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SCOTT HAMBLY, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a Berkeley, California, native, is editor of the Symposium on Games in this issue. He was Assistant Editor of *Western Folklore*, 1970-1974, before assuming his dual capacity position as Editorial Assistant for *Pennsylvania Folklife* and the forthcoming *American Folklife* (University of Texas Press). He is presently a predoctoral student in the Graduate Department of Folklore and Folklife at the University of Pennsylvania.

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ANGELA VARESANO, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is at present completing research in the British Isles for her doctorate in Folklore and Folklife at the University of Pennsylvania. She was the third member of the field corps at Eckley in the summer of 1972.

ELIZABETH MATHIAS, Jamaica, New York, teaches anthropology at St. John's University, Jamaica, Long Island.

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DR. BERTON E. BECK, Bronx, New York, who died this year at the age of 84, was an emigre from rural Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. He wrote several important articles for our pages, among them studies of pioneer settlement procedure and land-clearing in the high timber country of Lycoming and Tioga Counties, where his Pennsylvania German forefathers pioneered over a century and a half ago.

DR. MAC E. BARRICK, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, is a member of the Department of Romance Languages at Shippensburg State College. He has contributed many articles of *Pennsylvania Folklife*, most of them from his field researches in his home area of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. His full-length book on the folk-culture of the area is scheduled for publication in 1975.

DR. CLAUDE K. DEISCHER, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is Professor of Chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania. A native of the Moravian town of Emmaus, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, and a member of the Moravian Church, he tells in his article in this issue his experiences in knowing and using the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect in this country and abroad. The article is another in the series on the subject which began with Henry Snyder Gehman, "What the Pennsylvania Dutch Dialect Has Meant in My Life." *Pennsylvania Folklife*, Volume XVIII No. 4 (Summer 1968), 8-11.

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Cultural Learning through Game Structure: A Study of Pennsylvania German Children's Games

By WALN K. BROWN

The history of game scholarship has been both extensive and diverse. The game collections of Newell,¹ Gomme,² and the Opies,³ coupled with the recent analyses of games endeavored by Goldstein,⁴ Brewster,⁵ and

¹William Wells Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children* (New York, 1963).

²A. B. Gomme, *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1894).

³Iona and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of School-children* (London, 1959).

⁴Kenneth S. Goldstein, "Strategy in Counting Out: An Ethnographic Folklore Field Study," in *The Study of Games*, ed. by Avedon and Sutton-Smith (New York, 1971), pp. 167-178.

⁵P. G. Brewster, "Children's Games and Rhymes," *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, I:4, (Durham, N. C., 1953); *American Non-Singing Games* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1953); "The Importance of the Collecting and Study of Games," *Eastern Anthropologist*, X:1 (1956), 5-12; "Priority and Exemption in Children's Games: A Comparative Study," *Volkskunde*, LVIII (1957), 21-30, being the most important for us.

Sutton-Smith,⁶ among others, provide us with an excellent perspective from which to observe the role played by folkloristics in the study of games. Couple the folklorists' purview of games with the insights rendered by psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and other social scientists, and we can readily see that the analysis of games is no mere child's play. From collection to analysis the study of games offers one more vantage point from which to note and analyze how man observes, interprets, structures, and subsequently organizes his experience through the phenomena of expressive culture.

⁶Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Games of New Zealand Children* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959); with Elliott M. Avedon, *The Study of Games* (New York, 1971); *The Folkgames of Children* (Austin and London, 1972); and "The Expressive Profile," *Journal of American Folklore*, LXXXIV (1971), 80-92, being the most important for us.



Skipping Rope – a universal favorite among smaller children. (Photos by Clarissa Smith.)



Schoolground games were important in the 19th and 20th Centuries for Pennsylvania children. This illustration of the "Old Schoolhouse by the Creek," is from Harbaugh's Harfe (1870), the first widely circulated volume of Pennsylvania Dutch verse.

The study of games provides the researcher a tool for analyzing how the individual and the group organize their perceptions and integrate them, through highly structured play activity, into socially acceptable norms. Games prove to be a microcosmic event which helps to instill and fortify that culture's value system. By playing at reality, through the game structure which the specific culture provides, the individual learns the intricacies of that culture and adjusts his perceptions accordingly. Through studying the culture's games the researcher investigates a traditional form of activity that aids in the socialization of the child and directs him toward the realization of socially acceptable norms and values of the culture under study. By studying a culture's games we uncover the very foundation of that culture's value system. That is, we discover how the individual learns to adjust to, synthesize, and subsequently employ that which the majority of individuals in a culture deem appropriate.

Contemporary game scholarship begins with Huizinga's *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, and it is from Huizinga's insights that game scholarship progresses toward more empirical analysis. Although this work is philosophical in nature, not steeped in empiricism, it is one of the first thorough endeavors to illustrate the importance of play in the enculturation process.⁷ Further we learn from Huizinga

that "genuine, pure play, is one of the main bases of civilization."⁸ According to Huizinga's scheme we are to view play as not only the basis for culture but also the means whereby culture sustains itself. Play, or more correctly "the play element," underlies all of culture. Play is an integral part of man's cultural institutions, forming the basis of these institutions. Play permeates all of life, yet is divorced from reality. When play is viewed it is viewed as a performance that elevates the participant into a "higher order than reality. In essence, play is a representation of something, something which is manifested through metaphor."⁹

Huizinga speculates the formal characteristics and the function of play, delineating these two intrinsic characteristics of play in an attempt to structure and define the basic elements of this phenomenon. He sums up the formal characteristics of play as follows:

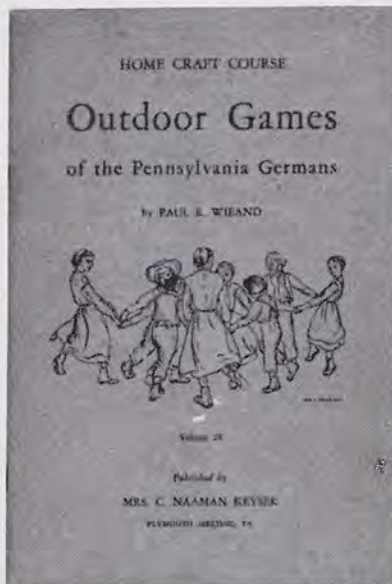
. . . a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.¹⁰

⁷Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston, 1955), p. 1.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰*Ibid.*



Literature on Pennsylvania German games is scarce. Paul R. Wieand's pamphlet, *Outdoor Games of the Pennsylvania Germans*, published in 1950 by Mrs. C. Naaman Keyser in the *Home Craft Course* series, is still at the top of the list. It includes instructions for 36 games, with the music to the songs for the Dutch singing games.

As for the function of play Huizinga suggests the following:

The function of play in the higher forms which concern us here can largely be derived from the two basic aspects under which we meet it: as a contest for something or a representation of something. These two functions can unite in such a way that the game "represents" a contest, or else becomes a contest for the representation of something.¹¹

For Huizinga play is neither good nor bad, it only exists.¹² It is a phenomenon that is separate from reality, self-contained, and forms the very basis for culture and civilization. Yet today, ever since the 18th Century,¹³ posits Huizinga, play has become too "serious," and the advent of serious games and sports has manifested the decline of the pure play element in culture.¹⁴

Though Huizinga's theory of play does not provide us with an empirical model for the study and analysis of games, it does offer us a point of departure from which to note the cumulative rise of contemporary game theory. Where Huizinga ceased his excursion into the study of play, Caillois ventures forward to note the inherent characteristics of play and games. In his *Man, Play, and Games* Caillois delineates the factors which he observes as being fundamental to the definition of games. To constitute a game the phenomenon under study must have six basic properties; it must be free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, governed by rules, and make-believe. More fully, these criteria involve the following definitions:

- 1) *Free*: in which play is not obligatory; if it were, it would at once lose its attractive and joyous quality of diversion;
- 2) *Separate*: circumscribed within limits of space and time, defined and fixed in advance;

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 197.

3) *Uncertain*: the course of which cannot be determined, nor the result attained beforehand, and some latitude for innovations being left to the player's initiative;

4) *Unproductive*: creating neither goods, nor wealth, nor new elements of any kind; and, except for the exchange of property among the players, ending in a situation identical to that prevailing at the beginning of the game;

5) *Governed by Rules*: under the conventions that suspend ordinary laws, and for the moment establish new legislation, which alone counts;

6) *Make-believe*: accompanied by a special awareness of a second reality or of a free unreality, as against real life.¹⁵

All six of these *basic* characteristics of play must be intact for a game to be justifiably termed a game phenomenon. When any one or more of these characteristics is perverted, "corruption" ensues and the phenomenon can no longer be termed a game; rather, it becomes another form of amusement.¹⁶

Caillois further notes that there are four "fundamental" categories of games in which the role of competition, chance, simulation, or vertigo is dominant. Caillois terms these four categories *agon*, *alea*, *mimicry*, and *ilinx*, respectively.¹⁷ Each of these designations has an order to relative progression between two polar opposites. At the one end of each category's parameters lies the element of uncontrolled fantasy which Caillois terms *paidia*, at the opposite end lies an element of convention and search for control, termed *ludus* by Caillois.¹⁸ By studying the four "fundamental" categories of games, and their internal variables, Caillois posits the possibility of a classificatory system for games. However, he cautions, the basic "attitudes" of games are not always found in isolation; rather they may unite their actions forming six, and only six, combinations of games.¹⁹ These six combinations are as follows:

Competition-Chance (*agon-alea*)

Competition-Simulation (*agon-mimicry*)

Competition-Vertigo (*agon-ilinx*)

Chance-Simulation (*alea-mimicry*)

Chance-Vertigo (*alea-ilinx*)

Simulation-Vertigo (*mimicry-ilinx*)

It is by studying the four "fundamental" categories of games, their internal variables, and the six possible combinations of the "fundamental" categories that we can designate and classify *all* game forms. We are therefore able to observe the possible range of game forms available to the individual within a culture.

Thus far we have observed the criteria for the classification of play and game phenomena, but both Huizinga and Caillois failed to note how and why the individual learns to manipulate play-oriented activities.

¹⁵Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games* (New York, 1961), pp. 9-10.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 43-55.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 14-26.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 71.

Although Caillois tempts us with a certain amount of this data he fails to employ an empirical model for the justification of his theory. I, therefore, hesitate to accept Caillois' theory for learning because it is much too speculative for the purpose of this paper. Rather, the methodology and subsequent findings presented by Erikson in his monumental work *Childhood and Society* present us with a more empirical perspective from which to note the rise of play within the individual; moving us from the individual into the culture of which the individual is part. Erikson's empirical model is based on first-hand clinical observations, steeped in psychological analysis gained from dutiful involvement with childhood interactions. This model offers an empirical foundation and framework that is lacking in the previous works.

Erikson sees play as a function of the ego which attempts to "synchronize" the bodily and the social processes with the self.²⁰ Play thus becomes an excellent means of organizing and strengthening the ego's sense of self by operating in a fantasy world that lies within the reach of reality. During play the child can act out his social roles, fantasies, or difficulties in a manner whereby he may attempt to master his sense of self and strengthen his ego.

According to Erikson's theory of play, play is to be observed as the infantile form of the adult world wherein the child *learns* to deal with the intricacies of life by creating various situations within a play frame of reference in order to attempt the mastery of reality through experimentation.²¹ From this perspective play becomes a viable means of extricating the child from the world of reality and affords him a fantasy world wherein he can build, or rebuild, his ego in an attempt to structure his ego to suit the requirements of the environmental and social stimuli that surrounds him. Play offers the child an expressive arena for ego mastery, while instilling in him his cultural imperatives.

Erikson notes three distinct spheres of child play, all of which aid in the development of ego identity; the autocosmic sphere, the microsphere and the macrosphere.²² The autocosmic sphere, or "autocosmic play," is the first stage, the stage where play focuses on the child's own body. In this stage the child experiments in play with his own body, and tests his own physical perceptions with other physical features that surround him. The second sphere, the microsphere, moves the child away from body-centered play into a world of manageable toys that aid in orienting the child more directly with his environment. In this second sphere the child may begin more readily to compare self with non-self, thus orienting the child

to external ego functions. In this sphere the child plays with reality but, primarily, on his own and unaccompanied. The third and last sphere, the macrosphere, is the world of play that is shared with others. Here the child adapts what he has learned in the two previous spheres in order to relate with others. He plays at social interaction and develops concomitantly with the amount of exposure to external phenomena synthesized and adapted by the ego. Thus we see a progressive development of the self as reality is mastered by the ego through play experimentation.

Erikson's model proves to be quite enlightening. Through this model we see how the individual observes, synthesizes, and employs play in relation to the self first and the culture second. The child moves from a state of "pure" play wherein activity is spontaneous and unstructured, to a form of play where activity becomes relatively less spontaneous and more structured. Gradually, what occurs is the imposition of cultural norms and values upon the play activity. The child plays at reality, corrupting play by giving it a structure superimposed by cultural reality. Slowly the genesis of games occurs. The child socializes himself by experimenting with and gradually mastering the intricacies of the culture's (play) structures. By playing at reality the child moves from fantasy toward reality, ever "synchronizing" the self and the socio-cultural value system.

Though the above studies are quite innovative, all three lack one important ingredient for definition. In each study the author fails to make a definitive distinction between play and games, each using the term interdependently. However, as we shall see, this is not necessarily true; games are a uniquely differentiated form of play. Sutton-Smith has recognized this anomaly of definition and attempts to dispel the synonymous misclassification of play and games as follows:

... play is unique and individual, but ephemeral; whereas a game is sufficiently systematic that it may be repeated by others in other places. . . . Games are repeatable because of their systematic pattern and their predictable outcomes. Play on the other hand is less systematic, and is open-ended with respect to outcomes. In a game, the participant's voluntary control over procedures has been subordinated in anticipation of, but without guarantee for, a given goal.²³

According to Sutton-Smith's definition play and games are two different entities. Play is unique, individual, ephemeral, relatively unsystematic, and holds an open-ended outcome. Games, on the other hand, are systematic, repeatable, have a relatively predictable outcome, and are goal-oriented. Games are a differentiated aspect of play where structure is imposed by reality factors and shared experience (see Fig. 1).

²³Avedon and Sutton-Smith, *The Study of Games*, p. 7.

²⁰Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York, 1950), p. 211.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 222.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 220—221.

Thus, games are the result of the superimposition of culturally perceived reality factors upon play instinct. Once the child learns to "synchronize," in Erikson's terms, outside reality with internal perceptions, he is moving away from the "pure" play to the sphere of game structure. In essence, it would be best to say that the child plays at games rather than saying merely that he plays.

Having rather systematically laid the groundwork for noting the history of the study of games, the seminal works of game theory, how and why the individual learns games, how games differ from play, and what properties underly the classification of games, we can move to a more definitive model for the characterization of games and view how specific game types reflect the disposition of a specific culture.

Perhaps the most influential work concerning the study of the relationship between games and culture has been the article "Games in Culture" by Roberts, Arth, and Bush.²⁴ The authors define a game as "a recreational activity characterized by: (1) organized play, (2) competition, (3) two or more sides, (4) criteria for determining the winner, and (5) agreed-upon rules."²⁵ (As we can see from this definition, games include a play element but are highly structured forms of play activity.) Competition becomes a key element in the study of games, and the authors relegate any non-competitive play activities to the position of amusements.

The authors claim to have surveyed the various literatures and the cross-cultural files on approximately one hundred tribes, and found that in those cultures where games exist they can be classified according to three general classifications: games of physical skill, games of strategy, and games of chance.²⁶ These three general classifications can be broken down into a classificatory system of only six possible game types, or their combination: chance, chance/strategy, chance/physical skill, strategy, strategy/physical skill, and physical skill.²⁷

The authors concur from their findings that the general categories of games of strategy appear to simulate social interactive systems,²⁸ games of chance appear to be associated with religious activities,²⁹ and games of physical skill appear to be related to environmental conditions.³⁰ Combinations of these factors would, of course, show an overlap of preferential activities within the culture under study. From their limited findings the authors conclude that there is a

relationship between games and needs;³¹ that most games are models of various cultural activities;³² and, that games are exercises in mastery.³³ Therefore, according to these findings, there should be a correlation between a specific culture system and the games that that cultural system manifests and sustains through tradition. These findings have been generally substantiated elsewhere.³⁴ However, it should be cautioned that these findings are limited since they are generalities and do not consider all variables involved for all individuals within each specific culture. Such a factor as sex differences constitutes just one criterion that must be more fully explored in order to ascertain and posit valid conclusions concerning games in a specific culture.³⁵ With this caution in mind I hope the reader will view what follows as a very general study of games found in one specific culture.

Having observed the tenets of relevant game theory and play perception we can now apply these models to a specific corpus of data and note whether these theories display relevant facts concerning a culture or society. For this experiment I have chosen to study the games of Pennsylvania German children. Although the sources of game ethnographies concerning the game activities of these people are limited, I believe that the amount of data examined provides us with some important insights into the game structure of this society. However, it must be noted that the findings of this

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 598.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 599.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 604.

³⁴Brian Sutton-Smith, and John M. Robert, "The Cross-Cultural and Psychological Study of Games," in *The Cross-Cultural Analysis of Games*, ed. Gunther Luschen (Champaign, Ill., 1970), pp. 100-108; Brian Sutton-Smith, "Cross-Cultural Study of Children's Games," *American Philosophical Society Yearbook*, (1961), pp. 426-429.

³⁵Brian Sutton-Smith, B. G. Rosenberg, and E. F. Morgan, Jr., "Development of Sex Differences in Play Choices during Preadolescence," *Child Development*, XXXIV (1963), 119-126.

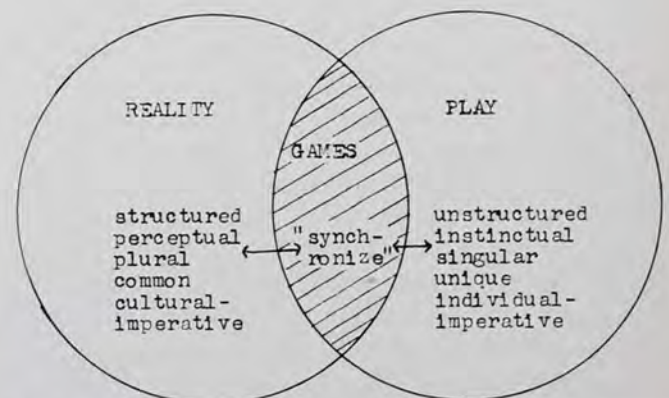


Figure 1. The structure of games. Games mediate between the spheres of reality and play. They are a product of the "synchronization" of factors from both spheres, serving as a transitory or "liminal" stage between the real and the instinctual worlds.

²⁴John M. Roberts, Malcolm J. Arth, and Robert R. Bush, "Games in Culture," *American Anthropologist*, LXI (1959), 597-604.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 597.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 597-598.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 600.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 601.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 604.

Figure 2. Classification of games according to Caillois' "Fundamental" Model*

	AGON (competition)	ALEA (chance)	MIMIERY (simulation)	ILINX (vertigo)
Paidia	3, 6, 13, 14, 24, 30, 40, 49, 50		4, 12,	30
Ludus	1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67,	7	5, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59	31

*Arranged according to number series assigned to games referenced from game ethnographies presented numerically in the Appendix.

experiment are speculative, not concrete, in that a much larger corpus of data is necessary to validate such an experiment. Further, such an experiment must undergo repeated examination by a variety of observers, and the findings corroborated, before such findings may be termed conclusive.

The game ethnographies reviewed in this study are not exhaustive. The writer realizes that other ethnographies containing game information do exist concerning this society. However, I have limited my study for several important reasons. First, too large a sample would have been unwieldy and very difficult to analyze. Second, many other sources were consulted, but lack of necessary contextual information and other needed data were not illustrated in these sources; therefore, these sources were discarded. Third, some game ethnographies were discarded due to my inability to commit them justifiably to specific categories offered by the models used for analysis; thus, rather than speculate, I did not categorize these games. What exists is a representation of games that held enough information for classification, and which could be committed to a specific category without skepticism.

The analytical models used for this study are those offered by Caillois, and those offered by the study of Roberts, Arth, and Bush. There are four diagrams derived from their models; the fundamental and extended classifications of Caillois, and the fundamental and extended classifications of Robert, Arth, and Bush. Let us turn to the diagrams of these models and view the findings concerning the Pennsylvania Germans.

Figure 2 illustrates the fundamental categories of Caillois' model. Each one of the Pennsylvania German games was assigned to a specific category because of the predominance of one certain quality that illustrates the greatest emphasis concerning one of Caillois' categories. Here we readily note the high percentage of competitive games. Approximately 75% of the total number of games classified for this study are competitive in nature. Of this 75% representation of competitive games approximately 61% are highly structured and approximately 14% are less highly structured. The simulated games hold an approximate 20% distribution. Of this 20% representation of simulated games approximately 17% are highly structured and approximately 3% are less highly structured. The vertigo-inducing games hold the last approximately 5%, being evenly distributed between the highly structured and less structured forms. There are no games that predominate with chance qualities, although one game, number 7, may be fitted loosely within this structure.

The predominance of competitive games provides us with the most important perspective for analysis since it holds the vast majority. Caillois states that this quality notes a "vindication of personal responsibility"; that it is a game form where the outcome is not entirely certain; one where an "equality of chances is artificially created"; and a form where the individual participant determines the outcome through his own abilities.³⁸ This must be contrasted to the lack of chance predominant games, games that are dependent

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 18.

Figure 2a. General Distribution Chart of Caillois' Fundamental Model.

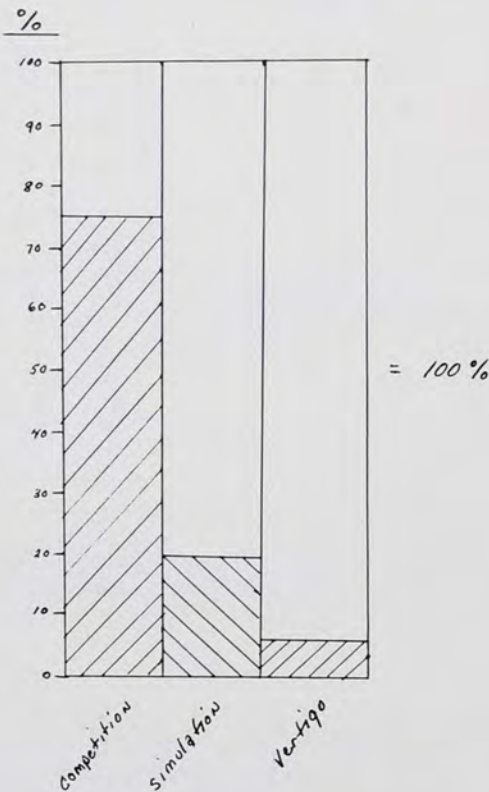
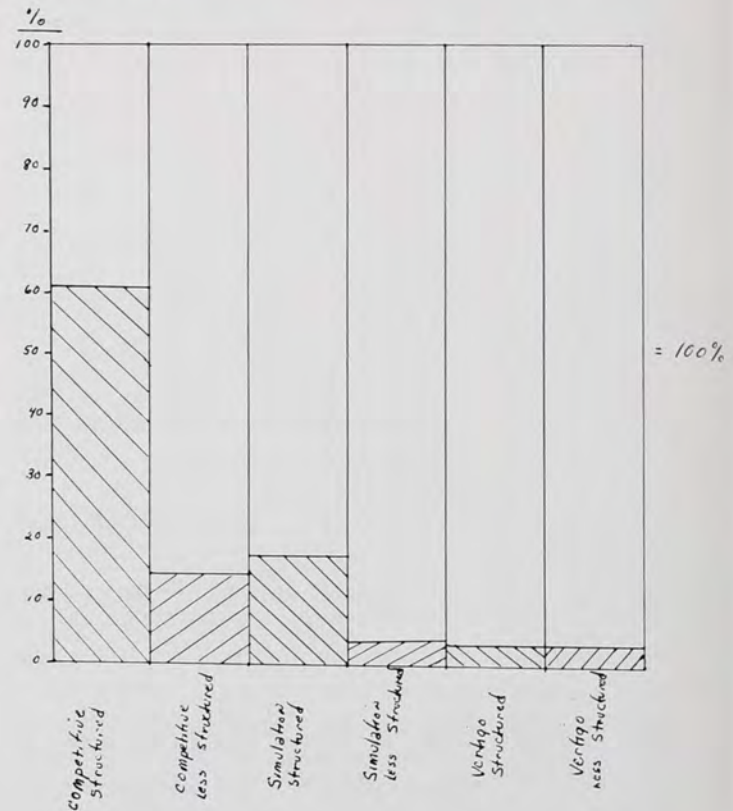


Figure 2b. Specific Distribution Chart of Caillois' Fundamental Model.



upon "fate," "destiny," and "based on a decision independent of the player" for the outcome.³⁷

Figure 3 illustrates the high percentage of games that contain both competitive and simulated qualities. Approximately 62% of the games surveyed predominated with the combination of competitive/simulation factors. Another 15% of the games showed strong competitive/

³⁷Ibid., p. 17.

vertigo tendencies; about 14% displayed heavy simulation/vertigo characteristics; almost 7% held competition/chance factors; and the remaining approximate 2% were chance/vertigo oriented; while none of the games were chance/simulatory forms.

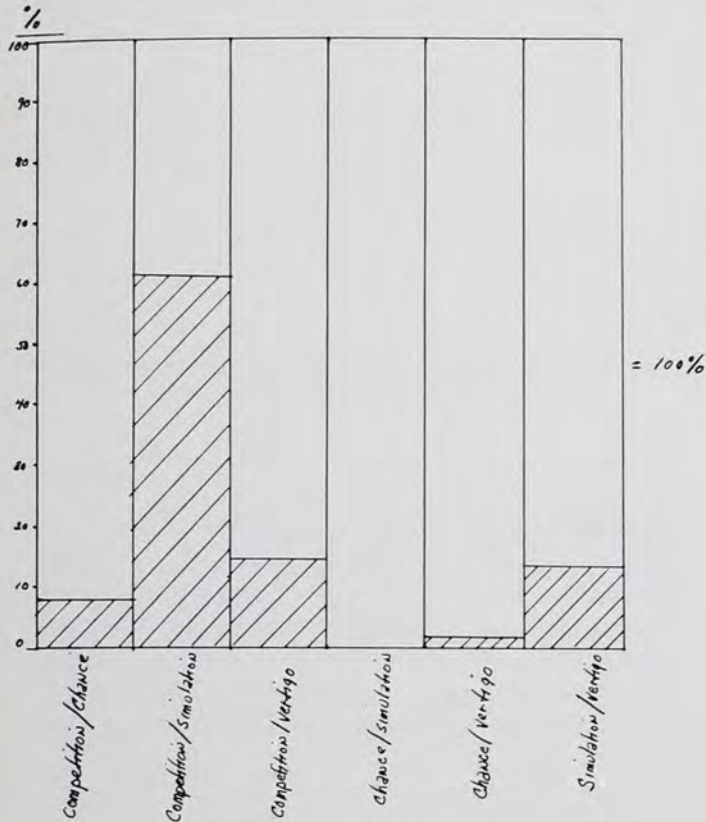
The extended model of Caillois, with its predominance of 62% for Pennsylvania German children's games, exhibits the strong tendency for both competitive and

Figure 3. Classification of Games According to Caillois' Extended Model*

Competition/Chance (Agon-Alea)	Competition/Simulation (Agon-Mimicry)	Competition/Vertigo (Agon-Ilinx)	Chance/Simulation (Alea-Mimicry)	Chance/Vertigo (Alea-Ilinx)	Simulation/Vertigo (Mimicry-Ilinx)
2, 3, 9, 13, 50	1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 65, 66,	6, 27, 37, 39, 40, 54, 62, 63, 64, 67,		7	12, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 55

*Arranged according to number series assigned to games referenced from game ethnographies presented numerically at end of diagrams.

Figure 3a. Distribution Chart of Caillois' Extended Model



imitative factors. According to Caillois a strong showing of these characteristics in combination displays cultural creative forms where educational or esthetic value is emphasized, and "stable and influential institutions are frequently and almost inevitably derived from them."³⁸

Figure 4 employs the fundamental model for classifying games according to the proposal of Roberts, Arth, and Bush. The findings in this model display the strong showing of games predominating with physical skill. Approximately 69% of the games surveyed indicate heavy emphasis on factors involving the participants' physical abilities. Another 29% of the games surveyed involved the predominance of strategy factors. Only 2% of the games could be classified in the chance category.

Bearing in mind that the authors of this classification system based their findings on "primitive," or better, non-industrial social groups, we can proceed to analyze our data. The predominance of physical skills displays emphasis on environmental factors, the higher latitudes having more games of physical skill.³⁹ Further, the authors speculate, there is a correlation between physical skill and self-reliance.⁴⁰ Games of strategy, on the other

³⁸Ibid., pp. 76-77.

³⁹Roberts, et al., p. 604.

⁴⁰Ibid.

Figure 4. Classification of Games According to "Fundamental" Model Presented by Roberts, Arth, and Bush*

Physical Skill	Strategy	Chance
1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 62, 37, 57	3, 11, 14, 19, 20, 22, 24, 27, 34, 36, 38, 41, 42, 50, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67	7

*Arranged according to number series assigned to games referenced from game ethnographies presented numerically at end of diagrams.

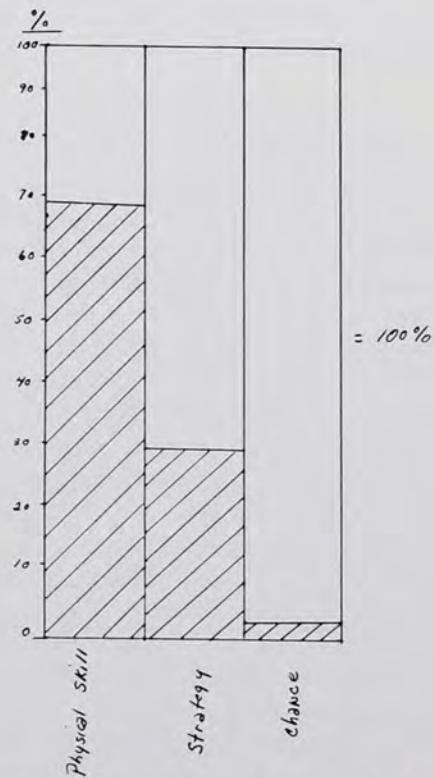


Figure 4a. Distribution Chart of Roberts, Arth, and Bush Fundamental Model.

hand, show a strong relation to social systems, also, they are linked with the *learning* of social roles.⁴¹ Twenty-nine percent of the Pennsylvania German children's games display this predilection of social role and social system factors. The lack of a prevalence, or even strong emphasis, of games of chance displays the lack of strong religious factors posited by the authors of this model.

⁴¹Ibid.

Figure 5. Classification of Games According to "Extended" Model Presented by Roberts, Arth, and Bush.*

Chance	Chance/Strategy	Chance/Physical Skill	Strategy	Strategy/Physical Skill	Physical Skill
7	50		38, 41, 3, 34, 42, 64, 65, 66, 67	2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 36, 37, 49, 52, 54, 60, 61, 62, 63, 57	1, 4, 5, 12, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 51, 53, 55, 56, 59

*Arranged according to number series assigned to games referenced from game ethnographies presented numerically at end of diagrams.

This is not to say that the Pennsylvania Germans are not strongly religious—to the contrary they are—but this shows that they do not attribute their life's cycle to the superimposition of magical or supernatural forces.⁴²

Figure 5, the extended model proposed by Roberts, Arth, and Bush, displays further information concerning the makeup of Pennsylvania German children's games. The strongest category of this model is the strategy/physical skill category wherein about 46% of the games can be classified. Another approximate 36% represents the prevalence of sheer physical skill. About 14% of the games are dominated by strategy factors. The remaining 4% are distributed between the chance and chance/strategy categories. According to this classification system physical skill and strategy/physical skill dominate, with games emphasizing strategy holding a slight emphasis.

Having reviewed the findings of these four models it is possible to posit some hypothetical conclusions. First, the strong emphasis on competitive games forms exhibits the Pennsylvania Germans' attitude toward displaying individual abilities in relation to others. Second, the combination of competitive and mimetic characteristics illustrates how strongly the surrounding environment influences the genesis of game forms that exude competitive factors; the games show how strongly the external social system influences the individual. Third, physical skills are highly valued by the society due to the strong emphasis on physically inclined game forms. Fourth, the combination of physical skill and strategy factors displays a strong emphasis on the combination of mind and body abilities; that self-reliance and adherence to the social system are of great importance.

In sum, the findings of this study show that the Pennsylvania German children's game forms emphasize

individual ability, self-reliance, physical and mental prowess, and adherence to the existing social system. Further, we see how the game forms exhibit, instill, "synchronize," and subsequently incorporate the Pennsylvania German child into the social system by providing him with game forms that teach him, through a play form, how to conduct himself and what char-

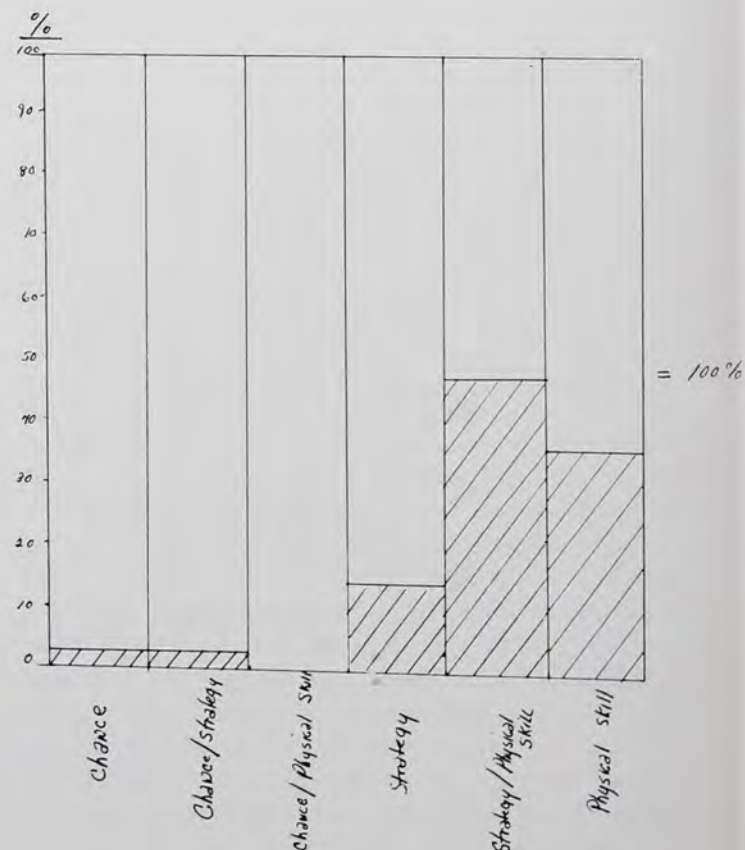


Figure 5a. Distribution Chart of Roberts, Arth, and Bush Extended Model.

⁴²Ibid., p. 602.

acteristics best display this appropriate form of conduct. The Pennsylvania German child learns the fundamentals of his social system by playing at them through socially derived game structures.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN GAMES AND THEIR ETHNOGRAPHIC SOURCES:

1. Ring-around-A-Rosy (Wieand, p. 4)
2. Guessing Colors (Wieand, p. 4)
3. Hid-and-Go-Seek (Wieand, p. 5; Moore, pp. 47-48)
4. Baking Bread (Wieand, pp. 6-7)
5. Playing Horse (Wieand, p. 7)
6. Shooting at the Board Fence (Wieand, p. 7)
7. Green Gravel (Wieand, p. 8)
8. Run Sheepy Run (Wieand, pp. 8-9)
9. Bat-Out, Throw-Back (Wieand, p. 9)
10. Shooting Rabbits (Wieand, p. 10)
11. Ring Tag (Wieand, pp. 10-11)
12. Leap Frog (Wieand, p. 11; Montgomery, p. 2)
13. Hat Ball (Wieand, p. 12)
14. Corner Tag (Wieand, p. 13)
15. Red Rover, Red Rover (Wieand, pp. 13-14)
16. Wall Ball (Wieand, p. 14)
17. Town Ball (Wieand, p. 15)
18. Peggy (Nipsy) (Wieand, pp. 15-16; *Pa. Dutchman*, I:3, I:7, p. 2)
19. Johnny Miller (Wieand, pp. 16-17)
20. Haley-Over (Wieand, pp. 17-18)
21. Shinny (Wieand, p. 18; Montgomery, p. 2)
22. Duck on a Rock (Wieand, pp. 19-20)
23. Piggy in the Hole (Wieand, p. 20)
24. Shooting Crows (Wieand, p. 21)
25. Kick the Wicket (Wieand, pp. 21-22)
26. Corner Ball (Wieand, p. 22; Johns, p. 3; Smith, pp. 169-170)
27. Crack the Whip (Wieand, p. 23; Montgomery, p. 2)
28. Broom Stick (Wieand, p. 24)
29. Churning Butter (Wieand, p. 24)
30. Weighing Butter (Wieand, p. 24)
31. Treading on Coal (Wieand, p. 25)
32. Wheel-Barrow (Wieand, p. 25)
33. We'll Swim across the Schuylkill (Wieand, pp. 26-28)
34. Oats, Peas, Beans (Wieand, p. 29)
35. Drunken Sailor (Wieand, p. 32)
36. Kissing with Ring Tag (Wieand, p. 34)
37. Botching (Hostetler, p. 165; Tortora, p. 29; Smith, pp. 170-171)
38. Blumssock (Smith, p. 170; Tortora, pp. 22-25)
39. Tug-of-War (Smith, p. 170; Grey, p. 26)
40. Indian Wrestling (Smith, p. 171; Moore, p. 48)
41. Marbles (Smith, pp. 172-173; Moore, p. 53)
42. Fickmiel (Frey, p. 2)
43. Pitching Buttons (Montgomery, p. 3)
44. Throwing Knives (Montgomery, p. 3)
45. Hop-Step-and-Jump (Montgomery, p. 3)
46. Rail Pitching (Montgomery, p. 3)
47. Stone Pushing (Montgomery, p. 3)
48. Sledge Tossing (Montgomery, p. 3)
49. Scheeffli (I. B., p. 2)
50. Doorkeeper (Grey, p. 46)
51. Flying Dutchman (Grey, p. 46)
52. Bag Tag (Grey, p. 46)
53. Bum Barterman (Grey, p. 46)
54. Upsetting the Hammer (Grey, pp. 46-47)
55. Riding a Stick (Moore, pp. 42-43)
56. Make-Believe (Moore, p. 43)
57. Playing Soldier (Moore, p. 43)
58. Playing Woodcutter (Moore, pp. 43-44)
59. Rolling a Hoop (Moore, p. 44)
60. Sock-Ball (Moore, p. 47)
61. Trees Are Parley (Moore, p. 47)
62. Wrestling (Moore, p. 48)
63. The Hide-It Game (Moore, p. 51)
64. Fig Mill (Moore, p. 51)
65. Checkers (Moore, pp. 51-52)
66. Give-Away (Moore, p. 52)
67. Pull the Pegs Puzzle (Moore, p. 57)

“Nipsy”. . . The Ethnography of a Traditional Game of Pennsylvania’s Anthracite Region

By DENIS MERCIER, WALN K. BROWN, ANGELA VARESANO

INTRODUCTION

This article is one of the products of an ethnographic study made in the summer of 1972 of the Village of Eckley, Foster Township, Luzerne County. Mercier, Waln Brown, and Angela Varesano, all doctoral students of Folklore and Folklife at the University of

Pennsylvania, researched the town with the help of a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and the Pennsylvania Folklore Society.

In 1968, because it had changed so little since its founding in 1853, Eckley was chosen as the site for the Paramount Pictures’ film “The Molly Maguires.” After the movie company had departed, a group of enthusiastic citizens formed a non-profit corporation called “The Anthracite Historic Site and Museum,” and, working closely with the Hazleton area Chamber of Commerce, acquired sufficient money to purchase Eckley from then-owner George Huss. At the same time the Pennsylvania General Assembly, through Act No. 83, Session of 1969, authorized the Commonwealth, through the PHMC, to accept title to the village as a gift from the local groups so that it might be developed and presented as a living museum, relating the socio-economic story of the anthracite coal miner, his family, and way of life in a mine patch in the heartland of anthracite coal. The deed was accepted for the Commonwealth by Governor Raymond Shafer in ceremonies at Eckley and recorded on April 8, 1970.

The ethnographic study conducted by the authors of this article was one of the preliminary stages in the development of Eckley into a museum.

HISTORIC-GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF “NIPSY”

The game of “Nipsy,” to hear a resident of Eckley tell about it, was one of the more popular pastimes of the youth of the town “as far back as anyone can remember” and was one of the reasons why “kids kept out of trouble in those days.”¹

A look at the Folklore/Folklife scholarship concerning the game reveals little more than that, save for a few particulars regarding the names by which the game has been known and the many places in which it has been—and still is being—played.

¹Interview with George Barron, lifelong resident of Eckley, June 10, 1972.



Pitcher (Researcher Waln Brown) attempts to cast nipsy into circle from behind pitching line.

The first mention of a game closely resembling Eckley's "Nipsy" occurs in Volume II of *Folk-Lore Journal* under the heading of "Ancient Irish Games" and is called "Cat."² No attempt is made to pinpoint the date or country of origin—here or anywhere else. Volume VII of *Folk-Lore Journal* refers to a game known as "Tip-Cat" to children of Dorset, England, and suggests in a vague way the origin of the term "cat." The long paddle needed to play the game was called the "cat" while the shorter billets of wood were the "kittens."³ The dates of these articles (the 1880's) and the fact that the game was even then being referred to as "ancient," "common," or "traditional" establishes beyond doubt that the game predates Eckley by a great number of years. Just how many years, however, is not known.

Another reference to the game, again from Ireland, occurs in 1901 with a detailed description of "Strac (Gaelic for "bat") Agus Cat" or "Tip-Cat," (the English name), by Rober Maclagan.⁴ A version very similar to one collected in Eckley (in which the sides of the "cat" are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4) was described in his book. A large number of Irish people emigrated to Eckley around the turn of the century, this possibly accounting for the striking similarity.

Alice B. Gomme, in *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, published at the turn of the century, corroborates the evidence found above but again makes no attempt to pinpoint either the approximate date or the county of origin of this "ancient," "traditional" game.⁵ One is left only with a vague basis for conjecture.

But it is not in folklore or folklife scholarship *per se* that a substantial clue is found, it is in English literature. Cited by Paul Brewster as "one of the sports to which John Bunyan was addicted in his unregenerate state,"⁶ he quotes Bunyan in *Grace Abounding*:

But the same day, as I was in the midst of a game of Cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole, just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?" At this I was put to an exceeding maze. Wherefore, leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had, with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with



Basic equipment for the various forms of nipsy; on the left, the one-pointed nipsy and the corresponding broomstick-handle paddle. On the right, the "standard" nipsy board paddle and two two-pointed nipsies. Numbered (notched) nipsies not shown.



Nipsy resting within perimeter of circle.

²G. H. Kinahan, "Connemara Folk-Lore," *Folk-Lore*, II (1884), 264.

³J. S. Udal, "Dorsetshire Children's Games," *Folk-Lore*, VII (1889), 234.

⁴Robert Craig Maclagan, *The Games and Diversions of Argyllshire* (London: Knutt, 1901, pp. 19-21).

⁵Alice B. Gomme, *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, II (London: David Nutt, 1898), 294-295.

⁶Paul G. Brewster, *American Nonsinging Games* (Norman, Okla., 1953), p. 162.

Batter Wain Brown takes second shot at nipsy. Fielder (researcher Denis Mercier) is poised to try to catch it on the fly and thus retire the batter.



Pitcher Denis Mercier takes running jump to go from the circle to the nipsy in the number of jumps he has agreed upon.

me, and as if He did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these and other my ungodly practices.⁷

Now, as John Bunyan was born in 1628 and died in 1688 and as *Grace Abounding* was published circa 1656, some slightly less vague idea of how old the game is is now possible.

More recent scholarship also indicates to a great extent just how far the game has traveled from its (presumably) English origin. John Kyvernetakis, in his book about Greek games in 1938, stated that boys played a similar game to "Cat" in Greece at the time the book was written.⁸ William Wells Newell, in his *Games and Songs of American Children*, notes that "this game [cat] is now played in Hindostan, as well as in Italy and Germany."⁹ Brewster demonstrates that a game called "Beat the Pig" is played in Egypt,¹⁰ and its rules conform very closely to the early British-Scottish-Irish versions previously cited.

Much closer to home is Newell's "Cat" noted in several locations in America, Brewster's "Tippy" collected in Illinois, and Richard M. Dorson's discussion in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* of traditional games in which he mentions "One-a-Cat" as a "possible precursor of baseball" which is "still played by boys."¹¹ In *Pennsylvania Folklife* two references to the game are found. In an article depicting youthful pastimes in and around Schuylkill Haven from 1871 to 1886, John Butz Bowman describes in some detail a game called "Hep," again with the short billet of

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸John Kyvernetakis, *Anthology of Games* (Crete, 1938), pp. 33-34.

⁹William Wells Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children* (New York, 1963), p. 187.

¹⁰Brewster, p. 161.

¹¹Richard M. Dorson, *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (Chicago, 1972), p. 4.

wood having numbered sides.¹² Another similarly conceived article by George L. Moore refers vaguely to "Piggie" around Hanover, Pennsylvania. It is classed with "Stickball," "Bat-Ball," and others.¹³ A brief description of "Piggy/Nipsy" is also found in Paul Wieand's *Outdoor Games of the Pennsylvania Dutch*.¹⁴

Most analogous to the following detailed, recently collected Eckley variants are examples to be found in the predecessor to this magazine, *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, in which then-editor Alfred L. Shoemaker gave a version very similar to one presented below and presented still other versions volunteered by four readers.¹⁵ These, known by "Nipsi," "Neps," and "Catty" were all very similar but were presented with the barest minimum of detail. A follow-up reply by another reader yielded an extremely interesting variant mentioned nowhere else that will be elaborated upon later in this article.¹⁶

So the tradition-based game of "Nipsy" found in Eckley last summer has relatives known by at least ten different names, is found in at least several areas in the United States and at least eight foreign countries. In Eckley, however, several variants of the game were collected—that is, reconstructed from interviews with the informants listed below and several others. The authors arrived some decades too late to witness an actual game being played.

The first version of "Nipsy" presented here is what will be called "standard nipsy"—the form of the game most of the residents of Eckley agree was played by most of the children most of the time. This article will elaborate upon this form of the game as well as its predecessor in minute detail to illuminate contextual elements previously unpublished elsewhere and to provide the reader with new insights regarding the popularity of the game, the strategy involved in playing it, and the complex physical skills necessary for mastery of the game. Two additional variations (with possible sub-variations noted) will then be presented in somewhat less detail, focusing primarily upon the differences from the "standard" version.

TWO-POINTED ("STANDARD") NIPSY

"Two-pointed Nipsy" was the most popular of all forms of "Nipsy" played in Eckley. The game could be played with either a broom handle sawed to a length

of 12 to 15 inches with one end flattened, or with a wooden paddle. When a wooden paddle could not be found, a broom handle was used. The paddle, approximately 3X1/2X15 inches, was the best club to use when playing "Nipsy" because of its greater surface area. The nipsy is 3 to 4 inches long, as there is no exact, standard size; rather, they were made to be in the neighborhood of 3 to 4 inches. (Both the paddle and the nipsies were handmade by the children.) Both ends of the nipsy are tapered. There were often many accidents from playing "Nipsy"; the person trying to hit the nipsy was most often hurt, but spectators or the fielders might get hit by the flying nipsy. Children would begin playing "Nipsy" at ages as early as four or five, and boys as old as twenty were known to play the game. Girls would also play "Nipsy," but the girls who would play the game were "school age" girls, from four to twelve years old. Girls would usually play against girls and boys against boys. Boys would often not play "Nipsy" against girls because "it was too dangerous." Boys could hit the nipsy too hard, and girls did not know how to protect themselves adequately in such a game. "Nipsy" was played in the streets. There were no cars then, so the game could be played safely in the streets. Any dirt-covered area would do, however.¹⁷

¹⁷Interview with George Barron, August 11, 1972.



Pitcher Angela Varesano awaits the striking of the nipsy by the batter, Denis Mercier.

¹²John Butz Bowman, "Pastimes of My Youth," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, X:1 (Spring, 1959), 45.

¹³George L. Moore, "My Childhood Games," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, XIII:4 (July, 1964), 46.

¹⁴Paul R. Wieand, *Outdoor Games of the Pennsylvania Germans* (Plymouth Meeting, Pa., c. 1950), p. 15.

¹⁵"Let's All Play Nipsy," *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, I:2 (May 19, 1949), 2.

¹⁶"Nipsi Again," *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, 1:7 (June 16, 1949), 2.

To begin the game, a circle is drawn on the ground. The size of this circle determines the amount of distance to be stepped off from the outside perimeter of the circle, to a line which designates from where the nipsy is to be pitched. For example, if the diameter of the circle is two feet, the pitching line will be drawn twenty feet from the circle; if the circle is one and one-half feet in diameter, the pitching line will be located fifteen feet away. The diameter of the circle, and thus the distance from the circle to the pitching line, are dependent upon two major factors: the age of the participants, and the ability of the participants to throw the nipsy from the pitching line into the perimeter of the circle. The younger the participants in the game, the more likely that the distance between the pitching line and the circle will be short. This is of course due to the young participants' inability to throw with as great an accuracy as older participants who throw from a greater distance. This is not an invariable rule, however, for participants who are unusually adept at short distance throwing pitch from a greater distance, thus making the game more of a challenge.

Once the field of play is set up, it is decided who will be the first to bat. This decision can be made in a variety of ways; the "eenie, meenie, minee, moe" rhyme may be used to determine first batter or possibly the determination is made by drawing straws; sometimes a simple yell of "me first!" was enough; but most often the decision is made by the two participants' ability to throw the nipsy into the circle—the player who lands closest to the center or edge is the first batter.

Once these preliminary stages are settled, the game can begin. The two participants take their positions, the pitcher behind the pitching line, and the batter beside the circle. The game begins by the pitcher throwing the nipsy at the circle. The pitcher is allowed one toss at the circle, the object of his throw being to cast the nipsy in such a way as to have it land within the perimeter of the circle. If the nipsy comes to rest inside the circle, the batter is "out," and the players exchange positions. However, if the pitcher is unsuccessful in his throw, two possible alternatives are presented. First, if the throw comes to rest on the line which designates the circle, the batter is allowed one hit at the nipsy. Second, if the nipsy comes to rest outside the circle, the batter is allowed to hit the nipsy three times.

The nipsy having been pitched, and resting either on the line or outside the circle, the batter goes into action. He must hit the nipsy from where it has come to rest, not being allowed to move it to his advantage. The batter now decides in which direction he wishes to hit the nipsy, and this is usually determined by the direction of the pointed ends of the nipsy. There are



In notched nipsy games, arguments often ensue over what number is pointing up, and thus how many strikes the batter gets. Batter is Waln Brown, pitcher Denis Mercier.

no boundaries as there are in baseball or other striking games, and the batter may decide it is to his advantage to hit behind himself or to either side. The only exception to this rule would be in the case of the nipsy landing in gardens, yards, or other such "prohibited" areas—any of which would constitute an automatic out.

The batter then takes his bat and strikes the nipsy on one of its pointed ends, which causes the nipsy to fly into the air. The batter then attempts to hit the nipsy in an outward direction. He attempts to hit the nipsy as far away from the circle as possible, but not into the hands of the pitcher. The batter may hit or "crack at" the nipsy one to three times, depending upon how the nipsy landed. If the batter has only one chance to hit the nipsy, he will be measured from where his one attempt lands. If the batter has three swings or "cracks" at the nipsy, he may hit the nipsy three times, each hit being in succession from where the nipsy has landed from the previous hit.

The end of the batter's hitting spree begins the process of scoring. The batter now surveys the distance from where the nipsy rests to the periphery of the circle. He also surveys the jumping ability of his opponent, for the scoring of the game is dependent upon these two criteria. The batter decides how many jumps he can safely allow his opponent without his opponent being able to make the allotted amount of jumps. If the batter approximates the distance between the nipsy and the circle to be 100 feet, and he believes his opponent can jump 15 feet, he can safely allot the opponent from one to six jumps without undue fear that the opponent will make the distance in the number of



One-pointed nipsy is struck while resting at approximately 30-degree angle from hole in center of circle.

jumps allotted him. If the batter allows more than the maximum six jumps he is jeopardizing his position as batter. The strategy involved in guessing how closely the batter can approximate the distance by jumping is critical in the scoring. If the batter allots six jumps to his opponent, and the opponent fails to make the distance between the nipsy and the circle in this amount of jumps, the batter receives six points. The same is true for any number of jumps, as long as the opponent cannot traverse the distance in the number of jumps allotted him. It is conceivable that the batter may allow one jump to his opponent, and thus receive one point; however, it is to the batter's advantage to guess as closely the number of jumps that he can allow his opponent without relinquishing his position as batter. In addition this method is more ethical in that it makes the game as competitive as possible.

The pitcher will now attempt to make the distance between the nipsy and the circle in the number of jumps allowed. He does so by getting a running jump from behind the nipsy, and jumping from where the nipsy rests. It is important to note that the pitcher does not have to make his jumps in one complete and successive movement. Rather, he makes his first jump, stops, draws a line where he lands, and then proceeds to make his next jump with a running start. In this manner he gets the greatest distance with the number of jumps allotted him. If he makes the distance in the number of jumps allotted him, the batter receives no points, and the positions are changed. If he fails to make the distance allotted him, the batter receives the number

of jumps as part of his score. There is also another means of getting the batter out at the beginning of this stage of the game. The pitcher is allowed to throw the nipsy, from the spot where it has come to rest, at the circle. If the pitcher can cast the nipsy inside the perimeter of the circle from this distance the batter is out and the players exchange positions. If the pitcher fails, which is most often the case, then he must jump.

The players retain their respective positions until there is an out. If the batter has made his hit, and the pitcher is unable to make the number of jumps allotted him, the batter receives that number of jumps as points added to his score. Sometimes, simple concessions were made. If a pitcher saw he could not make the number of jumps specified, he would concede the points; likewise, if the batter thought the pitcher could make it to the circle in the specified number of jumps he would concede the out. In the case of the former concession, the game continues with the pitcher throwing the nipsy at the circle, and the batter still retains his offensive position as the participant who bats and is therefore in the position to score points.

There are seven ways for the players' positions to change so that each has an equal chance to score points:

- 1) The pitcher can cast the nipsy into the circle causing the nipsy to come to rest inside the perimeter of the circle: thus the batter is out before he gets a try at scoring.
- 2) The nipsy may be caught "on the fly" by the pitcher.
- 3) If the nipsy lands in a garden or other pre-arranged "prohibited" zone, the batter is out.
- 4) If the batter is unable to hit the nipsy in the number of tries allotted him, he is out.
- 5) If the nipsy fails to fly more than one jump away from the periphery of the circle in the number of tries allotted, the batter is out.
- 6) The pitcher may be able to cast the nipsy inside the perimeter of the circle from where the nipsy has landed after being hit, thus constituting an out.
- 7) The pitcher may be able to make the number of jumps allotted him by the batter during the scoring process of the game.

The game is played until the participants grow tired of playing, to an agreed upon number of innings, to an agreed upon time, or until interrupted for some other purpose, such as being called home to do chores.

"Nipsy was played in Eckley up until the 1830's," noted Mr. James Denion, who added, "the time when cars began coming steadily through Eckley. The game was played on the streets, and with the influx of cars through Eckley the streets were not as safe to play on. Also, the use of cars made travel from Eckley more possible and thus there weren't always a lot of kids to play the game."¹⁸

¹⁸Interview with Mr. and Mrs. James Denion, August 8, 1972.

Although the game is played, in the main, by only two participants, one to each side, there are two possible variants to this version of "Nipsy." Three participants can play the game together. Each has a position: batter, pitcher, and fielder. As the game is played, each player keeps his own score; with the position of each player changing, in rotating fashion with each out. Thus, the batter will become fielder, fielder becomes pitcher, and pitcher becomes batter. This variant is seldom played, as the participants would not be able to bat as often, and this was, in their view, the best part of the game.

The second variant of this form of "Nipsy" is a game composed of two members per side. The rules for the above version apply, the change being that in the field, there is both a pitcher and a fielder, thus there is more opportunity for catching the nipsy "on the fly." When at bat, one player on the offensive batting side will bat the entire inning; the next offensive inning the other participant will bat the inning in its entirety. This version is seldom played, because the even number of players will allow the possibility of two separate games being played, and with only one player per "side" greater display of individual virtuosity is possible—especially more highly-desired turns at bat.

"OLD" TWO-POINTED TEAM NIPSY (PREDECESSOR TO "STANDARD" TWO-POINTED NIPSY)

This version of "Nipsy" is reputed by the Eckley residents to be a predecessor of "Two-pointed Nipsy," and was played as a team game. Two members on a side comprised a team. This version of the game was usually played with a boy and girl on the same team, whereas "standard" "Two-pointed Nipsy" is played by members of the same sex. This is due largely to the girls' "lesser abilities" in the game, and thus the boys would rather play among themselves. Also, the participants in this game were of a younger age, about six to eight years old, and were therefore very similar in their abilities.

To begin the game, a circle of between one foot and one and one-half feet in diameter is drawn in the dirt. Then a pitching line is drawn four to five feet away. The teams decide who will bat first, by the means cited previously.

What follows constitutes the major difference between the "old" form and the "newer" form of "Two-pointed Nipsy." Each inning one of the two participants on the batting team does all the work for that team, and the other stands by. The defensive team, previously cited as the pitching team, does not pitch the nipsy, but rather, waits in the outfield for the nipsy. The offensive, or batting player, throws the nipsy at the circle. He gets two tosses at the circle, hoping that one throw will land and come to rest within the perimeter of the circle. If the batter-pitcher does not get one of the

tosses to rest inside the circle, the team is out, and the teams exchange places. If one of the tosses lands in the circle, the batter-pitcher is allowed three swings at the nipsy. The nipsy, once again, is not to be moved once it lands, but must be hit from the position in which it lands. There are no boundaries; the nipsy can be hit in any direction. The batter-pitcher now hits the nipsy on one of its pointed ends, sending it up in the air; he then tries to hit it away from the circle. Every time the batter-pitcher hits the nipsy more than one jump past the edge of the circle, that team gets two points. There are no extra points for longer hits, rather, the scoring is a uniform two points.

The number of chances to get an opponent out are lessened in this game. An out is scored when a member of the opposing team catches it on the fly. An out is scored when the player fails to "strike" the nipsy in the number of tries allotted. A hit into a previously agreed prohibited area constitutes an out. If the nipsy is knocked into the air, but is swung at and missed, this is an out; a batter can elect not to swing at the airborne nipsy and only receive a strike.

The teams in this version of "Nipsy" have their own nipsy, to be used only by them during the course of play. Each nipsy is distinguished by a special mark carved into it to denote either individual or team "ownership" of the particular nipsy.



Batter Waln Brown measures off the number of paddle lengths he has hit the one-pointed nipsy from the circle, thus determining his score for that time at bat.

As stated above, this version of "Nipsy" was played, in the main, by younger children. It was most often played during school recess, and thus lasted only a short time. For this reason the game did not always turn out to have the same number of scoring chances for both teams. Therefore, the team which went first had a better chance at winning than the defensive team. Also, there were almost never more than two members to a team, because there was little chance that all members of the team would get a chance to be batter-pitcher. However, it is quite possible to play this version with one member on each team, according to the Eckley informants.

NOTCHED TWO-POINTED NIPSY

The equipment for this game was likewise handmade by the players. Each boy or girl usually had his or her own nipsy and paddle. The players usually agreed among themselves whose nipsy and paddle were to be used. The nipsy was made from a sapling cut from the woods. It was approximately 1½ to 2 inches in diameter and 6 inches long. Each end was tapered to a 2-inch point. Long points such as this were preferred by the players, since the longer the point was, the higher the nipsy jumped when hit with a paddle, and thus the greater the chance the batter had at batting the nipsy. The central 2-inch cylindrical area of the nipsy was notched. There were four sets of notches used; carved across the 2-inch length, and taking up about one-fourth of the cylindrical area, were four sets of notches starting with one notch and increasing a notch set until four notches were reached. The paddle used for this game is the same as that used for "One-pointed Nipsy" (explained below). It was made from an 18-inch length of broom handle; 3 inches at one end were whittled to form a flat surface used to strike the nipsy.

This version is not played in teams, and each player keeps score for himself. A device commonly used to establish batting and pitching order is throwing fingers. For this method, all the players throw a number of fingers with their right hands. One player, designated by group agreement as counter, proceeds to count up the total number of fingers cast. When a total is reached, the counter then proceeds to count from "one" up to that total number, starting with himself. The player whom he points to when he reaches the total number is the first batter. The player who is one less than that total is the first pitcher, the player who is two less than the total is the next pitcher and so on, until each player has a pitching order.

To mark off the dirt area for the game, a circle is drawn about 18 inches in diameter. A pitching line is marked off about ten paces away from the edge of the circle; this line extends for about three feet. The

batter stands by the circle and waits while the pitcher attempts to pitch the nipsy into the circle while standing behind the pitching line. If the pitcher fails to comply with this position, he is penalized by being made to pitch from a position a few paces farther back behind the line.

The critical difference from the "standard" form of the game is the significance of the notches on the nipsy. The number of chances the batter receives to hit the nipsy is determined by the way the nipsy falls when pitched outside the circle or on the circumference of the circle by the pitcher. The batter receives as many chances to hit the nipsy as there are notches on the side of the nipsy facing upward.

An alternate version of two-pointed, notched "Nipsy" was the same game played in two-man teams, with the same rules as those described above for the predecessor of "standard" "Nipsy." Residents of Eckley referred to this form as "Carbon County style Nipsy," since it had migrated to Eckley from the Lower Buck Mountain area.¹⁹ Several previously cited collections of games mention notched nipsies, but only the letter from Fredrich Schaefer in the June 16, 1949, *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, refers to a version of the game played in Reading with an unmarked nipsy but with the circle divided into quadrants numbered one to four.²⁰ No one in Eckley even remembers playing this version of the game.

The final variant of Eckley "Nipsy" is so radically different from the others as to be almost in a class by itself. According to Mr. and Mrs. James Denion, it is a much more recent version (reportedly circa 1923) but, strangely enough, seems to be remembered by very few Eckley residents.

ONE-POINTED NIPSY

The nipsy used was a piece of wood about 6 inches long and 1½ to 2 inches in diameter. The nipsy wood was cut from a 6-inch length of a sapling cut in the nearby woods. A point about 2 inches long was whittled at one end. The paddle was made of a length of old broom handle, usually about 20 inches long. Three inches at one end were whittled to form a flattened surface about ½ to ¾ inches thick; this was the area that actually came in contact with the nipsy.

To play the game, the batting and pitching order was first determined. To do this a selected player draws an 18-inch diameter circle in the dirt with the nipsy. He then throws the nipsy into the circle. Whoever the point faced when it landed would be the first batter. The nipsy would be cast in the same manner to deter-

¹⁹Notched Nipsy material gathered from interviews with longtime Eckley residents Frank Zahay and Joseph Charnigo, both interviewed August 24, 1972.

²⁰"Nipsi Again," 2.



Jimmy Denion, aged 75, in his living room. He and his wife, who died recently, played nipsy to demonstrate the game to the field researchers.

mine the first pitcher. The process was repeated until each player had a pitching order. Any of the other alternatives previously mentioned could also be used.

A pitching line about three feet long is drawn in the dirt about twelve paces away from the edge of the circle. The pitcher stands behind the pitching line and attempts to pitch the nipsy into a small hole in the center of the circle that is made just large enough to hold the nipsy lengthwise. If the pitcher crosses the line with his foot when he is pitching, he is penalized by losing his batting order and becoming the last player



Margaret Maloney in her living room. Lifelong resident of Eckley but has lived away for extended periods as a priest's housekeeper.

to bat. If the nipsy lands in the hole, the batter is out, and the pitcher takes his turn at bat. If the nipsy misses the circle, or the nipsy lands in the circumference of the circle, or lands within the circle but not in the hole, the batter is safe.

The batter receives three chances to bat the nipsy as far as possible from the circle. He must bat it in whatever position it lands in. This is tricky, since the nipsy with one point is hard to direct: when hit on the point, the nipsy will jump in the direction the point is facing. The batter must compensate for this when batting. The batter holds the paddle by the rounded end and hits the nipsy close to the point with the flattened area. He then bats it when it jumps into the air. If the batter misses the nipsy and hits the ground instead, he continues to try to hit the nipsy on the point until he makes it jump into the air. If the batter hits the nipsy into the air, and fails to bat it, this counts as a strike. The criteria for determining if the batter is out after he bats or "cracks" the nipsy is as follows: if the nipsy is not at least one paddle-length from where it was lying when hit, the batter is out (the pitcher measures this); on the other hand, if the nipsy is farther than one paddle-length from where it was batted, the move counts as a strike. If the nipsy lands in a garden, the batter is out.

While the batter is batting the nipsy, the other players stand all around the circle twelve paces away and they try to catch the nipsy. If a player succeeds in catching the nipsy, the batter is out. The players can also pick up the nipsy while it is still in motion on the ground and throw it into the hole in the circle. If a player succeeds, the batter is out. If the nipsy misses the hole, or lands outside the circle, the batter loses distance. Points are determined by the number of paddle-lengths from the place at which the batter first batted the nipsy to the place at which it finally lands. The batter receives as many points as there are paddle lengths. Before the game begins, the players decide on a certain number of points as the goal number. Whoever first accumulates that number of points wins the game. The usual number used was 100 or 200.

A variant of this game does not require a pitcher. The batter places the nipsy in the center of the circle tilted up at a 30-degree angle in the dirt with the point upward. From this initial position, he bats the nipsy. The other players stand all around the circle, twelve paces away, and attempt to catch the nipsy. If any player caught it, the batter was out. The batter would continue batting until a player caught the nipsy. The players also could try to bat the nipsy back towards the circle by hand as long as the nipsy was still in motion on the ground. This would result in the batter losing points. All other aspects of this game, including equip-

Annie Maloney, aged 92, beside her house at Eckley.



ment, play area set-up, and scoring, are the same as the previously described version of "One-pointed Nipsy."²¹

Two young Eckley boys, one ten years old and the other twelve, (just the right age to play "Nipsy") were totally dumbfounded when the pictures which accom-

pany this article were taken. They had not only never seen the equipment and setting of a nipsy game, but had never even heard the word used! Like car-free dirt roads, "Nipsy" in Eckley today is just a memory—but as this article shows, a warm and vivid one.

²¹Interviews with Michael Hartz, longtime Eckley resident, August 20, 1972, and August 24, 1972.

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Susie ("Baba") Zoshak, aged 90, in her kitchen. Lifelong resident of Eckley, widowed 17 years.

The Game as Creator of the Group in an Italian-American Community

By ELIZABETH MATHIAS

The bowling game of *bocce* is a game of physical skill brought into the South Philadelphia Italian-American community by Italian immigrants.¹ *Bocce* is played almost exclusively by Italian-born males; consequently, we see the game played only by the very old men of the earliest immigration period of the late 19th and early 20th Century and by the younger, still unacculturated immigrants of the past ten years or less. The predominance of *bocce* players in Philadelphia are immigrants from Southern Italy; however, the game is played throughout Italy and has a high status in that country where it is played in intra-city competition matches. Thus, any Italian immigrant has played or has, at some time in his life, at least watched *bocce* being played.

Bocce is played in America almost exclusively by immigrants; and, because of this selectivity, a large age difference appears between the older and the younger players.² The age difference between the two groups is about thirty years, with the older men, who are mostly old-age pensioners from the shops of the local garment industry, ranging in age from about sixty-five to eighty-five years, and the ages of recent immigrants, ranging from about thirty-five to forty-five years. The two age groups are initially drawn together by the game itself, which is obviously represented in the community by the especially constructed *bocce* courts in most of the small corner parks of the area; the men

are stimulated to continue their communal relationship because of the many experiences which they hold in common. The old men and the immigrants have basically the same cultural values, a shared language, and country of birth; both groups adhere to the dominant leisure patterns of Southern Italian men, and, in addition, share a similar work experience; the old men have been garment workers, and most of the younger men are currently employed in garment factories which are located within the South Philadelphia Italian community.³ The men's shared experience of past and present, as well as their interest in *bocce*, draws the younger and older *bocce* players into a "folk group" which stands apart from the male segment of the ethnic community as a whole. The shared language, above all, sets these men apart from the community; all communication among the men is in Italian. Nearly all of the older men can speak at least operational English but they generally speak Italian with their age peers. Few of the younger immigrants have been in this country long enough to have learned to speak English. Moreover, most of the young immigrants speak the various Southern Italian dialects of the older men; and many are *paesani* of the older men; this is a fact much appreciated by the elders, who enjoy pointing out the particular game skills of younger men, referring to their young *paesani* (those who share the same village of origin) as "della paese mia" (from my village).⁴

¹The research for this paper was supported by a grant from the Center for Urban Ethnography, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (NIMH #5R 12MH, 17216). A shorter version of the paper was read at the meetings of the Northeastern Anthropological Association, April 27, 1973.

²This age gap is also clearly represented in the immigration records. In the thirty-year period from 1891 to 1920 nearly four million Italians came to the U.S. This great wave of immigration was arrested in 1924 when the United States Congress passed a quota law which severely restricted further Italian immigration to the U.S. The years of the Depression and of World War II saw immigration nearly halt, and it was not until 1965, when Congress eased immigration restrictions with a new immigration act, which, as of July 1968, did away with the national origins quota, that Italian immigration again resumed (Joseph Lopreato, *Italian Americans* [New York, 1970], pp. 12-18). For a definitive study of the Italian Emigration until 1919, see Robert F. Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of our Times* (Cambridge, Mass., 1919). This absence of immigration for so many years is reflected in the age gap which we see in the community of first generation (born in Italy) Italian men in Philadelphia.

³The pattern of southern Italian leisure time activities both in Italy and American ghettos is characterized by rigid separation of the sexes. Women stay in the home or relax on chairs immediately in front of the doors of their houses. They often visit with the other women seated nearby but rarely socialize more than a few doors beyond their own. Men, on the other hand, gather together in the town piazza, on street corners, and in local bars. The male and female leisure domains are, thus, rigidly segregated; mixing of the sexes is almost unheard of and is negatively sanctioned.

⁴Italian immigrants identify most strongly with those Italians who share their villages or provinces of origination and the earliest Italian settlements in South Philadelphia were clustered according to areas of origination in Italy. Most of the earliest immigrants into South Philadelphia were Sicilians and Abruzzese and the two groups mingled rarely. One Abruzzese informant told me that it was a matter of shame in an Abruzzese family if a member married a Sicilian. This attitude, he said, lasted well into the 1940's.

William Foote Whyte mentions that this settlement grouping according to "paesani" was also characteristic of the pattern in Boston (William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* [Chicago, 1943], p. xvii).

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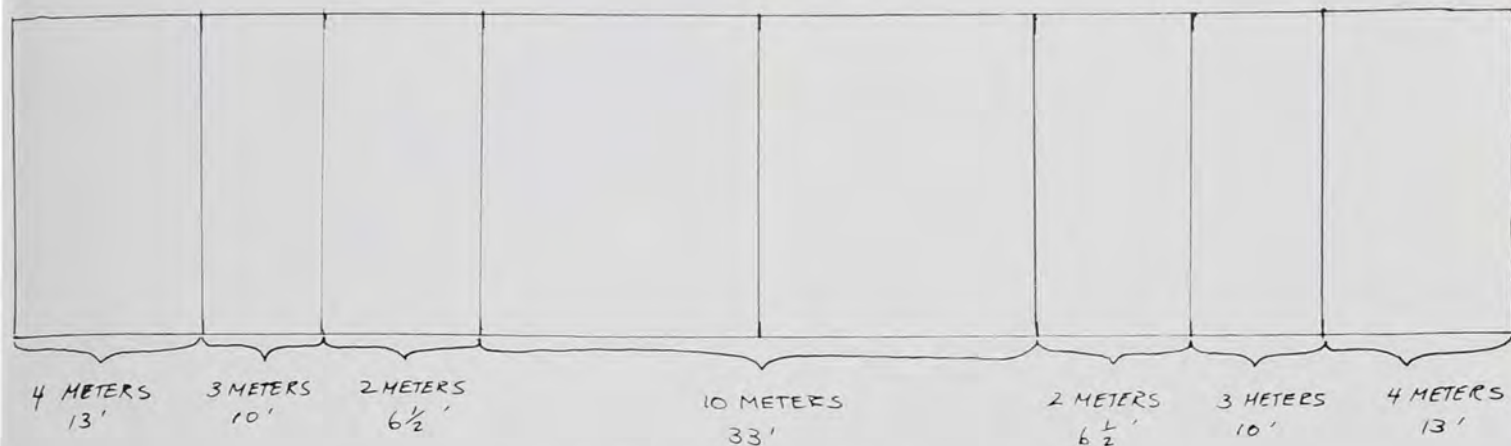


Figure 1. Dimensions of a regulation bocce court.

The game itself is the main factor, however, which brings the men together on a regular basis and acts as a consistent focal point for their interaction. To understand the *bocce* players' unity as a game and folk group and the advantages which the men gain from their interaction in the game milieu, it will be helpful first to discuss the game locale and the mechanics of play in Philadelphia today.

The Philadelphia Italians play *bocce* on permanent outdoor or indoor courts of ninety-two feet long by twenty-three feet wide (see fig. 1). The court is made of clay which is about two inches thick and which has a built-in "bias," a tilt of the surface of the court which is different for each court and is known only by the men who have played long enough on the court to learn its particular "bias." The courts are bounded by low board walls from which bank shots are used in much the same manner as in the game of pool. Eight wooden balls are used plus one target ball called the *pallino* which is about two inches in diameter and is made of stainless steel. The larger, wooden balls have a diameter of about six inches and are of two colors to distinguish between the two teams of four men each.

The game begins with the rolling out of the *pallino*, a small metal target ball toward which all of the *bocce* balls will be directed. This target ball is thrown out by one of the bystanders or by one of the players who is chosen either by lot, or often, by a brief game of *mora*.⁵ The *pallino* must come to rest somewhere be-

tween the center line and the ten foot line for the game to proceed. Then one of the players will roll his *bocce* ball from the opposite end of the court along the ground, trying to get as close to the *pallino* as possible. This ground shot, called a *punto*, requires good aim and a knowledge of the bias of the particular court. The second man then throws his ball with one of two objectives: he will try either to throw so that his ball will come to a stop near the *pallino*, or, if the ball of an opponent is close to the *pallino*, he will try to hit it and to knock it farther away from the smaller ball, hopefully with his own ball remaining near the target. Then the next man to play will do the same, either try to knock his opponents' ball out or to stop near the *pallino*, or to achieve both with one shot. After eight *bocce* balls have been thrown, the players will determine which team has the most balls nearest to the *pallino*. This decision often is so close that the men must use a tape measure to determine fractions of an inch distance among the balls (see fig. 2). The team which has the most balls close to the *pallino* wins the round, and after a number of rounds have been played, the team which ends with twelve of its balls closest to the *pallino* wins the game. The playing order of the members of each four-man team is planned in advance by the members of the team and is based on the known talents of the players. For example, some players are more skilled at the initial moves or *punto* shots, the attempts to place the *bocce* balls near to the *pallino*; other players are particularly skilled in the *volo* shots which are needed later in the play to knock opponents' balls out of positions near the *pallino*. The team players must know each others' talents, as well as those of the opposing team, in order to choose the most effective order of play. It is in this choice of order that an

⁵*Mora* is an Italian game of mixed strategy and chance which is played by two men facing each other. The two men simultaneously throw out a hand with one or more fingers extended, at the same time yelling a number from one to ten in Italian. The man calling out the correct sum of the extended fingers wins the game. The throwing of hands is repeated rapidly until one calls the correct number.

element of strategy appears in what is otherwise primarily a game of physical skill. It holds true in *bocce*, as in the games of *mora* and *passatela*, that the longer the team members have played together, the better they know each others' strengths and weaknesses; and, with this knowledge, comes an accompanying increase in the strategy element present in the games.⁶

Bocce is a game which any man, who has the coordination to roll a ball, can learn to play with only one or two practices. However, as in any game based predominantly on physical skill, much experience is needed in order for a man to gain the control and precision to play the game well. Naturally, some players are much better than others, and most are known in the group for being either just generally acceptable as players, or for having special skills. Some men are especially known for their *punto* shots and others are known for their skill in *volo* shots. During the game the order of the players may be shifted within a team to give a turn to a man whose particular skill fits the positioning of the balls at a particular time.

The *volo* shot is most admired and it is at the time that a *volo* is called for that the game becomes most exciting. The *volo* shot may be a hard drive along the ground or it may be a shot which arcs through the air and is calculated to come down precisely on the top of the opponents' ball (see fig. 3). This shot is spectacular and difficult and when a man completes it successfully he is heartily cheered and much admired. If the same individual is consistently successful he gains high status within the group and will be awaited eager-

⁶*Passatela* is a drinking game in which two men called "Padrone" and "Sotto-Padrone" battle verbally to determine which of their friends will drink and which of them will not drink. The game is generally played in conjunction with card games such as *tre sette* and *briscola*.



Figure 2. Two players debating a close decision (Circolo Roma, March 1973).

ly by the other men at each evening's *bocce* game. It is not unusual, if such an admired player should happen not to appear some evening, for one of the group to go to the player's home and coax him to come over to the court for just one or two games. The ego gratifications inherent in the game are unmistakable, and the better the player, the greater his gratification.

All players thus are encouraged to participate regularly and to miss few evenings of playing with their group. This loyalty to the game and to the group also links the men to the companion games to *bocce*, the games of *mora* and of *passatela*. When the *bocce* game is finished for the afternoon or evening the balls are put away in the nearby park building or are placed aside to be taken home later, the men generally go to a nearby corner bar or club.⁷ At the bar the men may play *mora* or *passatela* for drinks. Since all of the men who know how to play *bocce* have learned in Southern Italy how to play the other two games, a new contest often arises in the bar which may go on until early the next morning.

The language of the game is Italian; one Sunday afternoon I watched the game for at least two hours and heard no full sentences spoken in English. Now and then for a joke one of the recent immigrant players might yell a word or two in English. He would then look proudly around at his peers and there would be laughter, but most shouts were in Italian. The following are standard shouts which I noted during the course of many games:

- E fatta!* — This is yelled when a ball comes closest to the *pallino*.
- "It's done!"
- E morta!* — Yelled when a ball ends too far from the *pallino* to count.
- "It's dead!"
- E storta.* — When a rolling ball curves away from the mark.
- "It's crooked."
- E corta.* — The ball is thrown too weakly and will end up too far back from the *pallino*. When the throw is too long the call is *E lungo*.
- "It's short."

- Spara la rosa!*
(or another color) —
- "Kill (or shoot) the red!" — Called just before a player will attempt the aerial maneuver to knock an opponents' ball away from the *pallino*.

These calls are made both by the players themselves and by the crowd of bystanders, usually old men (women almost never go to watch the game). The crowd is very much a part of the game in that there is a continuing verbal interaction between players and spectators. In addition, a bystander may be called in

⁷Many of the men own their own *bocce* balls and become very attached to the properties of their personal ball. During a study which I did of Italian funerals in South Philadelphia I discovered that it is not unusual for a man to request that his *bocce* ball be buried with him in his casket. See Elizabeth Mathias, "The Italian-American Funeral: Persistence through Change", *Western Folklore*, XXXIII (1974), 35-50.



Figure 3. *Volo* shots
(Circolo Roma, May
12, 1973).



Photography by Elizabeth Mathias

to make a difficult shot or just to play for a bit. However, the rule that seems to govern this action is that the man must be old and must not be one who regularly plays for a long stretch. One Sunday afternoon as I watched a game an old man (Mr. Rossi of 10th

Street) was called in to make a difficult *volo*.⁸ Accepting, he entered the court affecting a prancing walk and took the ball. Then, after bowing about to the other players and spectators, he threw the ball in a perfect shot, and smiling broadly, he bowed about again and jiggled off the court. It was obvious that he had had little doubt that he could execute the shot perfectly.

The camaraderie between the younger and older men is excellent. Occasionally some hostility flares up when infractions of the rules seem to have occurred. I observed brief, often heated, arguments which were quickly resolved and play resumed.

In South Philadelphia *bocce* brings the men together year around on warm afternoons and evenings and is a favorite weekend sport. The game is also played during rainy weather on some of the newer neighborhood courts which are roofed over and lit at night.⁹ During the winter, as well as when the game is played in competition with the Italians of another section of the city or those of other towns such as Bridgeport or Norristown, *bocce* is played on indoor courts at various Italian clubs in the Philadelphia area. Formerly there were many clubs with *bocce* courts in South Philadelphia. In the past each Italian Beneficial Society, which were locally controlled Italian burial and work insurance clubs (see fig. 4), had its own court for its mem-

⁸Field observation of November 8, 1970.

⁹Most of the street corner parks in the Italian community have a *bocce* court as well as small building, heated in the winter, where the men meet to play cards. The courts have been built with city funds, and improvements may be made by Italian politicians. For example, the new court at 6th and Reed Streets, was, according to my informants, made possible by Mayor Rizzo at the time of his election campaign in 1972.

Figure 4. An Italian beneficial society. The sign still stands but the building now serves as a social club for the old men of the area of Sixth and Reed Streets. There is a bocce court on the nearby corner, within Columbus Park, where Columbus Day festivities are held each year.



bers' use; however, because of the Italians' increased trust in American labor unions, insurance companies and banks, most of these societies have disappeared, or have become strictly social clubs for the old men who once used the services of the societies.

Many of the society buildings have been abandoned entirely and stand among the vacant, deteriorating buildings which dot the outskirts of the Italian community. Nearly all of these original beneficial societies had their walled *bocce* courts, and the walls still stand. *Bocce* is probably still played behind many of these walls; however, I cannot determine how many of these courts are still active because the very old men who still go to the original buildings of the societies will permit no nonmembers to enter.¹⁰

The three clubs where I have seen *bocce* games in progress are The Italian-American Bocce Association, Il Circolo Roma at 25th and Point Breeze Streets, and The Italian-American Bocce Club on Washington Avenue near 6th Street. These clubs are private and have bars, pool tables and card tables where the old men play the Italian card games of *briscola*, *scopa*, and *tre sette* and occasionally play *passatela* for drinks (see fig. 5).

¹⁰The older men were friendly, cooperative and many were enthusiastic about my desire to study their games. I based my observations on outdoor locations or in clubs such as The Circolo Roma, where women were permitted into the back room dining areas. However, those private clubs which are located in the old Italian beneficial societies are still distinctly off limits to nonmembers, and females are excluded. According to one informant, whose 85-year-old father frequents The Italian Beneficial Society at 6th and Reed streets, the men are fearful that the pressure of any outsider might disrupt their group in some way. This informant said that there were also fears that an outsider might be a policeman intent upon stopping their gambling games. One gambling game which is played in many of these clubs is *zigonetta*, a rapid card game of pure chance in which a man might lose hundreds of dollars in a few minutes (interview of May 11, 1973).

Figure 5. A newer club, the Circolo Roma. This club has been in use for nearly seventy years. The bocce court is in a walled enclosure at the back of this building.



Figure 6. The scoring wheel at the Circolo Roma (May 12, 1973).

One testimony to the popularity of *bocce* among the older men is the presence of a *bocce* court in the central courtyard of the Weinstein Geriatric Center at Locust and 22nd Streets. The membership of this center for retired garment workers is about 75 percent Italian with the remainder mainly Jewish.

During the warm months of late spring, summer and early fall *bocce* is played during the week from mid-morning (starting around 10:00 A.M.) through the afternoon until dinner time at about 5:30 P.M. The game is resumed after dinner and may be played on lighted courts until midnight. A typical afternoon scene is to see a *bocce* game in progress on the court while other men play Italian card games at the concrete tables nearby. Spectators, generally men who feel too old to play, sit on the wooden benches which line the *bocce* court, watching, encouraging, and criticising particular shots and placing small bets on the outcome of the game. The score is kept on a pegged board or a wheel at one end of the court which is numbered from one to twelve (fig. 6). The group during the day is composed mainly of the old men. One warm afternoon I talked with a number of the men and inquired about their ages. All were retired and over sixty-five years of age. The oldest man playing was eighty-seven and the oldest spectator was ninety-two. Most spoke only Italian or a highly accented English.

In the evening younger men appeared. They had worked all day and after eating dinner came to spend the evening hours playing *bocce*. These younger men are recent immigrants; all play *bocce* well. The young men were welcomed by the older men who told me, "Now that the boys are here the game will really get interesting," as indeed it did.¹¹ The younger men pride

¹¹Field observation of June 1970.



Figure 7. Two elderly players. The men, from the left, are ninety-two and eighty-seven years of age (Circolo Roma, March 13, 1973).

themselves on executing the difficult *volo* shots well. The excitement of the game lies, as mentioned earlier, in these shots. The aerial shot or *volo* is used primarily in the last plays when the *pallino* is surrounded by the *bocce* balls of both sides. The player then tries with his *volo* to throw his ball so that it will come down to hit the top of the opponents' ball closest to the *pallino* in order to knock it away from the target ball without disturbing his teammates' balls. The *volo* depends on a strong arm and a sharp eye for accuracy, while the *punto* requires patience, subtle precision and a feel for the bias of the court. This one shot may win or lose the whole game and the moment is critical because of the money which the players and spectators have bet on the outcome of the game.¹²

When the young men join the elders the mood of the gathering changes perceptibly. Before they arrive the older men play the game with obvious pleasure and determination, but now the atmosphere becomes much livelier; the old men move about more actively; greetings and joking comments are exchanged and new teams line up for play. The game serves as a matrix

¹²Bets are generally small but some men are known as heavy betters. One player of 87 years of age, for example, is known to bet up to \$10.00 on one game (field observation of July 8, 1971).

for association, communication, and socializing between the two age groups and the atmosphere created by the merging of the men in the game setting obviously furnishes an anticipatory and highly pleasurable experience for both young and old. Let us consider some of the characteristics of the merging of the groups and then examine the advantages of the game situation for both the old and the young players.

All of the older men playing *bocce* know each other and most have been playing together for up to fifty years. Earlier hostilities have been worked out within the group over the many years that the men have been adapting to their new American urban environment together as well as playing *bocce* together (see fig. 7).¹³ The younger men playing, the new immigrants, have not yet learned English well enough to socialize with their own age group, the third generation Italians. Until they learn the new language, as well as the expectations and values of their own age group, they benefit from the support and approval of the older men; with the older men they may maintain at least a recreative focal point in the new environment. The game milieu serves as a point of continuing Italian identification for the younger men, mitigating the strain of adaptation and of the constant translation of cultures required of them by their new lives in America. The younger immigrants rely on *bocce* and on the social circle which the playing of the game furnishes for them. The old men find the game and the socializing surrounding it to be equally important in their daily lives. An essential factor in the mutual enjoyment of the game by the two age sets is that age is irrelevant in *bocce*, and since the good *punto* requires long knowledge of the court, an older man's consistent performance is valued just as much as a younger man's more dramatic *volo* shots. The game has maintained its popularity and form better than any other of the games played by Italians in Philadelphia partly because it is so tightly structured, and thus has been changed less by the fluctuations of human interaction and changing cultural conditions than have the other games, and partly because the game offers so much ego gratification for old and young alike. The group formed by *bocce* is solid and shows little fluctuation over time except for the inevitable changes caused by the deaths of the old men at one end of the age continuum. Predictably

¹³It is rare to see an expression of anger during the course of the game. The nature of the game is such that there is little cause for argument. Games of pure strategy such as *passatella* furnish a fertile ground for argument because the strategy is worked out by each man against each of the others within the group and personal feelings are deeply involved in the workings of the game as well as in its punishments and rewards. In *bocce* the rules are well defined, and it is the materials of the game rather than the people involved which the players manipulate; the strategy is a matter of physical skill rather than of mental dexterity and is directed toward the bias of the court and the positioning of the balls rather than against one's opponents.

there may be other changes within another ten years or so, as the younger men become acculturated enough to the Italian-American cultural system to interact more with their own age group and may drift away from regular participation in the game. The older men, however, do not fear the decline of interest in *bocce*. When I asked one of the old men if he did not fear that *bocce* would gradually disappear as has *passatela*, he answered emphatically, "That won't ever happen. As long as they [the younger immigrants] keep getting off of those boats, we'll have *bocce*!"

I have examined the characteristics of the locale, the game, and the participants in *bocce*, and have noted that the game acts as creator as well as sustainer of a group widely separated by age and by time of immigration to America. Also I have noted that the culture of the older members and of the younger members of the group is similar and acts as a binding force maintaining the game; the fact of the game creates the group and the force of the group maintains the game. It is the fact of the game's existence which draws the younger and older immigrants together in the social activity, but it is the *force* of the group which is the central element in both the persistence of the game in America and of the continued gathering of the men as a social group. If we view the game milieu of *bocce* as a dynamic structure, we see that it is the constant infusion of younger immigrants, feeding members and energy into the game situation, which creates a *force* which helps to sustain the older men's enthusiasm in the activity. In this regard also, the renewed atmosphere of *Italian-ness* which the influx of the young immigrants provides to the game setting is important. To a large measure the old men enjoy the presence of the young men because of their treasured memories of themselves as Italian youths, both as young men in the villages of their origin and as newly arrived immigrants in America. Additionally, the young immigrants serve a vital function in the maintenance of the *bocce* group because they are a source of replacements for those old members who, either become too feeble to play and must retire to the sidelines as spectators, or who are lost to the group through death. While keeping in mind this concept of the *bocce* milieu as a dynamic structure which both maintains and energizes the Italian male group, let us consider further how the game, and the group interaction made possible by the game benefits both the older and the younger members of the group.

Bocce does not just *exist* in the social order; instead, it *acts* to create and sustain certain aspects of this order. For both the younger men and the older men, *bocce* acts as a *mediator* and as a *buffer* in the stresses of culture change and in the transition from one state of being to another. For the younger men the assistance of the *bocce* group is directly involved with the stresses

of the abrupt change in social patterns which they experience with immigration. The game and the gaming group help to ease the problems of this transition. An important point to remember is that the older men understand the younger men's problems because they have experienced some if not many of the same problems and can empathize fully as a result. It is also important to recognize the fact that the younger men have not one culture but two cultures to which to adapt; they must not only learn the social rules of the dominant "American" culture, but they must first try to understand and to learn the commonly accepted pattern of social behavior within the Italian-American culture. This Italian-American culture stands closer to them because of the settlement pattern of the Italian community, but is nearly as alien to them as the dominant culture. Further, the Italian-Americans are probably more resistant to the immigrants' attempts to cope with this new environment than any other group.

The Italian-Americans of the second, third and fourth generations feel varying degrees of hostility toward the recent immigrants and often shun them, calling them (as well as the first generation oldtimers who have clung to their old country ways) by the pejorative term, "greaseball." The immigrants are feared because of their drive to succeed; they are felt as a competitive threat in the job market. One third generation informant expressed his feelings in this way, "Those greaseballs don't think of anything but making money; they don't know how to live. They'll work for almost nothing; they're ignorant; they don't even eat right. They sit in their rooms and eat potatoes and greens and bread, and won't even spend money for meat."⁴ The accepted norms of the Italian-American group are just as little understood by the immigrants as they try to adapt their old behavior patterns to their new environment. Conversely, the familiar recreative behavior of the old men along with their obvious acceptance of the young immigrants, draws the men closely to-

⁴The informant quoted is an American-born Italian of about 35 years of age. He is employed as a garment worker and has little chance of bettering his financial condition. His favorite leisure time activity is to "hang" on the corner with his age group, and he plays no games involving face-to-face interaction. He gambles daily by playing the *Numbers* and gambling on horse races and other sporting events through the gambling setup active in a local pool hall which serves as a "front" for various gambling activities. This informant is typical of most third generation Italian-American males who play none of the Italian games and who speak no Italian. For other views of the role of recreative behavior and ritualized expression in culture change see: John Beattie, "Ritual and Social Change," *Man*, N.S. I (1966), 60-74; Alice G. Dewey, "Ritual as a Mechanism for Urban Adaptation," *Man*, V (1970), 438-448; Felix M. Keesing, "Recreative Behavior and Culture Change" in A. F. C. Wallace, ed., *Men and Cultures* (Philadelphia, 1960); pp. 130-133. James L. Peacock, *Rites of Modernization: Symbolic and Social Aspects of Indonesian Proletarian Drama* (Chicago, 1968); Barry Sugarman, "Tension Management, Deviance and Social Change," *Sociological Quarterly*, X (1969), 62-71.

gether. Recreative behavior, thus, as seen in the circumstances surrounding *bocce*, may function within a group undergoing the strains of culture change as a social and emotional *mediative buffer* for the individuals in the group, by presenting a nonthreatening area of regular group interaction where the individuals undergoing the strain of culture change may actually learn methods for coping with new problems. As Felix Keesing has noted, "Under intervention pressures where, so typically, economic, political, and perhaps other areas of choice and expression may be blocked by external power, recreative outlets may become focal rallying points for self-motivated activity and morale."¹⁵

Bocce may be seen to act in a number of ways to ease the young immigrants' transition from the familiar culture of the Italian village to the new cultural environment of urban America: the game acts as a mediator or bridge between one social system and another in that it acts as a continuation of a favorite and familiar activity, as a buffer in the cultural stress of adaptation to a new social system, as a recreative and social focal point where the immigrant can regularly interact with his peer group, the other young immigrants, as a communications center where the immigrant may trade information with fellow immigrants as well as receive advice from older men who understand his problems because they themselves have experienced similar problems in the past, and as a situation where he may receive recognition and ego support, where he can still be counted, can excel, be cheered, and criticized constructively.

For the old men there is also much to be gained from the new folk group formed with the young immigrants, as well as from the game itself. For these

¹⁵In the Italian villages of their origin the immigrants had been exploited by the *padroni*, the land owners, or by overseers who had employed them to work their fields for near starvation wages. In the American city the immigrants encountered a similar type of *padroni* who exploited them just as much as ever; these new *padroni* were Italians who had emigrated earlier and had learned enough English to act as go-betweens or labor-agents between potential employers, such as the railroad companies, and the later immigrants. The *padroni* in America arranged for the immigrants' passage to America at high fees, recruited labor at low wages and also served as money lenders, organizers and bankers for the new immigrants; in addition, they charged the immigrants a fee, called the *bossatura* for finding them jobs. Many of the immigrants were trapped by debts to these *padroni* which were nearly impossible to pay off. For other discussions of *padroni* in the U. S. A. see Domenic T. Ciolli, "The Wop in the Trade Gang," *The Immigrants in America Review*, II:2 (1916), pp. 61-64; see also Humbert S. Nelli, "The Italian Padrone System in the United States," *Labor History*, V (1964), 153-167.

The problem with the Irish immigrants who had settled in South Philadelphia earlier than the Italians was another depressant for the Italian immigrants. The Roman Catholic churches of the South Philadelphia area were dominated by the Irish who disliked the new Italian immigrants and actively fought their presence in the community and in the Catholic churches. For a discussion of this Irish-Italian conflict see Rudolph H. Vecoli, "Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church," *Journal of Social History*, II (1969), 217-268.

men the problems of adapting to the system of the new environment are past. The hardships of their own struggle to make a place for themselves and to care for their families in the confusing, and often hostile, environment of the new land exist now only in their memories. Their early battles with the new language, the dishonest and exploiting *padroni*, the Irish majorities in their new neighborhoods and the Irish-dominated Roman Catholic church and the hardships of the Depression are all now just bitter events of the past which they can look back upon with the satisfaction of having conquered. The problems which now face this group of old-age pensioners are mainly the same problems which face the aged in America and other industrially oriented countries in general; these are the problems of the gradual disengagement from active life and involvement. The Italian games, and especially *bocce*, make this transition a communal and far easier one for the old men.

For the old ones the Italian card games of *tre-sette*, *scopa*, *briscola*, and sometimes (including modified forms requiring less heavy drinking) *passatela*, furnish a focal point for regular meetings with their contemporaries. As noted earlier, the card games are played year around in the buildings adjoining the *bocce* courts or in the neighborhood Italian clubs which are frequented by the adult Italian men. The older men may generally be found toward the back of the club where permanent tables are set up for their card games, and the younger Italian-American men are at the bar. The new immigrant group, however, rarely frequents these bars because they have not entered the card-playing cliques which have been established for years among the old men, and also because they have not formed the heavier drinking patterns of the younger Italian-Americans. It is at the *bocce* court where the older men meet and interact with the young immigrants, and where the interactions of the social grouping which I have referred to as a new folk-group may be observed.

The old men benefit from *bocce* and from their interactions with the immigrants in a number of ways which would not be available to them without this particular game setting. Because of their mutual involvement with the games appropriate and possible for their advanced ages they never need to withdraw into the world of degradation and dependence which the female social condition symbolizes to them. They may simply move into a shared world of "rulers in retirement" which they have constructed together and which they agree to share, in the milieu surrounding *bocce*, with the young male immigrants. Thus, the Italian men in old age need neither enter into nor share their world with the society of the women. Everyone still retains his "place" as well as his independence and power despite the fact that he has had to shift

his position somewhat after his retirement as an active wage earner.¹⁶ This reliance upon the Italian clubs and *bocce* was clearly displayed to me by a man of eighty-two years old with whom I talked at the *bocce* court of the club, *Il Circolo Roma*. When I asked the old man, What would you do if you didn't have the club to come to? he responded, "I'd have no place to go; I'd just stay home and do nothing; I'd go crazy." He began to weep quietly and spoke about the loneliness he had felt after his wife died six years before. Several other old men approached us then and talked briefly about how, at their ages, eighty-four and eighty-six, friends mean everything to them and the Club is their only place to get together.¹⁷

Bocce, then, conditions and ameliorates the lives of the old men: by maintaining their group and their special friendships, held over many years often beginning shortly after a man's time of immigration to the United States, by giving the retired men a regular leisure time activity with their peers as well as a focal point for grouping, whether they play the game or just join in as spectators, and by easing the transition from active worker to retired pensioner by softening the ego blow caused by feeling useless. With *bocce* the older man may still act and perform within a classificatory system of skills which serves as an ego builder because the older men are admired by the younger male immigrants for their wisdom in life as well as their continued skill in the game. Here at the *bocce* court the old men still find conditions where they are able to feel superior because the cultural categories of the immigrants are similar to their own. The Sicilian proverb, "Vigor to the young and wisdom to the old," still has meaning in the shared cultural view of the old

men and the young immigrants. In the area of the *bocce* court, if no longer in their homes where younger generations are "Americanized," they may still be accorded wisdom and respect giving the old man recognition for continued male vigor. He can still play the game at least in brief spurts when he is called in to make a special shot. He will still be cheered for doing well at something. As one immigrant male expressed it when an old man made an exceptionally good *volo*, "Look at him! He is eighty-two years old and still playing so well." In the specialized cultural setting of the game age gives the old Italian a plus mark.

Bocce has persisted as a game and as a social focal point in the Italian community. Its form, stabilized by the construction of formal playing courts, has not changed perceptibly since the years of the earliest immigrations in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Moreover, it has remained a game played almost solely by immigrants, both old and young, and it acts to form a dynamic new folk group among the earliest and the latest immigrants. *Bocce*, thus, has stopped the clock for the old men and has preserved a cultural setting for the new immigrants which is based upon the old country village values. The immigrants understand these values and find this cultural setting to be useful in coping with the stress of adaptation to the new environment. Within the Italian-American community of South Philadelphia the game of *bocce* has acted as a cultural mediator and buffer for both Italian male age groups.

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¹⁶Otto Newman has discussed the condition of the old-age pensioners of the working class of the London East End, and describes the plight of such men who can no longer keep up with the younger men in the gambling circles. Unlike the retired Italians of my study, who have *bocce* and its surrounding social situation to rely upon, the old men he discusses must transfer ". . . into the less demanding world of the females" who frequent the betting shops at different hours from the younger men, and who have ". . . accepted relegation into the limbo of dependence and of non-productivity, who have resigned themselves to their loss of function and of independent survival in the male world of swagger, assertiveness, dominance over the females, who have undergone the metamorphosis into meekness, dependence, [and] acceptance of domestic democracy" (p. 27). The few men who still hang on in the world of the younger men do so under extremely difficult and demanding conditions where, the older men, in Newman's words, "still manage to hold their own, often with something to spare, in the quest of recognition of those who count [and] still demand, perhaps now with a greater edge of aggressiveness, to have their voices heard in expert discussion of form, to have their opinions taken account of in achievement of consensus. . . . For the world from which they refuse to be parted is of tougher fibre than that into which the bulk of their contemporaries has withdrawn. One single lapse from common standards, from mandatory norms is enough to spell exclusion" (p. 27). See Otto Newman, "The Sociology of the Betting Shop," *British Journal of Sociology*, XIX (1968), 17-33.

¹⁷Field observation, March 18, 1973.

Pennsylvania Town Views of a Century Ago

By DON YODER

In earlier issues we have published Pennsylvania town views in engraving form, from the first half of the 19th Century. In this small album we present photographic views from about a century ago, of some known, and some unidentified Pennsylvania towns. All of them are from the Editor's Collection of Pennsylvaniana. Most of them are undated, but from the looks of the evidence they appear to come from the 1870's or 1880's. They present valuable details on town planning in 19th Century Pennsylvania,

show a great range of architecture from log to stone, brick, and frame, and are particularly good for covered and other bridges spanning Pennsylvania's rivers. My favorite among them is the magnificent photograph of Mifflintown in Juniata County after the fire of 1870 which destroyed much of the riverside and central area of the southern part of town. Will readers who recognize the unidentified views inform us of the identity of the towns involved? – EDITOR.



Figure 1. View of Towanda, Bradford County, Pennsylvania. Note immense covered bridge across the North Branch of the Susquehanna, the warehouses, founderies, and factories along the river, the Greek revival church to the right, and the very unecological clearing almost to the top of the mountain at left.



Figure 2. View of an unidentified town somewhere in Pennsylvania mountain country. Note raft in river at left, courthouse-like structure left center, and the general look of frontier clearing and new building that the town shows.

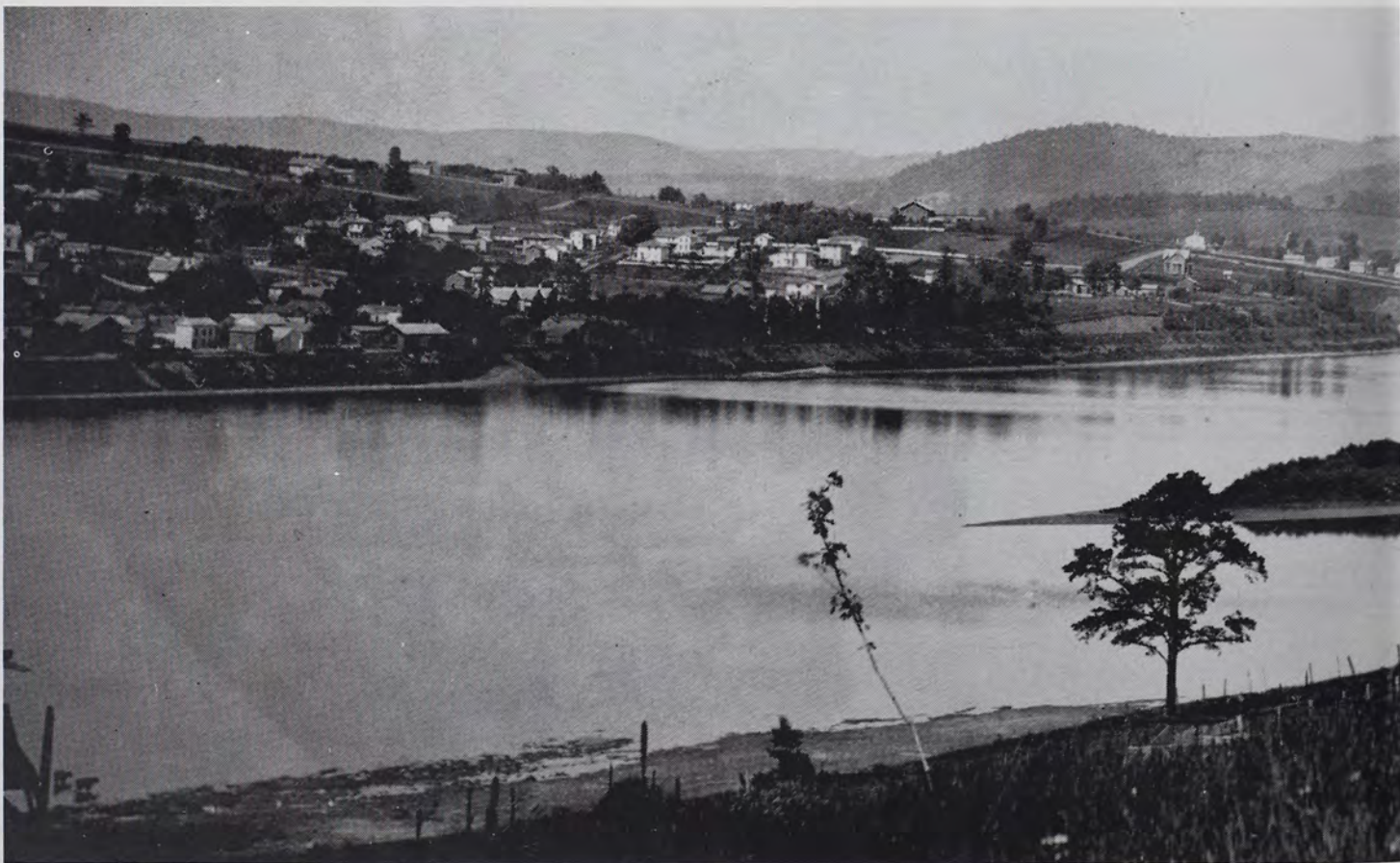




Figure 4. A closeup view, farther up (or down?) stream of the town pictured in No. 2, left. Note freight cars in lower left, the river bridge, and the courthouse-like structure at right.



Figure 3. View of river town with railroad bridge in background. A scribble on the back of the photograph gives the address of a minister at Wyalusing, Bradford County. Is this a view of Wyalusing?



Figure 5. Detail of another unidentified river town in Pennsylvania. Note blacksmith and harness shop (unpainted building in center of photograph), Victorian mansions along river, and Victorian gothic house in right foreground.

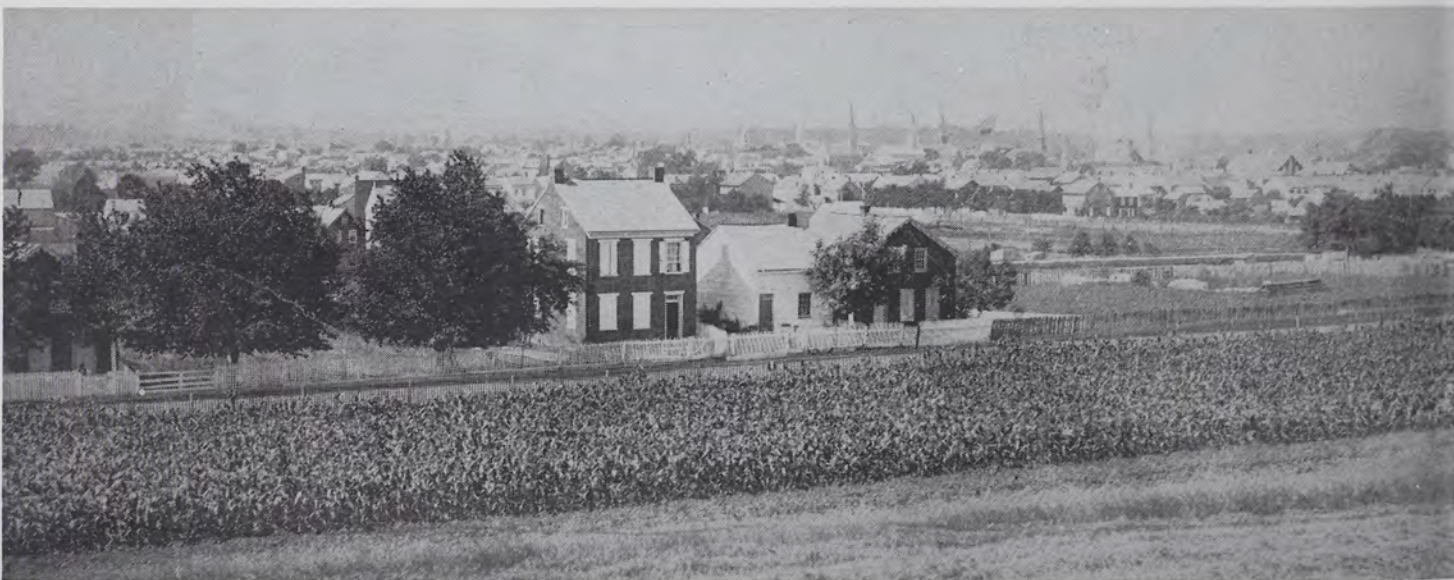


Figure 6. View of Clarion, county seat of Clarion County in Western Pennsylvania. The view was taken from farm country at the edge of town. In the distance can be seen at least eight church spires in the center of town. The houses in the foreground are in the Pennsylvania farmhouse style of the mid-19th Century, with a few concessions to the Victorian era in the gable trim of the buildings on extreme left and right.

Figure 7. View of Clearfield, Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, with the railroad in foreground and the West Branch of the Susquehanna at upper right. Particularly interesting are the Victorian freight station at left center, the three church spires, the Clearfield County courthouse and jail at upper right, and the circular building at lower right. The photograph was made, or copied, by The Philadelphia photographer Gutekunst.



Figure 8. Mifflintown, Juniata County, Pennsylvania, after the fire of December 31, 1870. Note immense covered bridge across the Juniata River, the courthouse (upper left), Lutheran Church to the right of the bridge line, the huge factory complex, possibly a tannery from the piles of wood or bark, and the obvious devastation wrought by the fire, which left only chimneys standing on many house sites. The fire can be seen smoldering along the river to the right of the bridge.

“The Barber’s Ghost”:

A Legend Becomes a Folktale

By MAC E. BARRICK

In the generally illuminating discussions of legend printed in the recent collection titled *American Folk Legend* (ed. Wayland D. Hand [Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1971]), little was said of the close relationship between folktale and legend. From the commonly accepted definitions of legend,¹ it would seem that any folktale can function as a legend at the folk level so long as it is believed to be true and set in an identifiable locale in the recent past. In an extended discussion of the role of belief in the development of legend, Linda Dégh expanded that facet of the definition to include indifference, skepticism and even disbelief,² which brings the definition of legend remarkably close to that of superstition, a point which Wayland Hand has already noted.³

As in the case of other folklore genres, such as the proverb and the riddle, where essential characteristics are often discernible not in the structure but rather in the function of the genre within the external social situation, the difference between legend and folktale

can be determined to some degree from the use that the informant makes of them. While the folktale, at least in the United States, is usually told as a means of amusing or entertaining an audience that participates only passively in the telling, whether it be a fairy tale told as a somnifacient for children or a dirty joke intended to titillate or embarrass, a legend has a more serious purpose and is not deliberately amusing. A legend is recited to explain in an etiological sense or to instruct in an admonitory manner, in short, to impose a belief, whether intentionally or subconsciously. Thus in different situations, the same narrative can function as a folktale or a legend, depending on the narrator's intention, and that intention will vary considerably with individual narrators. Richard Dorson suggests (“Legends and Tall Tales,” p. 160) that the distinction between folktale and legend may rest on such a subtle change as the shift in the introduction from “Once upon a time” to “One time there was.”

One tale, collected in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1963, has all the earmarks of legend:

George Hurley went huntin' one time up at Flat Rock. He went up there huntin' raccoon; he had an old musket, you know, and while he was diggin' a raccoon out of some rocks, he hung his powder horn up on a limb. He reached out for it after bit and here he'd hung it on the moon. He had to wait until the next night to go up and git his powder horn off the moon.⁴

The place and actor are identified and localized, yet it is obvious that the informant does not believe the story is true nor is he trying to impose a belief in the truth of the occurrence. The same informant also tells the story of “The Greatest Liar”:

There was a man, up in Mifflin Township, was a such a big liar, an' he was comin' walkin' down the road one day, and the one fella says to him, he says, “Tell me a lie.” He says, “No, I don't have time ta tell ya a lie, I must go down here, so-and-so's dead, an' I'm supposed t' go down 'n' lay

¹“Legends, like myths, are prose narratives regarded by their tellers as true; unlike myths, they are generally secular and are set in the less-remote past in a conventional earthly locale” (Jan Brunvand, *The Study of American Folklore* [New York, 1968], p. 87); “A legend is a traditional oral narrative regarded as true by its teller and by many members of the society in which it circulates, but containing remarkable or supernatural elements that follow a pattern” (Richard Dorson, “Legends and Tall Tales,” rep. in *Folklore: Selected Essays* [Bloomington, 1972], p. 159); “A legend is a story or narrative, set in the recent past, that is believed to be true by those by whom and to whom it is communicated” (Robert A. Georges, “The General Concept of Legend,” *American Folk Legend*, p. 5).

²Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, “Legend and Belief,” *Genre*, IV (1971), 281-304, esp. 294-299; cf. Herbert Halpert, “Definition and Variation in Folk Legend,” *American Folk Legend*, p. 54: “We must be prepared to find in many extremely serious areas of belief, custom and legend, such as death and burial and ghostlore, a proliferation of humorous explanatory stories and mocking anecdotes that seem to deny the seriousness of these very serious subjects.”

³*American Folk Legend*, p. 215. Cf. Ray B. Browne's tripartite scale of levels of superstitious belief: (1) whole-hearted acceptance, (2) partial acceptance, (3) humorous incredulity (*Popular Beliefs and Practices from Alabama* [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1958], pp. 4-5), to which Kenneth S. Goldstein has added a fourth level, total rejection (“The Collecting of Superstitious Beliefs,” *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, IX [1964], 17-18).

⁴Baughman, motif X1753.1*. See Barrick, “Blue Mountain Tales,” *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, 9 (1964), 76.

him out." So after he went down the road, this man that he was tellin', he got excited, an' he didn't know whether it was true or not, so he jumps on the horse 'n' rides down. When he got down there, why he met this man walkin' around, 'n' then he knowed he had told him a big lie.⁵

Despite the failure to identify the liar (the informant couldn't remember his name), this tale has the characteristics demanded by the usual definitions of legend; it is localized, of recent date, and is believed to be true. Yet folktale scholars recognize it as a folktale of international currency. An adequate definition of *legend* should allow for such contingencies and indicate at what point a legend is no longer a legend but a folktale.

"The Barber's Ghost," a story collected frequently in Central Pennsylvania, illustrates the problems involved in identifying the differences between tale and legend and at the same time provides some indication of how the shift from one genre to the other occurs. The earliest available text based on oral tradition was collected sometime before 1930 by Nevin W. Moyer, a high school teacher from Linglestown, Pennsylvania:

(A) There was a hotel or inn, somewhere west of here that had one room in the house in which no person could sleep on account of being tormented with the ghost or goblin.

It happened that one time a traveler came along, it was time to put up for the night, he asked if there was room, the innkeeper said his house was full all but one room, but it spooked in that room, the traveler was agreed to try it out.

When night had fallen he was taken up into the room, he looked all around he saw no sign of ghosts so he gave the landlord a hearty good night, who then left the room, after which the visitor proceeded to undress, blew out the light and then crawled into bed, tucked up all for the night, he had no more than himself, when to his surprise he did hear someone say "Do you want to be shaved" in a very fine tone, he pulled the covers down a bit to listen more clearly and again he heard the same fine voice saying "Do you want to be shaved." Now he hated very much to be shaved by a ghost or goblin and so he proceeded to get one arm out under cover to be ready for such an operation, by a goblin. No sooner [was] this done than here he heard the same words repeated "Do you want to be shaved." Now he crawls out under the cover and sits on the bed, all ready for a fight but with teeth rattling and knees shaking. No sooner this done, he heard the same fine voice saying "Do you want

to be shaved." No sooner said than this done he grabbed up his clothing and out the door as fast as he could go. When he landed in the bar room, they wanted know what was the matter, he told his story and then was allowed to sleep on the floor, for the night in perfect peace.

Some time after this this same inn became full as before, but this time it was a would be brave fellow that was willing to sleep in this room, but had practically the same experience as the other fellow. (Tell this same above over again, to make the story interesting, when you tell it).

Later a man called some other day who was very brave too with a very hoarse voice, asked for room and was told the same story, he was willing to try it out, he was very anxious to have a real ghost experience, when his time came he too was taken up into the room, he looked all around under the bed, on the walls, but nothing in sight, he thought that could scare him then he gave the innkeeper a fond good night, who left the room and the teamster began to undress and then blowing out the light jumped into bed.

He was not there very long till he heard the same fine sound "Do you want to be shaved" he pulled the cover down to make sure he was not mistaken, he laid for awhile and then again heard the fine voice, now he made up his mind he was going to get him or he it. So he started out of bed he sat on the rail and when the cry was made again, he moved right in the direction where the sound came, moving with his body forward so if the goblin would attack him, a blow would not knock him over. The sound seemed to come from a window, it made another cry, "Do you want to be shaved" at this time he grabbed up and out of the window to grab the ghost but to his surprise he grabbed hold of a limb that had been rubbing against the window pane[!] which caused it to say, or make the noise, "Do you want to be shaved."

Next morning he reported his experience and after that the traveling men could sleep in the room with ease.

Mrs. Jesse Phillips Clinton Co. Mar. 1926, told me she heard a new part to this story. When he found it was the limb he felt so happy that he thought he must have more fun. He heard them gambling down stairs so he got his big razor cut holes in a sheet put it on and went down stairs into the room where they were gambling with drawn razor saying "Do you want to be shaved" the gamblers up and out of the house leaving all the money behind, he grabbed it all up and went back to his room and slept fine. Next morning he was asked how he slept and he said fine. They asked of spook bothered him and he could say not at all.⁶

In 1952 Alfred L. Shoemaker noted that he had "recorded the folktale 'The Barber's Ghost' as told in dialect by Charles Weyandt of Reading," though he

⁵Recorded in Carlisle, Pa., March 20, 1968. Other informants recalled the same story (April 27, 1968, and November 21, 1969), presumably involving the same liar. However, see motif X905.4 and the references in Baughman, type 1920B, to which add Thomas R. Brendle and William S. Troxell, *Pennsylvania German Folk Tales* (Norristown, 1944), pp. 192-193; Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago, 1959), pp. 132, 228-229; idem, *Buying the Wind* (Chicago, 1964), pp. 68, 357-358; *Northeast Folklore*, III:2 (Summer, 1960), 34.

⁶From page 183 of an unpublished typescript of historical, genealogical and folk materials compiled by Moyer between 1915 and 1940. A copy is on deposit at the Ezra Lehman Library, Shippensburg State College.

⁷*The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, III:19 (March 1, 1952), 8.

apparently did not publish the text. A variant collected in Hummelstown, Dauphin County, was published in 1956:

(B) Some of our citizens were rather superstitious. Some believed in pow-wowing, fortune telling, spooks and witchcraft.

Here is one of the early spook stories, supposed to have happened in the Tavern on the corner of Main and Rosina Streets (Hummelstown). The building is still standing, although it is weather boarded and does not resemble a log house. At this time it is occupied by Green's Barber and Beauty Shop.

In the early days, it appears, there was one room in this tavern in which a person was unable to sleep on account of a spook that would get after the occupant and continually ask him this question, "Do you want to be shaved?"

One night a weary teamster stopped and asked for lodging, and the tavern-keeper told him the only room he had left was one in which a spook was supposed to be. He said he didn't mind spooks at all. He put his team away for the night and had his supper, when, in the language of that time, the innkeeper lit him up to his room. The teamster took advantage of the light of the candle and looked under the bed and in the closet, and after undressing outened the candle, crawled into bed, and tucked the covers up close to his chin, awaiting the arrival of the spook. Very shortly, he heard in a low squeaking voice, "Do you want to be shaved?" — Then again, "Do you want to be shaved?"

He opened up the covers for the attack. Then, for the third time—"Do you want to be shaved?" He left ample room, he figured, to be shaved in order not to have his neck cut, then sat up in the bed, made one jump, grabbed his clothing and ran downstairs. When he got to the barroom, he related his experience to the late customers, but no one volunteered to hunt the spook. He spent the night on the barroom floor, and in the morning had breakfast and went on his way with the vow on his lips that he would give that tavern a wide berth on his next trip through these parts.

A second teamster came along and had the same experience.

Finally one night a big burly teamster stopped at the tavern and told the landlord that he had heard about the spook and as he enjoyed their company very much, would like to have the room in which the spook dwelt. No sooner had he crawled into bed when he heard the voice say, "Do you want to be shaved?" He cautiously got out to the rail of the bed and after each question of the spook he moved toward it with clenched fist. It being summer time, the window was raised, and after advancing to the window, he heard the question asked again, "Do you want to be shaved?" Thrusting his head outside the window in the direction of the sound, he caught the spook in the form of a limb of an old apple tree rubbing against the window pane, which seemed to say, "Do you want to be shaved?"

While the teamster was lying in bed and having further experience with the spook, he heard the sound of money being handled in a card game in the room below. He thought this would be a good time to play a joke, so taking a sheet off the bed, he cut eyes in it, placed it over his head and proceeded down the stairs to the gambling room. He opened the door gently, so that his face could be seen by the gamblers, and then, in a very fine voice, he asked, "Do you want to be shaved?" At once the gamblers jumped up and ran pell-mell out of the door, leaving all the money for the spook. Gathering up the money, he took it up to his room, got into bed and had a good night's rest. The next morning, the landlord asked how he slept and he said, "Fine!" The landlord asked, "Did you see the spook?" to which he answered, "None whatever." The landlord was surprised and then told the teamster how on this occasion the spook must have been downstairs and scared all the occupants of the first floor out of their wits and even went off with the gamblers' money.⁸

The story apparently remained dormant until the 1960's when it was recalled in a somewhat shortened version by Raymond Bear, of Carlisle, Pennsylvania:

(C) Warren said, that the house stood idle. No one'd live in it, an' some neighbor-man said, "I'll live in it fer ya, fer 't." An' he said, "I'll do 'er." So he went there one night, an' it on'y happened when the wind was blowin'. An', which was natural. An' of course, after bit, why he heard a noise, an' he raised the winda, an' he said the, boy it just talked as plain as could be, "Do you want shaved?" An' then the wind would sway it the other way, 'n', "Do you want shaved?" An' it, he said, it wore an inch in that weather boarding, of that limb, an' by God, he went downstairs, 'n' he got outside, 'n' he down' it, it was down in the lower storey, An' he tol' the man, he didn't take his house from 'm, he said, "You, I fixed it," he said, "I, I killed that spook," he said, "now you kin rent it." Well, he rent' it, no one ever heard 't after'erds 'n' he tol' 'm, but he said, "You keep that tree limb trimmed, fer," he said, "it'll happen." But Warren, Warren happened t', Warren happened t' know the g. . ., where the house was, an' he said, "That actually happened," he said, now this's the way most of 'm starts." I said, "Not all of 'm."

The publication of this text evoked a brief flurry of interest and the recording of another variant by John B. Brendle:

(D) Well, this was told to me years and years ago by our neighbor, who was the story-teller of the Reinholds area, by the name of Henry Foltz. Now, he was born over on Stone Hill, which is about five miles to the east of here in Brecknock Township in Lancaster County; and I would say probably around the Civil War era—about eighteen

⁸Frederick J. Bolton, "A Spook Story," *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, I:2 (Summer, 1956), 18-20.

⁹Eugene Utech, "J. Raymond Bear's Olde Tyme Ghost Tales of Cumberland County," *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, XII (1967), 226.

sixty-one, sixty-two—around there. I don't know the exact date of his birth, but he used to tell some of the most fantastic tales, and, since I read the article that appeared in the *Keystone* folklife magazine, why, I felt the story was not complete. And that had to do with the barber that lived close to Carlisle—and evidently this must have happened years before Mr. Foltz was born, because he used to say that a friend of his told him this story that came from Carlisle and knew all about it. And he said that there was a particular house on the outskirts of Carlisle where there was a Scotch-Irish barber, lived in among the Pennsylvania Dutch people, and he had his barber's shop or room on the second floor of the house. And, as happens in in all of the Pennsylvania Dutch counties, it was customary for the peddlers—the Jewish peddlers—to come around with their pack of yard goods and thread and so forth on their back. And, one particular summer this peddler came along and he stopped in at this barber's house, and there was a heavy thunderstorm approaching. And, when the peddler went into the house, one of the neighbors was just coming out, and he heard the barber say to the peddler, "Do you want to be shaved?" And, the peddler said, "Yes."

And, that was the last that they ever heard or seen anything of the peddler. But, it wasn't too long afterward that this particular barber moved out of the house and that when other tenants moved in they found in the room where the barber chair had been a blood stain—or what seemed to be a blood stain—on the floor. And, at night time, especially if it was windy and foggy and misty—eerie nights, so to speak—as long as the wind was really moving, why they could hear just the man's voice just as plain as could be a-saying, [low, drawn-out], "Do you want to be shaved? Do you want to be shaved?" Almost the same tone of voice as the barber used when he asked this of the peddler. And, it so happened that they couldn't rent this house out to anybody anymore because they'd only live there a short time until they moved, and people'd ask why, and some of them would say, "Well, it wasn't clean—the place was haunted." And so, one day—the owner of the house, incidentally, had tried to sell the house a few times but nobody would buy it just on the strength of this: that it was haunted. So one day, some young fellow came in town—a young Pennsylvania Dutchman—and he come to the local hotel and it happened that this land owner—or the man that owned the house where this was allegedly to have taken place—happened that he was there and they got to drinking, and this young fellow said for fifty dollars he would stay for a few months so that he had a room. Well, he didn't only promise him the fifty dollars, but he said he would pay for his board if he would stay there—or at least try to find out where this spook, or where this ghost came from. And, the young fellow stayed there, and sure enough about the second night that he was there, why he heard this noise and saying, "Do you want to be shaved? Do you want to be shaved?" And he started to investigate. He didn't run like the rest of them did, but he looked around and finally discovered

what it was. There happened to be a apple tree growing in the front yard and one of the limbs had rubbed up against the weatherboarding on the second story in this same room where the barber shop had been—in the barber's room, and it had wore a deep groove into the weatherboarding, and, as the wind would move this limb back and forth, it had a sound just as if some ghostly voice would say, "Do you want to be shaved?" And, he went and got an axe, or some sharp instrument anyway; I don't remember did Henry say did he saw the limb off or did he—but he cut it off some way anyway. And, the next day he came to this man that owned the place, he says, "Well," he says, "you owe me fifty bucks," he said, "for being a ghost doctor." And he said, "What do you mean?" "Well," he said, "I discovered your ghost." He says, "yes," he says, "what was it?" "Well," he says, "I'll tell you," he said, "if you'd a done a little bit of investigating on your own instead of running," he said, "you woulda found what it was." So he says, "you come along out to the house," he says, "after you've paid me the fifty dollars." This landlord was as good as his word; he paid the boy the fifty dollars, and he went out and he showed him where he cut the limb and where it had rubbed into the side of the weatherboarding. And sure enough, a few years after that they found out that the peddler hadn't been killed after all, that he died a natural death about two years later; it just so happened that the neighbors didn't see him leave. And the barber, he died a natural death out in one of the western counties; he moved out in among his friends because he never did like the Pennsylvania Dutchmen because he was a Scotch-Irishman, and he couldn't get along with them too well. So, that is the story that I know about the barber out at Carlisle.¹⁰

The structural similarity between these variants suggests a common source, perhaps a printed one,¹¹ and such a source there is. One of the few pieces of reading matter found in almost every rural Pennsylvania home in the past hundred and fifty years has been *Baer's Agricultural Almanac*, published in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, since 1825. The role of the almanac generally in the propagation and transmission of folklore is of considerable importance though this material and its influence has been inadequately analyzed. In 1866 *Baer's Almanac* published the following tale under the heading "Anecdotes":

(E) *The Barber's Ghost*. — A gentleman, traveling some years since in the upper part of this State, called at a tavern, and requested entertainment for the night. The landlord informed him that it was out of his power to accommodate him, as his house was already full. He persisted in stopping, as he, as well as his horse, were almost ex-

¹⁰John B. Brendle, "Another Note on 'Do You Want Shaved?'" *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, XIII (1968), 23-28.

¹¹"Indeed, if in any area you find only one unchanging version of a legend told by many informants, you may begin to suspect either an extremely dominant informant, or what is more probable, the influence of print" (Halpert, "Definition," p. 49); cf. Dorson, "Legends and Tall Tales," p. 160.

hausted with travelling. After much solicitation the landlord consented to his stopping, provided he would sleep in a certain room that had not been occupied for a long time, in consequence of the belief that it was haunted by the ghost of a barber, who was reported to have been murdered in that room some years before.

"Very well" says the man, "I'm not afraid of ghosts."

After having refreshed himself, he inquired of the landlord how and in what manner the room in which he was to lodge was haunted. The landlord replied that shortly after they retired to rest an unknown voice was heard, in a trembling and protracted accent, "Do you want to be shaved?"

"Well," replied the man, "if he comes he may shave me."

He then requested to be shown to the apartment, in going to which he was conducted through a large room where were seated a great number of persons at a gambling table. Feeling a curiosity which almost every one possesses after having heard ghost stories, he carefully searched every corner of his room, but could discover nothing but the usual furniture of the apartment. He then lay down, but did not close his eyes to sleep immediately; and in a few minutes he imagined he heard a voice saying—

"Do you w-a-n-t to be s-h-a-v-e-d?"

He arose from his bed and searched every part of the room, but could discover nothing. He again went to bed; but no sooner had he began to compose himself to sleep, than the question was again repeated. He again arose and went to the window, the sound appearing to proceed from that quarter, he again heard the sound distinctly; and convinced that it was from without, he opened the window, when the question was repeated full in his ear, which startled him not a little. Upon a minute examination, however, he observed that the limb of a large oak tree, which stood under the window, projected so near the house that every breath of wind, to a lively imagination, made a noise resembling the interrogation—

"Do you w-a-n-t to be s-h-a-v-e-d?"

Having satisfied himself that his ghost was nothing more nor less than the limb of a tree coming in contact with the house, he again went to bed, and attempted to get asleep; he was now interrupted by peals of laughter, and an occasional volley of oaths and curses, from the room where the gamblers were assembled. Thinking that he could turn the late discovery to his own advantage, he took a sheet from the bed and wrapped it around him, and taking the wash-basin in his hand, and throwing the towel over his arm, proceeded to the room of the gamblers, and suddenly opening the door, walked in, exclaiming in a tremulous voice—

"Do you w-a-n-t to be s-h-a-v-e-d?"

Terrified at the sudden appearance of the ghost, the gamblers were thrown into the greatest confusion in attempting to escape it—some jumping through the windows, and others tumbling head over heels down stairs. Our ghost, taking advantage of the clear room, deliberately swept a

large amount of the money from the table into the basin and retired unseen to his own room.

The next morning he found the house in the utmost confusion. He was immediately asked if he rested well, to which he replied in the affirmative.

"Well, no wonder," said the landlord, "for the ghost, instead of going to his own room, made a mistake, and came to ours, frightened us out of the room and took away every dollar of our money."

The guest, without being the least suspected, quietly ate his own breakfast, and departed, many hundred dollars the richer by the adventure.

The story is obviously not original with the editors of *Baer's Almanac*, since the identical text appeared in the Gettysburg (Pa.) *Republican Compiler* of March 9, 1857,¹² and before that in numerous newspapers in New England, as noted by George Carey.¹³ The almanac is the more likely source for the story in its folk form, since newspapers, being ephemeral, are utilized for a period of days, and then discarded, but the almanac remains in use throughout the entire year.¹⁴

"The Barber's Ghost" apparently had its origins in a historical incident in New England,¹⁵ since it was still a part of the legendry of that area as late as 1932. In a collection of folktales published by the New Hampshire Federation of Women's Clubs appears the following:

(F) A Franconia Ghost Story

My grandmother on mother's side, Priscilla Quimby, was left a widow with two small children to support. Her husband was killed by the exploding of a cannon on the training field at Lisbon at Muster. You know in those days women did not have the means to support themselves that they do now, so she had to turn her hand to most anything to get food for her children.

Almost everybody was superstitious then, and believed in spooks, and ghost stories, that is, a good many did, but my grandmother did not.

One house in town was said to be haunted. Tenant after tenant vacated, frightened by the horrible noises that came at irregular intervals. The owner, Simeon Spooner, told my grandmother that she could have the place rent free, if she would live in it, and she was glad to accept his offer.

¹²Reprinted by Alfred L. Shoemaker, "The Barber's Ghost," *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, III:19 (March 1, 1952), 8.

¹³Carey reprints a text from the *Salem Gazette*, September 18, 1840, and notes two other occurrences of it ("A Note on J. Raymond Bear's 'Do You Want Shaved?'" *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, XIII (1968), 19-21. On the role of early newspapers in the diffusion of folklore, see Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow* (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), pp. 20-23, and Carey, "Folklore from the Printed Sources of Essex County, Massachusetts," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, XXXII (1968), 19.

¹⁴Cf. Angus K. Gillespie, "Work and the Farmer: The Almanac as Cultural Index, 1858-1878," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, XX:3 (1971), 40. Numerous other examples of the influence of *Baer's Almanac* on oral tradition in southern Pennsylvania could be cited.

¹⁵Compare a similar incident recorded by a Vermont newspaper in 1935 and noted by Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow*, p. 164.

"But I'm afraid you won't stay there when that terrible screeching begins," the owner told her. She moved in, and for a time nothing strange occurred. Then one evening, the most terrible whining and screeching began, growing more gruesome every minute. The children were asleep and grandmother was there alone. At first she was frightened, but she was determined she would not be driven out of the house, so made up her mind to find the cause of the disturbance.

The noises came from upstairs which she did not use. She blew out the candle, and started up the stairs, for she felt that if there were something supernatural, she could discover it better in the dark. She looked all around, but could see nothing. Then she bravely began to trace the noise, though at times it was almost unearthly in its weirdness. Step by step, she investigated and finally came to the window where she found the branch of an ancient tree scraping, and scratching over the roof and window panes, blown back and forth by the south wind. The next day she asked a neighbor to saw off the limb. The ghost was laid.¹⁶

After entering the area of popular literature represented by newspapers and almanacs, the legend-become-tale emerged in Pennsylvania, again as a legend, possibly inspired by a similar historical experience, as suggested by Brendle's account.

"The Barber's Ghost" provides an excellent example of the manner in which recurrent folklore motifs accrete to a hospitable structure. The tale has developed in two major versions, the first of which appears to be closer to the original historical incident, hence it is more in the nature of a legend than its congeners. The Gore, Bear, and Brendle texts exemplify this version, whose general motifs are: A house is believed haunted (motif E281 *Ghost haunts house*), so that the owner is unable to rent or sell it (Baughman E402(d) *Ghost-like noises cause owner to abandon farm*); The owner offers the property free to anyone who will live in it (H1411 *Fear test: staying in haunted house*); one man accepts and, the first night, hearing the noise, discovers the cause (Baughman J1782.3(c) *Limb of tree scratching window or other part of building thought to be ghost*); he either claims the property as agreed, or shows his honesty by refusing it on the grounds that there really was no ghost. The second version is the more complex and generally involves the interpretation of the noise as the words "Do you want to be shaved?" (E571 *Ghostly barber*). In this version the setting is a hotel or tavern, so that the motif pertaining to ownership does not apply. Rather than the entire house, one room is haunted (E281.3 *Ghost haunts particular room in house*). Three men in succession attempt to stay in the room, only the third of whom is successful (Z71.1

Formulistic number: three; D1273.1.1 Three as magic number; cf. H1242 Youngest brother alone succeeds on quest). The same motif of discovery is involved (Baughman J1782.3(c)), but the conclusion differs in that the owner is not usually told the true cause of the noise. A completely extraneous episode is often introduced into this version: The man dresses as a ghost to scare some gamblers and steal their money (K1833 *Disguise as ghost; K335.0.5 Owner frightened from goods by apparitions of the dead*). Only the almanac/newspaper variant provides motivation for this insertion; there the noise of the gamblers keeps the subject from sleeping, so he scares them, out of vengeance or a desire for quiet. A more interesting possibility is raised by the Bolton variant, where the first victim appeals to the gamblers for aid and they refuse to help him, suggesting that they may be involved in a plot to have fun at the newcomer's expense. In that case, the subsequent scaring of the gamblers and stealing their money becomes a justifiable trick played on the tricksters (cf. K1682.1 *Big 'Fraid and Little 'Fraid*). Since all the variants except the Gore text involve the words "Do you want to be shaved?" there is obviously considerable interplay between the two versions. Only Moyer seemed to be aware of the existence of two versions, since his text ends with a disclosure of the truth about the noise with the gambler episode added as an alternate ending. Interestingly, in keeping with the nature of legendry, nearly all of the Pennsylvania variants localize the action rather than adopting the ambiguous phrase "in the upper part of this state"¹⁷ which was used indiscriminately in newspapers in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

After careful analysis of the motifs, a tenuous derivational schema can be established. The Moyer and Bolton texts¹⁸ are obviously derived indirectly from the almanac/newspaper version with slight changes attributable to the entrance of the tale into folklore. The change from one to three travelers is a logical one based on the traditional structure of folktales, and it may in fact represent a return to an earlier form no longer extant. The author of the semi-literary version in the newspapers may have felt that the repetition of action represented by the introduction of three travelers was excessive and so trimmed the tale to fit his space. Moyer himself recognized this problem in transcribing the tale into his notebooks, since he reminds himself that when reciting the tale he is to include all three

¹⁷Cf. a similar phrase, "in northern Kentucky," frequently used in legends about Jesse James and Beanie Short; D. K. Wilgus and Lynwood Montell, "Beanie Short: A Civil War Chronicle in Legend and Song," *American Folk Legend*, p. 150n.

¹⁸Given the proximity of Linglestown and Hummelstown, it is not unlikely that Bolton's text may have been inspired by Moyer's i.e., that Bolton's informant heard Moyer recite the tale on one of the occasions when he spoke to local groups.

¹⁶Mrs. Moody P. Gore and Mrs. Guy E. Speare, comps., *New Hampshire Folk Tales* (Plymouth, N.H., 1932), pp. 221-223.

travelers with the same incidence of detail, "to make the story interesting." The Gore text is most closely related to the apparent historical basis of the legend, though there is an added folkloric motif in the successful party's being a poor widow. The Bear and Brendle texts are essentially folkloric and give no indication of contamination from the literary source beyond the interpretation of the noise as the words "Do you want to be shaved?" It is impossible to determine whether Bear's version represents an intermediate step between the simple event and the more complex tale, or whether it is, as George Carey suggested (*KFQ*, 13 [1968], 19) a corrupted or garbled text. Coincidentally, Brendle insists that the story derives from an incident occurring near Carlisle, the area where Bear spent his entire life. Perhaps a historical event similar to that noted by Dorson in Vermont also occurred in south-central Pennsylvania, though Brendle's inclusion of the *Murdered Peddler*¹⁹ and the *Ineradicable Bloodstain* (Baughman E422.1.11.5.1(e)) suggests that his tale is entirely in the realm of folklore. Brendle's variant offers an entirely different explanation for the words "Do you want to be shaved?" than that presented in the almanac/newspaper version.

A comparison of the description of the ghost voice in the different variants might aid in determining the provenience of each. Since the ghost voice is the basic motif in nearly all of the variants, the tone of voice used in reproducing it would be a memorable detail likely to be retained in the retelling, if the story was transmitted for any length of time in oral tradition. Moyer describes the voice as "a very fine tone," Bolton as "a low squeaking voice" though later he notes that the teamster masquerading as a ghost spoke in "a very fine voice." This reinforces the suggestion that Bolton's text derived from Moyer's. The Bear and Brendle variants are the only examples of which tape recordings exist, so only there can the speaker's true intent be established. Bear, in imitating the sound, used a normal conversational tone since, as he noted, the voice "talked as plain as could be." Brendle's imitation was low and drawn-out. Since the almanac/newspaper text did not describe the sound (except as "tremulous"), anyone using that as a source would be left to his own devices in reproducing the sound.

Obviously the story of "The Barber's Ghost" is told with an intention to debunk. As such it is often inserted into a session of ghost stories, as a serious attempt to show that behind every ghost story there is a logical, realistic explanation. Raymond Bear's variant, which

is the only example recorded in an authentic folk situation, represents a curious inversion of this function. Bear, when the occasion was propitious, told an extended series of ghost stories, each of which undoubtedly developed originally as an independent legend. By the late 1960's, when the stories were recorded, Bear's manner of narration was that of the accomplished storyteller, and his intention had become one of entertainment. Bear still believed in the historical veracity of his stories, but the audience in most cases did not share his belief. Ironically Bear incorporated "The Barber's Ghost" into his repertoire not to debunk but in an attempt to reinforce what he considered to be the factual basis of his stories. "The Barber's Ghost" had been told originally by a co-participant in a tale session as a negative legend²⁰ to deny the authenticity of the ghost stories Bear was reciting. Bear, recognizing the intent of the story, refuted it with a simple statement that this one instance of logical explanation does not necessarily apply to all ghost stories. Bear's final statement did not affect the plot of the story, yet his attitude changed its essential nature, at least in story-telling situations where he was involved.

Most of the narrators who related "The Barber's Ghost" believed that it was based on factual circumstances. Even Bear, in his negative approach to the story, does not deny that it is true. Yet the changes wrought in the structure of the story by the inclusion of the gambler episode in the almanac/newspaper variant have gradually moved it into the area of folktale. The belief factor alone does not provide the basic distinction between legend and folktale. The fact that the narrator believes in the historicity of his story does not make it legend. Legend is a form of folk history and thus is known to a high percentage of the inhabitants of a culture area. "Many or all of the members of a given social group will have heard of the tradition and can recall it in brief or elaborate form. This is indeed one of the main tests of a legend, that it be known to a number of people united by their area of residence or occupation or nationality or faith."²¹ In the case of "The Barber's Ghost" the story is known and communicated in its entirety by one or two individuals, most members of the community not even being aware of the general features of the story, indicating that it is already outside the purview of legendry.

¹⁹Baughman, E334.2.1(e) *Ghost of murdered peddler seen near burial spot*. Add: Ella Z. Elliott, *Old Schuylkill Tales* (Pottsville, Pa., 1906), pp. 103-105; Louis C. Jones, *Things That Go Bump in the Night* (New York, 1959), pp. 86-87; Donald Bird and James Dow, "Benjamin Kuhn: Life and Narratives of a Hoosier Farmer," *Indiana Folklore*, V (1972), 192-196.

²⁰"The simplest kind of negative legends usually tell of a horrible experience that implies a supernatural encounter but releases tension by finding sober explanation of the adventure. Most of such legends have the tendency to generalize. If they show evidence that in a particular case supernatural phenomena did not occur, the conclusions of the legends may suggest 'Supernatural phenomena do not exist'" (Degh and Vázsonyi, "Legend and Belief," p. 297).

²¹Dorson, "Legends and Tall Tales," p. 160; cf. Dorson, *American Folklore and the Historian* (Chicago, 1971), p. 150.

Grain Harvesting in the Nineteenth Century

By BERTON E. BECK

Grain such as wheat, rye, oats and buckwheat, were important grass cereals grown and harvested in the early 1800's. Corn is also a grass cereal but its culture and harvesting is quite different from the four just mentioned, so it will not be considered in this article.

The word grain indicated the mature seeds or kernels on the growing stalks, and was also used in speaking of a field of growing cereals.

Harvesting means to gather, and it included the cutting of the standing grain, putting it in bunches, and tying it into sheaves. To thoroughly dry the moisture from the straw and kernels of grain, the sheaves were stood in shocks of eight sheaves, and two more placed on top of the shock as caps, or covers, to shed rain. When the moisture was evaporated from the straw and kernels, the straw was beaten to release the grain from the heads.

A ripening field of grain, such as wheat, rye or oats, gradually changes from its green color to a golden yellow, as the stalks die, for its work is finished. Before the stalks weaken allowing the heads of grain to fall on the ground, they must be cut and the grain secured.

The ancient implement for cutting grain was the sickle. One grasped what grain he could with the left hand and cut it with the sickle, and lay the handful in a row or swath. This was indeed a slow operation.

Some person with vision made the sickle blade longer and straighter, then placed it on a long handle. This was the origin of the scythe. No one knows when the sickle and scythe were devised, but has not Father Time always carried a scythe on his shoulder?

Dr. Stevenson W. Fletcher in his book, *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life, 1640 to 1840* (Harrisburg, 1950), writes that the grain cradle was of European origin, brought to America, and by 1780 was in common use on the farms of Pennsylvania. The *Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Encyclopedia* (rev. ed. [New York, 1945, c. 1947]) reports the grain cradle was devised by Americans in the period 1776 to 1800.

Samuel Ball began making cradles at Balls Mills, in Hepburn Township, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, in 1847. He not only supplied the local market, but reported that his biggest business in cradles was in the West.

Cradles have a relatively straight handle, as compared to the crooked snath of a scythe. In the middle of the handle is an upward curve, with an upright hand grip. Attached to the base of the snath is the blade, longer, wider and straighter than the blade of a scythe.

At the base of the handle a frame is also fastened to catch the cut grain. This frame consists of an upright piece of wood about 18 inches high, solidly secured to the snath. To this piece are attached four curved fingers of strong light wood, the curve corresponding to that of the blade.

The first finger rests close to the blade, but the others are about six inches apart. A steel wire or rod, as a brace, extends from the handle to each finger. They are held in position by passing through holes drilled in a piece of wood, about a foot from and parallel to the vertical piece holding the ends of the fingers.

Regarding blades for scythes and cradles, Fletcher reports that the farmer had a choice of an English blade of hard steel which was sharpened by grinding, or a German or European blade made of soft steel and sharpened by laying the blade on an anvil and using a hammer to pound the blade to a sharp edge.

Each farmer who had a soft steel blade had a *Dengelschtock*, a Pennsylvania German word for a small anvil. It was a piece of iron an inch square and ten inches long, with one end flattened much like a screw driver to be driven in a block of wood. The top of the *Dengelschtock* had a head of steel, on which the blade was held flat as it was pounded to a keen edge.

Once my father and one of his brothers were reminiscing of their youth and spoke of how each morning the ringing sounds of hammers on the anvils could be heard, as neighbors sharpened the blades of their scythes and cradles, before starting the day's work of mowing hay or cutting grain.

To use the cradle, it is picked up by grasping the vertical hand grip with the right hand and placing the left hand under the end of the snath, palm up, with the fingers curled around the handle.

Cradling is begun by swinging the cradle to the right and rear, keeping the blade four or five inches from the ground; the cutting stroke is made by swiftly swinging

Loading the hay wagon was a familiar scene in rural Pennsylvania. This popular print, entitled "Harvest Time," was published in 1904 by the James Lee Company, Chicago, for distribution as a premium with other retail products. From the Editor's Collection.



the cradle to the left in a fast gliding motion, cutting the grain which is caught and held by the fingers of the cradle. The swing continues to the left and rear, and raising the back of the cradle, allows the straw to slide off the fingers to lie in the swath.

As the cradle is swung to the right, the cradler takes a short step forward and the stroke to the left begins. It is all done in a steady motion, with a slightly perceptible pause at the beginning and end of each stroke.

It was a pleasant sight to watch several men cutting grain on smooth ground, as they advanced in seemingly effortless ease, making each stroke in a continuous rhythmic motion. But watching a novice, it looked like very hard work.

A test of skill the "boys" liked to try, was to place a stick in the grain ahead of the cradler. With three strokes he was to cut as much of the grain surrounding the stick as he could, without disturbing it. The one leaving the least number of stalks standing, was the winner.

Though cradling grain may not have been the easiest task a farmer had to do, many men claimed they enjoyed doing it. After the first day they might be a little stiff and sore, the next morning, but it did not take long to "limber up" so they could put in another long day.

The number of acres a man might cradle in a day depended on several factors: his dexterity with a cradle, the type of grain to be cut, and the condition of the standing grain. Due to the length of the straw, rye was considered the hardest to cut and buckwheat the easiest. A severe rain and windstorm striking a field of ripe grain could tangle the straw or cause some of it to lie almost flat on the ground.

TAKING UP AND SHOCKING GRAIN

With the cut grain lying in swaths, raking it in bunches and tying them was called "taking up," and

standing eight sheaves together was the "shocking."

In harvesting the whole family often helped and this included the mother and daughters. Children too small to do the tying would rake the grain in bunches for an older person to tie into sheaves. The children would also gather ten sheaves in a pile to be later stood in a shock. This job was called "carrying sheaves."

TYING THE SHEAF

There was an ingenious way of taking some of the straw, making a "band" and tying a sheaf. A handful of the straw was selected and holding it near the heads with the left hand, it was stripped through the right hand to remove any loose strands and straighten any that might be tangled. Holding the straw near the heads, the right hand separated it in two parts, which we will number *one* and *two*. Leaving the index finger of the right hand free, the thumb and remaining fingers grasped the number *two* part of the grain. Still holding the straw in the left hand, by a "sleight of hand performance" the right index finger flipped the number *one* part over the heads of all the grain, where it was held in a half knot, by the thumb and fingers of the right hand. Now the band was twice as long as the original straw.

Reaching around the bunched grain, both hands lifted it a few inches and the knot was placed on the underside and held tight so that it could not open and come apart. The left hand which had helped in the lifting, now grasped the number *one* part and slipped towards the end. The hand which had been holding the knot tight, slipped along the second part of the band towards its end. With the bundle lying on the ground, the knee helped to compress the bundle as the two parts of the band were drawn tight, the ends of the two parts of the band were twisted together and a loop of the twisted ends pushed under the band, tying the sheaf.

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but about the only way one could learn this seemingly impossible

task was to have a slow and careful demonstration; yet often the lesson had to be repeated.

The prowess of certain men in tying up grain led them to boastful claims. As one braggart explained it, if he had six bunches of grain ready to be tied, he could tie the first sheaf, throw it high in the air and then tie the second one, giving it a good toss, and he was able to tie the six sheaves, keeping one in the air until he had tied all six. Very few men could throw their sheaves that high!

When the sheaves were tied, eight of them were stood together in a shock, and two more were flattened and placed on top of the shock to shed rain. The grain was left in the shocks about two weeks to dry the straw and harden the kernels of grain. The weather had considerable effect as to how long the grain was in the shocks.

THRESHING GRAIN

Threshing was the removal of the kernels from the heads of the cut and shocked grain. This was done by beating the heads with the flail of antiquity, or by having farm animals walk over the grain spread on the threshing floor. For sanitary reasons, the animals were not used to thresh grain for human consumption.

In all the early barns there was a section with a tight wooden floor, known as the threshing floor; even in later years when powered machines did the threshing, it was done there so that any spilled grain could be saved.

Farmers whose barns were large enough to have some empty space often hauled the shocked grain to the barn, storing it there to be threshed at a later time. If there was not room to store the sheaves, they were threshed from the wagon. There was a little less work to this method, but there was always a weather hazard.

We can be quite certain that very little grain was trodden out, the most being threshed with flails.

After the flailing, the straw was forked either into a mow or loft in the barn or carried outside and placed in a stack. The straw was used for winter feed, though there was not too much nourishment in it. Cattle need a certain amount of roughage in their diet and when fed grain with the straw they would come through the winter, if not fat, at least healthy.

The grain was swept from the floor and if a breeze was blowing, it might be poured from a basket at an elevation of six or more feet to fall onto a blanket. The wind blew away the chaff and small particles of straw.

There were "winnowing" baskets three or four feet in diameter and four to six inches deep that were sometimes used to catch the falling grain. At the gristmills there were water-driven fans to clean the debris from grain before grinding it into flour.

The weather could be either an ally or an enemy during the harvesting season. A severe rain and wind storm could tangle or bend the almost ripened grain in one direction, so that one could not cradle around the field but only on one side. The cradler then cut his swath across the field and walked back to the starting point to cut the next one.

If the grain was standing in shocks, after the storm one might find that some had blown over, or that many of the caps had blown off. A week of intermittent rain could be most discouraging at this time.

Harvesting was hard work and surely the help given by the women was appreciated. Starting with the binding and the shocking of the sheaves, loading the wagon, by placing the sheaves as they were pitched on, to unloading and threshing, the wife worked along with her husband, through the whole procedure.

In those early days the cradle and flail served their purpose well, but it was hard manual labor from sunrise to sunset. No one had thought of a forty-hour week; they more likely wished they had a forty-hour day.

THE FLAIL

Basically, the flail consisted of a staff or handle about six feet long, and attached to the end by a swivel joint, there was a heavy bar or club about two feet in length. Often the staff was made of ash and the bar of oak or maple.

The simplest form had the staff end in a knob; if the handle was one and a half inches thick at the end, the knob would be that diameter.

Just back of the knob a layer of wood one fourth of an inch deep and an inch long was removed to make a channel around the staff. Here the head of the flail was connected by the swivel, so that it could revolve around the handle, but could not slip over the knob. If the club was not fastened by a swivel, the staff would rotate in the hands of the one using the flail.

The beater had a hole near the end through which a strip of leather was placed, to be loosely tied in the channel. This leather did not last very long, and they found it was better to use rawhide.

Dried eel skin is very tough and wear-resistant and made an excellent piece of rawhide. Cut in strips about an inch wide and "worked" by soaking, bending, and rubbing it until softened, it was tied to the head and secured loosely around the channel, making the swivel attachment. When tied in a knot and dry, it was not easily opened.

A more elaborate swivel was frequently made of wood, but few farmers had the skill or the equipment for bending wood, so the wagon-maker may have been called on to make the flail.

The simpler form of the flail, has the bar or head connected to the handle by a strip of leather or rawhide, tied securely to the bar but loosely to the channel cut on the staff. Being loose on the handle allows the head to revolve when in use.

The wooden swivel flail has a longer channel cut on the staff and the "U"-shaped piece of wood ends in blocks to fit in the channel. To hold the swivel in place, it is tied with eel skin or leather.

The "U"-shaped wood on the head is glued and doweled. A flail of this type is exhibited in the farm museum section of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C.

There is also an interesting model in the museum of a "Flail Machine" which has four mechanical flails to be operated by a man turning a crank.

HORSE-POWERED THRESHING MACHINES

By 1850 the revolution in the development of farm equipment that began in 1797 with the patented cast-iron moldboard plow, was now in full swing. Men with vision were devising machines to lessen the labor of making hay and harvesting grain. The mowing machine for cutting hay was first developed. This was a two-wheeled cart, drawn by a team of horses, with a cutter-bar on the side, the knives activated by gears that were powered by the revolving wheels of the cart. This was followed by a two-wheeled hayrake, replacing the wooden rake.

From the mowing machine, Cyrus McCormick developed the reaper to cut and bunch the ripened grain that gathered on the platform and was raked off by hand. In 1848, Nelson Platt invented a self-acting rake which swept over the platform to push the grain off in bunches. The grain still had to be bound in sheaves by hand.

Converting the reaper into a binder, that tied the grain in sheaves, was accomplished in 1875, when John F. Appleby, making use of several previous patents of others, produced the modern grain binder, which served its purpose until replaced by the combine of the 20th Century.

A horse-powered thresher was developed about 1850 to replace the flail. This was a rectangular box about six feet long, three feet wide and five feet high. The thresher had a revolving cylinder, twelve inches in diameter and two feet long. The cylinder was fitted with a series of spikes that intermeshed with spikes in a concave piece beneath the cylinder. Several concave pieces came with each machine, for use in threshing different grains.

A team of horses on a treadmill was one way to use the animals to operate the revolving cylinder. Another type was the sweep power machine. Here four horses hitched to arms or sweeps, walked a circle around a

machine fitted with gears that activated a "jack" that was geared to rotate a pulley about two feet in diameter. This large pulley was attached by a leather belt to the small pulley on the cylinder of the thresher. The large pulley greatly increased the speed of the smaller pulley on the end of the cylinder.

With the two machines set up, the horses in place, and put in motion, the wheels turned and the cylinder began to spin. When it revolved rapidly, the operator opened the band of a sheaf of grain and slowly fed it into the cylinder. The kernels of grain loosened from the heads, and with the straw were pushed into a long box called the shaker. The bottom was full of one-inch holes so the threshed grain would fall on the floor, and the straw was pushed out the end of the box, to be forked away by a man standing there.

The shaker was moved back and forth by an arm attached to the side of a revolving wheel, that was turned by a belt from the shaft of the cylinder.

The threshed grain was cleaned by putting it through a "fanning mill," that sifted the grain out of the straw while a revolving fan blew away the chaff and dirt.

Some of those threshing machines were quite large and mounted on wheels so that they could be moved from farm to farm, doing custom work. Others were smaller and used only on the owner's farm.

In the last quarter of the century, the thresher was called a "separator," mounted on wheels, and operated by a steam engine. The thresher was a huge machine, where the clean grain came out of a spout, and was bagged. The straw came out the back end of the machine and a carrier delivered it to the upper floor of the barn.

The owner of the outfit had his own two teams of draft horses and two helpers to haul the equipment from farm to farm. The "boss" fed the sheaves into the thresher, one helper fired the steam engine, and the third man counted the bushels of grain threshed. The owner was paid by the bushel, and he wanted every bushel counted.

The farmer whose grain was being threshed needed a crew of a half-dozen men and boys to get the sheaves to the machine and take care of the straw. It was the custom of the times that the farmer's wife served a sumptuous dinner and supper to the crew of hungry men. She took great pride in this as she did not want it said that the men were not well fed.

The development of the diverse farm equipment enabled the successful farmer to double the number of acres he cultivated, by either renting or buying a neighboring farm, or one that was close by. Thus the trend of larger farms and fewer farmers began.

This revolution for more advanced machinery is still in progress, but I shall leave the telling of this to some future writer.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE DIALECT

By CLAUDE K. DEISCHER

There is an old adage — “Be not the first to discard the old, nor the last to adopt the new.”

This philosophy was much in evidence in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, in the early 1700’s. This community was settled by the Moravians whose mother tongue was German.

My wife and I were born in this community early in the 20th Century and educated in its schools. My wife learned English for the first time when she started school. Even though English was the language in the schools, the conversation in the homes and on the streets was mostly Pennsylvania German.

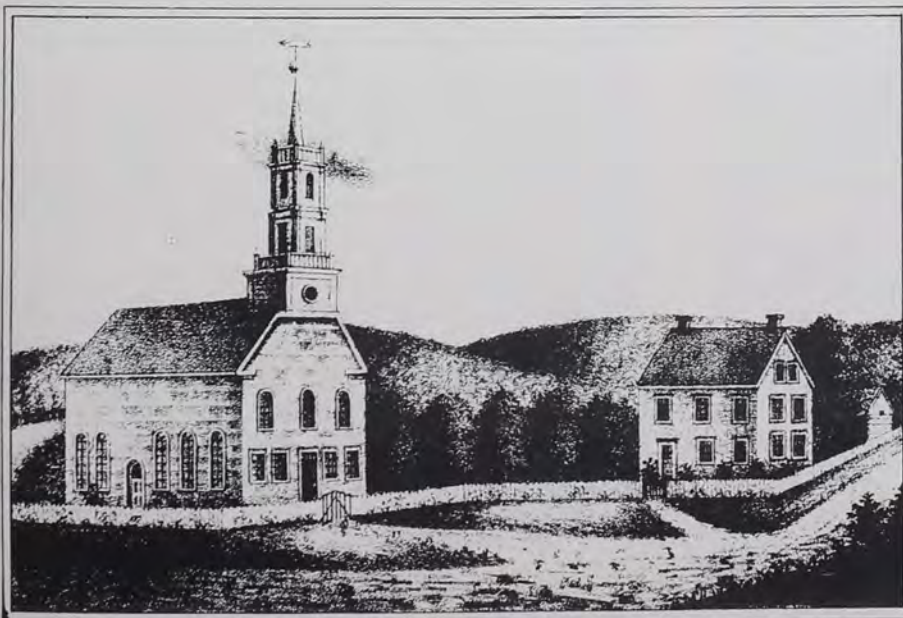
Our grandparents conversed with us in the dialect, in fact most of the older people spoke only the Pennsylvania dialect. The majority of people understood the English but hesitated to speak it; if they did their remarks incorporated both languages. It was necessary very often to know the dialect in order to understand what they were trying to say. The churches conducted services in German and English — many of them up to World War I.

We have never regretted this heritage and all the heartwarming experiences that went with it as well as those we have had since that time. In fact, many of the younger generation are missing something culturally that would greatly enrich their future, even though

their manner of speaking and inflection might indicate where they came from or the influences on their upbringing.

It was very unfortunate that during World War I, the speaking of any kind of German implied to some people that there was an allegiance to Germany. This was not so because the Pennsylvania Germans were extremely loyal to our country and many of them sacrificed their lives on the field of battle. However, certain influences caused the teaching of German to be dropped from many curricula in many educational systems. Even the dialect was spoken with reservations in certain areas.

We have learned since that bi-lingual or multi-lingual ability in the languages is much to be desired and that this brings one into a realm of broader cultural interests, understandings, and associations. After World War I there was a marked decline in the use of the dialect and with it a gradual loss of interest in its culture and literature. A number of years later several individuals strove to renew interest in it. Noteworthy were the contributions in the form of special columns in the daily or weekly newspapers, the presentation of plays, skits and humorous radio programs, the organizing of groups to hold “fersommlings” periodically (i.e. “Grundsov Lodches”), and folklore societies — all in the dialect. Familiar English poems, stories and



Moravian Church and Parsonage, Emmaus, Pa., built in 1834. From an old lithograph made from one of Samuel Reinke's Twelve Views (1836).

songs were translated into the dialect and still more recently Pennsylvania German folk festivals and fairs have become popular. In these ways many people become better acquainted with the language, culture and food, thus helping to perpetuate it.

After a lifetime of association with this culture, I am convinced that the advantages of a Pennsylvania German background far outweigh the disadvantages, if there be any. The philosophy of the Pennsylvania Germans, their standards of conduct, religious influences, the wholesome appreciation of work, responsibilities that must be assumed in order to progress and above all the ability to speak the dialect have proved to be invaluable to me.

Probably my first appreciation of the dialect came to me when I took courses in German in college. There was the tendency to think and associate the words of the dialect with those in German, the realization that there was a marked difference in grammatical structure and spelling, yet it always served as a key to a more precise and exacting language. There was a kinship which nothing else could have given.

My wife and I have had the opportunity to travel to Europe several times and we can say without question that one of the greatest benefits resulting from our background was the ability to be able to converse with many people in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Holland, Denmark, and certain parts of France where German is understood. Many people marveled at our speaking the dialect and that they were able to understand us. They called us *Pfälzer* or asked, did we come from the Heidelberg or Mannheim area. Later we visited the Stuttgart area and we were asked the same questions. It was hard for these people to believe that we were Americans and that this language has been perpetuated in America over 200 years ago and that it is still spoken.

When we visited Heidelberg in 1957 we were interested in the dialect that the people speak there and noted that their markets resembled our farmers' markets even to the products that were sold. The mannerisms, dress, and physical features of these people gave us a feeling somehow of belonging. The art in the museums, especially the one in Mannheim, also was evidence that we have many similar objects — no doubt much was brought over or the art of making them was imported with the immigrants.

We made much use of the dialect in Germany with Austria as a close second. When one is able to converse with people in a language closely related an apparent bond immediately exists. Such an experience came to us in the dining room of our hotel in Vienna during one European trip. Since all the tables were occupied we were invited to sit with a German woman who was alone. She spoke very little English but the

fact that we could converse with her in the dialect led to a happy visit in Stuttgart. Her husband is in the transport business. A few months ago both came to New York and later we had the pleasure of entertaining them in our home and also showing them historic Philadelphia. We have become very close friends due to the fact that the dialect opened the lines of communication.

While traveling in Europe on a sabbatical in 1965 we visited a number of book dealers. In Florence we visited a dealer who spoke to us in Italian and then in French, which we did not understand. Finally German and our dialect enabled us to conduct business.

During a lengthy stay in Germany, we visited the Justus Liebig Museum in Giessen. This building now houses the famous laboratories where Liebig, a professor in the early 1830's, trained and taught young men in the various branches of chemistry. Many of his students became the leaders of chemical education in their respective countries. The curator of this museum was a woman who gave us many privileges not normally granted because we could speak German. We took pictures, examined items of great historical value, and were allowed to spend as much time as we wished.

As members of the Emmaus Moravian Church and as Secretary of the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province of America, we visited Moravian churches and their pastors in Bad Boll, Königfeldt, Hamburg, Neuwied, Zeist, and Basel. We visited the pastor and his family in Königfeldt many times and spoke the Pennsylvania German. He became so interested in it that he requested me to speak to the congregation at the Children's Lovefeast on a Sunday afternoon. I brought greetings in the dialect to several hundred people from our American brethren. I explained to them about our background, our customs, and how many of our religious celebrations were similar to theirs. They were amused but impressed with the phrases I used and deeply appreciated the fact that I could speak to them without an interpreter. We felt a warm close relationship — again due to our dialect.

We had many similar experiences in libraries, shops, concerts, in our travels. We were also able to visit homes because of this common heritage. How thankful we were many times that we retained some of the old which could be combined with the new.

Now we are on a new adventure — on our way to attend a Unity Synod in Czechoslovakia, the birthplace of the Moravian Church. We know no Czech but we are sure with our knowledge of Pennsylvania German that we will be able to converse with these people in a country that gave John Huss and John Amos Comenius to the world.

HARVEST ON THE PENNSYLVANIA FARM:

Folk-Cultural Questionnaire No. 34

Our rural forebearers grew many grains, each of which was harvested at different times. In addition there were other field crops like hay that had to be processed at harvest time. We are seeking in this questionnaire information remembered by our readers on the harvesting practices of the Pennsylvania farm.

1. Harvesting of Grains. *Describe the harvest procedures for the various grains grown on the Pennsylvania farm, wheat, rye, corn, and oats in particular. What other grains were raised in earlier times (examples, buckwheat or Buchweeze, barley or gaerschde), and spelt or Dinkel.*

2. Hay Harvest. *Describe the mowing and drying of hay. What sort of storage of hay do you remember—storage in the hay mows of the barn, in hay stacks, or in hay barracks?*

3. Personnel of Harvesting. *Who harvested the grains and the hay on the Pennsylvania farm? Did women and children help in the harvest field?*

4. Tools of the Harvest. *List, describe, and if possible draw pictures or diagrams of the tools used in harvesting—from hay wagons (ladder wagons) to hay forks and straw forks. The cutting tools ranged from sickle, scythe, and cradle to mowing machine and combine. What was distinctive about the Pennsylvania cradle? Who made these instruments, and where did the farmer purchase them? How were the cutting blades of sickles, scythes, and cradles kept sharpened?*

5. Threshing the Grains. *Threshing has changed over the last century, from the earlier ancient practice of flailing and winnowing to the use of the power-driven threshing machine. If you have flailed, describe the flail and its use. Where was the flailing done? When was the flailing done, and what grains were involved? How many people were usually involved in flailing? Describe the winnowing process on the fanning mill or wind mill. Describe the changes made when the steam threshing machine came to be used? Were there earlier machines used for threshing which made use of horse power?*

6. Granary and Grain Storage. *Describe the places where the various grains were stored on the farm—granary in barn, attic in house, corn crib. How much of the grain grown on the farms with which you are*

familiar was kept for home use, how much was put on the market? Of the minor grains, like buckwheat, how much was grown, and where was it stored?

7. Milling of Grain. *How were the various grains grown on the Pennsylvania farm milled for use in foods? What sorts of home milling devices existed, what larger mills were used? How was corn husked and shelled, for example, before being ground into cornmeal? Draw a picture and describe the husking peg (Baschthols) with which you are familiar. In what various ways were the byproducts of harvesting and milling used, as for example, wheat straw, rye straw, and corn stalks, husks, and silk?*

8. Grain Foods. *List and describe the staple foods which the farm family made out of the various grains grown. Be sure to include the more old-fashioned foods less heard of today, like the baby-food pap (Brei) and browned flour soup (Gereeschdi Mehlsupp).*

9. Harvest Home Services. *The Pennsylvania German churches used to have their own harvest thanksgiving services, somewhere in the period from July to October. On these occasions, to celebrate the harvest and God's hand in it, the farmers brought the fruits of the harvest and decorated the church with them for a special service called in Pennsylvania German either Aernkaerrich (harvest church) or Aernbreddich (harvest sermon). Describe these events as you remember them, naming the churches involved. How did these celebrations relate to the New England or national Thanksgiving Day?*

10. Lore of Harvesting. *As usual, list for us sayings, proverbs, or write down the jokes, anecdotes, or songs you remember that involve harvesting. For example, Pennsylvanians used to say that "when the wind blows over the oats stubble it won't be long till Fall". And some of us recall the bounty of our grandmother's tables at threshing time in the expression, "they ate like threshermen" or "had appetites like threshermen".*

Send your replies to:

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