

**Aus den Aufzeichnungen**  
von  
**L. A. Wollenweber**  
über seine Erlebnisse in Amerika, namentlich in Philadelphia.\*

**Mitteilungen**  
des  
**Deutschen Pionier-Vereins von Philadelphia.**

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NOTES FROM THE LIFE OF  
LUDWIG AUGUST WOLLENWEBER  
ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES IN AMERICA  
ESPECIALLY IN PHILADELPHIA  
IN  
COMMUNICATIONS OF THE  
GERMAN PIONEER-UNION OF PHILADELPHIA  
1909-1910

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## INTRODUCTION

Ludwig A. Wollenweber was an exceptional personality among those concerned about things which mattered to the Pennsylvanisch Deitsch of the Quaker State. In fact, Wollenweber, born at Ixheim, near Zweibrücken, in the Western Palatinate, on December 5, 1807, was technically not Pennsylvania Dutch at all, but was one of those called Nei-deitsch because they arrived toward the mid-point of the nineteenth century. Though he actually arrived in Pennsylvania in the middle 1830's, he falls in the intellectual migration from the German Rhineland we still generally refer to as "the Forty-Eighters."

When he first came to the new world, he travelled extensively throughout this adopted state of so many fellow Germans. The young scholar spoke to those earlier arrivals and many of their descendants from one end of the state to the other. When they spoke the dialect so abhorrent to the more educated later arrivals, Wollenweber listened, made mental notes of dialect variations, and consciously or not, tucked that accumulated information away in the recesses of his busy mind. In search of employment Ludwig headed back to the city. There, while learning much about the English-speaking segment of the local population, he found a job to suit his talent and his interests as editorial writer for several of Philadelphia's German-language newspapers. He turned out material for those newspapers for two decades. In 1853 he retired to the rural haunts of Berks and Lebanon Counties to try his hand at literary production. Meanwhile he had also married a Pennsylvania German woman descended from agrarian eighteenth century immigrants. Wollenweber became, for all practical purposes, an adopted son of the Dutch Country.

His early training in Germany and his ear for dialect as volksproach led him to collect tales

stories and accounts he heard about him. They ranged from folk sayings and legends brought along by Palatines and Swabians and even Huguenots, as cultural baggage from the Old Country, to tales of deutsch experiences on Pennsylvania's colonial frontier, and even to often off-color accounts of events contemporary to his own lifetime. Wollenweber was certainly one of the first to describe in print (in what he believed was the dialect) the legend of Berg Maria or Mountain Mary. His collection of folk stories, Gemälde aus dem Pennsylvanischen Volksleben, was published simultaneously in Leipzig and Philadelphia. It was set in gothic type and has remained suspect among many of the bibliographers of dialect studies. But some of them miss the point that Wollenweber, intellectual that he was, did not find dialect material beneath his dignity as did many of his contemporaries.

L. A. Wollenweber was certainly Pennsylvanisch Deutsch in spirit, as he demonstrated in one of his own poems which has become by now a by-word among those of the Dutch who are familiar with it:

Ich bin e Pennsylvanier  
 Druff bin ich stolz un froh.  
 Es Land is schee, die Leit sin nett,  
 Bei Tschinks; ich mach schier en'ge Wett  
 'S biets ke Land in der Welt.

This account of the life and experiences of Wollenweber appeared serially in the publication of the Deutschen Pionier-Verein von Philadelphia, in Issues 13 to 17 in 1909 and 1910; that printing acknowledged its debt to the original newspaper accounts of a previous generation. My thanks to the German Society of Pennsylvania, Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, for their permission to copy and use the text from their run of that journal. The text has of course long been in the public domain.

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