Colonial languages in the US

A colonial language is a language brought from somewhere else to a colony.

A colony is a settlement of foreigners (usually with the political backing of a foreign government).

Colonial Languages in the US were:

- English
- French
- German
- Spanish

Generalizations about colonial languages:

1. Dialect leveling—linguistic simplification and loss of diversity when different dialects are thrown together
2. Extensive language contact with other languages in new location
3. Lessened contact with dialects in the old country increases linguistic divergence
4. Stigmatization of new variety by old country.
5. Diglossia in new locale.
7. Depending on events, possible establishment of new local standard.

Germanic languages in the US

- English
- Pennsylvania German
- Plautdietsch
- Hutterite German
- Scandanavian languages
- Yiddish

German was not the language of a European state with colonial designs on America. Instead, individual German speakers became American colonists.

Germany in the 16th century:

- Poverty, overpopulation, hunger
- The Reformation: Martin Luther, Calvinism (especially in German-speaking Switzerland), Mennonites, Amish.
- Religious diversity in Germany brought political division and the 30-years war.
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<th>Pennsylvania:</th>
<th>Late XVIII century saw beginning of anti-German discrimination</th>
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<td>• William Penn’s 1681 “experiment in religious toleration, good government, and individual morality.”</td>
<td>• Immigration restrictions: loyalty oaths, entry fees higher for Germans than Irish</td>
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<td>• Francis Daniel Pastorius, planner of Germantown, PA, a settlement of German and Dutch Mennonites. Near Swedish, Dutch, and English-speaking communities.</td>
<td>• Benjamin Franklin’s racism</td>
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<td>• Peak of German emigration was 1717-1754. It made Philadelphia the 2nd largest city in the British Empire, after London.</td>
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<td>• There were also (but smaller) German groups in New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.</td>
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<th>Colonial German-Americans were pacifists, abolitionists</th>
<th>The Revolution</th>
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<td>• The Moravians in NY were unusual in thinking that Native Americans were humans with human rights (but they still looked down on their lifestyle)</td>
<td>• Pennsylvania’s pacifist groups—the English Quakers and the German Mennonites and Amish.</td>
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<td>• Many Germans had close relations with Native Americans and worked as multilingual translators</td>
<td>• Against war but also against taxation by British.</td>
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<td>• Many German-speaking regiments and even generals.</td>
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<td>• Christopher Ludwick convinced Hessian mercenaries to come to the American side.</td>
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<td>• Towerhouse (aka Liberty) Bell was hidden in a German household.</td>
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<td>• Molly “Pitcher”—accompanied husband to war, carried water to soldiers, fought when husband fell.</td>
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| In colonial days German-Americans were                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • 19th century immigration & westward settlement from Pennsylvania                                                                  | • lifelong German monolinguals                                                                                  |
| • 20th century immigration and migration---less homogenous communities                                                              | • balanced bilinguals                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                         | • fluent in languages like Mohawk and Delaware.                                                               |
Most influential was the \textbf{Rheinfränkisch dialect} of Old High German (note this is \textit{not} the ancestral dialect of Modern Standard German)

\begin{itemize}
  \item Pennsylvania Dutch: Wann kann en Mensch en Kalb sei? Am aerschde Abrill! Ansellem Daag kann er en Abrillekalb warre.(Guck! Dei Schuhbendel is uff!)
  \item Standard German: Wann kann ein Mensch ein "Kalb" sein? Am ersten April. An jenem Tag kann er ein "Aprilkalb" werden. (Guck! Dein Schnuersenkel ist auf!)
  \item English: When can a person be a calf? On April 1st! On that day he can become an April calf (fool). (Look! Your shoelace is untied!)
\end{itemize}

\textbf{American-German diglossia}

\begin{itemize}
  \item In the XIX century Standard German (H) was used in the press, written language, church services, education.
  \item Effects of \textbf{WW1}: laws against teaching German in school, speaking German on the telephone. English replaced Standard German as the H language
\end{itemize}

\textbf{German influence on English}

English sayings that are direct translations from Pennsylvania Dutch:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Are you from the store back already?
  \item We walked the block around.
  \item It gets me honish (it rankles in me)
  \item What kind of language do you got behind your speech? (What is your linguistic background?)
  \item She's putting herself on. (She's dressing)
  \item He's taking himself off (He's undressing)
  \item She's put on nice (She's nicely dressed)
  \item That don't go her nothing on (That's none of her business)
  \item It wonders me so.
  \item Those parents used their children good (treated good)
  \item Make the lights out
\end{itemize}

In Colonial America

\begin{itemize}
  \item There were more German publications than English ones
  \item German speakers had the first “public” schools, and the first bilingual education
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Grammatical differences:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item simplification of the case system
    \begin{itemize}
      \item nominative and accusative merged in Pennsylvania
      \item dative and accusative merged in Texas
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
**German and Yiddish loans in English:**

- bagel, fin, shtik, spiel, shmultz, schlep, kvetch, schlemiel, shlemozzel, nebbish, klutz, schmuck, klutz, enemy-shnenemy

- What, me worry?
  Such a deal.
  So what else is new?
  I should know?
  The governor, may he rot in hell, gave a paycut to my son the professor, may he live and be well.