

The Creation of an Ethnic Culture Complex Region: Pennsylvania Germans in Central Ohio, 1790-1850

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The delimitation, description, and analysis of ethnic space and place has occupied a central role in the literature relating to the cultural and historical geography of the United States. From the contributions of early luminaries such as Ellen Semple and John K. Wright, on through to the more recent well-known work of Wilbur Zelinsky and Terry Jordan, American cultural and historical geographers have busied themselves with the mapping and analysis of ethnic spaces and ethnic cultural landscapes in order to more fully understand the processes that have helped to shape and define different culture areas of the country.¹

More recently, a group of geographers has begun to debate, rethink, and reevaluate the conceptualization of ethnic space in North America. Although the focus of this debate centers around the concept of ethnic “homelands” in North America, some researchers, most notably Michael Conzen, have attempted to define and classify other types of ethnic space within the parameters of the “homeland” discussion.² This dialogue has proven to be most fruitful, with several sessions at recent national meetings of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) having been organized around this theme and an edited book on the subject due to appear at the end of this year.³

In a way, the ethnic homeland debate can be seen as an attempt to rethink and reevaluate the traditional and long-standing map of American culture areas that resulted from the Berkeley School-Chicago School method of looking at and analyzing the American landscape. This method emphasized the concepts of core or hearth areas and first effective settlement, diffusion processes such as distance-decay, and a preoccupation with the rural, the traditional, and the folk in order to understand and map ethnic regions in North America. Perhaps the penultimate outcome of the many years of studying the American scene in this way is Wilbur Zelinsky’s 1973 national map of American culture regions depicting culture hearth regions and a nested hierarchy of first-, second-, and third-order culture areas.⁴ While such a map is useful in

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determining large-scale national and sub-national patterns, it does not (and cannot) address local or regional ethnic landscape imprints and regions. The homeland dialogue and debate has attempted to rectify this by devising a scheme or methodology for classifying such ethnic places (Figure 1).

The proponents of the idea of the ethnic homeland concept argue that such places possess certain qualities that set them apart from other types of culture areas. These qualities—embraced and maintained by the ethnic group—include, among others:

- ☒ a sense of belonging to a specific place;
- ☒ ethnic self-consciousness;
- ☒ politico-socio-economic control in the homeland (this normally presupposes numerical exclusivity);
- ☒ elaboration of a distinctive cultural system that functions in the homeland;
- ☒ ecological adjustment to place over time.

Thus, in this line of reasoning, Zelinsky's Mormon culture region in the mountain West becomes not just a culture area, but rather a *homeland* for a specific culture group. Zelinsky's Hispanic culture region in northern New Mexico becomes Richard Nostrand's Hispano *homeland*.⁵

Working within the homeland dialogue, Michael Conzen has proposed a new map of American culture regions in which ethnicity plays a dominant role rather than a subdued or generalized role as it does in Zelinsky's representation.⁶ Borrowing a term from geology, Conzen likens Zelinsky's sub-national culture areas to ethnic "substrate" regions underlain by an ethnic "lithic" base, in which "regional and local ethnic cultural influence" results from an underlying ethnic latency, for example a Germanic Midwest, a Mexican-American Southwest, or a Yankee Northeast. In most such substrate regions, ethnic heritage or ancestry on the part of the population for which it is named may be no more than 5 percent to 10 percent. Such ethnic regions range from multi-state to continental in scale with an ethnic imprint that subtly underlies, colors, or influences other landscape signatures. While only a handful of true ethnic homelands are still extant, such ethnic substrate regions number in the dozens. Conzen also calls for the recognition of highly localized and distinctive ethnic landscapes created by literally hundreds of different ethnic groups in both rural and urban portions of the country. Conceptualized as "ethnic islands," such ethnic regions are spatially compact—a neighborhood in urban environments, a town or township in rural areas—and exhibit a characteristic landscape that is dense and highly conspicuous. Examples of urban ethnic islands are too numerous to mention (there are literally thousands of ethnic neighborhoods in North America's cities), and the American Midwest and Great Plains are dotted with thousands of small ethnic islands that resulted from the mass immigration of northwest Europeans in the 19th century.

This paper discusses the migration of Pennsylvania Germans from southeastern Pennsylvania to a five-county region of central Ohio in the late-18th

Type	Diagnostic Characteristics	Examples
Ethnic Homelands	Demographic Concentration/Exclusivity (Arreola 1993; Conzen 1993)	Hispano Homeland (n. New Mexico)
	Sense of Place/Attachment to Place (Nostrand et al., 1993)	Quebec
	Ethnic Self-Consciousness (Jordan 1993; Lamme & McDonald 1993)	Acadiana (Cajun) (now probably moribund)
	Ethnic Cultural Landscape Imprint (Nostrand et al., 1993)	Navajoland (Four Corners area)
	Socio-Economic-Political Control (Arreola 1993; Jordan 1993)	Téjano Homeland (southern Texas)
	Ecological Adjustment to Environment (Nostrand 1993)	Anglo-Texan Homeland (central Texas)
	Ethnic Nostalgia and Boosterism (Ostergren and Hoelscher 1993)	PA-German Homeland (now moribund) (southeast Pennsylvania)
	Outside Recognition of Homeland (Sheskin 1993)	Deseret (Mormon) (Utah, s. ID, n. AZ)
Ethnic Islands	"Localized Ethnically and Racially Distinct Settlements" (Conzen 1993)	
	Can be Either Rural or Urban	Little Italy
	Spatially Compact (Rural = Town or Township; Urban = Neighborhood)	Chinatowns
	Dense, Localized Ethnic Landscape Imprint	African-American Neighborhoods
	Varying Sense of Peoplehood (Weak to Intense)	19th-c. Northwest European Midwest Settlements
	Varying Sense of Attachment to Place (Weak to Intense)	
Ethnic Substrates/ Archipelagos	Ethnic Latency (ca. 5-10% Ethnic Heritage/ Ancestry)	German (Midwest)
	Regional and Local Ethnic Cultural Influence	Mexican-American (Southwest)
	Spatially Large (Several States to Continental)	Yankee (Northeast)

Figure 1. Some types of ethnic space in North America. Source: *Journal of Cultural Geography* 13 (1993). The contents of this entire issue of the journal are concerned with the homeland concept and dialogue.

and early-19th centuries within the context of the ongoing ethnic homeland discussion and debate (Figure 2). After briefly discussing and defining the Pennsylvania Germans as an ethnic group and their initial settlement in the Mid-Atlantic region, the paper employs several data sets to describe and delimit this group's settlement in central Ohio. Next, the resulting cultural landscape imprint in this study region is defined and discussed. Finally, the paper



Figure 2. Study Area Location in Central Ohio.

posits that the landscape legacy left by this ethnic group in the study region does not easily or readily “fit” into the categories of ethnic space discussed and defined within the context of the ongoing dialogue dealing with ethnic homelands and ethnic space. Instead, the landscape imprint left by the Pennsylvania Germans in central Ohio resulted in the creation of what might best be called an “ethnic culture complex region.”

Historical Context

The cultural landscapes of Ohio reflect the legacy and influence of frontier settlement by a variety of ethnic and national groups. This frontier popu-

lation included significant numbers of migrants from the three primary East Coast culture hearths and immigrants from a variety of northwestern European locations. Members of each of these groups tended to settle in specific regions, imbuing each with a distinctive national or ethnic imprint. By the end of the initial settlement period, ending roughly in the 1840s, extensions of each East Coast culture hearth region had been established in Ohio, supplemented with a variety of rural immigrant ethnic islands.

The formation of such culture regions and outliers in Ohio resulted in part as a function of national and geopolitical circumstances that governed the alienation of land in the Old Northwest. The establishment of federalism in the new Republic, the presence of Native American nations, and conflicting territorial claims in the trans-Mississippi West by eastern states forced the federal government to deal with special problems regarding land alienation in the newly acquired territory that had not been faced in the East.

In order to facilitate and encourage Euro-American settlement in the Northwest Territory, the federal government attempted between 1785 and 1820 to solve the problem of land alienation by enacting a number of far-reaching policies. First, it brokered the cession to the federal government of most of the territory west of the Appalachians claimed by eastern states by virtue of royal charters, some dating to the 17th century. Second, it successfully cleared the human barrier to Euro-American settlement represented by Native Americans from the region through military intervention and territory-ceding treaties. Third, with Congressional approval of the Land Ordinance of 1785, the government established a systematic and orderly system of land survey and alienation in the public domain.⁷

The original land-subdivision system in Ohio reflects the federal government's early land-alienation policies, modified by unique and important local circumstances (Figure 3). By 1786, all of the eastern states that had claimed territory in the Old Northwest had agreed to relinquish such claims. Connecticut and Virginia, however, successfully negotiated with Congress to retain large tracts of land within the territory in order to satisfy debts (through payment-in-kind of tracts of land) owed to state militia members who had served during the Revolutionary War (the Connecticut Western Reserve and the Virginia Military District, respectively). Likewise, in 1796, Congress reserved some two million acres within which to locate military warrants from the Revolution that had not yet been satisfied (the U.S. Military District). Congress also authorized the sale of two large tracts within the Ohio Territory to private companies—the Ohio Company (1787) and the Symmes Company (1794). These companies surveyed and subdivided their respective tracts before reselling parcels to private individuals, but both companies met with only partial financial success.⁸

The unique subdivision of Ohio's early settlement landscape played a decisive role in directing migrant streams from the East Coast. Early routes of ingress into the Ohio Territory such as Zane's Trace (1797), the National Road, the Ohio River, and Lake Erie funneled settlers along specific routes, playing

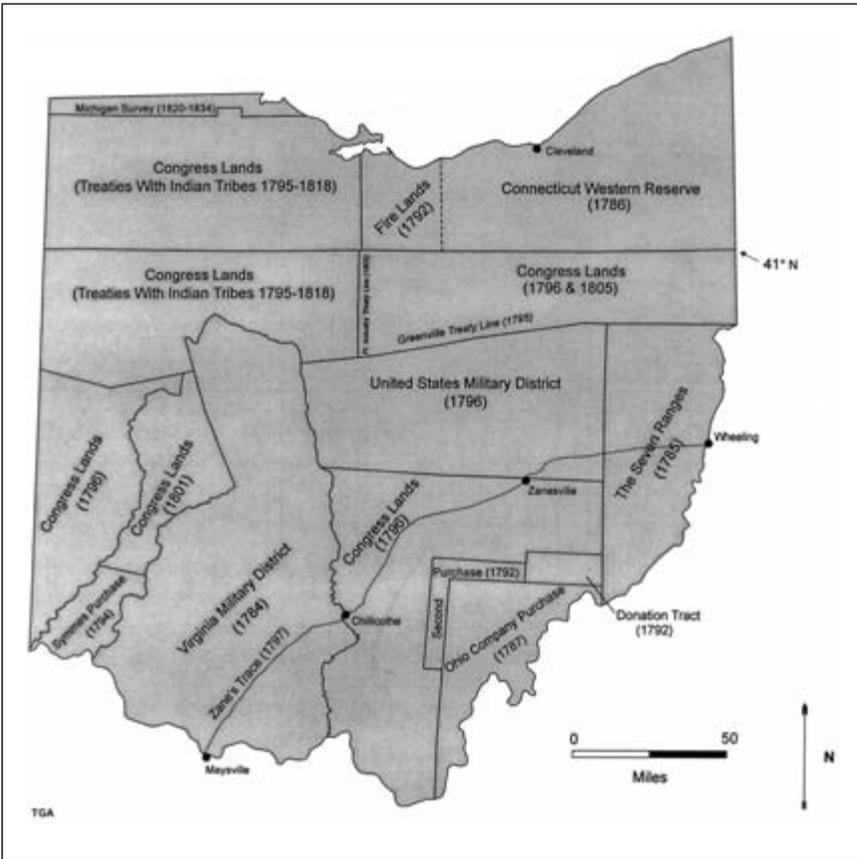


Figure 3. Original Ohio land subdivisions. Sources: C.E. Sherman, *Original Ohio Land Subdivisions*, Vol. 3 (Columbus: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey, 1925); Thomas Acquinas Burke, *Ohio Lands: A Short History* (Columbus: Ohio Auditor of State, 1993); Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, *The Origin and Distribution of Settlement Groups: Ohio, 1850* (Athens, Ohio: Cutler Printing, 1982).

an important role in the settlement process as well. As a result, three distinctive subculture regions evolved in early Ohio. When mapped at the township level, data from the 1850 federal census—the first to record the nativity of each person enumerated—reveal these settlement regions (Figure 4). New Englanders took up residence overwhelmingly in the designated counties of the Western Reserve. Southerners, dominated by those born in Virginia and Kentucky, congregated in and around the Virginia Military District and along the Ohio River. A third group of early settlers from the Middle Atlantic culture hearth region came to dominate the population throughout the rest of the state, and were especially numerous in the central and east-central counties.⁹ This latter group of settlers produced a lasting imprint in the cultural landscapes of several Ohio areas. Many were members of an ethnic group that

played a central role in the building of the Middle Atlantic culture hearth centered on southeast Pennsylvania—the “Pennsylvania Germans,” also known as the “Pennsylvania Dutch.”

Pennsylvania Germans and Settlement in Central Ohio

Approximately 85,000 people from German-speaking regions of Europe immigrated into the 13 North American colonies between 1683 and 1775, a number which accounts for 27.5 percent of all non-African immigrants during this period. Nine out of ten came between 1717 and 1775 and settled in the area of the lower Delaware Valley, but especially in Philadelphia, southeast

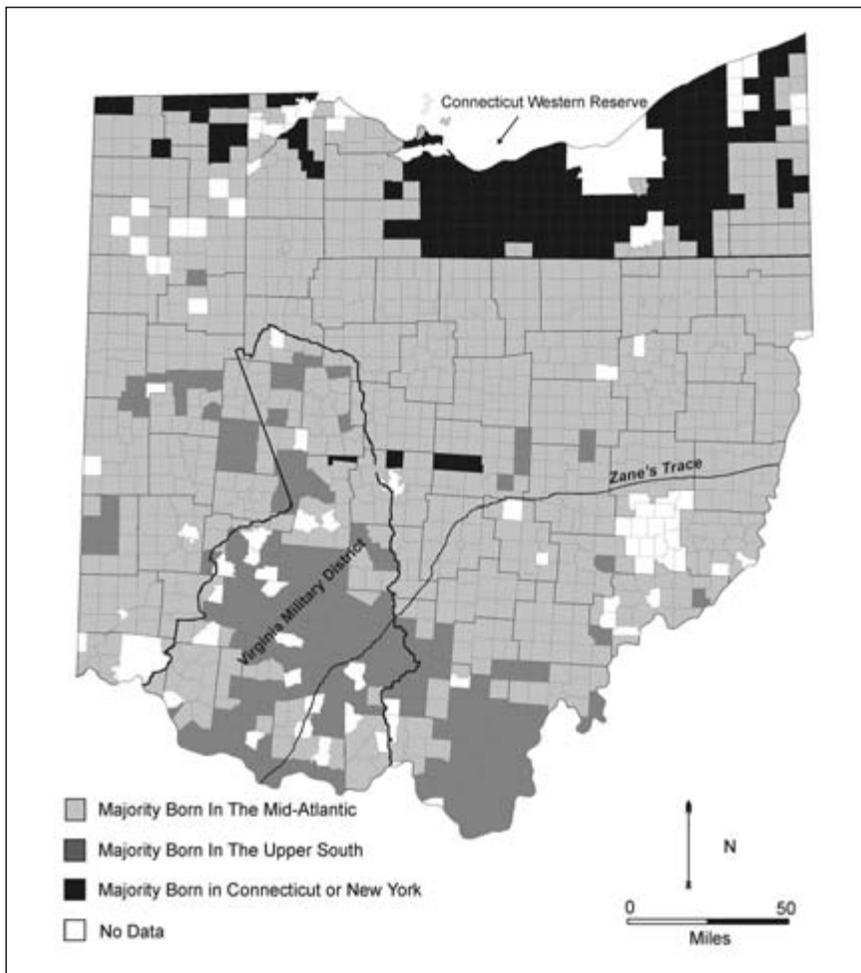


Figure 4. Place of birth of the non-Ohio-born population, 1850. Sources: 1850 Population Manuscript Census Schedules; Wilhelm, *The Origin and Distribution of Settlement Groups*.

Pennsylvania, and western Maryland. Most hailed from the middle-Rhine region of southwestern Germany, centered on the kingdoms of Baden and Württemberg, extending south and west into parts of Switzerland. Many came from smaller villages and towns and traveled to North America in small groups comprised of villagers hailing from the same locale. The majority were members of the landless or land-poor peasantry, the stratum of society most adversely affected by a series of economic and social crises that affected the region in the early-18th century.¹⁰

Though often described solely in terms of religious attitudes and traditions or mother tongue, the population commonly described as Pennsylvania-German was, and is, in fact not a wholly homogeneous ethnic or national group. Defining the exact ethnic nature of the group, then, is rather problematic. In general, the term refers to the descendants of the thousands of Germanic immigrants that settled in southeastern Pennsylvania and the lower Delaware Valley between 1683 and 1835.¹¹ Though not entirely ethnically cohesive, this population nevertheless was united by several cultural characteristics that set it apart from other groups. First, most members of the group hailed from a common area of origin in Europe—southwest Germany and parts of Switzerland. Second, most spoke “Pennsylvania German,” basically the *rheinpfälzisch* dialect that was spoken in the Palatinate and the Upper Rhine Valley at the time of the migration to North America, combined with loan words from both High German and English. The dialect is probably a mixture of several dialects spoken in the three major source areas of Württemberg, the Palatinate, and Switzerland. Over time, in North America the individual characteristics of the three regional dialects came to be modified and homogenized into a dialect that was in general uniform.¹² Third, a Reformed and Anabaptist religious background and tradition united the Pennsylvania Germans. Most were members of four broad Protestant groups—Lutherans, German Reformed, the Anabaptist Pietistic sects (Amish, Mennonites, and Schwenkfelders), and the Moravian church—each of which traces its origins ultimately back to the Reformation of the early-16th century. The German-speaking members of the Lutheran and Reformed movements came to be known as “church Germans.” Members of the various Pietistic sects, which emphasized brotherhood within a community of believers, came to be called “house Germans.”¹³ Methodism significantly affected the German-speaking population in North America. In southeast Pennsylvania, two separate Wesleyan churches emerged as part of the Methodist revival in the late-18th and early-19th centuries—the United Brethren in Christ, founded by Philip Otterbein in 1789, and the Evangelical Association, established by Jacob Albright in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, at about the same time. These two bodies merged in 1947 to form the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB), and in 1964 the EUB merged with the United Methodist Church. The Reformed Church in the U.S. eventually merged with the Evangelical Synod in North America to form the Evangelical and Reformed Church; in 1949 this body joined with the Congregational Christian Churches of the U.S. to form the United Church

in Christ (UCC).¹⁴ Members of both the EUB and the UCC were influential in the early frontier settlement of the Ohio study area under scrutiny in this paper. Fourth, the Pennsylvania Germans developed a distinctive agricultural system in southeast Pennsylvania during the colonial era that was diversified, extensive, and commercially oriented. Such features distinguished the system from those established in New England (a rather intensive and subsistence-based system) and Tidewater Virginia (a coerced-labor, cash-crop monoculture) during the colonial era. The Pennsylvania Germans used their land to produce a wide variety of both crops *and* livestock. Wheat became the primary grain crop, but other grains such as rye, oats, barley, and corn, as well as forage and hay crops, were rotated in a three- to four-year scheme. The most important livestock animal was the cow, with horses serving as the most important beasts of burden.¹⁵ Fifth, the diversified and market-driven agricultural system that developed among Pennsylvania-German farmers, coupled with Germanic cultural baggage imported from Europe, resulted in the creation of a distinctive cultural landscape imprint in southeastern Pennsylvania.

The most distinctive and diagnostic element of this landscape is the forebay bank barn, the term stemming from an upper-level extension projecting over the front stable wall. Adapted from a variety of Swiss forebay types, this barn gained distinctiveness in colonial America due to its large size and its two-level floorplan—larger than New England—the lower level functioning as a stable and the upper housing threshing and storage. This multipurpose barn effectively served the needs of a diversified and extensive agricultural system.¹⁶ A variety of folk housing forms emerged in southeast Pennsylvania during the colonial era, but contrary to the bank barn, none is affiliated solely with the Pennsylvania Germans as a group. Rather, the house types of the Middle Atlantic culture hearth in general reflected the multiethnic nature of early settlement there, with Swedish, Dutch, German, and English contributions, influenced later by popular styles (e.g. Federal and Georgian styles).¹⁷ The most distinctive Pennsylvania-German influence on folk housing and folk art tended to be in decoration, iconography, motifs, and color. Examples include the practice of painting or carving signs and decorations (sun wheels and bursts, swastikas, circles, tulips, and doves) on material objects, most conspicuously on barns, but also on such objects as furniture, chests, gravestones, and bibles. Many writers have argued that such folk art is heavily invested with religious meaning, but it is much more likely that it simply represents an outward sign of prosperity or an early form of conspicuous consumption.¹⁸

The five traditions—area of origin in Europe; dialect of German, Reformed and Anabaptist religious background, a distinctive agricultural system; and a distinctive material culture and cultural landscape imprint—united the various Germanic ethnic groups that settled in southeast Pennsylvania during the colonial and early national periods into a group that can accurately be referred to as Pennsylvania-German.

Beginning in the 1770s, thousands of Pennsylvania Germans began to move out of their Pennsylvania homeland into western portions of the colony,

the northern Shenandoah Valley, southern Ontario, and central Ohio. This large-scale migration, foreshadowed by rising land prices and quitrents, poor soil conservation, stagnant farming technology, and divisions of holdings over successive generations led, over time, to decreasing returns on investments in southeastern Pennsylvania.¹⁹ The migration experiences of four families that were prominent in the frontier settlement of Fairfield County, Ohio, culled from genealogical and family history records, provide a small, but nevertheless illustrative example of this movement (Figure 5).²⁰ Members of these families began to move north and west into Union and Northumberland Counties in the 1760s and 1770s from Berks and Lancaster Counties, where the families had settled only some 30 years after their initial immigration from Germany. Their stay in these counties did not last very long either. Between 1804 and 1806, all but a few members of these families migrated to central Ohio. Such “short-range” frontier migrations appear to have been very common during this period. Robert Mitchell has shown that successive migrations, following the frontiers of settlement, facilitated the accumulation of capital through the profitable sale of land and the purchase of less-expensive land (often public domain land) in frontier regions. In the case of the Pennsylvania Germans, rising population densities and the practice of impartible inheritance resulted in increasing numbers of younger sons having to migrate to frontier regions in order to find less-expensive land and start their own families.²¹ Members of the Anabaptist sects, in particular the Amish, followed similar processes of migration from a core region in southeast Pennsylvania to frontier regions.²²

Data from the 1850 census reveals the significance of Pennsylvania Germans in Ohio’s frontier settlement. By this date, the state’s population had already expanded to nearly two million. Most of the state’s population, about 67.5 percent, was born in Ohio. The rest, about 32.5 percent, claimed non-Ohio nativity. Of this migrant population, one in four were foreign immigrants (Table 1). While the non-Ohio-born population hailed from many different states, by far the most numerous were those born in the mid-Atlantic region, especially Pennsylvania. Of the nearly 500,000 Ohioans born in another state, fully half came from the Middle Atlantic states. Of these, four in ten claimed Pennsylvanian nativity and a significant number were of Pennsylvania-German descent.²³ When mapped at the civil township level, it is clear that the Pennsylvania Germans who moved to Ohio tended to settle among each other in specific places, among those of like ancestral and ethnic identity (Figure 6). This map shows that native Pennsylvanians in 1850 accounted for over 50 percent of the non-Ohio-born population in two primary regions of the state. In terms of both raw numbers and percentage of all migrants, the densest area of settlement occurs in an east-west belt bordered by the Connecticut Western Reserve on the north and the U.S. Military District on the south (present-day Wayne, Ashland, Richland, Stark, Columbiana, and Mahoning counties). A second area of dense settlement occurs in central Ohio, clustered around the city of Lancaster along the former route of Zane’s Trace,

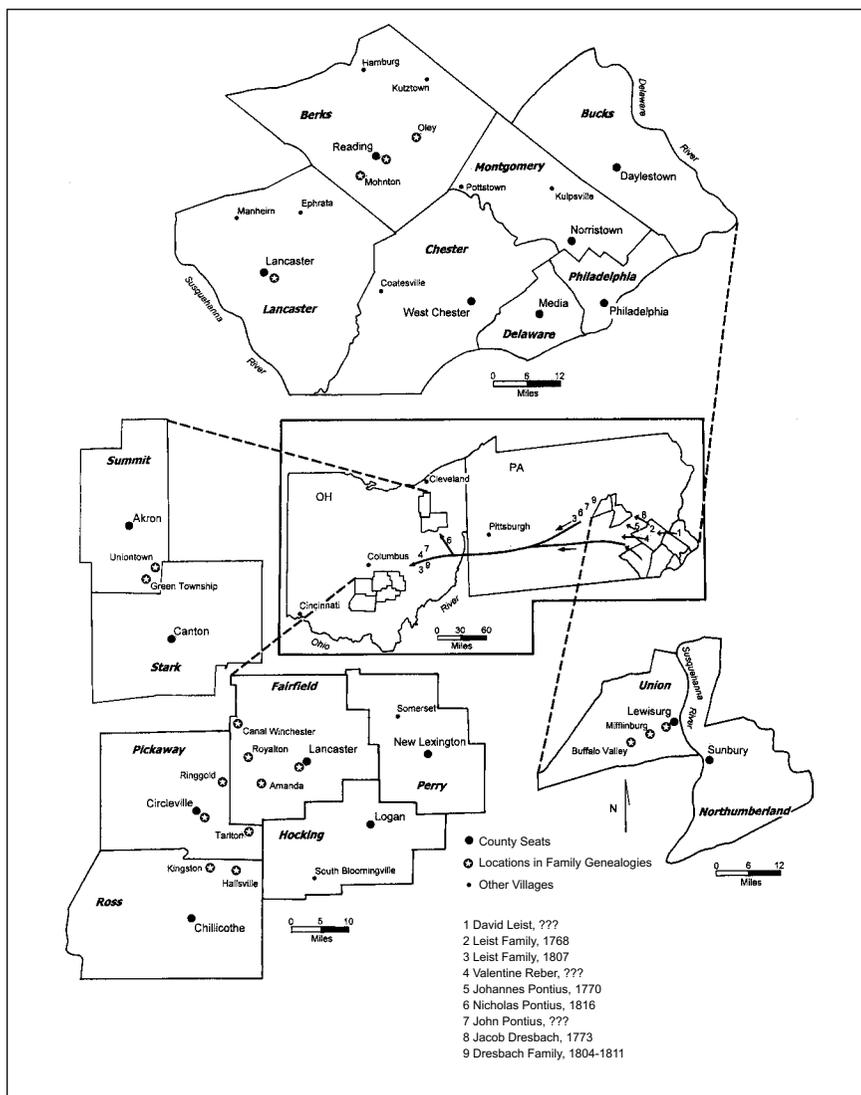


Figure 5. Migration of the Dreisbach, Reber, Leist, and Pontius families to Ohio, 1768-1816. Sources: Mary Sue Leist-Parsons, *Leist and Allied Families, 1690-1990* (Manuscript Copy, 1992); Joseph Edison Pontius, *The Ancestors and Descendants of Jacob Franklin Pontius, 1873-1953* (Manuscript Copy, 1972); <http://www.gentree.com/databases/Dreisbach/Dreisbach1.html/>.

in parts of Fairfield, Perry, Ross, Pickaway, and Hocking counties. The remainder of this paper will focus on this latter region to illustrate the cultural landscape imprint created by Pennsylvania-German settlers.

An Ethnic Culture Complex Region

Cultural geographer Hubert Wilhelm maintains that, in general, the locations chosen by specific frontier migrant populations depended most upon the cultural background of the group and their time of arrival in frontier regions.²⁴ In the case of the Pennsylvania Germans in Ohio, these influences were critical. The principal routes of ingress from Pennsylvania provided relatively easy access to locations underlain by especially fertile soil and were, as it happens, available for purchase at the time of the initial migrations. The area of Pennsylvania-German settlement centered on Fairfield, Perry, Ross, and Pickaway counties lay along the route of Zane's Trace and is situated along the

Table 1. Ohio Nativity, 1850

Place of Birth	Number	% of Total Population
Ohio	1,980,329	66.2
Pennsylvania	190,396	9.6
New York	75,442	3.8
Other Mid-Atlantic (DE, MD, NJ)	60,741	3.1
<i>Subtotal</i>	326,579	16.5
Virginia	83,300	4.2
Kentucky	11,549	0.6
Other South (AL, FL, GA, NC, SC, TN)	7,822	0.4
<i>Subtotal</i>	102,671	5.2
Connecticut	20,478	1.0
Massachusetts	16,437	0.8
Other New England (ME, NH, RI, VT)	22,428	1.1
<i>Subtotal</i>	59,343	2.9
Other United States	9,724	0.5
Foreign Immigrants	145,992	7.4
Black Population (state of origin n.a.)	25,279	1.3
Total	1,980,329	100.0

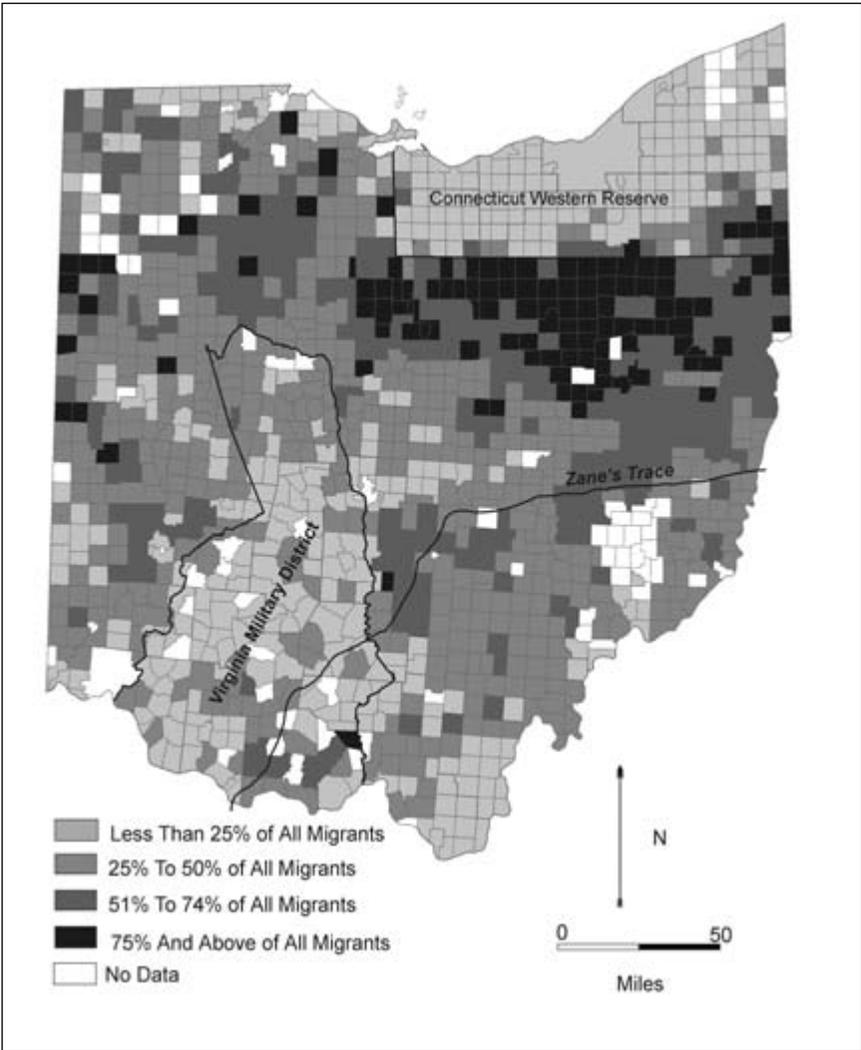


Figure 6. Migrants born in Pennsylvania, 1850. Sources: 1850 Population Manuscript Census Schedules; Wilhelm, *The Origin and Distribution of Settlement Groups*.

margin of the Wisconsin glacial moraine, affording the region soils of high quality underlain by glacial till (Figure 7). As such, this was an area where the Pennsylvania-German tradition of extensive mixed commercial farming could be practiced much like it had been in southeast Pennsylvania with relatively few changes.

Biographies of early settlers contained in county histories and atlases from the 1870s reveal that Pennsylvania-German families with origins primarily in the southeastern Pennsylvania counties of Berks, Lancaster, and Bucks began to settle on public domain lands in the study area of central Ohio (Figure 5) as

Table 2. Pennsylvania Nativity in the Study Area Townships

Township	Pop.	PA	%PA	All Migrants	%PA
Fairfield Co.					
Amanda	1,788	215	12.0	417	51.6
Auburn	626	61	9.7	135	45.2
Berne	2,656	240	9.0	513	46.8
Bloom	2,289	327	14.3	536	61.0
Clear Creek	1,739	225	12.9	400	56.3
Greenfield	2,113	236	11.2	435	54.3
Hocking	5,309	429	8.1	1,183	36.3
Liberty	2,901	256	8.8	437	58.6
Madison	1,164	153	13.1	274	55.8
Pleasant	2,011	267	13.3	482	55.4
Richland	1,776	152	8.6	429	35.4
Rush Creek	1,218	180	14.8	288	62.5
Violet	2,544	343	13.5	718	47.8
Walnut	2,130	143	6.7	495	28.9
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>30,264</i>	<i>3,227</i>	<i>10.5</i>	<i>6,742</i>	<i>47.9</i>
Perry Co.					
Jackson	1,740	152	8.7	280	54.3
Reading	3,984	494	12.4	902	54.8
Thorn	1,847	223	12.1	457	48.8
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>7,571</i>	<i>869</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>1,639</i>	<i>53.0</i>
Pickaway Co.					
Circleville	3,842	410	10.7	1,041	39.4
Pickaway	1,425	163	11.4	363	44.9
Salt Creek	1,844	268	14.5	415	64.6
Washington	1,099	217	19.7	272	79.8
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>8,210</i>	<i>1,058</i>	<i>12.9</i>	<i>2,091</i>	<i>50.6</i>
Ross Co.					
Cole (Colerain)	1,398	189	13.5	310	61.0
Green	1,994	185	9.3	432	42.8
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>3,392</i>	<i>374</i>	<i>11.0</i>	<i>742</i>	<i>50.4</i>
Hocking Co.					
Good Hope	635	45	7.1	95	47.4
Laurel	1,126	60	5.3	195	30.8
Marion	1,746	126	7.2	270	46.7
Perry	1,217	164	13.5	268	61.2
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>4,724</i>	<i>395</i>	<i>8.4</i>	<i>828</i>	<i>47.7</i>
Totals	54,161	5,923	10.9	12,042	49.2

Source: 1850 Population Manuscript Census Schedules.

early as the 1790s.²⁵ By 1850, nearly 6,000 Pennsylvania-born persons resided in the region. This represented only about 11 percent of the total population of the area, but fully half of the non-Ohio-born population (Table 2). Given the fact that the 1850 census was taken too late to include all of the first-generation migrants, the latter figure probably more accurately reflects the actual percentage of the population in the study region with Pennsylvania-German ancestry at the time the census was taken.

Pennsylvania Germans were among the first effective settlers in the study region and brought with them many aspects of the agricultural system practiced in Pennsylvania to Ohio, thereby transplanting several cultural landscape elements to Ohio. This has left an indelible mark on the study area that is part Germanic, part Euro-American, and part Pennsylvania-German. This landscape includes three diagnostic structures and features that together constitute a distinctive culture area similar to, yet at the same time different in important ways from, the hearth area in southeastern Pennsylvania (Figure 7).

The most conspicuous element of this cultural landscape is the widespread occurrence of the Pennsylvania forebay bank barn type, which in form, style, and construction technique has antecedents not only in Pennsylvania, but in

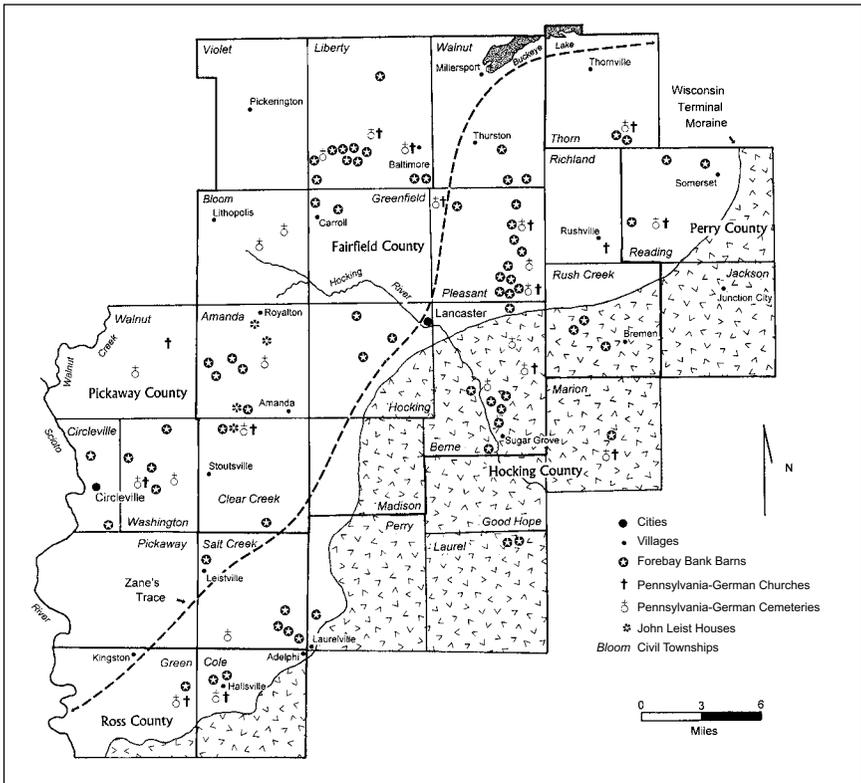


Figure 7. Pennsylvania-German diagnostic landscape features in Fairfield, Perry, Hocking, Ross, and Pickaway counties, Ohio. Source: Author's field observations.

Germany and Switzerland as well (Figure 8). Indeed, field reconnaissance in 1999 resulted in the enumeration of at least 68 extant examples of forebay bank barns. Given that barn form is often a function of the agricultural system employed by its builders, it is not surprising that the Pennsylvania barn moved westward with Pennsylvania-German settlers. Data from the 1850 agriculture manuscript census schedules for Fairfield County reveal a continued reliance on both crops and livestock as outputs in an extensive mixed commercial farming system (Table 3). The most significant modification of the system brought from southeast Pennsylvania is apparent from the data recording acreage devoted to various grain crops. Whereas wheat was by far the most important grain crop in Pennsylvania, in Ohio maize (corn) quickly became most dominant. Corn was fed to cattle and hogs for sale in Baltimore (beef) and Cincinnati (pork) and performed extremely well on the glacial till covering most of central Ohio.²⁶ The Fairfield County area was becoming one of



Figure 8. Pennsylvania forebay bank barn near Laurelville, Pickaway County, Ohio. Source: Photo by author in January 1999.

the premier agricultural regions of Ohio by the 1840s and 1850s as the area became linked via canals and roads with markets both in the Midwest (Cincinnati and Chicago) and along the Atlantic seaboard.²⁷ With a continued reliance on both livestock and crops, the forebay barn remained a part of the Pennsylvania-German farming landscape in Ohio as it served the twin purposes of hay and grain storage and of livestock stabling. Although the basic form of the forebay barn was repeated on those built in Ohio, including the occurrence of at least half a dozen of the 18 variant forms of the barn identified by Robert Ensminger in his landmark study, some minor changes set many of them apart from those in the southeastern Pennsylvania hearth region.²⁸ First, the use of stone as a construction material for anything other than a foundation is extremely rare on the barns surveyed in the study area.

Table 3. 1850 Agricultural Census Data, Pleasant, Richland, and Greenfield Townships, Fairfield County, Ohio

<i>Pleasant Township (197 Farms)</i>			Number With
	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean/Farm</u>	<u>Any (%)</u>
Improved Acres	14,918	75.7	197 (100.0)
Unimproved Acres	8,465	43.0	184 (93.4)
Horses	824	4.2	194 (98.5)
Milk Cows	817	4.1	193 (98.0)
Other Cattle	1,154	5.9	160 (81.2)
Sheep	2,586	13.1	172 (87.3)
Hogs	2,162	11.0	191 (97.0)
Wheat (bu.)	24,437	124.0	184 (93.4)
Rye (bu.)	809	4.1	25 (12.7)
Corn (bu.)	130,711	663.5	192 (97.5)
Oats (bu.)	15,115	76.7	163 (82.7)
<i>Richland Township (131 Farms)</i>			Number With
	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean/Farm</u>	<u>Any (%)</u>
Improved Acres	9,008	68.8	131 (100.0)
Unimproved Acres	5,798	44.3	125 (95.4)
Horses	490	3.7	129 (98.5)
Milk Cows	472	3.6	131 (100.0)
Other Cattle	547	4.2	101 (77.1)
Sheep	3,113	23.8	112 (85.5)
Hogs	1,436	11.0	123 (94.0)
Wheat (bu.)	11,517	87.9	118 (90.1)
Rye (bu.)	559	4.3	15 (11.5)
Corn (bu.)	65,986	503.7	128 (97.7)
Oats (bu.)	8,412	64.2	84 (64.1)
<i>Greenfield Township (185 Farms)</i>			Number With
	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean/Farm</u>	<u>Any (%)</u>
Improved Acres	14,245	77.0	185 (100.0)
Unimproved Acres	8,975	68.5	162 (87.6)
Horses	708	3.8	179 (96.8)
Milk Cows	708	3.8	181 (98.0)
Other Cattle	1,069	5.8	143 (77.3)
Sheep	3,251	17.6	143 (77.3)
Hogs	2,524	13.6	178 (96.2)
Wheat (bu.)	23,825	128.8	168 (90.8)
Rye (bu.)	864	4.7	19 (10.3)
Corn (bu.)	155,317	839.6	180 (97.3)
Oats (bu.)	9,802	53.0	108 (58.4)

Source: Agriculture Manuscript Census Schedules, 1850.

Rather, they are built almost entirely of wood, with sawn lumber covering a hand-hewn timber frame. In the Pennsylvania hearth region, both stone and wood or a combination of the two commonly appear as construction materials.²⁹ Second, the characteristic forebay on many Ohio barns is either partially or fully enclosed, that is, supported by timbers on one or each gable end. Third, the presence of barn decoration (so-called “hex” signs) is almost entirely absent on the extant forebay barns in the study region. Field reconnaissance has documented only one barn in central Ohio with such decoration. Some 10 of the 68 forebay barns in the study area exhibit a relatively rare modification of the standard Pennsylvania barn form—the so-called “double overhang” Pennsylvania barn. This modification is also found in southeastern Pennsylvania (but very rarely), distinguishable by two forebays rather than one. Hubert Wilhelm has identified 10 such barns in Fairfield and Perry counties, attributing their occurrence here to “local vernacular practice among a crew of carpenters,” and to aesthetic “balance.”³⁰

A second element of the Pennsylvania-German cultural landscape established in the study region is the nearly ubiquitous occurrence of the I-house with Federal decorative elements. Unlike many folk houses in the southeast Pennsylvania hearth, the dwellings built by early Pennsylvania-German settlers in the study area reveal little with regard to the German ancestry and ethnicity of their builders, at least in terms of type, floor plan, and form. Instead, they reveal aesthetic tastes and ideals popular at the time. Whereas the Quaker-plan or “four-over-four” house became the dominant folk house in the mid-Atlantic hearth region, the I-house became the preferred type built in the Ohio study area. Characterized by a basic plan with side-facing gables, one-room depth, at least two rooms in width, and two stories in elevation, the I-house became one of the most common folk house types in North America. Initially introduced in the Chesapeake Tidewater region during colonial times, it was built into the 20th century throughout a large region of the U.S., as far north as Pennsylvania and as far west as the Great Plains.³¹ The Federal style, popular at the time, influenced the characteristic houses built by Pennsylvania Germans in central Ohio during the late-18th and early-19th centuries. Becoming popular along the East Coast around the time of the Revolution, its popularization can be linked to a renewal of interest in Greek and Roman architecture and forms dating from the Renaissance. This combination resulted in houses characterized by an emphasis on verticality, symmetry, delicate ornamentation, and careful proportion.³² In the study area, perhaps the most striking examples of I-houses with Federal ornamentation are four houses built in Fairfield County between 1817 and 1827 by John Leist, who migrated from Pennsylvania in 1807 and became a well-known public figure, as well as a master builder and carpenter (Figure 9; locations detailed in Figure 7).³³

A third diagnostic element of the ethnic cultural landscape in the study area is a religious landscape highlighted by rural churches and cemeteries that are telling reminders of the Protestant Reformed tradition of the early Pennsylvania-German settlers. The most common denominations established by

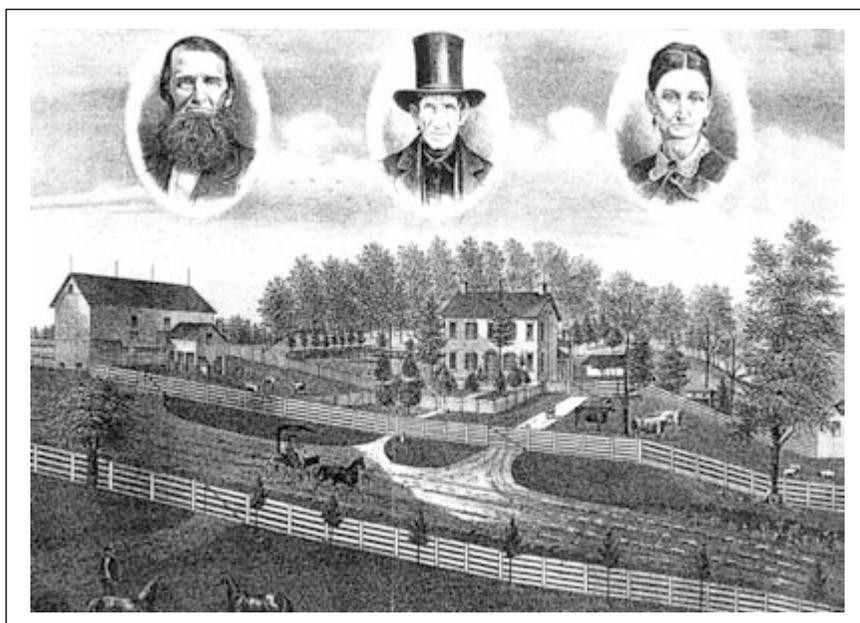


Figure 9. The John Leist farm at Dutch Hollow, Fairfield County, Ohio, ca. 1875. Note the brick I-house with Federal ornamentation and accompanying forebay bank barn. Source: L.H. Everts, *Combination Atlas Map of Fairfield County, Ohio* (Philadelphia: Gale Research Company, 1875): 76.

the earliest settlers in the study area were German Reformed, Evangelical Lutheran, and United Brethren in Christ (UBC). Recall that the UBC merged with the Evangelical Association to form the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) in 1947 and that the EUB merged with the United Methodist church in 1964, so only a few (and now abandoned) church structures from these two denominations still exist. But most of the rural Methodist churches in the study area trace their origin to early UBC and EUB denominations established by the earliest Pennsylvania-German settlers. Ubiquitous throughout this landscape, then, are small community churches—Reformed, Evangelical Lutheran, and Methodist—that dot the rural countryside (locations detailed in Figure 7). Most of the Methodist churches date only to the 1960s, but congregations built many of the standing Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran structures as early as the 1880s. The Protestant background of the Pennsylvania Germans brought with it a rejection of overt iconography and ornate architecture. Most of these churches display simple construction, often with an austere bell tower or cupola, and white paint (Figure 10). Inside and out, the absence of overt religious iconography is conspicuous. More often than not, the church is adjacent to a cemetery, such that the rural Protestant church and accompanying cemetery together encompass a third primary cultural landscape feature in the region.



Figure 10. St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Cemetery, Fairfield County, Ohio. Source: Photo by author in January 1999.

Conclusions

The cultural landscape created by Pennsylvania Germans in central Ohio is a conspicuous reminder of the richly textured ethnic landscapes of North America. This paper has identified three separate elements of this landscape—forebay bank barns, brick I-houses with Federal ornamentation, rural churches and cemeteries—that occur together in a dense enough distribution in the study area to distinguish it as a separate culture area. Exactly what kind of culture area, however, is problematic. Set within the ongoing dialogue among some cultural and historical geographers concerning American ethnic homelands and regions, the area does not conform to the definitive parameters of any of the spatial territories proposed, discussed, or theorized for ethnic settlements (Figure 1).

While the homeland debate has provided a useful new context within which to view and categorize different kinds of ethnic space in North America, the type of ethnic area I have described in this paper does not fit easily into the existing hierarchy of ethnic spaces. As a result, and at the risk of adding jargon, I argue that another category that includes such places can be added to the mixture. Perhaps best described by the term “ethnic culture complex region,” I posit that such places can be conceptualized as “outliers” of either ethnic homelands or culture hearth regions, secondary areas of settlement by members of an ethnic group that are “near” the homeland or hearth area both

in a geographic sense and a temporal sense. Culture complex regions like the one I have described in this paper differ significantly from ethnic homelands and ethnic islands:

- ☒ in size, such areas are smaller than a homeland or substrate region but larger than ethnic islands, on the order of a county or even several counties;
- ☒ there is a significant and visible ethnic landscape signature that is easily identifiable, but it is a landscape that has been modified—diluted one might say—from the homeland or hearth area;
- ☒ the number of people with the particular ethnic ancestry or heritage does not constitute an absolute numerical majority of the total population, rather it may be as low as 40 percent to 50 percent;
- ☒ there is little or no sense of “peoplehood” on the part of the members of the ethnic group today;
- ☒ there is little evidence of ecologic adjustment to place.

Given these parameters, one might conjecture that there are dozens, if not hundreds, of such ethnic places and spaces in North America. Some examples might be other multi-county areas settled by Pennsylvania Germans from a southeastern Pennsylvania homeland such as southern Ontario, parts of eastern Ohio, and the mid-Shenandoah Valley; the Western Reserve of northeastern Ohio settled by Yankees from the New England culture hearth; the German Hill Country of central Texas; Amish regions in east-central Ohio and northern Indiana; or Czechs in rural east-central Texas.³⁴ Such ethnic culture complex regions may be viewed as “intermediate” ethnic regions. Many are temporally intermediate in terms of the date of their settlement between the colonial era, when hearth areas were formed, and later frontier settlement dating to the late-18th and 19th centuries when many ethnic islands were formed. They are also geographically intermediate in terms of their location between the East Coast hearths and the Midwestern and Great Plains ethnic islands. As outlined in this case study, the ethnic culture complex landscapes reflect their intermediacy, in part indicative of the landscapes of the hearth or core areas that spawned them, in part representative of the moderating and diluting effects of other population groups and national cultural trends and processes.

Notes

1. Karl B. Raitz, “Ethnic Maps of North America,” *The Geographical Review* 68:3 (1978): 335-350. Although now somewhat dated, Raitz’s article provides a rather comprehensive overview of the most significant contributions of geographers in this field.
2. Michael P. Conzen, “Culture Regions, Homelands, and Ethnic Archipelagos in the United States: Methodological Considerations,” *Journal of Cultural Geography* 13:2 (1993): 13-29. This entire issue is devoted to papers on this topic.
3. Richard L. Nostrand and Lawrence E. Estaville, eds., *Homelands: Regional Geographies and American Culture* (Harrisonburg, Va.: The Center for American Places, forthcoming). Transcripts of the AAG

- sessions devoted to discussion of the homeland concept can be found in Richard L. Nostrand, "AAG Session Report: The Homeland Concept," *American Ethnic Geography Specialty Group Newsletter* 5:2 (1997): 12-14; Douglas A. Hurt, "AAG Session Report: The Homeland Concept Revisited (Part 1)," *American Ethnic Geography Specialty Group Newsletter* 6:2 (1998): 11-13; Douglas A. Hurt, "AAG Session Report: The Homeland Concept Revisited (Part 2)," *American Ethnic Geography Specialty Group Newsletter* 7:1 (1999): 4-6.
4. Wilbur Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States*, rev. ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992): 118-119.
 5. Richard L. Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992); Richard L. Nostrand, "The New Mexico-Centered Hispano Homeland," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 13:2 (1993): 47-59.
 6. Conzen, "Culture Regions, Homelands, and Ethnic Archipelagos," 20.
 7. D.W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America*, Vol. 2, *Continental America, 1800-1867* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): 348-357, 385-418.
 8. C.E. Sherman, *Original Ohio Land Subdivisions* (Columbus: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey, 1925): 89-90. Thomas Acquinas Burke, *Ohio Lands: A Short History* (Columbus: Ohio Auditor of State, 1993): 23. Geoffrey L. Buckley, Timothy G. Anderson, and Nancy R. Bain, "Living on the Fringe: A Geographic Profile of Appalachian Ohio," *Pittsburgh and the Alleghenies: Precambrian to the Present* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 2000): 141.
 9. Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, *The Origin and Distribution of Settlement Groups: Ohio, 1850* (Athens, Ohio: Cutler Printing, 1982): 23-25.
 10. Aaron Spencer Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996): 2, 4-6, 8, 51, 55-56.
 11. William T. Parsons, *The Pennsylvania Dutch: A Persistent Minority* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976): 19.
 12. Oscar Kuhns, *The German and Swiss Settlements of Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1900): 118, 120-121.
 13. J. Gordon Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 3rd ed. (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1989): 27-33; Parsons, *The Pennsylvania Dutch*, 19; Ralph Wood, "Lutheran and Reformed, Pennsylvania German Style," in Ralph Wood, ed., *The Pennsylvania Germans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942): 87-102.
 14. Fredric Klees, *The Pennsylvania Dutch* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1950): 75, 78, 86-89; Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 27-33.
 15. James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972): 150-180.
 16. Robert F. Ensminger, *The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origin, Evolution, and Distribution in North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992): 50-106; John Fraser Hart, *The Rural Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998): 213, 215. Also see John C. Hudson, *Making the Corn Belt: A Geographical History of Middle and Western Agriculture* (Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 1994).
 17. For a much more detailed discussion on folk housing in the Middle Atlantic hearth see: Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968): 54-55; Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick, and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape*, Vol. 1 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984): 40-48.
 18. Russell Wieder Gilbert, *A Picture of the Pennsylvania Germans* (Gettysburg: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1958): 35-43.
 19. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country*, 77, 84, 86-88, 93.
 20. Mary Sue Leist-Parsons, *Leist and Allied Families, 1690-1990* (Manuscript Copy, 1992): 4, 9-10, 25, 83, 113-115, 233, 299, 339, 351, 363, 369; Joseph Edison Pontius, *The Ancestors and Descendants of Jacob Franklin Pontius, 1873-1953* (Manuscript Copy, 1972): 1-56; Personal Interview With Gertrude Noecker (Henry Reber's great granddaughter), Lancaster, Ohio, 22 September 1999; Information on the Dreisbach Family Genealogy can be found at <http://www.gentree.com/databases/Dreisbach/Dreisbach1.html>.
 21. Robert D. Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977): 52-55.
 22. William K. Crowley, "Old Order Amish Settlement: Diffusion and Growth," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 68:2 (1978): 249-264.

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24. Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, "Midwestern Barns and Their Germanic Connections," in Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, eds. *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995): 62-79.
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26. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991): 99. See Hudson, *Making the Corn Belt*.
27. H. Roger Grant, *Ohio on the Move: Transportation in the Buckeye State* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000): 57-61.
28. Ensminger, *Pennsylvania Barn*.
29. For a detailed discussion of construction materials employed on Pennsylvania barns, see Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick, and Stone*, Vol. 2 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984): 22-35.
30. Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, "Double Overhang Barns in Southeastern Ohio," *PAST—Pioneer America Society Transactions* 12 (1989): 29-36.
31. Noble, *Wood, Brick, and Stone*, Vol. 1: 52-55.
32. Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 130-131.
33. Scott, *A Complete History of Fairfield County*, 122-144.
34. Timothy G. Anderson, "Czech-Catholic Cemeteries in East-Central Texas: Material Culture and Ethnicity in Seven Rural Communities," *Material Culture* 25:3 (1993): 1-18.

