

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: CURRENT TRENDS OF DIALECT  
PRESERVATION THROUGH MUSICAL  
PERFORMANCE IN THE PENNSYLVANIA  
GERMAN COMMUNITY OF  
SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

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The purpose of this thesis is to examine who the Pennsylvania Dutch people are in light of American immigration history, interviews with Pennsylvania Dutch community leaders and scholars, performance observations, and printed text resources in order to evaluate how members of the Pennsylvania German community are actively promoting and preserving the Pennsylvania German dialect through the medium of performance. There is a general consensus among people familiar with the Pennsylvania Dutch culture that the Pennsylvania Dutch language is disappearing. Within the past 100 years cultural centers and educational institutions have been established to encourage and support preservation of the Pennsylvania Dutch language in Southeastern Pennsylvania. This study explores how and why musical performances within the community are fueled by a revivalist mentality to preserve the Pennsylvania Dutch language.

CURRENT TRENDS OF DIALECT PRESERVATION THROUGH MUSICAL  
PERFORMANCE IN THE PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN COMMUNITY  
OF SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

By

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## Preface

When I was a young girl, my sister and I would visit my paternal grandparents at their house, which was more lovingly termed “the cottage.” It was a place for large family get-togethers for holiday celebrations and weekend visits with my father who now lives near Philadelphia. I have vivid memories of my grandmother asking my grandfather to play guitar and sing some songs in Dutch.<sup>1</sup> Most of the time he grumbled and said that he did not remember many songs, or that he was too old and his fingers were too soft to play for very long. But sometimes her persuading would win him over and Grampa<sup>2</sup> would send us into his bedroom to get the guitar out from under his bed. We would dust it off and carry it with excited caution to Grampa, sitting in his chair. He would turn the TV off and send my sister or me back to the bedroom to help Grama get the music for him. We would come running out, carefully holding the old plastic bag full of sheet music and assorted books. The tattered corners of music sheets stuck out of the bag, yellowed with age and smelling of damp dust. He would rest the guitar on his right leg, pull the pick out from its resting place between the top strings nearest the headstock, and tune it up using the pitch pipe.

As Grampa was tuning the guitar, my sister and I would leaf through the pile of music. We would call out titles as we read through them. When we would come across a favorite familiar tune we would put the music in front of him and he would play and sing the song. “Red River Valley” and “You Are My Sunshine” were a

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<sup>1</sup> When I use the term “Dutch” in this thesis, I am referring to “Pennsylvania Dutch,” not the language spoken in the Netherlands.

<sup>2</sup> I often referred to my grandfather as “Grampa” and my grandmother as “Grama.” These are the terms I will use to refer to them in this text.

couple of the regular requests. Grama would then ask Grampa to “sing in Dutch” with us kids. The only song I can remember him singing for us in Dutch was “She’ll Be Comin’ Round the Mountain.” I remember dancing with wild abandon as kids do in joyful, somewhat silly moods, occasionally chiming in on the choruses “*Von ce Kumma*”— when she comes. That is all I could remember how to pronounce. We made a cassette tape recording of our performance of *Von ce Kumma Rum da Barrick* (“She’ll Be Comin’ ‘Round the Mountain”). My Grama was so proud of this tape that she played it for every visitor who came to the cottage to see them. It didn’t matter whether or not they had heard it before; they were about to hear it again. She was proud of our performance and Grampa singing in Dutch.

I was hooked. The more he played the more I wanted to hear. I tried to convince my grandparents to teach me how to speak Dutch, but I was only successful in learning two phrases and a couple words. Grama said Grampa couldn’t teach me his Dutch because the only words he remembered were the ones he would say to the mules, and they were not very nice. Grama claimed to have forgotten most of her Dutch. Even though my grandparents were not able to help me learn much of the Dutch language, I had the opportunity to live the culture at their cottage. They had planted the seed of intrigue.

What does it mean to be Pennsylvania Dutch? As a member of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture, I will offer some personal insight. Being Pennsylvania Dutch is to “outen the light” and eat breakfast, dinner, and supper; there is no lunch. It is a life of farming and hunting wild game. It is eating homemade bacon dressing over dandelion greens, pot pie, shoofly pie, stuffed pig stomach, pickled eggs, and

*Fastnacht*.<sup>3</sup> It is the Easter bunny and *Belsnickel*.<sup>4</sup> It is quilting, crocheting, tatting, and hex signs painted on barns. It is being able to laugh at simple things in life. It is singing simple folk songs with acoustic guitar for family get-togethers. And most importantly it is the linguistic connection which maintains the strongest tie to cultural identity as a member of the Pennsylvania Dutch community. It is the accent non-Dutch people notice when fluent Dutch speakers speak English that makes being Pennsylvania Dutch more obvious. This “Dutch-ness” is also evident in nonstandard English sentence structures as noted in phrases like “throw the horse over the fence some hay now.” All of these characteristics in combination help identify this culture. The least explored of these topics, however, include music and performance.

In November, 2004, I attended a performance of Pennsylvania Dutch songs and skits. I did not understand most of what was said at the performance, but I understood what was happening through sporadic English words and humor relayed through body language on stage. It was there, hearing the echoes of my grandfather’s laugh, looking out at the audience of grey-haired people that I was inspired to do something to document part of this wonderful culture. I wondered why the performers were so interested in presenting these songs and skits even though some of them did not even speak Dutch and had only learned how to say their individual parts for the performance. What else was the community doing to actively preserve the ways and traditions of the Pennsylvania Dutch? All those questions led me to this project.

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<sup>3</sup> *Fastnacht* “are deep-fried cakes made of sweetened batter and further sweetened, when eaten, with powdered sugar, honey, or syrup, and can be circular, rectangular, or diamond shaped. *Fastnacht* are baked, shared, and eaten on Shrove Tuesday, the Tuesday before Lent” (Yoder 2000, 107).

<sup>4</sup> German-speaking immigrants are credited with bringing the tradition of the Easter Bunny to North America from Europe (Yoder 2000, 109-110).

I have warm memories of those days at the cottage with Grama and Grampa. Whether it was picking potatoes, singing songs, bagging corn off the cob, drinking water from the spring, playing games in the yard, picnicking by the creek, or doing arts and crafts with Grama, I am grateful for the experience.

## Dedication

I dedicate this thesis project to the memory of my grandparents, Ervin and Elva Rupert, for the inspiration and guidance they have given me. I would like to thank my family and friends for their infinite patience and support, my interviewees for their willing participation, as well as my husband John for his comic relief. To everyone else, including Barbara and Roger Hoffman, your contributions of information, time, and personal experience made this project possible. *Gros Dank* (thank you very much).



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

My goal in this thesis is to examine how the Pennsylvania Dutch community is preserving the Pennsylvania Dutch language through the use of public performance, particularly music performance. I will examine the use of written sources, public gatherings, and performance in the Pennsylvania Dutch community to understand the role of public performance in current linguistic preservation efforts. I will argue that a revival movement exists within the Pennsylvania Dutch community by analyzing performance content and purpose in light of Tamara E. Livingston's work on music revivals. I will also evaluate the possible origins of the linguistic preservation movement and the revival.

### **Chapter Outline**

Chapter One provides background information on the present study, including its participants, performance observations, literature reviewed, and research questions posed.

Chapter Two defines who the Pennsylvania Dutch people are by describing their immigration, and discussing their cultural identity as established through language.

Chapter Three discusses institutions and organizations which support the preservation of the Pennsylvania Dutch language, including the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University, Groundhog Lodges, and the church.

Chapter Four analyzes observations of public performances and how these performances are aiding the preservation of the dialect.

Chapter Five presents the argument that the Pennsylvania Dutch culture, including language and music, is undergoing a revival within the Pennsylvania Dutch communities of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

## **Background**

I conducted this ethnographic research from November of 2006 through July of 2007 in Southeastern Pennsylvania, focusing primarily in Lehigh and Berks Counties. I collected printed resources from the library at the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center (hereafter PGCHC) in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. I purchased additional literature from the PGCHC book store and gift shop as well as from online bookstores. The PGCHC was a good resource for information as the library and presentations are public.

I observed two dialect church services, one in Fogelsville and the other in New Tripoli. Both services were advertised in the newspaper. I conducted three interviews with notable people active in different areas of interest (Keith Brintzenhoff—performer / educator, Darlene Moyer—community cultural center leader, and Dr. Don Yoder-folklife scholar) within the Pennsylvania Dutch community. I contacted Brintzenhoff through email and met Moyer in the PGCHC gift shop December 2, 2006, after “Christmas on the Farm.” After my interview with Moyer, I asked if Dr. Yoder might be interested in being interviewed. Moyer contacted Dr. Yoder and asked his permission. Dr. Yoder asked about the nature of my project and then granted permission to interview him. I observed a variety of musical and non-musical dialect performances held at the PGCHC as well as one church-sponsored performance of Pennsylvania Dutch music. The PGCHC performances were advertised in the PGCHC pamphlet of upcoming events. I was

invited to attend the church-sponsored performance during my interview with Brintzenhoff.

The majority of the historical information I collected came from several journals and newsletters of the Pennsylvania Dutch community located in the PGCHC library. Published journals ranged from the late 1990s to present. I obtained copies of any journal entry that contained a topic related to or containing information on performance of any kind that included the Pennsylvania Dutch language. In addition, I collected musical and non-musical selections. I also collected newspaper clippings from the Lehigh Valley area which featured articles on Pennsylvania Dutch culture and community activities. I purchased several books which were related to Pennsylvania Dutch culture online and a collection of out-of-print material from the PGCHC gift shop including the last available copy of a now out-of-print Pennsylvania Dutch / English Dictionary.

## **Participants**

I chose to interview three people from different areas of influence within the Pennsylvania Dutch community so that I could evaluate the linguistic preservation and revival efforts from several vantage points. I chose a musician, a scholarly historian, and a cultural center administrator in order to provide three perspectives on Pennsylvania Dutch community dialect and musical performances.

The first interview was with Keith Brintzenhoff, a performer of Pennsylvania Dutch music, stories, and history. I found Brintzenhoff through a search on the internet for Pennsylvania Dutch performers. Brintzenhoff, a certified teacher in elementary education and secondary social studies, stresses the educational aspect of his

performances. Brintzenhoff's website "Toad Creek Music" describes his Pennsylvania Dutch Music and Folklore program as "from mostly educational to mostly entertaining" (2007). Brintzenhoff also designs programs tailored to the intended audience, whether it be pre-kindergarten or more mature audiences. Brintzenhoff, who was very receptive to the request for an interview, quickly responded to my email and invited me to come to his home in Kutztown, Pennsylvania to conduct the interview. I had the opportunity to meet his family, conduct the interview, and observe Brintzenhoff perform twice in the Pennsylvania Dutch community.

Brintzenhoff performs regularly for the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and travels all over the state for people who want him to talk about Pennsylvania Dutch music, instruments, and dance. He also performs for smaller independent groups such as churches and schools. Performance groups vary from solo performances to the use of his entire band, depending on the needs and financial resources of the people or organizations who hire his services.

Brintzenhoff also performs with his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Brintzenhoff have recorded two cassette tapes (one of Pennsylvania Dutch songs and the other of Bluegrass music), both of which they market to the public. Mr. and Mrs. Brintzenhoff, both Pennsylvania Dutch, used to perform Pennsylvania Dutch public events together on a regular basis. Brintzenhoff claims his wife does not want to perform with him as much anymore because "she can't stand my jokes" (2006). Mrs. Brintzenhoff light-heartedly claims that his ego has gotten too big for her to deal with, but then attests to having a "real job," which keeps her from performing as often. Either way, Brintzenhoff "performs a lot, sometimes by himself, sometimes with his wife, or a fiddle or banjo



player, and sometimes with his band, The Toad Creek Ramblers” (Brintzenhoff 2007). Brintzenhoff was an integral part of my research, since he has been a multi-dimensional performer in the community for many years. His cooperation allowed me an insider's view of the community, beyond advertised public performances, over a long period of time.

Mrs. Darlene Moyer, assistant director of the PGCHC, my second interviewee, has worked at the PGCHC for 11 years. She began her service as a volunteer and is now a paid staff member. Mrs. Moyer is one of the key people responsible for building the programs, visibility, and community partnerships of the PGCHC. I met Mrs. Moyer when I attended the “Christmas on the Farm” at the PGCHC to observe the *Belsnickel* performances. We held a lengthy conversation in the gift shop after I checked out with my large pile of books, pamphlets, and other assorted resources. She was curious about why I would want so many books and materials. Once I told her more information about the project, she asked me questions and offered to help me. Upon interviewing Mrs. Moyer, I discovered that her responsibilities include collecting information for and publishing the quarterly newsletter The Pennsylvania German Review, creating informational pamphlets, organizing the annual calendar of programs and events, and operating the gift shop. Mrs. Moyer is knowledgeable about the initial development of the PGCHC and the current efforts being made to enhance the Center’s initiatives in relation to the community. I was also interested in whether or not she viewed current and ongoing activities as contributing to a revival. Mrs. Moyer provided insight as to the PGCHC’s role in perpetuating Pennsylvania Dutch traditions, crafts, and customs

including musical and non-musical performances which are a regular component of annual calendared festivals.

My third interview was with Dr. Don Yoder, a notable and well published Pennsylvania Dutch folklife scholar, whom I interviewed at his home in Devon, Pennsylvania. I was interested in interviewing Dr. Yoder because of his extensive and notable career as a scholar of religion and of Pennsylvania Dutch folk beliefs and culture. Dr. Yoder has published such books as Discovering American Folklife: Essays on Folk Culture and the Pennsylvania Dutch (2001), Hex Signs: Pennsylvania Dutch Barn Signs and Their Meaning (2000), American Folklife (1976), Groundhog Day (2003), Pennsylvania Spirituals (1961), and Songs along the Mahantongo (1964).<sup>5</sup> In addition, Dr. Yoder has been actively involved in Pennsylvania Dutch culture for more than six decades. Dr. Yoder was able to provide information and insight based on his academic expertise and long personal experience as an advocate of the culture.

### **Performance Observations**

Performance observations included Brintzenhoff's *Belsnickel* performances at the PGCHC and a performance of Pennsylvania Dutch music for Christmas time celebrations at a local church. Brintzenhoff invited me to attend these two performances.

I also observed performances of Pennsylvania Dutch carolers as part of the Christmas program rotation at the PGCHC. I was not aware of the carolers until I arrived to observe the *Belsnickel* performances. Once I discovered that they were singing all the songs in Dutch I requested permission to record the performances.

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<sup>5</sup> According to Yoder, *Songs Along the Mahantongo* is the first book of Pennsylvania Dutch songs to be collected and published. Yoder stated that a chapter of songs had been published in another book shortly before the publication of this book, but this was the first book devoted entirely to Pennsylvania Dutch songs (Yoder 2007).

Finally I observed two Pennsylvania Dutch church services, which I chose because they were the only dialect services that would be held during my research time frame. The other dialect services for 2006 had already been held earlier in the fall. I chose both of these services, advertised in the local newspaper, because the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect was being performed with and without the aid of music.

All of these observations and interviews were video recorded, with permission. Field notes taken at the various performances are stored with the video recordings in my personal collection. Field notes used to express a specific observation are italicized and presented in a smaller font in this text.

## **Literature Review**

As part of the resource collection, I obtained any printed text that referenced Pennsylvania Dutch culture, language, music, or performance of any kind. I collected information from journals, newspapers, newsletters, songbooks, song sheets, books, and pamphlets. For the purpose of this literature review I focus on the journals, books, newsletters, and pamphlets as these were most influential in my research. The pamphlets provided calendars and descriptions of events as well as text for Pennsylvania German songs. I will discuss two journals and one journal newsletter currently published to serve the Pennsylvania Dutch community, one additional journal article which provides historical information related to the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect church services, and one book which focuses on Pennsylvania Dutch traditions, customs, and language. I will also discuss journal articles which address revival, preservation, and Euro-American diaspora topics of this research related to the Pennsylvania Dutch community.

Three current journals contain information about Pennsylvania Dutch people and culture. All three of these publications, available to the public, are written with the familiar and unfamiliar reader in mind and are all published on a quarterly basis. Despite a comprehensive collection of cultural information, I did not find any journal which was able to offer much information on any form of performance practices related to how the Dutch language is currently used within the community. I did not find any songs printed with notation or accounts of community performances within the journals, with the exception of one speech and a skit from the first groundhog lodge meeting.

Two of these journals, the Journal of the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies and The Pennsylvania German Review, focus on the ways of the Pennsylvania Dutch by providing a plethora of historical information and take a strong stance for dialect preservation, frequently using the Pennsylvania Dutch language. It is interesting to note, however, that both of these journals use the term “German” in their title. The journals call the language “German,” but the people call it “Dutch.” This difference in nomenclature highlights an ongoing debate to define the culture that is discussed further in chapter 2. In this thesis, I will follow popular usage and call the language “Dutch.”

The Journal of the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies, published by Millersville University and distributed free of charge, focuses on Pennsylvania Dutch people and culture. The journal includes poems and cartoons in Dutch, some of which are translated into English. There is information on important figures in the community and their contributions, institutions such as groundhog lodges, recent publication announcements, a reader’s mail section, and obituaries. This publication keeps track of

current activity in the community and also discusses old-favorite Pennsylvania Dutch pastimes.

The most helpful and informative publication for Pennsylvania Dutch culture was The Pennsylvania German Review, the PGCHC's journal and newsletter. Published in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania German Review is also free and is sent to all subscribing members of the Center. It features language columns, Dutch poems with translations, advertisements for upcoming events and dialect publications, book reviews, additional resources for learning Dutch, articles on economic and societal issues affecting the Pennsylvania Dutch community, Kutztown Festival photos, Groundhog Lodge history, information about Center events, and the latest research findings.

The third journal I will review, the Historical Review of Berks County published in Reading, Pennsylvania, features a variety of articles with historical information on education, legislature, society, and folk traditions. It occasionally includes topics related to Pennsylvania Dutch culture, such as "The Belsnickel Revisited" (Riech 1998-99), "The Wayfaring Stranger: German Gypsies or Chickener of Pennsylvania" (Griggs 2003), and "Team Mennonites Preserve Berks County's Dutch Country"(Orth and Shaner 2002-03).<sup>6</sup> Various authors provide the articles with the exception of three authors who routinely contribute to the same section every edition. This journal, written for a wide range of readers, uses the Pennsylvania Dutch language infrequently.

Yoder's book Groundhog Day was also helpful in cross-referencing information published in the previously listed journals on the topic of Groundhog Lodges (2003). This book includes the history of Groundhog Day and the formation of the lodges, as well as Groundhog recipes and numerous pictures of programs and activities at Groundhog

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to works cited for full citations.

Lodge meetings. Yoder's article "The Dialect Church Service in the Pennsylvania German Culture," published in the Summer 1978 edition of Pennsylvania Folklife, was an important asset for analysis of the dialect church services I attended. Yoder analyzes the linguistic history of the Pennsylvania Germans, highlighting the struggle for balance between English, High German, and Low German in the schools, church, and family. This article provided the historical timeline needed to better understand how and why the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect service developed.

Goertzen (1998) examines how Norwegians aimed to preserve and revive music and dance styles and explains how foreign sources threaten old traditions if no attempt is made to preserve and/or revive. Goertzen follows Margaret Kartomi in categorizing the Norwegian folk music revival: "Margaret Kartomi has defined [this movement] as a 'nativistic musical revival,' an insiders' effort-made for a "mixture of nationalistic, racial prestige, historical, nostalgic, touristic, and artistic" reasons-to revitalize a body of music perceived as threatened" (1998, 102). Although Pennsylvania Dutch music may not be perceived as threatened, the language associated with it is. According to my observations, I have noticed that a large portion of music performed by Pennsylvania Dutch musicians incorporates the Pennsylvania Dutch language as a translation for original English texts. Often, American folk song texts are translated into Dutch with only slight adjustments to the rhythm, as to accommodate the new lyrics. This use of Pennsylvania Dutch continually reconnects the Pennsylvania Dutch people with their history and maintains an established cultural identity.

This article states that Norwegian Folk revival aims to preserve by physically locating particular traditions within tradition-rich areas in the form of contests. The

Pennsylvania Dutch community of South-Eastern Pennsylvania also aims to locate a visible community complete with musical traditions and folk customs in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country through the annual presentation of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival. As a part of this festival there are a variety of presentation, some of which are musical.

In *From the 30s to the 60s: Folk Music Revival in the United States*, Eyerman and Baretta relate that during this period of American musical history “activists reinvented traditional music as a political force by interpreting it as a depository of the "people" or the "folk," and as providing an alternative to manufactured, mass-mediated forms of cultural expression”(1996, 501). The authors also explain that people were interested in preserving the music by actively taking up threatened instruments and styles. Eyerman and Baretta note that revivals organized by the Smithsonian Institute in the 1960s involved a “form of politicalization, forging left-wing political ideologies onto populist roots (1996, 501).” In other words, these activists aimed to preserve lost or disappearing forms of cultural expression by popularizing them. This documentation supports the phenomenon where the Pennsylvania Dutch use popular tunes and substitute Dutch text and/or Dutch themes. I will discuss this more in Chapter 4.

Eyerman and Baretta also point out that these musical revival movements may be seen as a political act which also may use commercial means to disseminate more folk music to more people. These positions of political and commercial nature mirror actions taken by the Pennsylvania Dutch community when the folk festival was established in 1950. Eyerman and Baretta also discuss the claim that movements, such as the American folk music revival, should be “placed in their historical contexts in order to understand

fully both their emergence and their significance” (1996, 503). This statement reinforces the argument in Goertzen’s article where locating the culture is as important as maintaining it. The Pennsylvania Dutch Festival has become a major commercial enterprise, fixed in a location where it would be very difficult to maintain the festival without community support.

Bruce Jackson presents the argument that scholars of the 1950s and 1960s did not pay much attention to the folksong revival because it did not fit the academic models of the time (1993). Folk music and academic study of music were kept separate. As a result, the folksong revival can only be examined as a historical event (Jackson, 1993, 80-81). This situation parallels the circumstances of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival established in 1950. Although plenty of information exists about what takes place at the festival, very few studies of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival which address the significance of the elements (music, crafts, demonstrations, and informational sessions) of the festival. Jackson’s article validates the study of folksong traditions, such as those of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival, in light of the missed opportunity decades ago. I will address the significance of the festival itself and the music present at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival in terms of revival and preservation theories.

Richard Blaustein echoes Jackson’s remarks when his personal experience as a city-living, old-time fiddle performer finds him in the middle of a folk revival minus the accreditations of folklorists of the time (1993). Blaustein points out that music associations and organizations can develop out of “an ongoing cultural revitalization movement...which emerg[e] because they fulfill enduring expressive needs and desires that mainstream popular entertainment and mass media cannot satisfy” (1993, 260).



Blaustein's arguments support my explanations for why institutions, including musical institutions, developed in the Pennsylvania Dutch culture with the goal of language preservation.

Mark Slobin explores the dynamics that transpire as large populations of Euro-Americans deterritorialize and the presence of smaller musical units, termed here as "micromusics" become more noticeable(1992). Slobin focuses on the Euro-American diaspora due in part to the fact that ethnomusicology has been more attracted to other regions and states "music is at the heart of individual, group, and national identity" on both the personal and political levels. Slobin also highlights a range of visibility from local, to regional, to global levels noting that within each level various styles are present.

The parameters of this article closely relate to the current trends of musical performance happening within the Pennsylvania German community of southeastern Pennsylvania. Although the Pennsylvania Dutch culture is large enough to have street signs in Dutch, and is often recognized for its unique language, food, arts and crafts, these concentrations of Dutch communities exist within a modernized and highly diverse community where mass media predominates. Pennsylvania Dutch music rises to prominence most often on special occasions, such as festivals and celebrations. The Pennsylvania Dutch people are as interested in sharing their music and language with outsiders as these outsiders are equally curious to hear Pennsylvania Dutch music. The use of the Pennsylvania Dutch language during the exchange creates this individual, group and national identity Slobin refers to and the dialog between the Pennsylvania Dutch subculture and the more prominent Americanized culture establishes their music as a micromusic.

## **Research Questions**

I will focus on two questions, the first of which regards the preservation of the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect.

My second research question is whether the Pennsylvania Dutch community is experiencing a revival of dialect performance, especially in music.

To evaluate both of these topics it is important to define “preservation” and “revival” and to relate these perspectives to current trends and methods of preservation within the Pennsylvania Dutch community. I will first define several perspectives of what “revival” means and discuss what elements are present in the community to support the interpretation that these practices constitute a “revival.”

## **Defining “Preservation”**

Shubha Chaudhuri’s explanation of “preservation” can be summarized as the physical act of capturing and storing musical and performing traditions, so that as these traditions change through the course of time, the most original form will have been documented and stored: “The core aspect of preservation must be physical preservation. If archival material in the form of recordings or documentation is damaged or lost, it is a permanent loss” (1992, 368). This documentation can exist in the form of written notes, transcriptions, audio recordings and/or video recordings. These physical entities can then be submitted to an archive and shared with other people. However, Chaudhuri also notes that three “major drawback of archival recordings is that they are preserved without the context in which they are performed” (369). Chaudhuri finally states that archives

function as a “systematic centralization” of material (372). In other words, the act of preserving functions to save a performance tradition so that folklorists of the future can use the source as a basis of analysis and comparison.

Ormond H. Loomis’ “Links between Historic Preservation and Folk Cultural Programs” outlines the steps that have been taken by historic preservationists have taken to preserve historic landmarks in the form of buildings and physical space and emphasizes the need for these preservationists to work collaboratively with folklorists to preserve the arts, skills, values, folklife, and folkways associated with these landmarks (1988). Loomis explains the importance of preserving these “intangibles” in his *Cultural Conservation* report:

[V]alues, and actions expressing them, ...stand in favor of connections to one’s immediate community and place. As such they are found in the interaction among family, neighbors, and friends and provide the touchstones for orienting the individual in society ... They shape the relationships that enable the individual to know who one’s friends are, what and where home is, who the ‘folks’ are. (1988)

Loomis explains that the term ‘cultural conservation’ has been used when promoting the preservation of these ideals: “[For] example, the Smithsonian Institution’s 1985 Festival of American Folklife had a section devoted to cultural conservation, and the festival guide contained an essay that explained that ‘cultural conservation is a scientific and humanistic concern for the continued survival of the world’s traditional cultures’” (187). Loomis adds that folklorists often find it difficult to “quantify the cultural resources they are concerned about protecting ... ” (189).

Loomis’ discussion parallels Chaudhuri’s description of preservation as a physical act, while highlighting the challenges related to preserving the intangibles of culture. Physical objects such as homes, public facilities, and community meeting places are less likely to be physically altered once advocates begin to work to preserve them. The same

may or may not be true for “intangibles” such as oral performance traditions in music and the arts. On one hand, one could argue that elements of folk culture should constantly change and should not be held to the confines of the way things were done years ago. On the other hand, if no attempt is made to capture their existence, as they are now, or were then, history and data will have been lost and folklorists will be challenged by a disconnect between the past and the present. Therefore, there must be a balance between the need to preserve and our human tendency to constantly change and adapt.

In the case of the Pennsylvania Dutch, the field researchers, folklorists, and archivists are often from the community. These people have taken the initiative to serve as researchers and archivists of their own community in order to preserve their own cultural parameters, heritage, linguistics, and performance practices. The PGCHC library functions as the archive of all things Pennsylvania Dutch. Although the archives of music and performance practices are limited to printed sources, there is a plethora of archival information related to genealogy, including records of births, deaths, and church affiliations, in addition to many books written to inform the general public about Pennsylvania spiritual practices, folk art, occupations, food, storytelling, skilled trades, and crafts.

To address “preservation” in this thesis, I’ll examine the methods that the Pennsylvania Dutch community currently use for language preservation and argue for the importance of scholarly acknowledgment of these methods. I will also argue that the Pennsylvania Dutch community has a sense that its language is endangered and that the community strives not only to “preserve” but to keep the language active — to revive it — for future generations.

To evaluate how music is used as vehicle of preservation, I will examine performances in two venues, the church and a cultural center, paying special attention to who is performing this musical preservation and how performers use the dialect. I will offer a timeline of important events in dialect performance and in broader dialect usage. I will analyze the influence of institutions, such as Kutztown University and the PGCHC, which sponsor these dialect performances.

### **Defining “Revival”**

Tamara Livingston defines specifically musical revivals as “social movements which strive to ‘restore’ a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for the benefit of contemporary society” (1999, 66). Livingston points out that revivalists often oppose aspects of contemporary cultural mainstream to “align themselves with a particular historical lineage, and offer a cultural alternative in which legitimacy is grounded in reference to authenticity and historical fidelity” (66). In many cases, revivalists pit modern practices against the practices of the past in a rhetoric of authenticity:

The US Folk Revival dates from the late 1940s when the considerable commercial success of recordings by the Weavers was the catalyst for the formation of numerous folk groups...The revival was founded on song collecting and field recordings under taken in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by such figures as Carl Sandburg, John and Alan Lomax, and on the extensive musical repertory of such key singers as Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie, along with early revivalists including Oscar Brand, Burl Ives and John Jacob Niles (Laing 2007).

Bruce Jackson evaluates the American folk music revival of the 1950s in his article “The Folksong Revival” and weighs the revivalist intentions against the realities of revival events (1993). Jackson points out that “many writers and festival fans claimed the revival provided an opportunity for millions of modern Americans to better understand their country’s musical roots...” (1993, 73). Jackson also notes several occasions where

revivals were adapted to meet the expectations of and appeal to the intended audience. To illustrate the evolution of the folk festival through the 1950s and 1960s Jackson highlights the Newport Folk festival: “Newport wasn’t the earliest folk festival in the revival and neither was it always the biggest. But it was the best known and it had in abundance the virtues and faults of the revival” (Jackson 1993, 77).

The Newport Folk Festival was developed in the early 1960s after several other folk festivals of the 1950s had hit or miss success. According to Jackson, Pete Seeger wanted the festival to function as a non-profit foundation instead of trying to organize for commercial gain. Pete Seeger, George Wein, and Theodore Bikel created a forum where the performers programmed music that was as much educational as it was entertaining. The festival offered a balance of large concerts and small intimate workshops, big name stars as well as many traditional performers. Scholarly influence on the programming was virtually non-existent. For almost a decade, this folk festival met with success, most likely the result of a balance between the past and the present, allowing more people to make a personal connection with the aims of the festival.

The Pennsylvania German community of the 1950s experienced a revival of culture in terms of music, crafts, performance traditions, language, food, and trades. This revival is most evident with the establishment of the Pennsylvania German Folk festival in 1950 (Weaver 2006, 11). This festival, established as an educational festival, was intended to celebrate what it is and what it means to be Pennsylvania Dutch. The Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival, now one of the nation’s oldest continuing folklife festivals in the United States, has gradually become more commercial as it has grown in the fifty-seven years since its inception (Fooks 2007).

William Werner argues that a revival of interest in Pennsylvania Dutch culture occurred between 1928 and 1938, much earlier than the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival. Werner discusses the negative impact of World War I on Pennsylvania German culture between 1917 and 1927: “[Let] three examples indicate the general trend: the village of Bismark, Pennsylvania, changed its name to Quentin; the Pennsylvania German Society omitted its annual meetings for three years, 1917-1919; and only one separate volume of dialect material was printed between 1911 and 1927” (1938, 122). Werner then discusses a revival of interest in Pennsylvania Dutch culture from 1928 to 1938, which produced “8 books on our culture, 8 books in our dialect, 12 different newspaper features, numerous plays, and many magazine articles” (124). Although this information supports a revival, it does not indicate a music revival.

Livingston explains that “[i]n ethnic revivals, the choice of tradition to revive may be influenced by the dialectics between the subgroup and the dominant group from which they desire to be distinguished” (1999, 68). Referring back to Slobin’s article, this previous statement would also support the classification of Pennsylvania Dutch music as a micromusic, with language as the main delineator. It is important to note that many members of Pennsylvania Dutch culture wish to be distinguished from German culture, that is, the culture of the country of Germany, and the High German languages spoken there. They highlight the differences that set them apart from what is today known as Germany, and establish themselves as an independent and well-developed culture through dialect events, festivals, and established heritage centers. This discourse of distinction is important and has been ongoing since the first Germanic settlers immigrated to the United States.

To evaluate the presence of a music revival I draw most directly on Tamara E. Livingston's outline of six characteristics which she identified as a result of her survey of a variety of music revivals: "An individual or small group of 'core revivalists', revival informants and/or original sources (e.g. historical sound recordings), a revivalist ideology and discourse, a group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community, revivalist activities (organizations, festivals, competitions), and non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market (found where there is a highly developed market economy)" (1999, 69). Livingston states, "I am proposing that this model of music revivals be used as a framework for understanding a particular class of musical phenomena" (69). I will use Livingston's framework of criteria in order to evaluate whether Pennsylvania German musical performance practices constitute a music revival.

The preservation methods and practices I present in this thesis support my argument that a revival, with music as an important component, is happening within the Pennsylvania Dutch community. Members of the Pennsylvania Dutch community organized social groups known as Groundhog Lodges in order to preserve and perpetuate the language. In 1940, church dialect services began where people could attend church and hear the dialect being used in place of English for the service (Yoder 1978, 6). Then in 1950, a folk festival was organized to highlight crafts, music, traditions, food, and dance of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture (Weaver 2006, 11). Finally in 1992, Kutztown University helped establish a cultural center for Pennsylvania German (Dutch) culture, whose sole purpose was to "gather, preserve, and disseminate knowledge of Pennsylvania German rural life in southeastern Pennsylvania from about 1740 to 1920" (PGCHC



2008). The PGCHC serves as a centralized research and educational facility for use by the general public and “preservation of the Pennsylvania German ("Pennsylvania Dutch") dialect as spoken in southeastern Pennsylvania is one of the Heritage Center's goals” (PGCHC 2008). This sequence of events outlines the methods of preservation enacted by the Pennsylvania Dutch community to facilitate language and cultural preservation. These preservation tactics are aided through musical and non-musical performance, which constitute a revival.

## Chapter 2: Defining the Pennsylvania Dutch

In this chapter I will identify who the Pennsylvania Dutch people are in relation to their immigrant origin and language. I will discuss the time frame in which the largest immigration occurred, the area of initial settlement, and the struggle for language dominance between English, High German and Low German in the family, school, and church environments. I will then discuss the identification of these German-speaking immigrants as “Pennsylvania Dutch,” and highlight the various methods they have established to preserve their culture, including language and music.

### **Immigration History**

From the late 1600s through the early 1800s, a large number of settlers immigrated to the colonies of the New World from the Palatine region of Alsace, Saxony, and the Rhine Valley. Today this area is Southern Germany and Switzerland. A large number of these people initially settled in Berks, Lancaster, and York counties in southeastern Pennsylvania. Yoder stated that the area settled by these people covered an area the size of Switzerland (2007).

When the settlers came to the New World, they brought High German as well as several Low German Palatine region dialects.<sup>7</sup> Buffington notes that “these German immigrants spoke the German dialects peculiar to the section from which they came. However, in the course of a few generations there developed from these several German dialects a new German dialect” (1939, 276). Although the people tried to hold onto High

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<sup>7</sup> High German and Low German are labeled relative to location. High German is from the Northern section of Germany, and Low German the South. These names also carry a connotation of purity of the language, and status of speakers. High German is associated with linguistic “purity” and upper-class or aristocrat speakers.

German in church services and printed text, it was eventually replaced by English and a dialect blending several Low German dialects, in which “the speech of the Palatinate, especially that of the eastern half of the Palatinate, predominated” (Buffington 1939, 276).

What do historians call these German-speaking people? Some scholars identified these settlers as “Pennsylvania Germans” while others called them the “Pennsylvania Dutch.” Both of these labels point to truths as well as misconceptions. It is true that they speak a Germanic language, but we can not label it German as that label is too broad. Germany as we know it today was not unified until about 1871 with the formation of the German Reich. The “Pennsylvania Dutch” are not from the Netherlands, although people from the Netherlands are also called “Dutch.” The only part of the term which is immediately clear to the newcomer is “Pennsylvania”; these people did initially settle in Pennsylvania, though they also settled in Ohio and Canada.

Scholars have been debating the issue of correct and appropriate classification for decades. Don Yoder argues that “Pennsylvania Dutch” is the proper term:

Some actively promote *Pennsylvania German* and say we are Germans, which we are not. We are Pennsylvania Germans, which is entirely different. We are from German speaking people in America. *Pennsylvania Dutch* is an old term too. The term Dutch goes way back before Shakespeare’s time into the Middle Ages and it meant to an Englishman anyone from the continent of Europe, especially from the Rhine Valley. The word Dutch is not a corruption of Deutsch. It is simply an early German cognate form, which goes back to the Middle Ages. Both terms go back to the eighteenth century. The more popular one, used by the people themselves, is Pennsylvania Dutch, and this is why I prefer it. (quoted in Weaver 9-10)

In this thesis, I refer to these people as Pennsylvania Dutch for two reasons. The most important reason, to which Yoder alludes, is that they call themselves Pennsylvania Dutch. The second is that these people were linked to their ancestral homeland in terms of language and not by the geographical borders of one specific country. As Yoder

argues, “Pennsylvania Dutch” is a more accurate description of the current language spoken today. Speaking Dutch is to speak not simply German, but rather a language that has developed out of the blending of several Palatine region Low German dialects.

Pennsylvania Dutch is an aural language. It is a blend of different Germanic dialects and does not have a standard spelling system. Pennsylvania Dutch spellings can be based on High German, phonetic English, or phonetic English spellings with German influence. In fact, the few dictionaries that do exist for Pennsylvania Dutch often have multiple spellings for entries because Dutch is often spelled as it sounds, and pronunciation varies between different regions of Dutch speakers, although as Buffington notes, “Variations in the dialect as spoken in the various sections of Pennsylvania are very slight” (1939, 276).

### **Language and Cultural Identity: Influence on the Pennsylvania Dutch Language as a Result of the World Wars**

The Pennsylvania Dutch people thrived in this new world as farmers and craftsmen, and they were proud of who they were and where they had come from until the early 1900s and the era of the two World Wars. Anti-German sentiment started to grow in the United States, and other Americans became suspicious of German-Americans (Werner 1938, 122). Some portions of the Pennsylvania Dutch community found themselves becoming more guarded about outwardly displaying their cultural identity:

When the United States finally entered the war in 1917, federal and local governments and community leaders sanctioned an anti-German panic...By 1918 the War Department had placed a box over the monument recently erected to commemorate the founders of Germantown, Pennsylvania. (Brooks 2005)

Speaking Dutch during this time in American history was frowned upon, to the point that adults would sometimes punish children for doing so outside of their immediate family. I overheard one man share a story about this dynamic with one of the attendants at the Macungie Institute in Macungie, PA: As he read through some of the displays about local heritage he remarked how his grandmother was not allowed to go outside for recess once because she had spoken Dutch in class. My own grandfather shared stories with us that during the wars his brothers and sisters were not allowed to speak Dutch outside of the family or they would be punished.

However, it was not uncommon for elders to speak Dutch to each other and English to the children. For example, as a child I heard stories of how my maternal great-grandfather and his brother would take my grandfather fishing. While they were out in the boat they would tell jokes in Dutch and laugh, but my grandfather understood very little of what they said. Generations were growing up without using Dutch on a primary and regular basis. German-Americans were assimilating into mainstream American culture by adopting English.

Previously, some Pennsylvania Dutch communities expressed pride in being Pennsylvania Dutch and emphasizing their cultural identity as Germanic descendants: “In 1899, a group of German Americans concerned about the waning of German identity formed the National German-American Alliance” (Brooks 2005). They formed *Fersommlings* (gatherings) where the Pennsylvania Dutch focused on the dialect through plays, stories, music and other performances. Local churches held Pennsylvania Dutch dialect church services complete with a home-cooked Pennsylvania Dutch meal to follow. One very important kind of *Fersommling*, the Groundhog Lodge, was pivotal in

establishing preservation efforts for the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect: “Holding steadfast to the provisions of one of the by-laws, which forbade anything but the Pennsylvania German dialect be used during the meeting, all speeches, songs and other entertainment were presented in the dialect” (Shupp 2007). (I will discuss the Groundhog Lodge in detail below.) In the post-war 1950s, weekly call-in and pre-recorded radio programs and television programs in Pennsylvania Dutch would draw many to sit and listen in:

The increasing popularity on television and radio of Professor Schnitzel and *die Wumernaas* in Reading and *Assabe un Sabrina* in Allentown [led an] Ephrata radio official [to ask Allen G. Musser a popular Pennsylvania Dutch storyteller] to go on the air with his own 15-minute dialect show on a Saturday morning. [Musser stated,] “It was suppose to last two weeks and it went 40 years –up until about four years ago.” Soon after Musser lost that spot when the station changed hands, he was contacted by WPAZ...when radio executives saw the value in continuing their own call-in dialect show Sunday afternoon from 4:30 to 5. [Musser also hosted] a half-hour TV show for Ephrata TV Thursday nights (Koehler, 1997).

When asked how many people tune in to his programs, Musser responded, “On Ephrata TV, maybe thousands...We speak in a foreign language. But there’s a lot of people out there who **verschteh** [emphasis in original] (understand)” (Koehler, 1997). This response attests to the fact that despite the challenges of cultural suppression through two World War conflicts, interest in the Pennsylvania Dutch culture as represented by the language is still strong and vehicles for language perpetuation continue to be supported by the community. Chapter 3 examines ways in which various institutions continue to support the preservation of the Pennsylvania Dutch language and culture within the community.

## Chapter 3: Institutions Supporting Pennsylvania Dutch Language Preservation

In this chapter I will detail four institutions, the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University, Groundhog Lodges, and the church, all of which support the preservation of the Pennsylvania Dutch language. I will explain how the PGCHC was established as well as the Center's importance to the Pennsylvania Dutch community. I will discuss the Center's professional relationship with the Pennsylvania German Society and the publication of the quarterly newsletter journal. I will include field notes from my first visit to the PGCHC "Christmas at the Farm" celebration and discuss elements of preservation present at this event. I will then outline the requirements of a Pennsylvania Dutch major offered by Kutztown University and discuss the implications in relation to language preservation efforts. I will also explain why the Groundhog Lodges were formed, who participates in Groundhog Lodge meetings, how the entertainment is presented, and what preservation agendas are behind these annual meetings.

Finally I will discuss the church and analyze two dialect church services by comparing them to an article by Pennsylvania Dutch folklife scholar, Dr. Don Yoder, in order to understand the history of struggle for a form of German acceptable for church services, outline the development of Pennsylvania Dutch services, as well as evaluate the current status of dialect services in the Pennsylvania German community today. I will discuss how each of these institutions has supported and continue to support the preservation of the Pennsylvania Dutch language.

## The Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center

Located in a vibrant Pennsylvania Dutch community, the PGCHC is not only supported by Kutztown University, but also relies on the support of individual membership, and annual donations. The Center is run by dedicated paid administrative staff, regular local volunteers, and interns from Kutztown University.

According to Darlene Moyer, the PGCHC was created in 1994 when Kutztown University purchased a property with an abandoned farmhouse and a collapsing barn adjacent to the Kutztown campus.<sup>8</sup> In November, 2002 the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Culture Society merged with the PGCHC, bringing with it artifacts and assets which were used to help get the center up and running (Moyer 2007). Since then the PGCHC has steadily built its reputation and standing within the community.

The PGCHC collects its resources based on the knowledge, expertise, and experiences of the Pennsylvania Dutch people who live in nearby communities. Its resources attract scholars and continue to inspire more local people to contribute. As community support grows, people donate memorabilia and loan special collections of artifacts, including handicrafts, artwork, and tools, to support the Center initiative. Some people have also bequeathed money as part of their estates, and one family donated a building that will eventually become part of the PGCHC (Moyer 2007).<sup>8</sup> In my view, the PGCHC is very important to the preservation of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture as the Center provides historical information about customs and traditions for seasonal events throughout the year. A museum displays artifacts of the early settlers, and language classes, conducted in the one-room schoolhouse, encourage people to learn or improve

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<sup>8</sup> It may take several years to incorporate this gift a part of the campus due to the necessary funding required for proper restoration and maintenance.



their ability to speak Dutch. This act of locating a culture within a tradition rich area in order to nourish a specific style reinforces Goertzen's criteria for folk revivals. Although no specific contest is sponsored, the PGCHC sponsors performances as part of a series of annual festivals which often include Dutch speaking performers presenting Pennsylvania Dutch songs or skits.

In addition, the PGCHC maintains a website which is linked to the visitor section of the Kutztown University website. This well-maintained website includes links to upcoming events, a genealogical library, the requirements for the Pennsylvania German degree at Kutztown University (to be discussed below), as well as other resources and affiliations. In addition to the website, the PGCHC produces a quarterly news journal, The Pennsylvania German Review, which focuses on Pennsylvania Dutch topics and is available to visitors and subscribing members.

The support of Kutztown University and the fact that the PGCHC directors are notable scholars adds legitimacy to the PGCHC's efforts as a community resource as well as a scholarly resource.<sup>9</sup> The PGCHC has also recently become home to the Pennsylvania German Society, which relocated its office to one of the log cabins at the PGCHC in January, 2007. This important move signifies unification among Pennsylvania Dutch organizations. Collecting and centralizing institutional resources may help to increase the stability of the PGCHC and further solidify its growing reputation within the community. Once again Goertzen's idea of locating culture to a fixed position aligns with Pennsylvania Dutch cultural conservation efforts.

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<sup>9</sup> Past directors of the PGCHC include Dr. David Valuska, 1993-2005, and Dr. Robert Reynolds, 2006 - present (Moyer 2007).

As the PGCHC grows in physical size and institutional offerings, attendance numbers at annual events continue to increase (Moyer 2007). Currently, the PGCHC has about 448 members, although membership numbers constantly change (Moyer 2007). The PGCHC has become a site of collective memory, a place where people who have experienced Pennsylvania Dutch culture share information and experiences with other who have had similar experiences and others who are interested in learning more. There is a nostalgic connection for people who are Pennsylvania Dutch and are curious to compare their experience. And many go to the PGCHC looking for answers to questions about who they are as Pennsylvania Dutch.

### **Observations of the PGCHC Campus**

The following section contains field notes written after my first visit to the PGCHC for the “Christmas on the Farm” program, December 2, 2006. These notes are my first observations of the PGCHC as I explored the campus grounds and some of the buildings. Figure 1 presents a map of the Center's campus.

*I took a good look around to see what this cultural center entailed. The Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center is a miniature village complete with turn-of-the-century buildings that Pennsylvania Dutch farmers would have utilized. There are a farmhouse, a summer house, two log cabins, a garden, a watering trough, an outhouse, a corn crib and two barns. The farmhouse and red barn are original to the property adjacent to Kutztown University. The two log cabins and the one-room school house are recent additions and there are plans to add more buildings in future. The only modern buildings at the Heritage Center are the public restrooms attached to the genealogical library facility, the gift shop trailer, and the office trailer furthest from the historic buildings.*

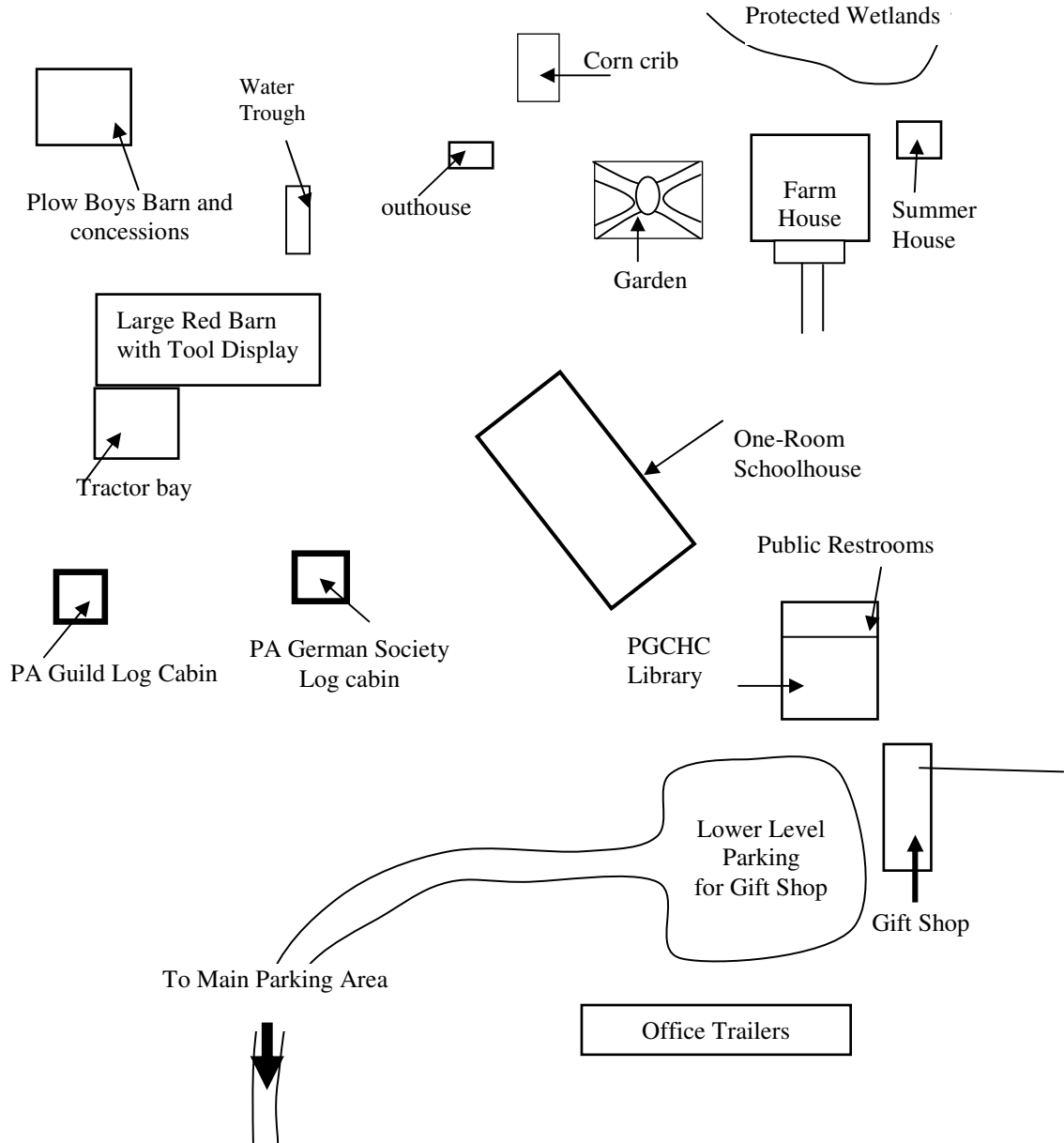
*Across from the school house is a small temporary petting zoo for the children to meet and greet farm animals. I walked past the petting zoo and into the farmhouse to look around. I noticed a sign directing people to the back of the farmhouse for some old-fashioned sugar candy making.*

*The inside of the farmhouse was decorated according to how it would have looked for a typical Pennsylvania Dutch family, complete with Christmas time décor. There was a small tree covered in cotton (to represent snow) adorned with homemade decorations. The people guarding the artifact displays in the farm house were dressed according to the typical dress of the early 1900s, complete with bonnets, long dresses and aprons. Men wore pants held up by suspenders with shirts tucked in, and some wore straw hats.*

*Some of the women were making handicrafts representative of the turn-of-the-century as people strolled by. Visitors were free to walk around both levels of the house to admire the various artifacts such*

as old tin and wooden toys, school books, beds, military uniforms, and handicrafts. There was even an old hammered dulcimer in unplayable condition sitting in a lower-level window sill. The only thing that seemed out of place was an Artley flute from the 1980s or 90s lying on the bed in the children's room. The open case beside the flute drew my attention. There was nothing about this flute that made its presence appropriate in this room among tin toys and hand sewn dolls. This flute was strangely out-of-place in this microcosm of another time.

Fig. 1. Map of PGCHC



After my first visit to the PGCHC I felt like I had traveled back in time one hundred years. The intent to preserve was strongly apparent in the clothes, language,

demonstrations, and decorations displayed by all those involved in this living history model, and both young and old were eager to participate. The intimate layout of the buildings and accessory structures, such as the corn crib and outhouse, allowed the visitors to observe the functional aspect of the village. Demonstrations and discussions were brief in order to allow visitors to move freely about the campus and self-discover lifestyles of the early 1900s. The PGCHC's intentional presentation of various traditions, appropriate to both insiders and outsiders, reinforced my view that preservation objectives are a central part of the PGCHC's work.

### **PGCHC Calendar of Events**

Along with the PGCHC's displays of living history, a very active year-round series of events celebrate Pennsylvania German culture and traditions. Seasonal events, such as "Christmas on the Farm," "Easter on the Farm," and "Harvest Fest," occur annually while other workshops, demonstrations and classes are scheduled based on the availability of the presenter. The topics of these occasional presentations include music, children's programs, Pennsylvania Dutch dialect classes, home life, foods, and crafts.<sup>10</sup> Most activities are free, although some programs require a small fee and there is a charge for the food offered on the grounds.

I had the opportunity to observe both a *Belsnickel* demonstration and a Pennsylvania Dutch Caroling session at the PGCHC as part of "Christmas Down on the Farm," December 2, 2006. I will discuss these performances in Chapter Four.

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<sup>10</sup> "Home life" is the term used to describe the methods of carrying out daily responsibilities in the home. For example, a home life presentation might include how the Pennsylvania Dutch prepared foods or decorated the home for holidays and special celebrations.

## Recently Established Pennsylvania Dutch Majors at Kutztown University

### Promote Pennsylvania Dutch Language and Culture

Kutztown University not only supports the PGCHC financially by paying all the major bills for the daily functioning of the center, but also recently developed and instituted two courses of Pennsylvania German study, which were approved in 2005. The larger of the two is the Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences in German Studies and Pennsylvania German Culture. The other is a minor in Pennsylvania German studies. Both of these studies offer an internship component which is connected with the PGCHC (PGCHC 2008). The required courses for both of these degree tracks comprise a well-rounded study of Pennsylvania German culture, including Pennsylvania German language, Pennsylvania German studies, Pennsylvania German literature, and readings in Pennsylvania German lifestyle. The tracks also require classes in German literature and language studies.<sup>11</sup>

As part of these degree programs, Kutztown University requires students to study High German as well as Pennsylvania Dutch. High German is more regular in terms of grammatical structure, spelling, and phonetics; this requirement allows students to study the similarities and differences between the two dialects. It may also provide a link between High German and Pennsylvania Dutch for those students who have prior High German background.

Student interest in these degree programs over the next couple of years will provide one indication of communal interest of younger generations in Pennsylvania German Studies. The creation of these Pennsylvania Dutch (German) majors makes a

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<sup>11</sup> German literature and language studies refers to High German, not Pennsylvania Dutch.

very important statement on the status of Pennsylvania Dutch language preservation and revival initiatives. The fact that scholarly study has been organized to promote the Pennsylvania Dutch language and literature is evidence of strong institutional efforts towards language preservation.

## Groundhog Lodges: A History of Ongoing Dialect Preservation

The *Grundsow* (groundhog) Lodge is another very important and integral part of the Pennsylvania Dutch language preservation effort. Established sixty years before the PGCHC was founded, the Groundhog Lodges established themselves as a group of individual organizations united under the common flag of dialect preservation. These separately governed Lodges are supervised by one Grandfather Lodge, which leads the PGCHC's efforts for dialect preservation and sponsors dialect classes at the PGCHC. How did these Groundhog Lodge organizations come to be and why did they choose the groundhog to represent them? Also, how are these lodges using music to support language preservation?

The *Grundsow* Lodges, organized in 1934 by a group of twelve men after the First World War as an effort to preserve the Pennsylvania Dutch language, require participants to speak only Dutch for the entire Groundhog Lodge meeting. The Lodge meetings have been held every year on or around Groundhog Day, February second, since 1934 with the exception of two war years (Donner 2002, 39). Membership and participation in the annual meeting is first-come, first-served and those who attended the year before have priority. Lodges are identified by number and location and are run by a set of officers nominated by each individual lodge. "After a lot of discussions ... it was decided to pattern the officers after a church council, by calling it 'S Rawd' with four of

them as officeholders, to be known as ‘die Ombtsleit’. The latter included, der Habtmon, or president; der Schreiver, secretary; der Gelthaver, treasurer; and finally, der Fuder Maishder, or chef” (Troxel 1953, 4). Sometimes a religious leader, often an ordained minister, delivers the main message or speech although these Lodges are not meant to be religious.

There were originally eighteen lodges in Pennsylvania and one in Delaware, which was established by men originally from southeastern Pennsylvania. The Delaware lodge operated for twenty-eight years and ended in 1958. These lodges were and continue to be for men only. About 300 men attended the first lodge meeting in Allentown. Women usually helped to serve the meal and then were promptly shooed out before the meeting for the men began. However, as Yoder points out, “In recent years, the Groundhog Lodge Movement has come under criticism from the Pennsylvania Dutch *Weibtsleit* (women) [who contend that] there should also be Groundhog Lodges for women” (2003, 72). Although there are currently nineteen active lodges, this figure also includes the two female membership lodges which are often considered to be *Fersommlings* (gathering) but are not consistently recognized as official groundhog lodges (Yoder 2003, 73). These two female organizations are not assigned a Lodge number as are the other Groundhog Lodges.

### **Pennsylvania Dutch Influence on the Creation of Groundhog Day**

Edwin Fogel delivered the first speech at the first *Grundsow* Lodge meeting in 1934. In his speech he outlined the history that led to the creation of Groundhog Day and the formation of groundhog lodges: “Candlemas is the festival where, in the Catholic

Church, the purification of the Holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is celebrated...The tapers which are used throughout the year in worship ceremonies are blessed and consecrated” (Fogel 2004, 16).

This purification ceremony is based on the Old Testament custom that six weeks after a woman gives birth, she resumes her menstrual cycle and is considered unclean. Fogel added; “The word February originates from the Latin ‘Februare’ and means purify” (2004, 16). February second, a little less than six weeks after Christmas, is Candlemas Day. The Germans believed that if the sun shone on Candlemas Day, winter would last for another six weeks, but that snow or storm on this day meant that it would be a good year. Most Pennsylvania Dutch were farmers, so they relied on weather patterns to time the planting season in order to grow the most productive crop possible. And so Groundhog Day, the function of which is to predict the coming of spring, and Candlemas Day are the same day.

The Pennsylvania Dutch people saw the groundhog as a nuisance, since it dug holes in fields, putting horses at risk for a broken leg, and burrowed under building foundations. However, the groundhog was the most populous hibernating animal in this area of Pennsylvania, and it also resembled the hedgehog common throughout Europe. Therefore it was chosen as the animal which, on waking, would predict a longer winter or an earlier spring based on the sun that day: “[F]or many of [the Pennsylvania Dutch]—on every day but February 2—the groundhog is mostly a nuisance in the garden and a memory of a meal during their childhood. Some of the ritual seems to make fun of anyone who would think that the groundhog could, in fact, predict the future” (Donner 2002, 41).



But why was the groundhog chosen as the representative of these Pennsylvania Dutch people? Mr. Fogel inquired, in his closing remarks at the first Groundhog Lodge meeting, “Why [did] our Groundhog Lodge select such a miserable thing as a groundhog for our symbol? Personally I don’t like the idea that we named ourselves after the groundhog and that we call ourselves brother groundhogs. Groundhog is just a name for foolishness and we Pennsylvania Dutch are positively not foolish” (Fogel 16). It is difficult to read “tone” in a written source such as this: Was Mr. Fogel giving his honest opinion about the groundhog, or was he speaking the opposite? It is likely humorous; many Pennsylvania Dutch have a dry and somewhat sarcastic sense of humor where what they say is the opposite of what they mean. Humor is a very important element in Pennsylvania Dutch culture as observed in these Groundhog Lodge dialect events: “The *Grundsow* Lodges present satires of the contradictions and confusions and complications of the modern, high technology world, but sometimes there is also an implied satire about the foolishness of those who might live outside it. The groundhog symbolizes a simpler past” (Donner 2002, 41).

### **Lodge Meetings**

All elements of the meeting, from the menu to the main speech and entertainment, are performed in the dialect. In some lodges speaking English will cost you, literally — “unwary Brother Groundhogs who are caught talking English are fined anywhere from 10 to 36 cents, according to the rules of various lodges. The money collected is given to local charities (Yoder 2003, 77). This encourages people to use Dutch words to describe things that are sometimes easier said in English. A traditional Pennsylvania Dutch meal

of meat (sometimes groundhog), potatoes and other vegetables is served; skits and music are performed; and a speech delivered by an important community member, most often an ordained minister. According to Don Yoder, the Groundhog Lodge program, developed over the past seven plus decades, is now standard. I will discuss Yoder's outline of the standard format as well as the elements of a Groundhog Lodge meeting that are not included in Yoder's outline.

Figure 2 outlines the standard format identified by Yoder in *Groundhog Day* (2003, 75-76).

Fig. 2. Yoder's standard format of Groundhog Lodge meetings.

1. First "America" is sung in Dutch. Translation by John Birmelin
2. Dutch prayer delivered by clergyman
3. the members sing dialect songs and listen to Groundhog reports
4. Lodge chairmen gives the official weather prophecy
5. new members take the Groundhog Oath in some lodges
6. the officers issue a Groundhog Day proclamation

Although this structure highlights the patriotic, religious, linguistic, and organizational elements of lodge meetings, Yoder does not include where the meal, skits, main speech, music and other entertainment fall into this order. To clarify this ambiguity, I located a copy of the program outline for Groundhog Lodge number three meeting. This program outline serves as the advertisement for a Lodge meeting in February of 1966. Figure 3 is the outline as it appeared on this advertisement flyer (Donner 2002, 47).

Fig. 3. Groundhog Lodge meeting advertisement.

THE PROGRAM WILL INCLUDE

1. Introduction of new members (bring a novice along).
2. The weather forecast for the remainder of the winter and summer
3. Music, stories and songs – native to all groundhog brothers – by Heffentrager and Labanz
4. Toastmaster – Mr. Norman Gahman
5. Main Speaker of the evening – Dr. Clyde S. Stine of Millersville State College
6. Our own Dutch Dinner “Sauer Craut un Schpeck”.
7. Entertainment and prizes

Although Figures 2 and 3 share several elements, including the weather forecast and new member induction, the order is different. Taking the Groundhog oath is a very important element of the Groundhog Lodge meeting. Yoder’s format lists four events before the oath takes place whereas the Lodge advertisement lists the oath first. Yoder specifies the singing of “America” in Dutch separate from the singing of dialect songs, whereas the advertisement only notes music, stories, and songs native to all groundhog brothers without mention of specific titles. The advertisement also lists the Pennsylvania Dutch dinner, entertainment, and main speaker in contrast to Yoder’s Dutch prayer and Groundhog Day proclamation.

The fact that an established order for Lodge meetings exists brings to light the presence of ritualistic elements. One example of a ritualistic practice involves the large wooden carved groundhog which is rolled down the center aisle of the meeting room, wearing a crown and eating a head of cabbage. All brother groundhogs raise their “paws” and recite an oath to the groundhog to only speak Dutch. Although the oath is listed in Yoder’s standard format, the groundhog statue and the raising of the “paws” is not. The presence of this statue and the raising of the “paws” reveal ritualistic elements.

Several additional activities documented in a variety of sources, including journals and newspapers, highlight traditional activities left unmentioned in Yoder's format. The meal, entertainment, and main message are unlisted in Yoder's format despite the fact that these events are documented in various sources which chronicle Lodge meetings.

These aforementioned practices, including the proclamation of a standard format, the wooden groundhog, the meal, and the entertainment establish a pattern of ritualistic behavior; they are repeated annually, in the same manner, by all of the Groundhog Lodge, satisfying the expectations for every annual meeting.

### **Performances at the Groundhog Lodge Meetings**

I will now discuss the music and other performances offered at Groundhog Lodge meetings through the accounts of those who have participated in these meetings. I will describe the instrumentation, function, and printed song material of the music, and discuss the other performance venues that transpire. I will also evaluate the influence of the dialect in these performances.

Given that I am female and not a member these somewhat secret societies, I was unable to obtain first hand recordings of the meeting activities and music. To compile information about the performances that take place at the annual Groundhog lodge meetings I searched various newsletters, Pennsylvania Dutch journals, and other miscellaneous resources, including two songbooks at the PGCHC library. There was very little documentation of the musical performances at Groundhog Lodge meetings; however, I located one songbook compiled from the Berks County *Fersommling* and one picture from articles published by the Pennsylvania German Review which provided

information about instruments used at Groundhog Lodge performances.<sup>12</sup> I will summarize what I learned from these sources about the role of music performance at these Lodge meetings.

The Pennsylvania German Review reports: “Keeping steadfastly to the provision of one of the articles of the by laws which forbids anything but the Pennsylvania-German dialect be used during the meeting, all speeches, songs and other entertainment was presented in the dialect” (Allentown Morning Call quoted in The Pennsylvania German Review 2002, 50). According to the written account of the first Groundhog Lodge meeting in 1934, sing-a-long song sessions were led by select Lodge members with “America,” “Schnitzelbank,” and “Spinning Song” receiving special mention. The article also mentioned that a “Deitchie Band played the instrumental accompaniments. The band also furnished appropriate music during the serving of the meal and at intervals during the program” (Allentown Morning Call cited in The Pennsylvania German Review 2002, 51). I would infer that “appropriate music” would include music that is familiar to the audience and appropriate for this meeting, such as popular, folk, or patriotic songs. Another article, also published in The Pennsylvania German Review, mentioned that “Grundsow meetings include music, songs, [and] a skit or play...” (Donner 39). I found no other article which elaborated on the musical performance practices at lodge meetings.

However, a picture printed in The Pennsylvania German Review, Fall 2001, labeled “Heffentrager’s Band,” depicts three men: one standing by the microphone, one playing a tenor saxophone, and the third playing the accordion. It can only be assumed, due to the lack of an audio recording, that the accordion provided the chordal

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<sup>12</sup> *Fersommling* is often used as a substitute for the Groundhog Lodges, as the Groundhog lodges are a type of *Fersommling* or gathering.

progressions, the tenor saxophone provided the melody and/or harmony, while the vocalists conveyed lyrics with the melody.

In my experience observing Pennsylvania Dutch musical performance, I have noticed that a 'band' usually consists of a group of people who want to make music for the purpose of entertaining other people. What one would expect to hear at a Pennsylvania Dutch music performance can vary, but there is a hierarchy built on the use of string instruments. The guitar, most often acoustic, is present in almost all performances. Guitar is used to provide the harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the melody and may be used with other harmonic instruments such as piano, accordion, banjo, or autoharp. I have observed two common performance practices for guitar: The musician performs either a rhythmic strum pattern using chords or an alternating root-fifth bass note pattern with chords on the weak beats. In either case the repeated rhythm is usually sustained for the entire of the song. Occasionally the banjo or autoharp may be used in place of the guitar utilizing similar performance practices. Sometimes banjo players will arpeggiate chords, also termed finger picking, as opposed to strumming all the strings so that the melody becomes more prominent. This technique is often used in song introductions or in between verses.

The next instrument usually added is a melodic instrument with voice being most common. If more than one singer is performing, harmony in thirds is very typical. On the other hand, in situations which incorporate audience participation such as the dialect services and Christmas Carol sing-a-longs, homophony dominates with incidental harmony. Once the chordal and melodic layers have been established other instruments such as mandolin, accordion, piano, fiddle, electric guitar, flute, trombone, and trumpet

may also be included for added harmonic and/or melodic lines. Electric bass guitar or acoustic string bass are used and often doubles the bass line created by the guitarist. A band at the Kutztown Pennsylvania German Festival combined mandolin, fiddle, string bass, and guitar with harmonized vocals and some yodeling, which created a bluegrass texture that they identified as gospel music.

Pennsylvania Dutch musicians often lack formal musical training. Chordal accompaniment is structured yet simple and focuses on the tonic, subdominant, and dominant chords. Intonation is not always accurate however the focus in this style is on the lyrics and delivery of the intended message. Although written notation is sometimes used, oral tradition permeates Pennsylvania Dutch musical culture as repertoire is handed down from one generation to the next. This observation of oral tradition is evident as guitarists and banjo players often capo to adjust to a more suitable key for the vocalists while allowing the instrumentalists to utilize familiar chordal patterns.

I will now focus on the notation provided in the *Fersommling* songbook. The Berks County *Fersommling*, established in 1937, collected a songbook that was eventually printed in 1981. This songbook includes fifty songs, forty-seven of which have notation. The notation is presented with the melody notated in treble clef and the lyrics written below the staff notation. When I compared this list of songs to a collection of sixteen Pennsylvania Dutch songs (lyrics only) provided by Keith Brintzenhoff, “*Wann Der Jug Awwer En Loch Hatt*”, “*Liewer Hienrich*,” “*D’Haem Uff Die Alt Bauerei*,” and “*Lauterbach*” were common between both collections. Four songs from the list of fifty including “*Alt Laeng Syne*,” “*Amerika*,” “*O Susana*,” and “*Tarra-Rarra-Boom-De-Ai*” were familiar to me as either American folk songs (translated into Dutch) or as songs I

had heard at previous festivals and community performances. I point out these comparisons to indicate that the songs present in the *Fersommling* Groundhog Lodges are not specific and unique to these meetings. These songs appear in other Pennsylvania Dutch performance arenas outside the annual Lodge meetings. Figures 4 and 5 provide two examples of the songs from the songbook *Baerricks Kounty Fersommling Sing Schitcker*.<sup>13</sup> These notations do not provide chordal accompaniments, only the melodic line with the verses and chorus written below the notation, which makes it more challenging for an instrumentalist to use this song sheet in a performance context.

Fig. 4. “Tarra-Rarra-Boom-De-Ai” song sheet.

No. 44

**TARRA-RARRA-BOOM-DE-AI**

1. Tarra-rarra-boom-de-ai,  
Da Daddi hut ken duwoch mae  
Ehr fillt de Peif mit Huvelschpae  
Muss in da Shtor sich holla geh.

Chorus: Tarra-ra-boom-de-ai  
Tarra-ra-boom-de-ai  
Tarra-ra-boom-de-ai  
Tarra-ra-boom-de-ai

2. Tarra-rarra-boom-de-ai  
Mei Hoar sin so dick wie Glay,  
Kusht zu feel im Barber-shop  
Denk ich schneid sie selvert opp.

3. Tarra-rarra-boom-de-ai  
Huf er kennt oll Deitsch fer-schtay  
No is alles gute un shee  
Tarra-Rarra-boom-de-ai.

Fig. 5. “Wann Der Jug Awwer En Loch Hatt Liewer Heinrich” song sheet.

No. 45

**WANN DER JUG AWWER EN LOCH HATT  
LIEWER HEINRICH**

Die Frog -

ANTWORT  
(Spoken)

Die Frog 1 - Wann der Jug awwer en loch hatt?  
Liewwer Heinrich, Liewwer Heinrich  
Wann der Jug awwer en loch hatt,  
Liewwer Heinrich, Wass no?

Antwort 1 - Shtub's zu (spoken)

2. Mit wass soll ich's awwer zu shtuppe? u.s.w - Mit wass?	7. Wann der Shtee awwer zu drucke is? u.s.w - Wass no?
2. Mitt Shtroh	7. Mach en nass.
3. Wann es Shtroh awwer zu lang iss u.s.w - Wass no?	8. Mit wass soll ich'n awwer nass mache? u.s.w - Mit wass?
3. Hock es ab.	8. Mit Wasser.
4. Mit wass sol ich's awwer ab-hocke? u.s.w - Mit wass?	9. Mit wass soll ich's Wasser hole? u.s.w - Mit wass?
4. Mit em Beil.	9. Mit em Jug.
5. Wann es Beil awwer zu shtump iss? u.s.w - Wass no?	10. Wann der Jug awwer en loch hatt? u.s.w - Wass no?
5. Mach's shariff.	10. Shtub es zu.
6. Mitt wass soll ich's awwer schleiffe? u.s.w - Mit wass?	
6. Mit em Shtee.	

<sup>13</sup> *Baerricks Kounty Fersommling Sing Schitcker* translates to “Berks County Gathering Songs.”



I had a conversation with the president of the Grandfather Groundhog Lodge at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival in Kutztown in July, 2007. He was sitting at a table with information pamphlets about the Groundhog Lodges; a large wood-carved groundhog, holding a head of cabbage, stood to the side. When I asked him if any standard songs were sung at the annual meetings, he could only name a few specific titles that he remembered. When I asked if there was a songbook that everyone uses he said he did not know of one, but they would not need it anyway because all the brothers of the Lodge know the songs from memory. The only item he mentioned as a regular resource at the lodge meetings was the book *Der Haahne Greht (The Rooster Crows)*, by Peter V. Fritsch. This book of Pennsylvania Dutch poems and *Scherrenschnitte*, which chronicles many aspects of Pennsylvania Dutch culture, is often used throughout the Groundhog meetings to recite poems or for storytelling.<sup>14</sup>

Groundhog Lodge meetings are thus an area of research within the Pennsylvania Dutch culture that would benefit from further investigation and documentation, both written and audio/visual, of performance practices at Groundhog Lodge meetings. Few recordings or reflective accounts exist which provide insight into what is performed, who is performing, and why particular material is chosen. Nevertheless, I observed that the Pennsylvania Dutch use American folk instruments in groups which they arrange based on available instrumentation. Performance structures are ritualistic and well structured, and transmission is mainly oral, with some written aids, within a familiar and popular context.

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<sup>14</sup> Fenstermacher offers this definition: “*Scherrenschnitte* is the art of freehand scissors cutting, a skill performed by an orderly set of specialized actions” (A3).

## The Church's Influence in Dialect Preservation: History of the Pennsylvania Dutch Dialect Service

Following Don Yoder (1978), I will outline the history of the Pennsylvania Dutch church service. Although I will discuss the presence of music in the dialect services, I will present a more focused and detailed discussion of that music in the next chapter.

According to Yoder, there were five languages or language blends present in the Pennsylvania German community beginning in the colonial period: High German, English, Pennsylvania Dutch dialect, High German influenced by dialect, and English influenced by dialect.<sup>15</sup> The community debate began in the early 1800s as to whether High German, English, or the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect should be used in church services.

Don Yoder describes the three possible positions as “Germanizing,” “Americanizing,” and “Dialectizing” (Yoder 1978, 2). Those who argued for High German claimed that in addition to German being the mother tongue and the language of Luther’s Bible, translating German prayers, songs, and hymns into English could not be done well enough to preserve the original textual connotations. Those who argued for English saw the move as a positive mark of assimilation to the national language of the United States, arguing that to retain German would stifle progress. And some suggested the controversial possibility of using the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect in services.

The thought of using Pennsylvania Dutch in church upset many people because the dialect was viewed as the most impure degradation of German to begin with, not to

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<sup>15</sup> In the formative years of the Pennsylvania German language, now known as Pennsylvania Dutch, “dialect” was the common term used to describe the hybrid combination of High German and English.

mention having been influenced by English. There were also class implications:

Pennsylvania Dutch, the local language spoken by most people, was not thought to be a language of scholars or lofty expression. An anonymous reader expressed his opinion in a letter to the *Lebanon Courier* in 1858:

Pennsylvania Dutch is an anachronism, a rotten relic of national ties, severed many years ago and consequently superseded by those of the adopted country; a decrepit reminiscence of a semi-civilized epoch, unworthy of our age, which ought to be wiped off from existence (quoted in Yoder 1978, 5).

The three institutions on which this language debate centered were the church, school, and the family. The schools were the first to drop German, replacing it with English in the nineteenth century when the free public schools replaced the smaller German schools. Church congregations were next to eliminate German as the official language: despite very vocal protest from the community, the first all-English Lutheran church was established in 1806 (Yoder 1978 3). German was gradually phased out as the language of choice as congregations shifted to English, first for one service a month and later for three. In 1935 all German was dropped even in the rural churches, except for Old Order Amish and Mennonite churches (Yoder 1978 3).

All-dialect services appeared in the 1940s in three forms. One form was the full liturgical service held in the Lutheran or Reformed Church. These services were sponsored by individual churches or other groups interested in the dialect services. The second form was “the evangelistic type service, held by the evangelistic sects—the United Brethren and Evangelicals, now United Methodists, and others—church organizations which were the product of acculturation between German pietism in Pennsylvania and Anglo-American Methodism” (Yoder 1978, 7). These denominations were not liturgical, so the German used here was closer to the “Dutch” dialect than the

German used by educated clergy. These services developed a strong native Dutch language hymn tradition that grew out of camp meetings and revivals. This native hymn tradition later became known as the Pennsylvania Dutch spiritual.<sup>16</sup> The third form was the all-dialect Sunday school, pioneered by such churches as Huff's Church in 1969.<sup>17</sup>

*Songs Along the Mahantongo*, a book of Pennsylvania Dutch folksongs gathered and edited by Walter E. Boyer, Albert F. Buffington, and Don Yoder, includes songs of childhood, courtship and marriage, the farm, the *Snitzing* Party, the tavern, American life, the New Year's Blessing, and the campground.<sup>18</sup> Divided into sections by song topic, historical background information and song sources are credited before each chorus is notated with a melody and accompaniment chords (see Figure 6).

According to *Songs Along the Mahantongo*, the Pennsylvania Dutch spiritual was born shortly after the Revolutionary War at the camp meetings of the Evangelical Association, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and the Church of God. Camp meetings for the "church satisfied man's social needs as well as giving him food for his soul. And *all of them...came to sing*"! (Yoder, et al., 1964, 199) Camp songs often contained improvised verses interspersed with already familiar choruses. Although the verses changed from area to area, the choruses did not because they were transmitted by circuit riders. Yoder comments, "This varying from place to place, and the fact that they were often in Pennsylvania Dutch rather than in High German, makes them folksongs rather than literary hymns"! (Yoder et al., 1964, 200) Figure 6 "Oh How Lovely" is an

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<sup>16</sup> Although it would be interesting to compare musical practices of the dialect services of the 1940s to the musical practices present in current day dialect services and analyze the influences on or of the dialect, Yoder does not address music specifically in this article; therefore, I do not have enough information to draw these comparisons.

<sup>17</sup> An all-dialect church service continues to be held annually in May.

<sup>18</sup> *Snitzing* Parties were communal get togethers where people would help each other with farming tasks. Sometimes someone would lead everyone in a familiar song to help pass the time. Once the work was completed dancing and singing began as women served pie, cake and cider (Yoder et. al. 1964, 127).

example from the book and “probably the all-time favorite camp meeting choruses” from the Mahantango Valley (Yoder et. al., 201).

Fig. 6. “Oh How Lovely” song sheet (Yoder et al., 203).

SONGS OF THE CAMP GROUND · 203 ·

*chorus -*  
*fp*  
 O wie Lieb-lich, wie lieb-lich, Wie lieb-lich, iss Yeesus, Er  
 iss mein Er-leeser, Mei Haer un mei Freind  
 1. Macht ei-re Lam-ben faddich, Maehl ei-re Lam-ben faddich, Macht  
 ei-re Lam-ben faddich, Un filllet sie mit Eel.

<p>1. Macht eire Lamben faddich,          Macht eire Lamben faddich,          Macht eire Lamben faddich,          Un filllet sie mit Eel.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>2. Un sei des Heils yewaerdich,          Un sei des Heils yewaerdich,          Un sei des Heils yewaerdich,          Bercidet Leib un Seel.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>3. Der Oowent iss yekommen,          Der Oowent iss yekommen,          Der Oowent iss yekommen,          Die finschdre Nacht bricht ei.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>4. Oh seid dir alle hallich          Oh seid dir alle hallich,          Oh seid dir alle hallich,          Siss Yeesus in der Seel.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>5. Oh Brieder seid dir hallich,          Oh Brieder seid dir hallich,          Oh Brieder seid dir hallich,          Siss Yeesus in der Seel.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>6. Oh Schweschdre seid dir hallich,          Oh Schweschdre seid dir hallich,          Oh Schweschdre seid dir hallich,          Siss Yeesus in der Seel.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p>	<p>1. Make haste, get your lamps ready,          Make haste, get your lamps ready,          Make haste, get your lamps ready,          And fill them all with oil.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>2. Prepare for your redemption,          Prepare for your redemption,          Prepare for your redemption,          In body and in soul.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>3. The darkness is descending,          The darkness is descending,          The darkness is descending,          The black night's coming on.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>4. Oh, let us all be happy,          Oh, let us all be happy,          Oh, let us all be happy,          It's Jesus in my soul.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>5. Oh, brothers all be happy,          Oh, brothers all be happy,          Oh, brothers all be happy,          It's Jesus in my soul.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p> <p>6. Oh, sisters all be happy,          Oh, sisters all be happy,          Oh, sisters all be happy,          It's Jesus in my soul.</p> <p><i>Chorus:</i></p>
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## Current Status of Dialect Services

Dialect services flourished for about twenty years but eventually started to decline in frequency. What used to be many churches holding regular dialect services became only a few churches that continued the tradition a few times a year. Today there remain a few church congregations that hold annual dialect services. For example, in the Lehigh

Valley, from four to six dialect services normally take place in the fall. Churches which sponsor a dialect service typically hold it at the same time every year.<sup>19</sup>

In November 2006 I attended two dialect services in two different churches in the Lehigh Valley. Both churches, within a few miles of each other, advertised the dialect service in the local paper. The services had both similarities and differences. I will identify each church with a letter according to the dialect service date. Church A, the Lutheran Church, held a dialect service November 5, 2006. Church B, the United Church of Christ Church, held a dialect service November 19, 2006. Both of these services followed the full Liturgical service structure held in the Lutheran or Reformed Church, which Dr. Yoder identified in his article on dialect services. Table 1 presents a comparative chart of the two services I attended.

Table 1  
Dialect Service Structure Comparison Chart

<b>Church A November 5, 2006</b>	<b>Church B November 19, 2006</b>
1. Long <b>prelude</b> comprised of several songs. Traditional and non traditional instruments. Acoustic and electric instruments. Large performing group.	1. One song <b>prelude</b> played on organ by the organist.
	2. Welcome and announcements led by pastor of church in English.
2. <b>Opening Hymn</b> “Holy, Holy, Holy” in Dutch	3. <b>Opening Hymn</b> “Holy, Holy, Holy” in Dutch
3. Pennsylvania Dutch speaker “Daniel” speaker for service gives welcome to crowd in Dutch.	4. Pastor leads congregation with a short prayer and a congregational response.
4. The women’s <b>choir sings an anthem.</b>	5. The <b>choir</b> (men and women) <b>sings an anthem.</b>
5. Pennsylvania Dutch speaker “Daniel” leads congregation in prayer	
6. The men’s choir sings two songs.	
7. One man reads at the pulpit while the piano vamps chord progressions in the background.	
8. Family of musicians play 3 songs around the piano. Includes guitars, piano and vocals.	6. Pennsylvania Dutch speaker “Daniel” reads the <b>Holy Scriptures</b>
9. <b>Psalm 103</b> read at the pulpit by a congregation member	7. Pennsylvania Dutch speaker “Daniel” gives the <b>sermon.</b>

<sup>19</sup> Occasionally a church may hold two services, but one is more typical.

10. <b>Hymn #2</b> Choir stands; congregation does not	8. <b>Hymn #2</b> “Come Now Almighty God” in Dutch
11. <b>Sermon</b> by Pastor from another church.	9. Pennsylvania Dutch speaker “Daniel” leads the Apostle’s Creed in Dutch
12. <b>Offering</b> is collected while the choir performs the offertory song.	10. Pennsylvania Dutch speaker “Daniel” leads the “Prayer of our Savior” in Dutch
13. Pennsylvania Dutch speaker “Daniel” speaks briefly.	11. <b>Children’s Sermon</b> in English
	12. <b>Offering</b> is collected while the choir performs the offertory song “Geld Sammelte Schtick” (In the Garden).
	13. Offering Response is led by the Pennsylvania Dutch speaker “Daniel” and read by all in Dutch.
	14. Offering prayer: participation requested in English but prayer was spoken in Dutch.
14. <b>Hymn #3</b> “How Great Thou Art”	15. <b>Hymn #3</b> “God be with You” sung by all in Dutch.
15. <b>Benediction</b>	16. <b>Benediction</b>
16. <b>Dismissal</b>	17. <b>Dismissal</b>

Although, as Table 1 indicates, the services had many elements in common, the services differed slightly in terms of structure, music, and treatment of the dialect. Both services were officiated by the same Pennsylvania Dutch community member known for his participation in dialect events. This man whom I call Pennsylvania Dutch speaker Daniel<sup>20</sup> led the prayers at Church A and read the Holy Scripture and gave the sermon at Church B. The Pastor who delivered the sermon at Church A was a visiting pastor who spoke Dutch.

The home pastor of Church A left before the service began because he does not understand Dutch and was not involved in conducting the service. The pastor at Church B, however, did participate in the service in two different ways. She led the first prayer in Dutch, taking time to speak clearly, and then served as English translator when the Holy Scripture was read by Daniel. I learned after the service that she does not speak Dutch, but she had studied High German and so she had to think carefully about her

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<sup>20</sup> Pseudonym

pronunciations in the prayer reading. She remarked after the service that she was frequently corrected on her inflection and pronunciation in rehearsal.

The churches differed in their treatment of Dutch language texts. Both churches provided a bulletin program with Dutch texts for the hymns, prayers, and congregational response sections, with credit given for the translations into Dutch where possible; no hymnals were used at any point. The only Dutch texts that were exactly the same in both services were the opening hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy” and the “Lord’s Prayer.”<sup>21</sup>

Both versions of “Holy, Holy, Holy” were performed in a similar manner and both used the same exact Dutch translation by Minister Larry Neff. The organist at Church A played the end of the melody as a lead in to the beginning of the song. Then the congregation entered on verse one and sang with the choir, accompanied by electric guitar and electric bass. The guitarist and bassist sat in the first pew facing the altar. For the most part, the congregation sang the melody of the hymn in unison. A few people sang the bass, tenor or alto lines, and a few more were slightly more atonal. The pronunciation was relatively clear, suggesting that Church A had a higher percentage of fluent dialect speakers.

Church B also played the introduction with the organ, but there were no other accompanying instruments. The congregation joined in with the organ, starting at the first verse. Once again the majority of the congregation sang the melody while a couple people chose to sing the alto, tenor, and bass lines. The Dutch pronunciation was less clear in this congregation, indicating a lower percentage of fluent dialect speakers. This lack of clarity may also have influenced the rhythm, which was less confident than that of

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<sup>21</sup> “Holy, Holy, Holy” original text by Reginald Heber and original tune by John B. Dykes (Lutheran Book of Worship, 1990).



the performance in Church A, as people did their best to say the words. I found myself listening around me to try and time the words right, and even though I know the song very well, I was still behind the rhythm.

The bulletin for Church A contained only the information needed for the dialect service. The bulletin for Church B was a small booklet that had the service written out on the first four pages and then listed announcements pertaining to the regular church congregation, such as prayer lists, newsletter article requests, and fundraisers, on the last two pages. These differences in the presentation of service material indicated a difference in community attitudes regarding the dialect service: Church A presented the dialect service as a special event, separate from the regular church activities, but Church B presented the dialect service as just another day in the church calendar that happened to use Dutch as its language. I draw from this observation the possibility that Church A is interested in preserving Dutch as a language and Church B is working to include Dutch on a more regular basis. The dialect service provided by Church A is important enough for the community to hold the service, but it does not bear enough weight to earn recognition as a regular part of the regular church events. Church A provides the dialect service once a year for the purpose of serving the congregation who still speaks the language. Church B not only sponsors a dialect service, but also decorated the church with handcrafted quilts and one-room schoolhouse memorabilia, and holds a Pennsylvania Dutch meal following the service making this a whole day event. The pastor also tried to participate by learning her part in Dutch, despite not having fluent speaking skills. Church B revived the entire experience of the dialect service.

Church A provided no English translations for non-speakers but it was evident, judging by the audience reaction to statements made by the dialect leaders, that many of the people understood what was being said. The Church A congregation was composed mostly of older people. There was not an empty pew at Church A's service and most people were sitting close to one another.

In contrast, the bulletin printed for church B's service included English translations for song titles, prayers, and titles of service sections such as "The



Fig. 7. Church pews decorated with quilts for dialect service.

Benediction" and "Offertory." Church B's service was also well attended, but it was a smaller church and was not quite as full as Church A had been; several pews in the front were empty. This congregation included teenagers, young adults, and eight children who also took part in the children's sermon.

The decoration of the two churches was very different. Church A was undecorated, but Church B had designated the service as a "Pennsylvania Dutch Day" and adorned the church with homemade quilts on every pew and one-room schoolhouse memorabilia in every window sill. The following field note describes this beautiful decoration:

*November 19, 2006 I sat down on a pew in the back of the church waiting for the Pastor. I couldn't help but notice how beautiful the church was. The back of every pew was draped with a handmade Pennsylvania Dutch quilt. As I compared what I knew about quilts to what I saw in the room I recognized some patterns as ones my grandmother had crafted. You could see the different time periods represented in the crafting of each quilt, despite its unique character. A couple of women seated down the pew from me chatted among themselves deciding which quilts were the most attractive and which quilts were brought by whom. Three very ornate quilts were also*

*hanging from the edge of the balcony above. Finally the pastor came to meet me. The ushers had me escorted up to the balcony so I could get a better view. I went upstairs where I was all by myself. The rows of pews sloped down toward the front of the balcony. Hymnals held down the edges of the quilts draping down over the edge.*

## **The Importance of Dialect Services**

A public opinion developed in the 1800s that the church service is not an appropriate place for the dialect and that High German was preferred. In his article on dialect services, Yoder included several quotes from people who were upset that the dialect was even being considered for church services in the first place. Regardless, the dialect services grew in popularity and “is now thought important enough to be used in the ‘sacred’ atmosphere of the Church” (Yoder 1978, 12). Although interest and attendance at dialect services declined through the latter part of the twentieth century, attendance at dialect events today, and the lack of controversy surrounding these events, indicates that times have changed and that the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect is considered real and valid.

Translating currently popular hymns into Pennsylvania Dutch for dialect services is one method of preserving the Dutch language. I observed several hymns, such as “Holy, Holy, Holy” and “Come Now Almighty God,” which were translated for the dialect service.<sup>22</sup> For those non-Dutch speakers who attend the dialect services, this practice narrows the gap between the familiar and unfamiliar. Figure 8 is a transcription of “*Heilich, Heilich, Heilich*” (“Holy, Holy, Holy”) as performed at Church A’s dialect service. The vocal melody is notated on the staff with accompaniment chords above. The lyrics are from the first verse of the song. Translation was written by Pastor Larry Neff.

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<sup>22</sup> “Come Now Almighty God” was translated into Dutch by Vernon M. Kamp.

Fig. 8. “Heilich, Heilich, Heilich” song sheet

Handwritten musical score for the song "Heilich, Heilich, Heilich". The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes, and chords are indicated by letters with flats above or below the notes. The lyrics are: "Hei-lich Hei-lich Hei-lich Harr Gott All-mech-dich Frieh duhn mir sin-ge zu Der im Him-mel hoch Hei-lich Hei-lich Hei-lich barm-ha-zich un mech-dich Bischt drei in eens vum Aa-fang bis zum End".

The dialect services also provide a social space, an opportunity to reconnect and identify with others of the same cultural background. There is often a typical Pennsylvania Dutch meal after these services with pot pie, fresh vegetables, cottage cheese with apple butter, and shoe fly pie for dessert. Some meals also include entertainment, usually music provided by local Pennsylvania Dutch performers hired for the occasion. For those who speak Dutch, these services provide an opportunity to converse in Dutch with other people who would otherwise speak English and offer a chance to look around the room and compare one’s own identity with other members of the Pennsylvania Dutch community. Yoder offers this statement:

The movement for dialect services in the Pennsylvania German speaking parishes of Eastern and Central Pennsylvania can be seen for what it is — a significant effort from the grass roots to preserve and maintain the Pennsylvania German mother tongue. It is significant that the Church, which was the last traditional institution in the Pennsylvania German community to preserve High German, should be the last of the older institutions in the culture to attempt to preserve Pennsylvania German. (1978, 12)

## Chapter 4: Public Performance Observations

I observed and videotaped five performances within the Pennsylvania Dutch community between November 5 and December 3, 2006. These performances include Keith Brintzenhoff performing *Belsnickel* at the PGCHC, Christmas carolers at the PGCHC, Keith Brintzenhoff performing an evening of Pennsylvania Dutch music at a church, and two dialect church services. Four of the five performance included music as part of the performance. The only performance that did not include music was Keith Brintzenhoff's *Belsnickel* performance, which I include because of its emphasis on and use of the Pennsylvania Dutch language. I will analyze these five performances in order, emphasizing musical elements including instrumentation, particular performance practices, and the use of the Pennsylvania Dutch language in order to illustrate how these performances serve as tools for preservation.

### **Musical presentation of the Dialect services**

I will now discuss the musical details of the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect church services which I introduced in the previous chapter. I will compare my experiences and observations from two services I attended, noting the similarities and differences. The following is an excerpt from my field journal describing my first dialect church experience:

*November 5, 2006: As my husband and I walked in to Church A we were greeted by several people and handed a program. The woman said, "Here's a program, if you can read it!" I thought that was an interesting thing to say to people coming to a Dutch dialect service, but I headed up the stairs to the balcony to set up my camera. As I scanned the room before the service started I noticed how modern looking this event appeared to be. There was a hand bell choir to the right (left of the altar) performing a variety of music. The music included traditional Christmas carols and Bach arrangements. They played well and appeared to be well rehearsed. The wind players played simple and harmonic melodies but were often out of tune. There were many*

*musicians with the youngest, a boy of about 12, and the oldest, a woman who looked to be in her seventies. There was an air of flexibility within the group as people shifted bell parts for different songs. In front of the altar were a nylon string guitar, an electric bass with an amplifier, and a steel string guitar. I wondered how modern this performance would be and how professional it would sound.*

I was most impressed with the “read it if you can” attitude from the greeter. I questioned whether she was assuming I was too young to understand the language, or maybe she knew from personal experience that many people attending this event do not speak Dutch. I felt as if I had just been treated in a condescending manner and it made me apprehensive about what I was about to experience. As I looked around the church from the balcony, it was interesting to note how the only visible hint of “Dutchness” was the Pennsylvania Dutch flag, hung in the front to the left of the altar, opposite of the organ and choir. The contemporary air to this service was reinforced by the presence of electric instruments and the prelude music. As the dialect service progressed, the “Dutch” atmosphere gained strength once the singing and speaking began.

The musical presentation was very different between the two dialect church services. Church A had a much larger group of musicians participating on more diverse instrumentation than did Church B (refer back to Table 1). The prelude of Church A lasted at least fifteen minutes and featured the hand bell choir performing traditional Christmas music, such as “Silent Night” and “Carol of the Bells,” and several Bach compositions arranged for hand bell choir and wind section. The wind section featured two trumpets, a trombone, and two flutes.

The music during the service at Church A was more upbeat and contemporary; it featured a family of musicians singing three religious songs in Dutch toward the middle of the service. I was not familiar with the titles or melodies of these selections. The instrumentation included a classical guitar, steel string guitar, electric bass, piano, and

harmonized vocals. The guitarists strummed open chords while the piano added an occasional boogie-woogie style to the arrangements. The man playing the classical guitar did not seem to know the chord progressions as well as his female counterpart on the steel string guitar. While he strummed a steady simple beat, and sometimes missed the chord changes, the female guitarist played confidently and performed a bass-pluck pattern where the pattern of root and fifth are played in an alternating fashion for every chord. All of the performers sang one song each, with the exception of the bass player.

The choirs at both churches each had fewer than ten people and used microphones to amplify their sound. Both choirs were composed of older men and women and I did not observe members in either choir who appeared to be younger than forty. Both choir anthems were sung in Pennsylvania Dutch. Both choirs read from some form of printed music and attempted to sing in harmony for whatever voice parts were present in each choir, but unison singing usually prevailed.

### **Dialect preservation through non-musical performance: Belsnickel performances sponsored by the PGCHC**

The following section presents the *Belsnickel* performance and my field notes related to this performance. I observed *Belsnickel* on my first visit to the PGCHC for the performances as part of the “Christmas on the Farm” program December 2, 2006. The following notes are my observations of the school house and my experience of the

*Belsnickel* demonstration:

*December 2, 2006: I looked at the schedule of events posted outside the school house to see what was happening at the festival. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there was a lot more going than just the Belsnickel performances. A rotation of three educational programs in the school house went on for the duration of the festival. The rotation started with a 15-minute presentation on Pennsylvania Dutch*

*Christmas customs and traditions, followed by a 30-minute Belsnickel performance, and then a 15 minute caroling session with all songs sung in Dutch.*

*As I walked up the steps of the school house I was greeted by a woman in a long dress with uniform patterned print material, wearing an apron and a bonnet. She greeted everyone and opened the door so that visitors could go in and out of the cozy schoolhouse entrance. Inside the room the desk-chairs and benches were filling up.*

*Looking around the room, I felt as if I had taken a trip back in time. The school house had five rows of desks facing the front chalkboards with a stove in the middle of the room. I envisioned what it must have been like to be in the seats near the stove when it was burning strong. Maybe the teacher would put the younger children there in winter. Maybe the students who volunteered for unpleasant tasks would be rewarded with a toasty seat. The window sills had local memorabilia including text books, photographs, water buckets, and toys which had been donated. Some of the artifacts were labeled with descriptions of who donated the item or its significance to the one-room school house. Benches lined the perimeter of the room. In the front of the room sat the teacher's desk and a small Santa Claus figure.*

*I slid into a seat at a desk on the right, about four rows back from the front. I wanted to be where I could see the whole room without straining too much. I took out my paper and pen to take some notes on the Christmas traditions speech currently underway. I was soon joined by an elderly man who took a seat next to me as the room became packed with onlookers.*

*As if on cue, Belsnickel tapped on the window with a branch. The woman then warned all the kids that they better have been good because the Belsnickel was coming. Entering from the back of the schoolhouse, Belsnickel was dressed with ragged fur pelts around his neck, his face was dirty and his clothes were ripped. In one hand he held a large blue cloth sac and in the other a tree switch. He walked up the right aisle slowly as he peered at the children, not saying a word. Then once he made his way to the front he stopped, struck his switch on the desk where two children were sitting and yelled something in Dutch.*

*The kids, in shock, were frozen and said nothing. Belsnickel yelled "I said, were you a good little girl?" The girl nodded in agreement but still said nothing. He asked them several other questions to find out if they had helped their mother and if they were nice to their siblings. Each time he asked the question first in Dutch and then in English. Then when he had interrogated them completely he put down the switch and reached into his bag to get a little something for them. He gave the children one of three things. They would get an orange, a handful of nuts, or hard candy. He would crack a joke with each gift and then he would move on to the next child until all children, toddlers thru teenagers, were visited.*

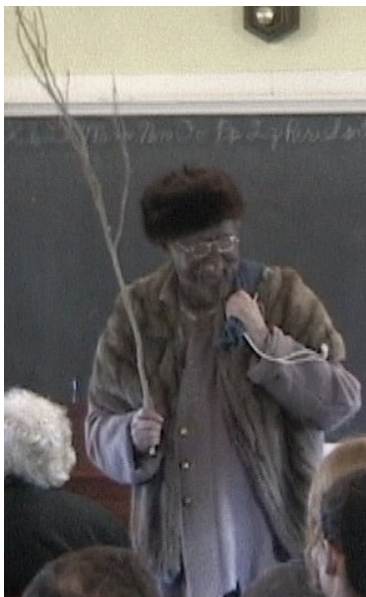


Fig. 9 Belsnickel

At the conclusion of this *Belsnickel* demonstration, Brintzenhoff introduced himself to the group and described what he does as a performer and who hires him to perform. He then explained the history of what the Pennsylvania Dutch *Belsnickel* tradition entailed. According to Brintzenhoff *Belsnickel* comes from the German words for 'pelt' and 'Nicholas'.



*Belsnickel* literally means a “fur pelt-wearing Nicholas” (see Figure 8). *Belsnickel* is usually a family member or friend of the family who dresses up and goes to visit children before Christmas. The two main requirements of a *Belsnickel* are to be unrecognizable (to the children) and to scare children so they will be good for the next year. Figure 9 shows *Belsnickel* interrogating two young girls with his switch in hand. The girls (in white) are leaning away from *Belsnickel* as he interrogates them. The personality of a *Belsnickel* can range from strict to downright mean. The *Belsnickel* tradition was banned for a period in

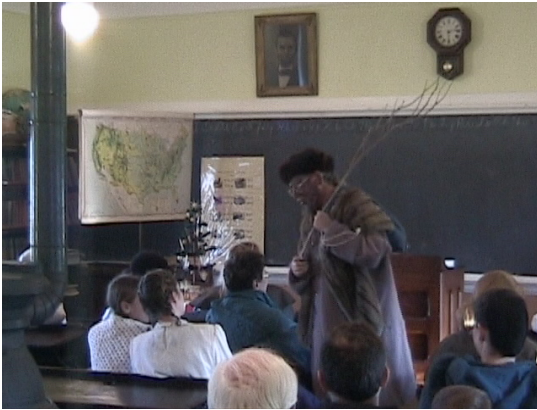


Fig. 10 Belsnickel with switch in hand.

*Belsnickel* would give these special treats to the children if he determined that they had been good (see Figure 10). The *Belsnickel* might also throw candy on the floor to see if the children reach for it. If they did reach for the candy, *Belsnickel* might smack the switch on the floor or on their hands (Brintzenhoff 2006). The

the 1800s because teenagers were *Belsnickeling* the younger children, which often got out of control (Brintzenhoff 2006). Brintzenhoff explained in his post-performance narrative that the gifts given by the *Belsnickel* have significance. Oranges, hard candy, and nuts were often very difficult to get at Christmas time.



Fig. 11. *Belsnickel* offering an orange.

balance of treats in one hand and a switch in the other kept the children guessing which they were going to get.

Humor is a very important factor in language preservation in Brintzenhoff's *Belsnickel* performance. The *Belsnickel* cracked jokes with most of the questions he asked the children. Here is one example from the *Belsnickel* performance that also illustrates the fact that not all English words can be translated, or that the meaning of some Dutch words may have been lost:

*Belsnickel*: "Do you know how to say 'butterscotch' in Pennsylvania Dutch?"  
(The kid shook his head no.)  
*Belsnickel*: "Say 'butterscotch'."  
Boy: "butterscotch."  
*Belsnickel*: "Very good!"

This playful banter kept the audience, young and old, interested in the performance even though not everyone could understand the language. The *Belsnickel* kept the audience guessing as to what he was going to say next.

In this performance, the language was performed in a manner which made it accessible to non-speakers. During the performance the *Belsnickel* would make a statement or ask a question in Dutch and then repeat the statement or question in English; the Dutch language was thus being performed to educate the general public, and the performance served as a preservation tool for the Dutch language.

### **Observing Pennsylvania Dutch Carolers**

The next group I observed on December 2, 2006 was the Pennsylvania Dutch Carolers who were performing in the one-room school house. Nine carolers stood spread out across the front of the one-room school house, in front of a chalkboard facing the audience who were sitting in desks (see Figure 12). The performers were casually



Fig. 12. Pennsylvania Dutch Carolers at the PGCHC.

dressed, except one woman who was dressed as the other volunteers had been around the grounds. The audience members were provided with a copy of the carols to use during the session.

These informal song books had a variety of notation. Some songs were notated in four parts with the soprano and alto parts together on one staff, the song text underneath, and the tenor and bass notes below the text in a separate staff, as it would be notated in hymn books. Other songs only provided a notated melodic line with words under the notation. A few of the songs only provided text with no written musical notation.

The two lead carolers discussed which song they would sing and then called out the song number so that everyone could find it and follow along. There was no choral director for the performance, only a singer from the group who acted as song leader. This leader would start the song and the audience and fellow singers would join in within a few seconds, once the tonal center was established. All songs were sung a cappella and intonation suffered more on less familiar songs. Intonation among the nine singers was inconsistent and the carols tended to go flat by the end of the last verse.

Most of the carols were sung in unison octaves with an occasional departure for the man who sang part of a bass line, the soprano who aimed for a higher note, or the

person who tried to create a harmony. There were also apparently unintentional “harmonies”: one woman had a limited range and could not sing all of the “fa la la la la, la la la la” phrase in “Deck the Halls” on pitch.

Some visitors did not appear to need song books, singing from memory. Others were able to read the songbook and sing along. A few people, like myself, tried to follow along either by following the notation or the words, but were unable to sing. All of the songs were in Dutch, so unless one could read the Dutch text or knew the song already, one could not sing along. One exception was the song “Angels We Have Heard on High” which used Dutch translations for all of the verses, but retained the Latin “Gloria” for the chorus section. I noticed one very elderly woman sitting on the opposite side of the room on a bench. She was not focused on a songbook or on the lead carolers up front. Her mind was disconnected from the active music making going on in the school house. Her eyes were gazing toward the ceiling and she gently sang every word to each song, as if she were recollecting memories of another time in her life, a time when she would have been singing or listening to these songs.

The carolers were organized by a local Dutch language teacher who has taught numerous language classes for the PGCHC. I noticed that the carolers leading the caroling were different in each performance. A couple of the carolers did not appear to be very interested in singing, barely moving their lips at all. After the performance I learned that some of the carolers were Kutztown University students who were enrolled in the Dutch language class, while the other carolers were volunteers from the community. Part of the language class requirement was to perform at this session. Judging by their body language and noted lack of enthusiasm, I inferred that although these students might have

been very interested in learning how to speak Dutch, they were not as enthused with singing in Dutch in front of an audience.

The caroling session was advertised as an information presentation, but it functioned more like a community sing-a-long than a professional performance or “presentation.” The carolers were amateur and the sound quality could be likened to that of a hymn sung at church where everyone does his best to participate in the singing. In sum, caroling was a participatory community event.

### **An Evening of Pennsylvania Dutch Music**

I had the opportunity to observe Keith Brintzenhoff perform a Pennsylvania Dutch music program for a local church on December 3, 2006, the day after I observed his Belsnickel performances at the PGCHC. We were invited to share in a pot-luck dinner, provided by church members, which was followed by Brintzenhoff’s performance of Pennsylvania Dutch music.<sup>23</sup> Santa was scheduled to arrive at the end of the musical entertainment.

Before the meal Brintzenhoff and I sat at a table and made small talk with the other people from the church. We conversed about what it meant to live a Pennsylvania Dutch way of life. The women sitting at the table discussed which church members were Pennsylvania Dutch and who could speak the language, and also noted who was Pennsylvania Dutch but could not speak the language. The woman across the table from me said she could understand spoken Dutch because her husband speaks the language, but she had not been raised Pennsylvania Dutch so she could not speak it herself. Then

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<sup>23</sup> “Pot luck dinners” are communal meals in which everyone attending brings something to contribute to the meal. One person may bring macaroni and cheese or a homemade dessert. The menu is not pre-planned.

she looked at Brintzenhoff and said, “You can tell you’re a Dutchman.” Brintzenhoff laughed and responded, “You can always tell a Dutchman, but you can’t tell him much!” With that the whole table chuckled. We all recognized that Pennsylvania Dutch people have a particular way of presenting themselves and interacting with others. Brintzenhoff looked the part with his beard, non-flashy attire, and witty sense of humor. On a personal level, everyone understood that Pennsylvania Dutch people often have the reputation for being very proud and steadfast, and once their mind is made up, it is hard to convince them otherwise.

After a meal of deviled eggs, baked lima beans with bacon, German potato salad, cole slaw, and roast turkey, it was time for Brintzenhoff’s performance. The first four minutes of the performance were spent warming up to the audience. Brintzenhoff noted that it was family night so he had “songs for kids, little kids and big kids” (2006). Brintzenhoff told several jokes and had a short conversation with a young boy which led into his first song; he then continued to alternate stories and jokes with songs for the remainder of the hour-long performance. Brintzenhoff accompanied his singing first on guitar, then banjo, and finally autoharp.

His program comprised one secular church song, one country song, one gospel song, two popular songs, one art song, two Christmas songs, and nine folk songs. He sang one popular song, one verse of “Silent Night,” and two folk songs (“*Frere Jacques*” and “She’ll be Comin’ Round the Mountain”) in Dutch. Transcribed below in Figure 13 is Brintzenhoff’s translation of “*Frere Jacques*.” Here Brintzenhoff has taken a French folk melody, which is popular among Americans, and translated it into Dutch. The top line represents the sung melody and the bottom line is the autoharp accompaniment. The

lyrics literally translate to “Brother Jacob, sleep you not, hear you not the bells (Bell sounds).”

Fig. 13. “Bruder Jakob” song sheet

Bruder Jacob trans. by Keith Brintzenhoff

Handwritten musical score for "Bruder Jakob" in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four systems of two staves each. The first system has lyrics "Bru-der Jak-ob, Bru-der Jak-ob". The second system has lyrics "Schlofscht du nett, Schlofscht du nett". The third system has lyrics "Heerscht du nett die Glock-en Heerscht du nett die Glock-en". The fourth system has lyrics "Bim Bim Bam Bim Bim Bam". The music features a simple melody on the upper staff and a rhythmic accompaniment of chords on the lower staff.

He sang remaining thirteen songs in English. Brintzenhoff altered both popular songs to add a Pennsylvania Dutch flavor: one by translating the text into Dutch and the other by substituting Dutch words and phrases into the song. He also had numerous short conversations with the audience and told eleven jokes, two of which were close to five minutes long. The program was thus very interactive, and the jokes helped to keep the mood light.

Figure 14 presents the text of Brintzenhoff’s version of “Take Me Out to the Ballgame, which he translated into Pennsylvania Dutch. Brintzenhoff and his wife first performed this song for “Pennsylvania Dutch Night” at the Reading Phillies baseball park.<sup>24</sup> This song is an excellent example of how Pennsylvania Dutch words are constructed around intended meaning when an exact translation is not possible. I have provided a literal English translation which I compiled from the Pennsylvania German Dictionary (Stine 1996). I surveyed native speakers for the constructed words and phrases I could not locate in the dictionary. I have underlined the words provided by the native speakers in Figure 14.

Fig. 14. Pennsylvania Dutch Lyrics with literal English translation for “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.”

*Nemm Mich Raus Zum Balleschpiel*

*Nemm mich raus zum Balleschpiel.  
 Nemm mich raus mit die Leit.  
 Kauff mir deel Grundnis un Bibliwelschkann.  
 Es macht nicht zu mir eb ich nie zerrick kumm.  
 Dann 'sis greisch, greisch, greisch fer die Ballefuhr.  
 Wann sie nett gewinne iss es en Schaad.  
 Fer 'sis eens, zwee, drei Schleg bischt raus  
 bei 'em alt Balleschpiel, nau!*

(literal English translation)

Take me out to one ballgame  
 Take me out to one ballgame  
 Take me out with the people  
 Buy me some groundnuts and small boy corn  
 It makes no to me before I never come back  
 Next it's shout, shout, shout for the Ball team  
 If they not win it is a pity.  
 For it's one, two, three hits are out  
 At the old Ballgame, now!

Brintzenhoff accompanied himself on acoustic guitar as he sang the first refrain in Dutch. He then repeated the refrain in English and invited the audience to sing along, which many did.

The last performance of the evening featured a duet with Santa Claus. After Santa arrived, Brintzenhoff gave his guitar to Santa and picked up the autoharp again. Santa took off his gloves as the two men prepared to play a duet together. Brintzenhoff's

<sup>24</sup> “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” text was written by Jack Norworth and the melody was composed by Albert Von Tilzer in 1908 (Baseball Almanac 2007).



introduction to his last song in the program described how Pennsylvania Dutch

performers adapt Pennsylvania Dutch topics and lyrics to the melodies of popular tunes:

There's a lot of strange music floating around today but if you hunt around a while you'll find some good stuff and one of my favorite modern song writers you know what I sang was mostly [sic] older songs but I do like a lot of newer songs too. When I was listening to this one song which I heard many times and most of you know, and it's written by a guy from Florida who who [sic] wrote about what food, drink, and culture is like down where he lives. So I thought to myself this summer one day, I said 'Hey, if he can write a song like that, I can write a song about food, drink, and culture where I live!' So let's do it! And then I thought, wait a minute...let's do it the easy way. I'm gonna borrow his melody. So you might recognize the melody of this tune and [Santa: that's what makes it naughty]...and Santa Claus and I have never played this together so you should probably cross your fingers, but probably your legs, your arms, your eyes, and everything else...

The introduction to this final song began with the autoharp strumming the melody in chords followed by vamps on a D major chord. Santa listened to see what chord and key Brintzenhoff was playing in, and then joined in on guitar. The melody was instantly recognizable as Jimmy Buffett's song "Margaritaville" (Buffett 1977). Figure 15 is a lyric and chord chart for Brintzenhoff's Pennsylvania Dutch version. I provide comments on Pennsylvania Dutch terms in notes accompanying the figure.

Fig. 15. Brintzenhoff's Pennsylvania Dutch version of Jimmy Buffett's "Margaritaville."

#### VERSE 1

D  
Nibblin on shoofly, waitin' for rhubarb pie  
A  
All of these tourists looking for food  
Strumming my auto harp, thinking out melody parts  
D  
Smell that pot pie it's gonna be good.

#### CHORUS

G A D  
Wasted away again in *Jagermeister stapp*<sup>25</sup> (KB spoken: *You know where that is?*)  
G A D  
Searching for my bottle of peppermint schnapps  
G A D A G  
Some people claim that there's a woman to blame

<sup>25</sup> *Jagermeister* is a German alcoholic beverage sold in a green bottle with a picture of a cross and an antlered deer on the label. *Jagermeister stapp* means the place where you get *Jagermeister*, in other words, the bar.

D

But I know, (N.C.)<sup>26</sup> Dutchie women are tops.

**VERSE 2**

I know the reason it's *elfa dritzel*<sup>27</sup> season

A

But I need some help from this old hang sine  
The hunting is better, in *distelfink*<sup>28</sup> weather!

D

I think I'll just have some dandelion wine<sup>29</sup>  
(Spoken: Here we go!)

**CHORUS**

G      A                      D

Wasted away again in *Jagermeister stapp*

G              A              D

Searching for my bottle of peppermint schnapps (Santa spoken: Merry Christmas!)

G              A              D    A              G

Some people claim that there's a woman to blame

D

But I know, (N.C.) Dutchie women are tops.

**VERSE 3**

Kicked off my farm boots  
I stumble on tree roots

A

Hurt my toes had to hobble back home  
But there's schnapps in the kitchen, and apples for schnitzen

D

And sausage sandwiches help me hang on

**CHORUS**

G      A                      D

Wasted away again in *Jagermeister stapp*

G              A              D

Searching for my bottle of peppermint schnapps

G              A              D    A              G

Some people claim that there's a woman to blame

D

But I know, (N.C.) Dutchie women are tops.

**OUTRO**

G              A              D    A              G

Some people claim that there's a woman to blame

D

But I know, (N.C.) Dutchie women are tops.

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<sup>26</sup> (N.C.) stands for "no chord." The musician stops the strings from vibrating until the next chord is to be played.

<sup>27</sup> *Elfa dritzel* is a game where a group of people convince one person to go out into the woods with a paper bag and call the snipe (an imaginary being), hoping to catch it in the bag.

<sup>28</sup> A *Distelfink* is the quail-like bird that appears in Pennsylvania Dutch artwork including hex signs.

<sup>29</sup> Dandelion wine is a homemade wine made from the dandelion weed which grows in most yards. This wine has the reputation for being a very strong alcoholic drink.

This song reaffirms several characteristics of present-day Pennsylvania Dutch folk music style. Brintzenhoff appropriates the melody and chord progression of a very well known song, but he changes the words to represent topics of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture. He talks about shoofly pie, rhubarb pie, pot pie, and sausage sandwiches, which are all foods of the Pennsylvania Dutch. His frequent mentions of Jagermeister, peppermint schnapps, and dandelion wine implies that the culture has a fondness for alcohol. He talks about hunting and farming, which are both important to Pennsylvania Dutch culture. The *distelfink*, mentioned in Verse 2, is the quail-like bird often used in decorative painting and has become a regular addition to hex sign disks.<sup>30</sup>

This song, which uses the D, G, and A major chords, is in the key of D. Although “Margaritaville” is a rock song, these chords are also very common in American folk music as they are played as open chords. The strumming pattern for both the autoharp and the guitar remain consistent throughout the song, except for the no-chord (N.C.) section in the chorus.

Brintzenhoff's performance suggests the following: Pennsylvania Dutch musicians often appropriate popular songs that are familiar to many people and either adapt Dutch lyrics to fit the melodies, or translate the lyrics into Dutch. The concept of “popular songs” covers a wide range of music and can include traditional folk songs such as “She’ll Be Comin’ Around the Mountain,” patriotic tunes such as “America,” as well as the latest top 40 hit on the radio.<sup>31 32</sup> When Pennsylvania Dutch musicians blend the

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<sup>30</sup> Hex signs are symbols commonly painted onto barns or buildings. Hex signs can represent such ideas as fertility, peace, and love.

<sup>31</sup> The first printed version of the song “She’ll Be Comin’ Around the Mountain” appeared in Carl Sandburg's *The American Songbag* in 1927. The song is believed to have been written during the late 1800s and was based on an old Negro spiritual titled “When the Chariot Comes.” During the 19th century it spread through Appalachia where the lyrics were changed into their current form (Sandburg 1927).

<sup>32</sup> “America” was written by Samuel Francis Smith in 1832 (Todd 2007).

Pennsylvania Dutch language with music appreciated by the majority of the community, the musicians are able to poke a little fun, express proud patriotism, and connect with the folk roots of the United States of America, a country they appreciate and are proud to live in. In other words, to perform Pennsylvania Dutch folk music is to perform ethnicity by drawing parallel connections to the broader U.S. culture. Pennsylvania Dutch musicians identify as Americans when they use popular, folk, and familiar melodies but also establish themselves as a member of the Dutch through use of the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. They put a Dutch flavor on a recipe that is Americana.

### Evaluation of all the Pennsylvania Dutch Performances

Table 2  
Instrumentation and Language Usage Observed in Pennsylvania Dutch Performances

	<b>KB at church</b>	<b>Church A Dialect Service</b>	<b>Church B Dialect Service</b>	<b>PGCHC Carolers</b>	<b>KB as <i>Belsnickel</i></b>
<b>Guitar</b>	X	X			
<b>Bass</b>		X			
<b>Piano</b>		X	X		
<b>Organ</b>		X	X		
<b>Banjo</b>	X				
<b>Autoharp</b>	X				
<b>Handbells</b>		X			
<b>Wind Instruments</b>		X			
<b>A Cappella</b>				X	
<b>Dutch</b>	Sung and spoken	Sung and spoken	Sung and spoken	Sung	Spoken
<b>English</b>	Sung and Spoken		Spoken	Spoken	Spoken

I'd like to offer some summary comments on all the performances I observed in terms of instrumentation, language usage and accessibility, and typical performance practices. The Pennsylvania Dutch musical performances I observed often used string instruments, were generally acoustic, used amplification as needed, often employed English translations, and always used the Pennsylvania Dutch language.

Table 2 illustrates the large variety of instruments used at these five performances. Of the eight instruments or instrument categories I observed, five were string instruments, two were wind instruments, and one was percussion. The guitar, piano, and organ were the only instruments to be used in two performances. Two of the eight instruments, the bass and the organ, were electric instruments. The remaining six were acoustic instruments, although some of these were played near a microphone and amplified in order to be heard. Microphones were used to amplify the choirs at both dialect services. Both church choirs were rather small, no more than twelve people, who otherwise would not have been heard by the entire congregation. The carolers at the PGCHC were not amplified, which was most likely related to the fact that the one-room schoolhouse was smaller than the sanctuaries of both churches and therefore amplification was not needed. Keith Brintzenhoff used two microphones (one for singing and the other to amplify the guitar and banjo) and a small PA system at his church performance. Although all five performances used Pennsylvania Dutch, only the dialect service at Church A was performed entirely in the Pennsylvania Dutch language. The other four performances used English either for spoken translation or in song. These five performances served as preservation tools for the Pennsylvania Dutch language in many ways.

The dialect service at Church A used Pennsylvania Dutch for the entire service, including all musical performances. This preserved the experience of what dialect services were intended to be when they were initiated in 1940 by Pennsylvania German churches: church services entirely in the dialect without any use of English (Yoder 1978, 6).

The other four performances provided the audience with a balance of English and Dutch. Some English was provided as translation. When Brintzenhoff spoke Dutch during the *Belsnickel* performance, it was followed by a spoken English translation. This format allowed the audience, especially the young children, to understand the dialog even if they did not speak the language. Brintzenhoff's performance at the church utilized a balance of English and Dutch, although the Dutch was not translated into spoken English. Brintzenhoff sang songs and told stories in English and sang songs in Dutch. When the choir sang carols in Dutch, printed text was provided so that participants could try their best to follow along. Judging by what I heard, a large portion of the audience was able to follow the lyrics in Dutch.

The dialect service at church B also provided written text to facilitate participation for as many as possible. The bulletin printed all the text for the service in Dutch including hymns and recited prayer sections, some of which had English translations. The sermon was not printed in the bulletin but it was translated into English section by section. The speaker spoke a short section in Dutch and then the pastor of the church recited the same section in English. This continued until the sermon was complete.

Providing English translations, whether verbal or written, keeps the Pennsylvania Dutch language accessible to the public (and to non-Dutch-speaking community

members). Public audiences may be less inclined to attend dialect activities if the Pennsylvania Dutch language becomes inaccessible through lack of translation. But are people conscious of these language barriers and of the attempts being made to bridge them? Are people interested in learning Dutch? Have these preservation efforts paid off?

I thought back to one of the *Belsnickel* performances. I noticed a young girl of about twelve, who came in to the schoolhouse with her older friend. Both girls were dressed in long dresses and aprons with their hair braided. I assumed that they were volunteers for the day as they were dressed the same. As they walked toward the front to sit down, the younger one asked the older one how to say a couple of phrases in Dutch. They appeared to have experienced a *Belsnickel* performance before, and the young girl was trying to prepare her answers in Dutch ahead of time. When the *Belsnickel* questioned her in Dutch she tried to respond in Dutch. The *Belsnickel* was a little surprised that he got Dutch responses and then proceeded to ask a series of questions in Dutch. The girl froze for a second before turning to her friend for some help translating. When the *Belsnickel* saw this, he chuckled and helped her with what she should say. At least some people, young and old, are indeed interested in learning and conversing in Dutch.

Several common threads tie the different Pennsylvania Dutch performances together. Among all the performances I noticed a concerted effort to bridge the language gap and make the presentation of Pennsylvania Dutch music and culture accessible to the general public, specifically to the non-speakers, through translations into English and the use of borrowed English-language musics. The Dutch, either written or spoken, was verbally translated where written English translations were unavailable or impractical.

And even though the Pennsylvania Dutch carolers sang all the songs in Dutch, the songs that had been translated into Dutch from English were popular, well-known Christmas carols, so the melody was already familiar to the audience. Written English translations were also provided for the majority of the dialect services.

The second common characteristic I noticed was the willingness to adapt traditional practices to modern venues. For example, the hand bell choir at Church A played traditional Christmas songs, Western art music, and sacred music for the prelude. Later in the service, electric guitar and electric bass were added to the organ for the hymn singing. In both situations, popular music was accented with electric and acoustic instruments. Brintzenhoff further exemplified this characteristic by also demonstrating that “Dutch” music can encompass a variety of genres including country, folk, bluegrass, sacred, gospel, and Western art music. Brintzenhoff also balanced his use of English and Dutch, only using Dutch to translate familiar English songs. It was evident that the people of this community enjoy listening to this performance of various genres as the audience sang along with almost every song he performed.

The final characteristic common among the performances was that each involved audience participation. *Belsnickel* had a conversation with every child in the audience for each of his three performances, the carolers led a group sing-a-long, Brintzenhoff’s evening of Pennsylvania Dutch music requested the participation of the audience throughout the show, and the dialect services provided text for a large portion of the church service so that the audience could follow the service and participate. With all of these observations in place, it is now appropriate to evaluate the presence of a revival within the Pennsylvania Dutch community in Southeastern Pennsylvania.



## Chapter 5: Incorporating Preservationist Methods and Revivalist

### Agendas

Having discussed resources, community efforts, and performance practices used to preserve the Pennsylvania Dutch language and folk traditions, I move on to the final question: Is the Pennsylvania Dutch community experiencing a music revival? To evaluate this question I will review Tamara C. Livingston's criteria for music revivals in order to compare these characteristics to a chronological overview of important musical, lingual and folklore accomplishments in the Pennsylvania Dutch community. Then I will discuss whether or not my interviewees agreed with my rationale that the Pennsylvania Dutch community is experiencing a revival.

Livingston states that

music revivals can be defined as social movements which strive to 'restore' a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for the benefit of contemporary society. Music revivals are middle class phenomena which play an important role in the formulation and maintenance of a class-based identity of subgroups of individuals disaffected with aspects of contemporary life (66).

Livingston's set of characteristics that constitute a revival consists of

- an individual or small group of "core revivalists"
- revival informants and/or original sources (e.g. historical sound recordings)
- a revivalist ideology and discourse
- a group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community
- revivalist activities (organizations, festivals, competitions)
- non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market (found where there is a highly developed market economy). (69)

As I discuss these criteria, not only will I show that Livingston's revival characteristics are defensible, but I will also use these criteria to establish that a revival movement is currently taking place within the Pennsylvania Dutch community of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

## **Important Pennsylvania Dutch Musical, Linguistic and Folklore Activities**

I have identified a series of cultural and linguistic preservation events that have occurred over the past century. The Groundhog Lodge *Fersommlings* were formed in 1934, the first Pennsylvania Dutch dialect church service was introduced in 1940, three folklife scholars collectively organized the “Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival” in 1950 and the PGCHC was formed early in the 1990s with the support of Kutztown University. What I have yet to discuss is the events in the forty-year span between the beginning of the folk festival and the formation of the PGCHC.

The American Bicentennial celebrations of the mid 1970s continued the progression of culturally based initiatives stemming from the 1930s. The American Bicentennial year of 1976 saw a resurgence of dialect efforts as America celebrated its 200th birthday. One way the Pennsylvania Dutch people celebrated their heritage was to create original literary works, in the dialect, which they performed as part of local celebrations. Huff’s Union Church is a prime example of this language revitalization initiative. The following is the Huff Church's own description of their dialect plays:

*The Pennsylvania Dutch Players* [of Huff’s Union Church] seek to perpetuate the heritage of our German ancestors by providing plays in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. In 1975 the first Pennsylvania Dutch Play by *Die Huffa Karrich Deutsche Leit* [The Huff’s Church Dutch Players] was performed, and has continued yearly ever since. These plays are presented annually, in the fall of the year. On occasions they are also presented in neighboring churches and on local radio stations. These plays have become very successful and draw thousands of people to their performances. In recent years, as many as 2,000 people have attended these plays (Huff’s Union Church 2006).

Revivalists often believe that revivals benefit contemporary society. The statement “seek to perpetuate the heritage of our German ancestors by providing plays in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect” reinforces the idea that a revivalist mentality supports the revival of language. Public interest in these plays fuels future interest, and the fact

that these plays are presented outside of Huff Church's congregation supports this revivalist initiative by relegating these dialect events as a benefit to society. This dialect play phenomenon also aligns with several of Livingston's revival characteristics: There are a small core of revivalists, a group of followers which forms the basis of a revivalist community, revivalist activities, and a revivalist ideology which, in this case, perpetuates and preserves a language which represents a particular community. Interestingly, these dialect plays are advertised more for the dialect element and heritage of our German ancestors rather than advertised by a specific title or topic. This generalization puts more emphasis on who is performing and why the play is being performed than on what specific play is being performed.

All of the linguistic and cultural preservation efforts organized during the 1900s are still in operation today. Of this sequence of events, the most significant milestone for preservation and revivalist theories was the founding of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival. This festival single-handedly provides all of the "basic ingredients" identified by Livingston in her article on music revivals and adds strong support to the argument that the festival is part of a musical and linguistic revival in the Pennsylvania Dutch community. The history and annual events of the festival explains how the festival supports preservation and revivalist ideals.

### **Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival History as it Relates to Preservation and Revival**

Three folklife scholars, Dr. Don Yoder, Dr. Alfred Shoemaker and Dr. J. William Frey, organized the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival. The festival was originally held over five days with "four tents of basically agricultural and Pennsylvania Dutch cultural

exhibits...Later the festival expanded and new programs were added” (Kutztown Folk Festival Flyer 2007). Today the folk festival is organized and run by a select group of people who oversee the logistics of festival functions. Two hundred juried craftspeople make and/or perform their crafts at the festival, twelve performing music groups and five solo musicians entertain audiences, and twenty-six demonstrations/presentations are scheduled in daily rotations.<sup>33</sup> These people, who are responsible for forming and maintaining the festival, function as the “core revivalists” that Livingston identifies as the first revival criteria.

According to the Kutztown Pennsylvania German Festival website, the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival currently runs eight days and includes Pennsylvania Dutch competitions, presentations, entertainment, folklife activities for all ages, craftspeople, and food vendors. The opening and closing special event is a Pennsylvania German Church Service held on each Sunday of the festival (2007). Many presenters share information on a variety of Pennsylvania Dutch topics such as folk beliefs, dialect humor, quilting techniques, and storytelling. According to the *Destinations* insert in *The Parkland News* “The quilt auction on the second Saturday of the festival is the highlight of the show and is attended by a large number of bidders from the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond.”<sup>34</sup> Demonstrations include a traditional wedding, a Mennonite wedding, a historically-significant mock hanging, children’s games, and farming techniques. Traditional music performed at the 2007 festival included, fiddle players, a roving accordion player, a brass band, a hoedown band, sacred hymn singing, bluegrass bands, and a local music showcase of mixed instrumentation.

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<sup>33</sup> This information was collected from the 2007 Kutztown Festival Flyer.

<sup>34</sup> This information was collected from *Destinations* Vol. 4 Issue 10 insert in *The Parkland News*

Presentations and performances take place regularly on five stages, with many performers and presenters repeating their repertoire several times a day, at various locations, for the length of the festival. This repetition of performers raises the question: Why are particular performers scheduled to perform repeatedly throughout the festival? I believe this issue relates directly to the issue of establishing authenticity. If this is a revival, the revivalists are using a small group of “core revivalists” to reinforce concepts and understandings about Pennsylvania Dutch music and culture. The more repetition that is provided, the more ingrained a perception becomes. This quality of the festival aligns with Livingston’s second criteria which addresses the presence of “informants and/or original sources” within revivals. As Livingston notes, “[A]uthenticity [can be] defined in terms of historically accurate scores or instruments, performance practices based on replication a historically remote experience, or any of these aspects combined” (1999, 75). Brintzenhoff is one performer who makes a point to justify his performances with historical explanations of why he performs certain songs or on certain instruments. For example, when he plays the first autoharp song of a performance he always informs the audience that a German immigrant in Philadelphia designed the first autoharp, thus therefore linking music with historical lineage.

This leads us to the conversation about discourse within and about the folk festival. I discovered an interesting revivalist discourse as I perused articles and advertisements before and after the 2007 festival. The first attribute I noticed was a photo caption in The Parkland Press “Kutztown Folk Festival Memories” section, printed the week after the 2007 festival. The caption listed all the available activities at the festival and claimed “all of which represent Pennsylvania German culture” (The Parkland Press

2007). The important word here is “represent.” Does “represent” mean a modern presentation of something old that has lost popularity or does not really exist anymore, or is the community choosing the best of what it has to offer in terms of providing outsiders with a better understanding of what it is to be Pennsylvania Dutch. According to the Official 2007 Program Booklet of the Kutztown Folk Festival, the original goal was to “produce an event that was unlike anything done before—a festival that would explain the life and customs of the Pennsylvania Germans...and also provide some wholesome entertainment for visitors (2007). Either way, the people providing this representation are reviving traditions that have value to the Pennsylvania Dutch community. This conversation regarding discourse parallels that of Livingston’s third basic ingredient: “a revivalist ideology and discourse” (1999, 69).

Livingston states, “In order to create a sense of community, revivalist[s] ...hold festivals and competitions [to] bring people physically together” (73). The fact that this festival of Pennsylvania Dutch culture has been held every year for the past 57 years is testament enough to support Livingston’s fifth ingredient: “revivalist activities [including] organizations, festivals, [and] competitions (69). Contests at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival include a dialect contest, liars contest, and a quilting contest.<sup>35</sup> As Goertzen stated, the forum of a contest allows revival efforts to be located and these particular contests are uniquely Dutch. The festival has become a central event for disseminating information about the Pennsylvania Dutch to the cultural insiders, cultural outsiders, and the culturally curious.

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<sup>35</sup> The liars competition is a storytelling competition to see who can tell the most creative and far-fetched story while still maintaining some level of credibility. Stories are often based on real events but are exaggerated by the storyteller. The audience judges the winner.

Livingston states that “revivalist communities are non-territorial; their membership may span local and national boundaries, and they often bring together people whose paths might never have crossed outside of the revival” (72). This statement holds true for the Kutztown festival as well. The attendance for the first festival was a few hundred people. Today visitors include the great grandchildren of the original attendants, as well as people from all over the United States and several foreign countries (Kutztown Folk Festival Flyer 2007). People in the surrounding communities, and those outside the immediate community, travel to the Kutztown festival every year. These people validate Livingston’s fourth criteria: “a group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community.”

In 2007, the Kutztown Festival attracted a record 130,000 visitors. It is now the oldest and largest continuing folklife festival in America. Among many honors, the festival has been twice selected as one of America's Top 100 events by the American Bus Association, and was named by the *Washington Post* as one of three ‘must see’ festivals in the region.  
(Fooks)

Many people who participate in Pennsylvania Dutch cultural events, such as the Kutztown Folk Festival, are middle class and are active participants because they believe the culture is changing, as the usage of the Pennsylvania Dutch language appears to slowly diminish. In a letter to the editor in The Morning Call, March 21, 2007, a man named Bill commented on how the Pennsylvania German language has been slipping away over the past fifty years that he has lived in the community. He tells the story of overhearing a conversation about scrapple, of which, some was in Dutch. Bill stated, “This simple scene showed the essence of the Lehigh Valley I once knew, where most of the kids I went to school with had parents who spoke Pennsylvania German and quite a few had noticeable accents...This is the Lehigh Valley that is passing into history. I miss

it” (Wise 2007). These people recognize that external influences on the culture, especially English, have affected the direction of the community, and they want to keep the language alive and well amidst a changing and more modern societal structure. As I argued earlier, these participants are what Livingston might call “core revivalists, [who] whether ‘insiders’ to the tradition or ‘outsiders,’ tend to feel such a strong connection with the revival tradition that they take it upon themselves to ‘rescue’ it from extinction and pass it on to others” (1999, 70).

In the months leading up to the festival one can see the folk festival advertised on billboards, websites, radio and television; and in newspapers, local magazines, and flyers. At the festival can purchase festival memorabilia including hats, shirts, name brand figurines (which feature Belsnickel and Amish people); Hex signs, Beanies, coffee mugs, buttons, lapel pins, and festival posters; and the craftwork of artisans presenting their wares (Fooks 2007). The primary sponsors of the festival include Kutztown University, The Morning Call, Byers Choice Ltd., and three radio stations. Other local businesses also run advertisements in the flyer. Although parking is free, adults must pay a daily and weekly admission rate (children are free). As a result, the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival satisfies Livingston’s final revival criteria as a “commercial enterprise catering to the revivalist market” (1999, 69). But is this festival, and its music, a part of what insiders would consider a “revival”?

### **Community Opinion: Is there a revival in progress?**

I asked my interviewees if they thought the Pennsylvania Dutch culture was experiencing a cultural and/or linguistic revival. At the time of my interviews I was not



clear on the definition of a revival. I did not have specific criteria to present to the interviewees which described and defined the term “revival.” When I asked them if the Pennsylvania Dutch community was experiencing a cultural revival, I was interested to see how all the interviewees would react to the question, and how their ideas would align or differentiate.

Darlene Moyer, assistant director for the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center answered an almost immediate “Yes!” Moyer's answer is logical since the PGCHC has begun to flourish in the past few years, as evidenced by steadily increasing attendance at events and significant donations of money and artifacts to the Center. The PGCHC is supported monetarily by Kutztown University, linguistically by the Groundhog Lodges, and academically by community leaders and scholars. Scholars and community members appear to be working together through the PGCHC to ensure the success of the PGCHC’s promotion of Pennsylvania Dutch heritage, culture, music, and language.

When I asked Dr. Yoder if he thought the culture was experiencing a revival, he said “No,” almost as quickly as Darlene Moyer had said “Yes!” Yoder said that he felt the current status of language-preservation efforts were more like regular maintenance than a revival. I do not believe that Yoder was implying that the language is so strong that it would not need or could not use a revival. Instead, I understood that Yoder may see current efforts as an act to stave off decline by stabilizing the language. I then asked if he thought the PGCHC could be instrumental in initiating a revival for the Pennsylvania Dutch community. Yoder agreed that the PGCHC has potential to inspire a revival, but it would take time to know the long term effects.

Dr. Yoder's opinion is intriguing. I have presented evidence to support the ideal that the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival pinnacled the efforts aimed at preserving Pennsylvania Dutch language and culture, and solidified a revival. According to Livingston's six basic criteria of a music revival, the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival brought the Pennsylvania Dutch culture into the general public's eye and constituted a revival. Given Yoder's response to my interview question, it is possible that as a co-founder of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival, Yoder unintentionally helped establish a revival, but was too personally involved to clearly see this possibility.

Finally, I consulted Brintzenhoff who is a regular performer in Pennsylvania Dutch communities and a certified school teacher. I met with Brintzenhoff on the grounds of the PGCHC during the "Easter on the Farm" presentation on March 31, 2007. Although he was not performing, his wife was there to volunteer. Brintzenhoff also pointed out that he and his wife helped design the garden beside the farmhouse when the PGCHC was first established, indicating that he has been involved with the PGCHC for many years. Brintzenhoff fits Livingston's demographics of a revivalist as "core revivalists almost always come from the ranks of middle class as scholars, [and] professional or amateur musicians..." (1999, 70). Brintzenhoff has performed at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival for almost two decades, as well as presenting educational music programs in and around the Pennsylvania Dutch community for many years. When I asked Brintzenhoff if he thought there was a current revival movement he hesitated and then said he was not sure. When I asked him if he thought the PGCHC could be influential in initiating one he strongly agreed. Brintzenhoff's responses indicate

that he acknowledges the importance and influence of the PGCHC but is unclear about what a “revival” is by definition or what the parameters may include.

Although their responses varied, all three interviewees agreed that the influence of the PGCHC is strong and that it could be very influential in initiating a revival—provided that one was not present to begin with. Interestingly, Brintzenhoff and Yoder, the two people furthest removed from the daily happenings of the PGCHC, did not characterize current Pennsylvania Dutch preservation efforts as a revival. Although Yoder and Brintzenhoff are not passive participants, they may view their own personal activities as something they do because it is important to share what they know and have learned about the Pennsylvania Dutch culture. Yoder and Brintzenhoff are also both connected to the folk festival as co-founder and entertainer/presenter respectively. On the other hand, Moyer actively pursues increased recognition of the Pennsylvania Dutch people, culture, music, language, and community through her work and initiatives at the PGCHC.

I agree with Moyer that a revival, which includes music as a very important element, is present in the community. The music portion of this cultural revival may be considered a revival within a revival, as I have aligned Livingston’s music revival criteria with all the folklore events, activities, and music making agendas of the Pennsylvania Dutch community. To further recognize this relationship, I acknowledge that I have not attended any Pennsylvania Dutch event that has not had music as an important component.

## **Exploring the relationship of the PGCHC and the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival**

One hundred years ago people of Pennsylvania Dutch heritage began preserving the Pennsylvania Dutch language. Linguistic-focused fraternities were formed, television and radio programs hosted dialect programs, newspapers printed dialect columns, churches invited the dialect in for a sermon and a hymn or two, and three folklife scholars acknowledged the importance a festival would bear for the Pennsylvania Dutch community. Later journals would chronicle stories and events within the community and a heritage center would be established to promote all things Dutch.

The Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival, the most visible and largest public display of Pennsylvania Dutch folklore and folklife, has a diverse and broad schedule of performances, presentations, and demonstrations featuring traditions of the Pennsylvania Dutch deemed important enough to share with the rest of the world. Many regular presenters speak to a wide variety of topics even though they may be considered an “expert” in one particular area. This fact suggests that there is consensus within the Dutch community on many topics and that personal experiences are not relegated to one person’s viewpoint, but are shared within the community. The PGCHC, with its year-round schedule of performance and educational opportunities, is only the latest addition to a revival which was established with the folk festival.

So is this a music revival? I find it extremely challenging to prove that a music revival exists without considering the cultural and linguistic influences that are intertwined. I believe that there is a music revival which is part of a larger, more complex cultural revival. I also believe that this music element is extremely important to the larger context because music was always present at every event or festival I attended as part of

this ethnographic research. I base this conclusion based on the evaluation of several articles which address folk and music revival, journals which chronicle Pennsylvania Dutch customs and community activities, personal observations of performances and presentations, and interviews with knowledgeable people active in the Pennsylvania Dutch community. This revival has developed out of current folklore preservation efforts and performance practices which strive to preserve language, and constitute a revival in terms of culture, music, and language. Although music is an integral part of this revival, it is not the sole driving force. Continued public interest in revivalist events, monetary support from Kutztown University, nostalgic connections regarded by the community, and scholarly validation keep this revival alive.

The initiatives of the PGCHC add strength to the ongoing Pennsylvania Dutch revival movement solidified almost 60 years ago. The PGCHC is able to perpetuate cultural conservation efforts initiated by the Groundhog Lodges and the Folk Festival because the PGCHC is a permanent physical entity which anchors Pennsylvania Dutch culture. Unlike the fairgrounds used for the annual folk festival or the meeting halls used for annual Groundhog Lodge meetings, the PGCHC holds programs year round in a collection of buildings which are only used for Pennsylvania Dutch related purposes. Although the PGCHC can not offer the diversity and wealth of information the Folk Festival is able to offer simultaneously, the PGCHC offers a regular calendar of seasonal celebrations and holiday festivals which would otherwise be out of context at the Folk Festival. The PGCHC has been important in bringing Pennsylvania Dutch people together, as well as reaching out to others interested in learning more about the culture, and with continued support, it will do so for many years to come.

## **Summary of Pennsylvania Dutch Performance Observations**

To evaluate how language has been and continues to be preserved through performance, I have observed Pennsylvania Dutch musical performances as part of folk festivals, cultural center events, dialect services, and Church-sponsored activities. I have read about the entertainment provided at Groundhog Lodge meetings and the songs sung at camp meetings, and I have observed non-musical presentations of the dialect with Belsnickel and dialect plays.

In all of these performance venues I have found the following linguistic characteristics to be true. In all of the dialect events there has been a bi-lingual presentation combining English and Dutch. The dialect translation has been presented in one of two ways: Dutch is translated through written English text provided at the beginning of the event or immediate verbal English translation is provided throughout the presentation. Dutch is frequently chosen for sung or spoken material that is expected to be familiar to the general audience. In the case of dialect services, popular sacred hymns, well-known scripture, and standard prayers have all been in Dutch. In the case of musical performance, popular and familiar melodies, such as “Silent Night” and “She’ll Be Coming Around the Mountain” have been chosen for Dutch text.

So what are the characteristics of Pennsylvania Dutch music? Focusing on the sound scape I have noticed that musical texture of the congregational hymn singing and Christmas carolers shifted from homophonic to polyphonic as people tried to harmonize the main melody with varied degrees of success. Singers, usually accompanied by at least one harmonic instrument, such as organ, piano or guitar, were almost always found in

groups. There was a heavy emphasis on American folk instruments such as acoustic guitar, autoharp, fiddle, and banjo. Oral tradition permeates the culture as an essential element in compensating for the lack of a standardized phonetic spelling system—which makes a written tradition more challenging to maintain. Humor and audience participation are key elements in terms of performance practice. Every performance I observed employed these two characteristics with the exception of the Pennsylvania Dutch Christmas Carolers, which relied heavily on audience participation.

Another performance practice technique which can add to the humor element is that Pennsylvania Dutch performers often align popular melodies with Dutch topics and text, thereby altering songs to parody the Pennsylvania Dutch lifestyle. Brintzenhoff did this multiple times, including his version of “Margaritaville,” to connect on a more personal level with Pennsylvania Dutch people.

### **Closing Remarks**

The modern Pennsylvania Dutch community has been continually challenged to preserve a language their ancestors brought to America in the late 1700s. Over time, these Germanic descendants learned how to balance the pressure of acculturation into an English speaking society with the drive to preserve a proud German identity. Despite the fact that many people think the language will eventually be extinct, the language continues to survive. The Pennsylvania Dutch community is collaboratively preserving its language by publicly performing what it means to be Pennsylvania Dutch. These people use Dutch as a vehicle to share cultural, historical, communal, and musical heritage. With the establishment of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival, the

Pennsylvania Dutch people have inadvertently established a cultural revival, in which a musical revival has transpired. Music is a powerful and indispensable element of cultural propagation and language preservation efforts for the Pennsylvania Dutch. I admire the creative minds that constantly redefine and reshape Pennsylvania Dutch identity in order to connect the old ways with the new, while at the same time maintaining various traditions which are important to the society. I also pay homage to those people like Brintzenhoff, Moyer and Yoder who have made and continue to make a difference in the community. It is the ingenuity of these people that ensure the continuing vitality of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture, language and music.



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