

**THE FOLKLORE OF  
THE PENNSYLVANIA  
GERMANS**

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The Folklore of the Pennsylvania Germans by John Baer Stoudt

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**JOHN BAER STOUDT**

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HOW FOLKLORE IS TRANSMITTED

The Folklore  
of the  
Pennsylvania Germans

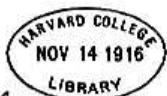
A PAPER READ BEFORE  
THE PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN SOCIETY  
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING  
YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, OCTOBER 14TH, 1910

BY  
REV. JOHN BAER STOUDT



PHILADELPHIA  
WILLIAM J. CAMPBELL  
1916

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THIS VOLUME IS KINDLY INSCRIBED  
TO MY SON  
JOHN JOSEPH STOUDT  
WHOSE ANCESTORS LARGELY CONTRIBUTED  
THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK



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## INTRODUCTION.

THE study of folklore has a charm all its own. As intimated by the very word itself, folklore is popular literature contrasted with the compositions of individual authors. The former is marked by simplicity and uniformity and the latter by complication and diversity. The one is the unconscious and naïve expression of the common life of a people, the other the effort of a cultured individual. In this respect, says the late W. W. Newel, "the simile of the wild and cultivated flora appears to express a real difference; as every blossom of the woods is felt to be pretty, so every traditional product has its æsthetic value: while literary construction must be perfect or else are cast out as unregarded weeds." And just as the highly cultivated rose has been, by the gardener's skill, developed from the common wild rose, so many a simple folk rhyme has been expanded into a poem, an epic, or an opera, no better example of which can perhaps be cited than the incomparable little opera of "Hänsel and Gretel."

We are told by the learned in the new science of folklore that from the proverbs, folksongs, etc., one can almost reconstruct a vanished race; and he who knows the folklore of a people has sufficient data to write the history of their thoughts, their ethics, and their religion.

The early German settlers in Pennsylvania came chiefly from the Palatinate, Baden, Swabia and Switzerland. They spoke the German dialects peculiar to the sections from which they came. From these several German dialects there developed in the course of a few generations the Pennsylvania German, in which these several dialects are blended but in which the forceful, direct and already mixed speech of the Palatinate predominates. In the same manner the folklore of these various localities was fused, and frequently given new settings, producing in a sense a new product. But the accidents of rhyme, meter and alliterations have tended to preserve the original forms. However, rhymes, ballads, proverbs from different sections were frequently united, and under new conditions, and amid new surroundings were given new settings and applications.

As a boy, one of my chief delights was to have my parents and especially my maternal grandparents, Charles and Anna (Carl) Baer, to recite to me some of the pretty ballads found in this collection. They became firmly fixed in my memory, where they lay dormant until I entered Franklin and Marshall College, at Lancaster, Pa., and came under the instruction of the late Joseph Henry Dubbs, D.D., LL.D., then occupying the Audenreid professorship of history in the said institution. While referring one day in the class room to the influence of the early German settlers in the upbuilding of the Commonwealth, he repeated a few jingles in the dialect. At the close of the recitation I recited for him several ballads from my childhood lore. He was highly elated to find some one who could repeat much of what he had heard as a boy; and repeatedly urged me to do what he, much to his regret,