazine to the German-American cultural project could not have been made clearer, especially as the first article of the new publication was entitled “The National German-

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64 Howard W. Kriebel, “To the Members of the Sixth Convention of the National German-American Alliance,” *The Pennsylvania-German* 12, no. 10 (1911), 578.
65 Ibid, 578.
American Alliance and the Washington Convention,” followed by an explanation of the organization’s principles. In the (admittedly self-selected) “What Readers Say” section of the second issue of *The Penn-Germania*, positive feedback appeared from Pennsylvanians and readers in other states, including a response from Wyncote, PA written in the style of English as spoken by a Pennsylvania Dutchman: “I likes dot Penn Germania, /Und Mine Vife, she likes it too; / Und so ve sitz togedder / By der lamp und reads it thro’ / Ve likes der deutsche ladies / From de home und faderland, / As dey stand in welcome, /Mit der flags in der hand.”67 In the following issues Kriebel continued to include items of interest to the Pennsylvania Dutch, including the Genealogical Club, balanced with a large number of articles on German-American history and German activities.

While the men of the Pennsylvania-German Society and Howard W. Kriebel of *The Pennsylvania-German* magazine ultimately shared the same goal—preserving and publicizing the history of the Pennsylvania Dutch—their views diverged on exactly how to accomplish that aim. The Pennsylvania-German Society declared that it was strictly an American organization celebrating a common heritage at its inception and consciously distanced itself from other German-American organizations dominated by later German immigrants. From his statements it is clear that Kriebel believed incorporating the history of the Pennsylvania-Dutch into an overarching German-American narrative would be an effective way to preserve the heritage of his people and to present it to a wider and appreciative audience. He therefore associated his Pennsylvania Dutch cultural journal with the National German-American Alliance, which actively promoted German-American culture and the history of the Germans in America. Members of the Pennsylvania Dutch community were presented with an important choice:

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remaining with the Pennsylvania-German Society’s separatist definition of Pennsylvania Dutch ethnicity that acknowledged German heritage, or fully joining the German-American ethnic community being defined by Charles Hexamer and the NGAA. The divergent responses of the Pennsylvania-German Society and Howard Kriebel’s *Penn-Germania* to the outbreak of the European conflict in 1914 would further illuminate the great divide between the two cultural representatives of the Pennsylvania Dutch, and the community would be forced to choose between the two visions, once and for all.

**The Outbreak of the War in Europe and the Question of American Neutrality: Whither the Pennsylvania-Germans?**

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, in Sarajevo was front-page news throughout the United States, including in papers like the *York Daily* that provided news to a large number of Pennsylvania Dutch. The town of York, Pennsylvania, located to the west of the Susquehanna River in the original Colonial German settlement area, provides an opportunity for the examination of the popular Pennsylvania Dutch experience during World War I, in contrast to the perspective provided by the intellectual leaders of the community highlighted in the pages of *The Pennsylvania-German* and the speeches of the Pennsylvania-German Society. While its 140,000 citizens were primarily Pennsylvania Dutch, York in 1914 was also home to a small but recognizable number of more recent German immigrants, as well as to a minority of citizens who were of non-German descent. While the local German newspapers that had operated almost continuously since the Colonial era had gone out of print several years earlier, the dialect was spoken in the home and on the streets.⁶⁸

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Pennsylvania Dutch in the York area largely belonged to the Lutheran and Reformed faiths, where in some churches sermons were still being delivered in German. Following the assassination of the Archduke, Yorkers largely carried on with their typical preoccupations, though letters from locals traveling abroad that described the European situation were printed in the *York Daily*.

The rapid chain of events leading from the Archduke’s assassination to open hostilities in Europe left President Woodrow Wilson and the American public little time to ponder the implications of a Great War in Europe on the United States, especially within the economic sphere. However, on August 19, 1914 Woodrow Wilson publicly declared the American policy of neutrality in a speech to Congress, announcing that

> The United States must be neutral in fact as well as in name during these days that are to try men’s souls. We must be impartial in thought as well as in action, must put a curb upon our sentiments as well as upon every transaction that might be construed as a preference of one party to the struggle before another.\(^{69}\)

Wilson particularly acknowledged in his speech that “the people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war.”\(^{70}\) He was not mistaken: American culture was dominated by Anglo-Saxon Protestant influences and Anglo-Americans (no matter how far removed from original English immigrants) formed the largest ethnic group in country.\(^{71}\) On the other hand, the 1910 census recorded that 8,282,618 Americans had either been born in Germany or had one or both parents born in Germany.\(^ {72}\) When considering all citizens of German descent, estimates ranged as high as fifteen to twenty million in a total population of one

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\(^{70}\) Ibid, 492.

\(^{71}\) Luebke, 84.

hundred million. Official American neutrality initially limited the benefits the country stood to reap from wartime trade in munitions and supplies; however, it was soon recognized that America had the potential to collect huge profits as the supplier of Europe’s arsenals. Neutrality in “thought and action” as Wilson proposed quickly waned as emotions ran high in the American population and soon became official policy in name only, especially as British maritime policy and the actions of the Royal Navy to control the seas limited a neutral America’s ability to trade with both the Allies and the Central Powers.

The NGAA, and by extension The Penn-Germania, seized on the occasion of official American neutrality to present the German view of events in the face of a national press dominated by British supplied propaganda, especially after the German transatlantic cable to the United States was cut by the British east of the Azores. British propagandists were responsible for filling American newspapers with vivid descriptions of German atrocities committed against Belgian civilians, despite their dubious veracity. Frederick Luebke, author of Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I, writes that the “champions of German ethnocultural separatism” like the NGAA and associated German-American organizations were taken to be representative of the collective attitudes of all of the Germans (foreign or native born) in America, despite being truly representative of only a small fraction of the aforementioned population. As such, the NGAA and its associated organizations provided the public face of German-Americans to the greater American population. The NGAA quickly acted to support the German position in the conflict and among its first actions was organizing fundraisers for

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74 Luebke, 89.
75 Ibid, 89.
German war relief. However, as both the American press and the government appeared to be leaning toward the pro-British side in the conflict, the NGAA began to actively fight back through speeches and editorials attacking America’s profitable war trade with Great Britain and the pro-British propaganda flowing into the United States. In the Pennsylvania Dutch stronghold of York, which also boasted several prominent citizens of more recent German extraction, letters received from brothers, cousins, and friends in Germany were reprinted in the newspaper for local consumption. News from Germany was included in the *York Daily* periodically throughout 1914 and 1915. Bold headlines marked notifications received by locals that friends or relatives had fallen in service of the German Empire. A young York woman received a letter from her cousin in Germany that pleaded with her not to believe the propaganda spreading throughout the United States: “The lies the enemy tells of us are beyond description. Our dear Saviour said the truth shall make you free, and when Americans discover the truth they will open their eyes and the truth shall appear.” Because of the publication of letters from Germany in the local press, citizens in Pennsylvania Dutch country had a clearer picture of the actual situation on the ground in Europe than citizens in areas without such access. *The Penn-Germania* provided them with another source of information, albeit one that was biased in the opposite direction of mainstream American newspapers.

*The Penn-Germania*, which had suspended publication between April 1913 and August 1914 due to lack of funding, returned to the presses in time to provide comment on the burgeoning European conflict. The editors acknowledged that “from the study of the simple lives in a Pennsylvania-German community to the causes of the Great European War is a far cry and may seem to call for a word of explanation” but emphasized that “it behooves all patriotic

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76 Johnson, 99.
citizens to seek and speak the truth about the war—in particular those of German ancestry, whether near or remote, should see to it that the Facts, FACTS are set forth regarding Germany.” Kriebel automatically assumed that because of their German heritage, the Pennsylvania Dutch would support Germany’s war effort. There is no doubt that that is true for Kriebel himself, but it certainly does not hold for the entire community. Kriebel did acknowledge Wilson’s plea for neutrality by reprinting his entire speech on the topic, and he especially pointed out Wilson’s warning against taking sides. However, Kriebel decided in the interest of education to provide facts and commentary about the conflict to his readers. He personally assembled “The Epitome of German History Chronologically Arranged,” a timeline “prepared as an aid in getting one’s bearing on German history in connection with the Great European War.” He also compiled a symposium presenting a collection of articles by “prominent men in Germany, England, and America” with an aim to “set forth in general the evident fact that no one individual, group of men, or country is to be blamed exclusively for the war and in particular to present the German viewpoint of the various causes.” Presenting the “German viewpoint,” invariably led to Kriebel’s taking sides, and under his direction The Penn-Germania fell in line with the uniformly assembled German-American press that uncritically accepted the German version of the events leading up to the war and denounced the pro-Ally bias of major newspapers.

By September 1914, Howard Kriebel had decided to join the German-American press completely and to remove his association with the Pennsylvanian aspect of his heritage entirely from the title of his magazine. He proposed to organize “The National Germanic Society” as the successor to the Penn-Germania Publishing Company, in order to “advance the knowledge of

78 “The European War,” The Penn-Germania 3, no. 3 (1914), 129.
Germanic history and ideals in the United States among the American public, particularly among the descendants of German and Swiss immigrants." The added emphasis in the previous passage indicates that the new Society’s proposed publication—*The National Germanic Magazine*—would be dedicated to the education (or edification) of the Pennsylvania Dutch population in regards to their “teutonic heritage” and would not continue to provide a venue for Pennsylvania Dutch history or culture. Instead, it would provide the Pennsylvania Dutch an explanation as to their proper place in the wider history of the Germans and the Germans in America, while focusing primarily on German cultural concerns. The proposed National Germanic Society was never formed. *The Penn-Germania* ceased all publication after the November and December 1914 issue, which continued to defend Germany’s point of view, was released. A 1934 Master’s thesis from the Pennsylvania State University entitled “A History and Index of *The Pennsylvania-German Magazine*” merely notes in a footnote that *The Penn-Germania* stopped publication “several months after the beginning of the World War.”

Howard Wiegner Kriebel’s concerted efforts to persuade his primarily Pennsylvania Dutch constituents to join the German-American cultural experiment likely failed due to the community’s unfavorable view of his unabashedly pro-German sentiments, especially in light of the British victory in the propaganda wars. While *The Penn-Germania* was experiencing financial difficulties before the outbreak of the War in Europe, Howard Kriebel’s decision to throw the weight of his publication solidly behind the National German-American Alliance and subsequently the German Empire’s war effort ensured its demise. The Pennsylvania Dutch community was forced to choose how it wanted to continue defining itself; and henceforth *The Penn-Germania* was rejected. The magazine, once it had shifted its focus to chronicling the German-American experience, became

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80 Kutz, XVII.
a financial and critical failure because of rejection by its primarily Pennsylvania Dutch subscription base. Before its end The Penn-Germania no doubt contributed to the cloud of suspicion that would fall upon the Pennsylvania Dutch as the conflict in Europe reached a stalemate and American involvement became more likely.

As Howard Kriebel threw his weight behind the German war effort, so the Pennsylvania-German Society had to decide how to respond to the conflict in Europe. One month after Howard Kriebel’s announcement of his goal to found the National Germanic Society, the Pennsylvania-German Society met in Lancaster, Pennsylvania for its annual meeting. President Julius F. Sachse opened his welcoming address with a summary and reminder of the founding of the Society, twenty-four years previously. He expressly referred to the founding document of the Society because, as he stated “This documents set forth (and I especially wish to impress upon all present who are not members of our Society) that this organization is strictly a Native American organization with no entanglements with any foreign power.”\(^{81}\) Sachse, a historian from Philadelphia who wrote books on the Ephrata Cloister, German Pietists and Masonry, was taking a strongly worded stand against Howard Kriebel and The Penn-Germania, and particularly against the National German-American Alliance. Earlier in the same month that the convention was held, Louis Viereck (special correspondent for The Fatherland, a German-American newspaper loosely affiliated with the NGAA) had given a speech in front of the Prussian Diet in Berlin claiming that the NGAA was the largest German organization outside of the Fatherland and that the German government could count on it to shape opinion within the United States.\(^{82}\) Viereck’s comment was coupled with Charles Hexamer’s virulent

\(^{82}\) Johnson, 104.
denouncement of the pro-British mood in the country: “I must confess that as a native American who fervently loves this land of liberty,” he declared in a speech at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, “I am nauseated by the lick-spittle policy of our country, which allows England to pull our nose, slap our face, and then licks the hand that smites us. English ships patrol our waters, England forbids us to trade with neutral nations…England cuts the cables leading from our shores to a friendly nation…”

Historian Charles Johnson maintains that the NGAA emerged as “perhaps the leading spokesman for Germany in this country.”

In his speech to the convention of the Pennsylvania-German Society, Sachse defined the Pennsylvania Dutch as an American ethnic group and laid the groundwork for establishing a public narrative about their origins. He was both reacting to the very pro-German sentiments of the Hexamer, Viereck, and Kriebel, and attempting to strike at the heart of developing anti-German sentiment that would be unleashed against the Pennsylvania Dutch. He proclaimed:

We are not less Americans because our ancestors came from the German fatherland over 115 years ago, to these western wilds, settled here; cleared the forests, and turned the wilderness into fertile fields…who later fought for the independence of their adopted country, and were important factors in establishing the American government under the present constitution.

Sachse went on to further detail Pennsylvania Dutch contributions to the American government and emphasized the considerable work the Society had undertaken to write the “narrative and critical history of the German influence in the settlement and development of the great commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” contained in twenty-five individually published volumes (including H.W. Kriebel’s Schwenkfelders in Pennsylvania). The Pennsylvania-German

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83 Johnson, 102.
84 Ibid, 102.
86 Ibid, 20.
Society and its dedicated members and historians had devoted themselves to definitively defining Pennsylvania-Dutch contributions to the United States during the twenty-four years since their founding. Interested parties merely had to look at volumes I-XXV (particularly *The Pennsylvania-German in the Revolutionary War*) to understand their overall importance and place in American society. After his strongly-worded introduction, Sachse continued on with the business of the Society. He must have hoped that his proclamation would be the end of the matter, but anti-German sentiment was just beginning to stir within the United States. At the next year’s annual meeting, even stronger words would be necessary to defend the Pennsylvania Dutch and the Pennsylvania-German Society.

**Anti-Hyphenism and the Pennsylvania-German**

Initially, criticism of Germany in the American press did not extend to condemnation of the German-Americans who were loyally defending their culture as well as the political and military goals of Kaiser Wilhelm and the German Empire. However, the NGAA’s political lobbying for absolute American neutrality coupled with fallout from the later sinking of the *Lusitania* would cause that criticism to extend to all German-Americans. The pages of the *York Daily* reveal that argument between advocates for American neutrality and those desiring preparedness for the eventuality of intervention was beginning to occur on a local level in early 1915. Petitions circulated in the community and women’s groups organized for both sides. Despite local connections to Germany and the fact that many citizens were of German descent, pro-German sentiment in the community was not evident—at least to the reporters of the *York Daily*. Rather, Yorkers remained preoccupied with local concerns while busily aiding Belgian relief efforts (those efforts were not connected to the NGAA’s German war relief) and reaping

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87 Luebke, 117.
the rewards of Allied contracts awarded to local factories. While local Pennsylvania Dutchmen were not overly troubled by German-American political lobbying, the NGAA increasingly demanded an embargo on American export of munitions in strident terms and grew sharply critical of the Wilson Administration. A torpedo launched from a German U-boat into the passenger liner Lusitania in May 1915 caused abstract political debates about American neutrality to become real to the public, as among the nearly 1,200 dead were 128 American citizens.

The founding of the Anti-Hyphen movement, spearheaded in the wake of the sinking of the Lusitania by Theodore Roosevelt, adversely affected the Pennsylvania Dutch community. After all, in contemporary press reports the hyphen was always included in the name of their ethnic group, whether they were referred to as the Pennsylvania-Germans or the Pennsylvania-Dutch. The movement was popularized by Roosevelt’s declaration in a speech to the Knights of Columbus in 1915 that “There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is an American and nothing else.” Teddy Roosevelt had taken aim at the hyphen as early as 1894, when he declared in the pages of Forum magazine that “We welcome the German or the Irishman who becomes an American. We have no use for the German or Irishman who remains such. We do not wish German-Americans and Irish-Americans who figure as such in our social and political life; we want only Americans.”

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88 Johnson, 106-107.
utilized the hyphen, were an American ethnic group. Their use of the hyphen was not intended
to signify the dreaded division of political loyalties but only to emphasize their pride in their
heritage. By the fall of 1915 Teddy Roosevelt had further developed his ideas about hyphenated
Americans and he was leading the nationwide “Swat the Hyphen” movement, which was given
further credence by Woodrow Wilson’s pronouncement to a group of newly naturalized citizens
that “You cannot become thorough Americans if you think of yourselves in groups.”92 While the
President refrained from naming German-Americans specifically, it was widely believed that
they were the specific targets of his rhetoric (followed closely by Irish-Americans who were
fiercely anti-British).93 By December 1915, when he delivered his State of the Union address to a
joint session of Congress, Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that:

> There are citizens of the United States, I blush to admit, born under other flags but
welcomed under our generous naturalization laws to the full freedom and opportunity of
America, who have poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national
life; who have sought to bring the authority and good name of our Government into
contempt, to destroy our industries wherever they thought it effective for their vindictive
purposes to strike at them, and to debase our politics to the uses of foreign intrigue.94

Endorsed at the highest levels of government, the anti-hyphen movement incited the first
widespread anti-German feelings and served as a precursor to a more generalized anti-German
campaign. Rumors of German sabotage and intrigue started to spread throughout the country, as
evidenced by a short article in the York Daily that tried to debunk a particularly ludicrous set of
rumors: “For months the War Department had been receiving letters from all sections of the
country reporting alleged German activities such as the masking of big gun foundations in tennis
courts and building foundations. No evidence has been discovered to substantiate any of these

92 Luebke, 142-144.
93 Ibid, 142-144.
94 Woodrow Wilson, “Third Annual Message to Congress: December 7, 1915.” The American Presidency Project,
reports.\textsuperscript{95} Though lacking in physical evidence, members of the general public genuinely believed that German-Americans and German immigrants within the United States were acting, however bizarrely, to directly aid the military aims of the German empire.

Spurred by the nation’s leaders, the Anti-Hyphen movement fueled public questions over the loyalty of German-Americans to the United States, including the loyalty of the hyphenated Pennsylvania Dutch. At the Pennsylvania-German Society’s annual convention in 1915, the assembled men angrily reacted to both the anti-hyphen movement and the presumed disloyalty of the German-American community, which they were being lumped into. The rhetoric deployed at the 1915 convention to defend the Pennsylvania Dutch against the anti-hyphen movement and distance them from the rumored intrigues being perpetrated by German sympathizers was ratcheted up from the measured tones of Julius Sachse in 1914. The Honorable Harman Yerkes of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, former State Senator and lawyer, was elected as President of the Pennsylvania-German Society in 1915. In his opening address, Yerkes emphasized that the men gathered at the Convention “have associated to commemorate and perpetuate the grand work of upbuilding America which glorifies the patriotic record of the early German, Hollander, and Swiss immigrants to Pennsylvania and their descendants.” The wording of Yerkes’ introduction is telling: he highlighted the “building of America” and the glorification of the “patriotic record” of the Pennsylvania Dutch before acknowledging their German antecedents.

The Pennsylvania-German Society strongly addressed the anti-hyphen movement, an indication that members of the Pennsylvania Dutch ethnic community were beginning to feel the

weight of suspicion. Yerkes recognized the stressors occurring in the fall of 1915 when he declared with emphasis that:

> It is our duty to see that [the early immigrants] shall not be robbed by madcap terrorism and false reasoning, inspired by alien interests, calculated to impugn their intelligence and patriotism as Americans, for they have done too great a work in laying the foundations of American liberty…to tolerate from any quarter attempts to arouse suspicion that we are other than Americans first, last, and altogether.96

Despite the concerted attempts by the Pennsylvania-German Society beginning at its inception in 1891 to define their community as an American ethnic group, their patriotism was being doubted as much as that of the wider German-American community, merely because of the inclusion of “-Germans” in their chosen descriptor. The 1890s efforts to ally the Pennsylvania-German Society and the Pennsylvania Dutch with a well-liked immigrant group backfired. What had been a decision made in order to distinguish the Pennsylvania Dutch community turned out to have spectacularly negative consequences as the German empire took the brunt of the blame for fueling world-wide conflict.

Yerkes justified the Pennsylvania-German Society’s use of the punctuation mark to define itself because they placed “Pennsylvania” first, prioritizing their American heritage while still acknowledging their German ancestry. “Even in the use of the hyphen” he propounded “the founders of the organization placed to the front its patriotic adherence to the country and its government which their forefathers were among the first to upbuild upon the principles of liberty and independence.” Society member Benjamin Mathias Nead offered clarification on the acknowledgement of their German heritage: “the hyphen in [the Society’s] name is a descriptive badge of honor and distinction, signifying the pride we justly have in the blood and manhood of

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our ancestors.”97 The founders of the Pennsylvania-German Society did not; Yerkes maintained “imitate the bad taste of those who subordinate their first attachment, owing to the country and government of their own making and adoption, by calling themselves ‘Irish-Americans,’ ‘German-Americans,’ ‘Spanish-Americans’ and the like.” Instead, the founders chose to declare themselves “‘Pennsylvania-Germans’ –and to be a Pennsylvanian denotes the best type of American citizenship.”98 Nead wrote that “the name of our society is hyphenated, but by no forced construction can it be confounded with other hyphenated classes of American citizens, or made to appear as a sign of divided allegiance to government.”99 Yerkes went on to conclude his speech by proving Pennsylvania Dutch loyalty—as had become the custom—through the Revolutionary War history of their ancestors. “If the test shall come,” Yerkes promised in the event of war “their sons and daughters will rally round the old flag made glorious and venerated by their fathers.”100 The Pennsylvania-German Society’s parsing of the name of their ethnic group in this manner was unconvincing to outside critics, but it demonstrates the absolute distance the members of the Pennsylvania-German Society felt from the German-American community in 1915. The community had wisely chosen to reject Howard Kriebel’s vision, confirming in the defense of their name that the Pennsylvania Dutch were Americans first, Pennsylvanians who took pride in their heritage—a heritage that just happened to be German instead of the typical English Anglo-Saxon of the majority of Americans.

97 The Pennsylvania-German Society, Proceedings at Reading, October 15, 1915, 8.
98 Ibid, 10.
99 Ibid, 32.
100 Ibid, 10.
“I am a Pennsylvania German and Proud of It”: Martin Grove Brumbaugh, Pennsylvania’s World War I Governor

During the course of the Pennsylvania-German Society’s 1915 annual meeting, President Harman Yerkes called on Pennsylvania’s sitting Governor to address some of the Society’s concerns regarding Pennsylvania politics. Yerkes thought that perhaps the Governor would pay attention to his admonishments about the size of Pennsylvania’s central government, as Governor Martin Grove Brumbaugh was “a typical Pennsylvania-German governor.”

M.G. Brumbaugh, as he was known, had in fact campaigned for the office of Governor as a Pennsylvania-German. A large newspaper headline published in the Philadelphia Ledger in March 1914 decreed “Distinguished Teacher, Preacher, and Author, This Stalwart Scion of the Pennsylvania-Germans is an important entry for the Republican Nomination for Governor.”

The following article noted that Brumbaugh would be “another in the long line of [Pennsylvania] Governors drawn from that important element in our population which found its way hither from Germany in the eighteenth century.” As the Ledger article recounted in detail, Brumbaugh was in fact the direct descendant of an immigrant who arrived in Pennsylvania in 1754.

Raised in Huntingdon County and educated at the Brethren Normal School (later Juniata College), Harvard, and the University of Pennsylvania, M.G. Brumbaugh was a staunch member of the Brethren Church.

103 Ibid
105 Colloquially referred to as Dunkers or Dunkards due to their practice of immersing adults for baptism during this time, the Brethren follow a pacifistic, sectarian faith that traditionally held itself apart from politics.
inaugurated as the 28th Governor of Pennsylvania in January 1915, months before the *Lusitania* crisis would precipitate the first wide wave of anti-German sentiment.

Nearly a year after he first took office, M.G. Brumbaugh seized the opportunity of a national interview to defend the Pennsylvania Dutch against the Anti-Hyphen movement in the national press. In December 1915, Brumbaugh sat down with an interviewer for *The Outlook* magazine, which was publishing an issue entirely dedicated to the subject of “Progress and Reaction in Pennsylvania.” The wide-ranging interview was devoted mostly to Pennsylvania politics, but it also traced M.G. Brumbaugh’s unorthodox path to the Governorship—he was, as the magazine pointed out “the first man of his faith ever to be elected a Governor of any state in the Union.” At the conclusion of the interview, when his questioner broached the topic of his unique religious beliefs, Brumbaugh also addressed his ethnicity. “With great emphasis,” the interviewer noted, M.G. Brumbaugh declared that “I came to America in 1754. I am a Pennsylvania German and proud of it.”

The hyphen is missing in the original text; an early example of one of the group’s simplest defensive maneuvers: dropping the hyphen. Brumbaugh made his declaration in a national magazine—*The Outlook* was advertised as “an illustrated weekly journal of current events”—and further elaborated upon his statement for his national audience. “But put the emphasis on Pennsylvania,” Brumbaugh instructed his interviewer, “we are the people who, along with the Quakers and the Scotch-Irish, developed this commonwealth. We are not hyphenated Americans.” The Governor went further, insisting that “There is only one nation for the people that live here. If we are not Americans, we are nothing. That is all there

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107 Ibid
Brumbaugh’s declaration about Pennsylvania Dutch loyalty—and his own—likely reached a much larger audience than the speeches of Julius Sachse and Harman Yerkes to the Pennsylvania-German Society. However, Brumbaugh’s explanation would prove no match for the swirling rumors of German intrigues, sabotage, and espionage that infected the general American population. Suspicions would be applied to the Pennsylvania Dutch merely because “-Germans” was attached to how they defined themselves, in addition to their German dialect and cultural traditions. Frederick Luebke describes anti-Germanism at the end of 1915 as a “vague, generalized feeling…more insidious because it lacked specificity.” The frustration felt by Pennsylvania Dutch intellectuals as they tried to prove their American heritage over and over again is reflected in their speeches and public statements; Brumbaugh’s clipped “That is all there is to it” pronouncement to his Outlook interviewer is but one example. The fight to publicize the American heritage of the Pennsylvania Dutch would eventually make its way to the pages of one of the United States’ most prominent newspapers: the New York Times.


The most comprehensive public statement on Pennsylvania Dutch loyalty issued by any of their intellectual leaders during the period of American neutrality was delivered by Henry Harbaugh Apple in New York City. Apple, named after famous dialect poet Henry Harbaugh, was the President of Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He delivered the keynote address to an Alumni Association dinner on the topic of the loyalty of the German settlers in America. Quoted at length on page four of the February 27, 1916 edition of the New York Times, the former pastor of York City’s Trinity Reformed Church offered a spirited

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108 Cooper, “Progress and Reaction in Pennsylvania.”
109 Luebke, 150.
110 It is unclear exactly what institution the attendants at this dinner were alumni of.
historical defense of the Pennsylvania Dutch ethnic group that was reprinted in its entirety in the pages of the *York Daily* and other newspapers across the country. The article, entitled “German Settlers Loyal to America,” highlighted Apple’s main point: he impressed upon his audience that “there could be no question as to the loyalty to this country of the descendants of the pre-Revolutionary German settlers.”111

Henry Harbaugh Apple’s detailed speech in New York City reached a national audience, much like M.G. Brumbaugh’s shorter explanation in the pages of *The Outlook* magazine. Apple opened his speech with a customary exhortation of the contributions of the Pennsylvania-Germans to the struggle for independence, followed by the explanation “Although they came from Germany, they were truly Americans as any of the English speaking people. They have never claimed any other nationality.”112 Harbaugh’s argument (and even his particular phrasing) is nearly identical to that of George F. Baer’s introductory speech to the Pennsylvania-German society in 1891, when he defined the Society as a strictly American organization at its founding. Apple elaborated that “They have never known any other loyalty and they have labored for the welfare of this government unceasingly in peace and war.” Recounting Pennsylvania Dutch history in greater detail than other statements by their intellectual leaders, Apple shared the story of the York Rifles, the first militia group from outside Massachusetts to arrive at Cambridge following the battle of Lexington and Concord in 1775. He remarked of Pennsylvania Dutch Revolutionary War soldiers that “Just as they were misunderstood by the English they were underestimated by them, and experience showed that ‘if they could not talk English they could shoot English,’ and they readily flew to arms when danger demanded the courageous devotion to

the cause of liberty.” Apple continued his recounting of the valor of Pennsylvania soldiers by telling of their service in the Civil War, claiming that “nearly one hundred years later the first force to reach Lincoln at Washington in 1861 was a regiment composed of five companies from Pennsylvania…almost entirely composed of descendants of the German patriots of Revolutionary days,” proving that the patriotism of the Pennsylvania Dutch expanded beyond their revolutionary activities.  

On a national stage, Apple was the first to address any existing Pennsylvania-German connections to the German people, as well as to put forth the argument distancing Pennsylvania-Germans from Prussianism. Apple says that the Pennsylvania Dutch felt:

natural sympathy for their own kin, and the ties that bind them to the people of Germany are those of pity for their dangers and sympathy in their struggles, but they have…decided opposition to those who advocate the military spirit and to the rulers of the German government who have plunged them into war.

The Pennsylvania Dutch community’s obvious cultural and linguistic ties to Germany did not extend, as Apple clarified, to support of the German Empire and Kaiser Wilhelm. Apple further states that “these descendants, who came originally from Southern Germany, always had antipathy to Prussia,” in an iteration of an argument that was also posed by other German-Americans. The Pennsylvania Dutch, descended from original settlers that emigrated from the Palatinate in Southern Germany, arrived in the United States before the formation of the German Empire in 1871. Forty-Eighters and other German-Americans that immigrated to the United States before 1871 offered the same defense, believing that they should not be tarred with the same brush as the citizens of the militaristic German Empire that was dominated by the

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114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
Prussians. Gustavus Ohlinger, who would lead the national fight to shut down the NGAA, wrote in his 1916 book *Their True Faith and Allegiance* that “two kinds of Germans inhabit our shores…the first kind began to come here two hundred and thirty years ago and continued coming…these desirable citizens were not Prussians but South Germans—as different from Prussians (except in speech) as we are.”\(^{116}\) While the true purpose of Ohlinger’s book was to attack the NGAA and its activities (he argued that they were part of the “teutonic battle line against Anglo-Saxon leadership”), even he was able to understand that the Pennsylvania Dutch differed greatly from the Germans currently under suspicion.\(^{117}\) However, it was the general population that needed to be persuaded. Apple concluded his speech with the pronouncement that the Pennsylvania Dutch “stand ready to answer a summons to service and to sacrifice property or life on the Altar of the American Republic.”\(^ {118}\)

Despite proving their American heritage in the pages of national publications, the Pennsylvania Dutch were still undoubtedly experiencing prejudice because of their German ancestors. The Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania-German Society, reacting to that prejudice, deemed it prudent in 1916 to suspend holding annual meetings “while all Europe was convulsed and drenched with tears and blood.”\(^ {119}\) The Executive Committee continued to meet, but the large gatherings of men drawn from throughout Pennsylvania Dutch country ceased to be held. However, the Society continued to publish its volumes of Pennsylvania Dutch history. In order to prove their loyalty visually as well as rhetorically, when volume XXVI of the *Proceedings and Addresses of the Pennsylvania-German Society* was published in 1918, the


\(^{117}\) Johnson, 121.


frontispiece of the volume was adorned with a picture of a waving American flag, captioned with the words “Our Flag.” The title page displayed both the American flag and the flag of Pennsylvania, colored in red and blue ink in contrast to the staid, un-illustrated black and white printing of the previous years. A general meeting of the Society was not reconvened again until 1920, at which point in hindsight the President, Reverend Paul de Schweinitz, confided

Sometimes it has seemed to me, that perhaps after all it would have been a good thing if we had met during the war years for the very purpose of being afforded an opportunity to voice in actual publicly spoken word the unquestioned loyalty to the United States and to democratic government of these descendants of the early German settlers of Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{120}

While the Pennsylvania-German Society failed to publicly proclaim the heritage of the German settlers after 1916, local leaders like York City’s Mayor E.S. Hugentugler would take up the fight to prove that the Pennsylvania Dutch had been wholly American for six generations and more.

**Proving their Loyalty: the Wartime Responses of the Pennsylvania Dutch**

The Pennsylvania Dutch would answer the “summons to service” for the American republic after Wilson was forced to ask Congress for a Declaration of War, even as American intervention prompted an even greater wave of anti-German hostility to sweep the nation. Declaring that “The world must be made safe for democracy,” Woodrow Wilson exhorted a special joint session of Congress to declare war on the Imperial Government of Germany on April 2, 1917. He recognized that it was “a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance.” Wilson did acknowledge “the millions of men and women of German birth and native

sympathy” living in the United States, and used the opportunity of his speech to make the official
government position regarding German-Americans, whom the public were beginning to regard
as an enemy column within their society, clear:

They are, most of them, as true and loyal Americans as if they had never known any
other fealty or allegiance. They will be prompt to stand with us in rebuking and
restraining the few who may be of a different mind and purpose. If there should be
disloyalty, it will be dealt with a firm hand of stern repression; but, if it lifts its head at
all, it will lift it only here and there and without countenance except from a lawless and
malignant few.\textsuperscript{121}

Luebke notes specifically that Wilson failed to define exactly what he meant by disloyalty,
opening the issue to public interpretation. He maintains that Wilson’s sweeping rhetoric made
the category of disloyal so broad that anyone expressing any type of dissent from official opinion
could be swept into it.\textsuperscript{122} Two days before Wilson made his request for a Declaration of War to
Congress, the citizens of York, Pennsylvania participated in a parade in support of the President.
The headline in the \textit{York Daily} published the day of Wilson’s speech declared “Parading York
Throng Proves City’s Loyalty.” The article announced that “true to its historic traditions,
although the population is largely of German descent, the city of York and vicinity…gave a
magnificent and impressive demonstration of its devotion to the flag of the country.”\textsuperscript{123} Five
thousand men marched down the city streets in a celebration that also included marching bands.
Mayor E.S. Hugentugler and other city leaders learned from the example of their intellectual
leaders that it was necessary to prove the loyalty of the town’s Pennsylvania Dutch citizens. As a
result, they proclaimed their devotion to the United States loudly and often, and the
 correspondents of the \textit{York Daily} took up their mission in newsprint. At the same time that

\textsuperscript{121} Woodrow Wilson, “War Message,” 1916-1928: World War and Prosperity in vol. 14 of \textit{The Annals of America}
\textsuperscript{122} Luebke, 209.
York’s citizens were loudly asserting their utmost loyalty, acknowledgments were also made that America’s war against Germany placed some citizens of the community in a difficult situation. Pastor Henry Walker, leader of one of York’s German Lutheran Congregations, recognized in a speech before a Red Cross organizational meeting that the majority of his parishioners were either born in Germany or of German parentage, and that it would be “only natural to suspect them of being in sympathy with the Fatherland.” Instead, he urged his audience to remember that his parishioners had severed their ties to Germany and that they stood by their “country, America, and the stars and stripes.” A *York Daily* article on April 7th acknowledged that “Possibly no other foreign nation with which America could go to war could array so many kin of Yorkers, near or distant, on the other side, as the German element has been predominant in York County since its settlement.” On a local level, the Pennsylvania Dutch took steps to overtly advertise their American patriotism in spite of their German ancestry through parades, the signing of loyalty pledges, and the joining of patriotic and relief societies.

The existence of a story regarding a telegram sent by Provost General Crowder to Governor Brumbaugh adds credence to the fact that generalized and growing anti-German sentiment was being directed against the Pennsylvania Dutch. As mobilization for the war got underway, more concrete support would be expected of the Pennsylvania Dutch than loyalty parades. As America’s new allies desperately needed men as much as they needed supplies, Pennsylvania Dutchmen would be expected to help fill the ranks of the new American army. Wilson quickly decided that conscription would be the best strategy to use to form an American army quickly, and legislation was put into place empowering local Selective Service boards to

125 Ibid
run the draft. Ultimately, the governors of individual states would be responsible for coordinating the draft under the direction of United States Provost Marshal, General Enoch Crowder. In Pennsylvania, Governor M.G. Brumbaugh was placed in a delicate position. Brumbaugh was raised as a member of the Church of the Brethren and in fact served as a minister within the Church. Brumbaugh’s faith required pacifism; yet as Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Brumbaugh was the Commander-in-Chief of the Pennsylvania National Guard. Not only was the Governor a pacifist who genuinely deplored war, he was also a self-proclaimed “Pennsylvania-German.” Brumbaugh proved a conundrum for outsiders at a time when even bearing a German surname was enough to cause suspicion.

Despite his unique moral dilemma, M.G. Brumbaugh dedicated himself to the war effort. He organized a statewide Committee of Public Safety to coordinate Pennsylvania’s war-work initiatives and began instituting the Selective Service Act by creating the bureaucratic machinery needed to register the state’s male citizens. Regardless of Brumbaugh’s actions to support the war effort in the opening phase of American involvement, as a Pennsylvania Dutchman Brumbaugh was still regarded with uncertainty. Every historical account in existence of the Pennsylvania Dutch experience during World War I mentions a rumor about the Crowder telegram. First appearing in the 1942 compendium *The Pennsylvania Germans*, the story is reported again with great indignation in Fredric Klees’s 1950 book *The Pennsylvania Dutch*. Klees writes that “one of the most absurd incidents in the history of the Pennsylvania Dutch occurred in 1917 when Provost General Crowder asked Governor Brumbaugh if he thought it would be necessary to send federal troops to Pennsylvania to keep the Pennsylvania Dutch in

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127 Zieger, 59. 
128 Kaylor, 94. 
129 Ibid, 317.
order.”\textsuperscript{130} Homer Tope Rosenberger tries to trace the story to its source; prior to 1966 he tracked the rumor to the former Archivist of Pennsylvania, in whom Brumbaugh apparently confided.\textsuperscript{131} Rosenberger cast doubt on the veracity of the telegram, yet the story is repeated in William Parsons’ 1976 book \textit{The Pennsylvania Dutch: A Persistent Minority}, in which he writes that “reports persisted” that Crowder asked if federal troops were necessary to “suppress the Pennsylvania Germans.”\textsuperscript{132} A careful examination of M.G. Brumbaugh’s papers held at Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA and in the Pennsylvania State Archives at Harrisburg did not produce a telegram containing the sentiments in question. However, Brumbaugh did compose an unusually strongly worded telegram to the Provost Marshal General on June 4, 1917:

“Confirming my former telegram indications here point to a complete and peaceable registration throughout Pennsylvania. No troops necessary. We are abundantly able to handle the entire situation.”\textsuperscript{133} Brumbaugh was not wrong: According to the \textit{York Daily}, registration was both peaceful and successful. The actions of M.G. Brumbaugh—who was arguably the most prominent Pennsylvania Dutchman at the time—to marshal Pennsylvania’s resources and dedicate them to the war effort should have proved beyond a shadow of a doubt his absolute loyalty, as well as that of the ethnic group he represented. However, suspicions remained as the nation geared up for war.

Superpatriotism erupted across the United States as the country entered its first World War. Across America, overzealous citizens primed by months of anti-German propaganda started to take their frustrations out on symbols of German culture, including the German

\textsuperscript{131} Rosenberger, 135.
\textsuperscript{132} Parsons, 235.
\textsuperscript{133} M.G. Brumbaugh to Provost Marshal General, June 4, 1917, Martin G. Brumbaugh Papers, MG-348 Box 1, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg.
language, music, and even German foods. Historian Paul Finkelman explains the war on German culture by quoting a wartime author: “There is a slogan in this war that says, ‘if you can’t fight over there, fight over here.’”\textsuperscript{134} The fight in the homeland was against German-Americans who maintained linguistic and cultural ties to Germany. In a precursor to the freedom fries of the 2000s, sauerkraut was renamed “liberty cabbage” and knockwurst “liberty bologna.”\textsuperscript{135} German was dropped from school curriculums, even in areas like York and Lancaster, Pennsylvania who were home to large proportions of people who still spoke the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect at home. Fears of spies, saboteurs, and disloyals filled the streets. The \textit{York Daily} exhorted its readers to “Watch Alleged Disloyal Yorkers” in an article that opened with somewhat hysterical bent:

That at least one man occupying a prominent position in this community engaged in questionable correspondence with the German Ambassador, Count Bernstorff, that a score or more have been interviewed or admonished by agents of the Department of Justice, and that a hundred or more names are listed as “suspects” are alleged facts learned recently by the Daily.\textsuperscript{136}

The reports compiled by the nascent Department of Justice during World War I have been released as the Old German Files by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and are available at the National Archives. They indicate that individuals within York County were investigated during the course of the war, but contain no signs of the “hundreds” of suspects reported by the \textit{York Daily}. The pages of the \textit{York Daily} and the reports of the Department of Justice indicate that Pennsylvania Dutch country experienced its own paroxysms of hysteria, like the rest of the nation.

\textsuperscript{135} Parsons, 231.
One case within the files is particularly illustrative of the dangers Pennsylvania Dutch citizens experienced while expressing their own cultural attributes in the dialect. Harry J. Smith, ironically the manager of the State Employment Bureau in Allentown, Pennsylvania, was reported to the Department of Justice for German activities in 1918. Smith’s crime was in singing a traditional “Penna. German” song, as the report states. Smith was joined by a friend in singing “Du, du Liebst mir im Herzen,” in the restaurant of a well-regarded Philadelphia hotel. They were reproached by other diners and offered an explanation, described at length by the agent conducting an investigation of Smith:

Mr. Smith, to assure the stranger that there was no intent on the part of anyone to be disloyal or engage in any glorification of the Kaiser or his Government, handed his card to the gentleman, with the idea that the gentleman would understand that he being in government service would not engage in anything that would be regarded as un-American. Clearly, Smith’s explanation that the song was traditional among the Pennsylvania Dutch and in no way derogatory in nature was not accepted. The stranger reported Smith to the Federal Authorities, and an investigation was launched. The case was closed on the basis of Smith’s providing the agent with proof of his father’s service in the Civil War and his personal holding of $800 worth of Liberty bonds. Smith—a government employee—was required to prove his American heritage in a bid to clear his name. The investigating agent summarized the warning he gave Mr. Smith in the case report:

I cautioned Mr. Smith against engaging in singing any songs of a German character as at these times people who are not familiar with the language are apt to misconstrue their meaning… [Mr. Smith] stated that he certainly would not indulge in any German songs

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in the future, as he had no desire to in any way be the object of suspicion with regard to
to his loyalty to his country. 138

Speaking—and singing—in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect was perceived by outsiders as an
indicator of support for the German Kaiser. As a result, the use of the language itself virtually
ceased among the non-sectarian Pennsylvania Dutch as a result of the war. While the use of the
dialect had already been declining, World War I hysteria resulted in the abrupt end of the public
use of the dialect and the diminishing passage of the language to the next generation. William
Parsons writes that “thousands of young parents who had heard no language but Pennsylvania
Dutch in their own childhood, forbade their children to learn the dialect, and punished them
when they did.” 139

Throughout the war, Pennsylvania Dutch citizens in York County continued to heed the
lesson they had learned from their intellectual leaders in the neutrality period: they
conspicuously demonstrated their loyalty by participating in parades and demonstrations, while
newspaper articles published in the *York Daily* continually recounted the service the
Pennsylvania Dutch had rendered to the nation during the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.
York County contributed many of its sons to the Twenty-Eighth Division, which was formed
from units of the Pennsylvania National Guard and participated in heavy combat on the Western
front. While demonstrating wholesale support for America and the war effort, expressions of
their Pennsylvania Dutch culture were suppressed because of its ties to Germany. The German
ethnicity of the Pennsylvania Dutch became secondary to the community’s American identity.
The Pennsylvania Dutch were forced to prove their loyalty over and over again during the era of
World War I. Ultimately, they were successful in proving their American heritage, at the price of

138 E.J. Nagele, “Harry J. Smith (German Activities),” Case No. 8000-53877, Old German Files, Federal Bureau of
139 Parsons, 237.
their freedom of cultural expression. The real success of the Pennsylvania Dutch at convincing the public of their American heritage was revealed during World War II, when the nation was again at war with Germany. The founder of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society noted in 1942 that despite the fact that most things “Germanic in origin” were avoided by many persons due to the war…“the interest in Pennsylvania German lore suffered no diminution during these trying days.”¹⁴⁰ Today, Pennsylvania-German and Pennsylvania-Dutch are no longer hyphenated. “Pennsylvania German” remains attached to mainly academic organizations, like the still operating Pennsylvania German Society and the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center at Kutztown University in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. However, the vast majority of individuals who identify as members of the ethnic group today describe themselves as Pennsylvania Dutch, so much so that over 255,000 individuals in Pennsylvania wrote exactly that—Dutch—on the 2000 Census’s fill-in-the-blank questionnaire that asked for respondents’ ancestry.¹⁴¹ The events of World War I led the Pennsylvania Dutch to define themselves as a wholly American ethnic group, completely separate from the German-American community. For the average citizen of German descent in Pennsylvania, that meant referring to himself as Dutch. To the intellectual leaders of the community, it meant dropping the hyphen.

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