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NEW BOOK EXPLORES PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH FOLKLORE

OREGON, Wis. – Wisconsin folklore author, Dennis Boyer, has taken on the ghost stories of the Pennsylvania Germans or “Dutch” in his new book, ***Once Upon a Hex***. Boyer offers up a folktale journey through nearly 300 years of America’s most enduring European American ethnic group.

The Berks County, Penn., native draws upon his extensive knowledge of folk narrative tales that reveal a strong sense of place. Called the “Folktale Man” by various Midwest publications, Boyer has written extensively on heartland ghost stories, tavern tales, Great Lakes legends and railroad lore.

In *Once Upon a Hex*, Boyer returns to the stories and places of his youth. Discover these folktales rooted in the spirituality of the Pennsylvania Dutch:

- the Trappe Hospital ghosts are the spirits of dead Revolutionary War soldiers who roam the area around Collegetown and Trappe. The private residences, churches and inns that were commandeered to nurse the wounded now house the moans, low conversation and faint shadows of limping spirits.
- the Red Lion miners in Eastern Berks County. Several locals including Old Gip from Alburton and Boyer’s great uncle, Ollie Bauer, invite the spirits of miners entombed in a blasting accident into the bars of the local hotels with them.
- the Holtzham Orchard ghost. This ghost shows a city woman how to create a 19th century orchard that feeds both body and soul.
- the Cumberland Valley Railroad ghost. Carleton, a former rail yard maintenance worker on the CSX, tells of the spirit that stands with a carman’s bar and light attempting to conduct a rolling inspection of a non-existent train.
- the Shivaree ghosts of Kittatinny Mountain. They walk the ridges from Blossville to New Germantown to Stanger and initiate newlywed Dutch husbands outside their bedroom windows with sleigh bells, wash tub fiddles, bugles and jugs.

Most of the tales are drawn from the “Dutch core” of southeast and south central Pennsylvania. The book returns again and again to the love of the land through themes drawn from farming, gardening, hunting, fishing and encounters with the original native peoples. But it also explores past and present Pennsylvania German life in mine and mill, kitchen and workshop, tavern and farmers market.

Once Upon a Hex finds magic in the lives of these people. But it also finds solid values including a strong work ethic, tolerance and reverence.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dennis Boyer is the author of many books on folklore, ghost stories, taverns and regional storytelling. Among his recent titles are *Snow on the Rails: Tales of Heartland Railroad* and *Gone Missing: A Supernatural Tour of the Great Lakes*.

To set up an interview, a book signing or an appearance or to request a review copy for *Once Upon a Hex*, *Snow on the Rails* or *Gone Missing*, contact Badger Books at 800.928.2372 or via e-mail at marylou@badgerbooks.com. Reporters can contact author Dennis Boyer at dutchhex@netscape.net or at his home at 608.935-5968 (author information NOT for publication). Visit his Web site at www.onceuponahex.com.