



Winter 1963

Pennsylvania Folklife Vol. 13, No. 2

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Recommended Citation

Robacker, Earl F.; Bucher, Robert C.; Long, Amos Jr.; Shaner, Richard; and Yoder, Don, "Pennsylvania Folklife Vol. 13, No. 2" (1963). *Pennsylvania Folklife Magazine*. 15.

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Pennsylvania **FOLKLIFE**

Winter 1962 • 1963



**Pennsylvania
Pewter
and Pewterers**



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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

\$4.00 a year in the United States and Canada. Elsewhere fifty cents additional for postage. Single copies \$1.00.

MSS AND PHOTOGRAPHS:

The Editor will be glad to consider MSS and photographs sent with a view to publication. When unsuitable, and if accompanied by return postage, every care will be exercised toward their return, although no responsibility for their safety is assumed.

PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE, Winter 1962-1963, Vol. 13, No. 2, published quarterly by the Pennsylvania Folklife Society, Inc., 8 West King St., Lancaster, Pa. Executive and editorial office, Box 1586, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Contents copyrighted.

Entered as second class matter
at Lancaster, Pa.

WINTER 1962-1963, Vol. 13, No. 2

Contents

2 Pennsylvania Pewter and Pewterers

EARL F. ROBACKER

7 Grain in the Attic

ROBERT C. BUCHER

16 Dryhouses in the Pennsylvania Folk-Culture

AMOS LONG, JR.

24 The Amish Barn Dance

RICHARD H. SHANER

27 Pennsylvanians Called It Mush

DON YODER

Pewter teapot by William Will, one of the most accomplished of American pewterers.

—The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Mrs. J. Insley Blair, 1940, in memory of J. Insley Blair.



Pennsylvania Pewter and Pewterers

By EARL F. ROBACKER

There seems to be a feeling on the part of some neophyte collectors that when one goes back in time to a consideration of pewter he goes back to the beginning of things—back to the primeval, so to speak. Such a condition is not true in any country, least of all in America. Pewter stands on a narrow threshold between two larger, just possibly more interesting territories (wood at one end, silver at the other); it is neither a beginning nor an end in the stages of progress of the American colonies.

To the extent we are able to determine it, the first hollow and flat utensils which did not come over from Europe in the early sailing vessels were made of wood, at least partly in imitation of Indian prototypes and according to Indian methods. This wooden ware went by the name of "treen," and very interesting it is, especially when it was made from burls in various kinds of wood—elm, maple, and walnut in particular. Treen was short-lived; every stroke of the eating implement on bowl, plate, or charger contributed to the wearing-out of the object. Some plates were foredoomed to a short existence in that they were used first on one side for the main part of the meal and then, suitably slicked up, were turned over so that pie could be placed on the clean side. Since the major eating implement in the 17th Century was the knife—a knife sharp enough to carve a

portion of bear, for instance, from the chunk in the stew—it is hardly surprising that much early treen ware was completely hacked to pieces.

Probably no one was sorry to see treen replaced by pewter. The change-over came gradually, however; one could create his own wooden plate or bowl, given time and a knife, but he had to pay money for pewter—and money was hard to come by. The first pewter used in the Colonies came from Europe, of course, and the few pieces which could be brought along in the sea chests were supplemented by others as soon as anything like regular trade was established.

Pewter seems never to have been strongly cherished, even though it represented a considerable advance over wood; it had once been fashionable in the great baronial establishments of Europe, but with the gradually advancing economy of the people it started to go out when silver came in. By the time the rich and the powerful could drink their ale from silver tankards or load their banquet tables with ornate porcelain services, pewter had become something for the servants' hall, or for poor folk generally. Among these latter, many of the colonists would have to be included. In later years, pewter would go out of favor with the common man, just as treen had done, and silver, china, and glass would become cheap enough that almost everybody

could own what he needed for his immediate domestic purposes—and also, perhaps, to show off a little.

Much early “American” pewter—that is, pewter with a history which takes it back to the 18th Century, or possibly earlier—was obviously American by adoption, not by birth. There was little reason, as yet, for making it in the new world; Europe was flooded with it and, once the colonists were able to make purchases at all, they could purchase the imported ware reasonably. Needs were simple, and the time when “sets” of dishes would be considered necessary by those even in very modest circumstances was far in the future.

It is precisely at this point, however, that the story of American pewter begins. Pewter is soft; it is easily cut and broken, and it can stand only moderate heat. The normal life expectancy of a piece of pewter in early times is said to have been about eight to ten years. After that time, in Europe, the worn-out pieces would normally have been discarded; in America, one discarded nothing lightly, and the damaged objects were repaired instead. The repair men—usually tinsmiths or braziers or whitesmiths or blacksmiths or silversmiths—were the first American pewterers.

The actual composition of pewter is of no great concern to anyone save possibly a metallurgist or a chemist; it is always tin plus some other, harder metal to give strength and stability. Pewter which is 80 per cent tin and up to 20 per cent copper is considered “good” pewter; that is, it has a pleasing sheen and is agreeable to the touch. Antimony and bismuth were commonly used to give strength to the tin; lead helped to make it malleable—but pewter with a great deal of lead in it is lacking in life and attractiveness.

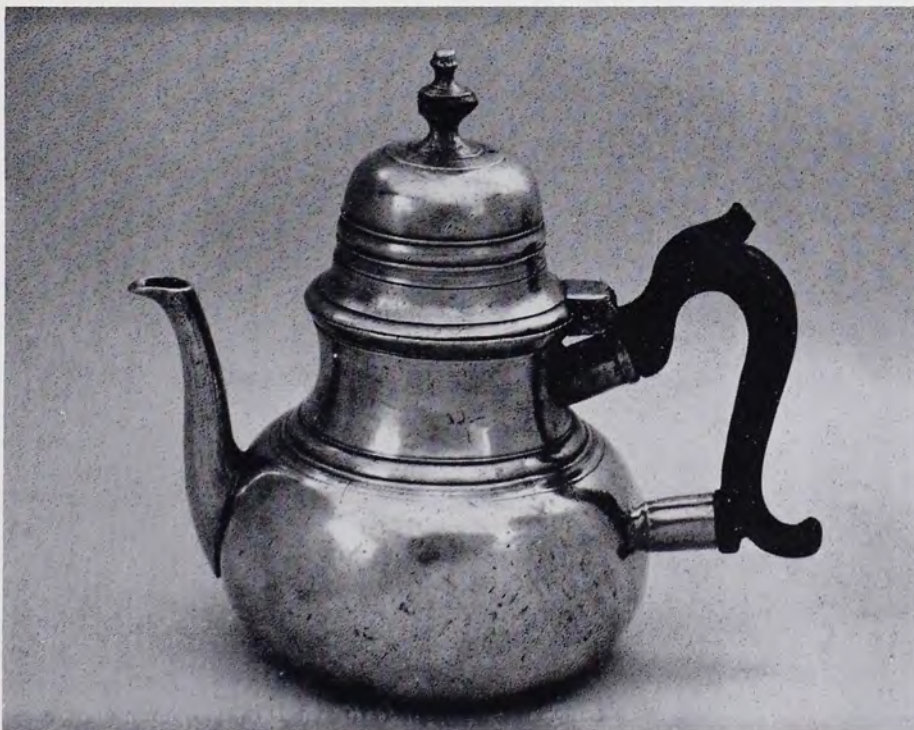
It was the job of the American repairman either to mend a broken object or to melt down the worn-out piece and create a new one in its place. The actual composition of the pewter meant little to him; he simply worked with what he had, employing his skill to what advantage he could. To create a new utensil he ran the molten alloy into a mold and let the stuff harden. After that, there were several



Porringer by Francis Bassett I or Francis Bassett II.

—The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. J. Insley Blair, 1940, in memory of J. Insley Blair.

additional operations—trimming away the excess metal, hammering the flatware, and then smoothing and polishing by the use of abrasives. In England, incidentally, flatware (plates, platters, etc.) was known as sadware and the person who created it was a sadware worker; hollow ware (mugs,



Teapot by William Kirby.

—The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. J. Insley Blair, 1946, in memory of J. Insley Blair.



Pewter flagons are not known to have been made in America. These are said to be of Swiss origin. Vessels much like these were made in every European country which made pewter at all.

—The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1908.

tankards, etc.), which required considerable lead for malleability, was called ley ware and was made by ley men or trifiers.

It appears that most of the molds needed for casting came from England. They were of bell metal, or brass, or sometimes cast iron. To ensure that the molten pewter would not stick to the mold and thus ruin the casting, the insides of the molds were smoked, we are told. Spoons or plates could be cast by the use of one mold; hollow ware, however, had to be cast in several pieces, which were then put together with the added details of handles or whatever was called for. When one considers the softness of pewter, it should be obvious that considerable skill is called for in the making of hollow ware.

It was in the best interests of the mother country not to foster inventiveness on the part of the colonists, and not to allow the colony to become self-sufficient. Such policies help to explain why the fine Cornish tin was never exported as such—why finished articles might be sent over for the American trade but not the vitally necessary raw ingredient to create a finished article. Another factor which reduced the amount of American-made pewter in early years was the influence of the Society of Pewterers of London, that autocratic body which kept the entire pewter business in the palm of its hand, ostensibly for the purpose of maintaining high quality and for safeguarding the interests of members of the Society. There is no point now in criticizing the activities of the English guilds of centuries gone by; one might observe, however, that these activities very effectively strangled ingenuity and enterprise outside the confines of the guild.

Now where, in this general background, does the Pennsylvania Dutch pewterer have his niche? He has one—but we do not know how big a niche it is, and we no longer have a way of finding out. One bears in mind that only a small fraction of the pewter ever used in America was made here—and that among the 200-odd pewterers and

repairers of pewter whose names have survived, only a few were Pennsylvania Dutch. One remembers that the life of pewter is very short, and that many, many of the early pieces were melted down and re-molded long ago, with the name of the maker and his touch mark irrevocably destroyed in the process. One recalls, too, that at the time of the Revolution, when metal of all kinds was needed for ammunition—and quickly—pewter came to most minds first as being expendable. In other words, what evidence once may have existed now exists only in the tiniest degree and largely by accident.

Again, while we do have lists of pewterers whose names suggest a Continental origin, we have little if any corroborating evidence—and sometimes no surviving examples of their work, either.

A few, however, we know a little about—not much, but a little, and enough that the reader who has a piece represented by the name can say, for whatever it may mean to him, that he has a piece of Pennsylvania Dutch pewter. The reader knows, of course, that the only possible identification of pewter pieces comes in the symbols and names stamped on the pewter itself—the various kinds of “touches” or “touch marks.” We know that one L. Shoff, of Lancaster County, was working in the 1780’s; a surviving eleven-inch dish with a smooth brim, his work, is said to be worth, at this writing, about \$350. Joshua Metzger of Germantown appears to have been a Pennsylvania Dutchman; he worked between 1806 and 1820—but we do not know what he made. We think that John Valentin Beck was a Moravian pewterer who worked in or near Bethlehem and later at Winston-Salem, North Carolina (both cities strongly Moravian at the time) in the more than half a century between 1731 and 1791. There is no surviving piece of pewter of his.

Pewterers of British Isles background were active in Lancaster and York in the latter half of the 18th Century. In Lancaster, between 1775 and 1778, Benjamin and Joseph

Harbeson were working. There are plates, deep dishes, and basins of theirs in existing collections. These articles are not of particularly good quality. Elisha Kirk, Quaker, was making pewter porringers in York in 1785.

The Quaker Pennocks (Samuel, the father, and Simon, the son) worked in East Marlborough, Lancaster County, from 1805 to 1845. Little of their work has survived. A Pennock porringer is valued at something more than \$300; a plate at perhaps \$250.

Then there are the Philadelphians—Isaac Jackson, John McIlmoy, Elkins Leslie, Luke Moore, Robert Palethorpe, Thomas Paschall (very early: 1686–1718), Henry Peel, Abraham Seltzer, John Wolfe, Simon Wyer, Blakslee Barns, Mungo Campbell, William Cox, Edmund Davis, Johann Philip Alberti, and Thomas Badoecke, among others. We are not, in a consideration of Pennsylvania Dutch artisans, especially interested in these men—although several (for example, Abraham Seltzer and Simon Wyer) may have been Pennsylvania Dutchmen.

Of Pennsylvanians in general, Parks Boyd, who worked in Philadelphia from 1795 to 1819 must be counted as one of the best of all American pewterers. Quality in a pewterer may mean a number of things: originality in design (actually, very little variation exists); quality of the pewter alloy itself; gracefulness of line (unless the pewterer created the molds he used he could not claim full credit here); and smoothness and sheen of the finished product. By any or all of these standards, Parks Boyd was a pewterer of quality.

Anyone who has even a smattering of knowledge about pewter has heard something about the Wills, if only the

fantastic valuations assigned to pieces of bona fide Will origin. The clan started with John, who worked from 1752 to 1766. Examples of his work are rare—and good. He was the father of Christian; Henry; John, Junior; and William, all of whom seem to have been involved in the making of pewter at some time or other. Chief among them was William, who was born in Germany, but who between 1764 and 1798 occupied himself from time to time at making the most beautiful pewter known in this country. He learned his skill in a period of apprenticeship to one of his brothers, but we do not know which one. William was a man of note in the New World. He became a colonel in the army during the Revolution, and he is said to have made the pewter inkwell which was used at the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He is the first pewter artisan to have made coffee pots—and the collector who discovers one of his Queen Anne-style teapots will have no trouble at all in turning in the teapot for five one-thousand-dollar bills. William Will was succeeded by his son George Washington Will, who operated in Philadelphia from 1798 to 1807.

Another Dutch Country "great" is Johann Christopher Heyne. Like William Will, he was born in Germany; unlike him, he demonstrated some of the techniques of German pewter making in his American work. While he is represented by such surviving work as sugar bowls, whisky flasks, and plates—and one porringer—his fame would have been assured alone by two Communion flagons, generally referred to as the Trinity Lutheran Church flagons of Lancaster County. He worked in Lancaster from 1754 to 1780. At this writing, a Heyne flagon of the kind men-



Deep pewter basin, once tentatively ascribed to John A. Brunstrom because of the IAB touch, but now considered to be the work of a different artisan.

—The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Joseph France, 1943.

tioned above, in perfect condition, could command perhaps \$3500; a sugar bowl, \$1000.

Heyne's work was continued for a short time by his step-son, Frederick Steinman (1783-1785), also in Lancaster. Peter Getz, of Lancaster, is mentioned as an associate of Steinman's, but as a coppersmith. It is not unlikely that, like many coppersmiths of the time, Getz also made pewter.

Most interesting of all the Pennsylvania pewterers may be the mysterious person or persons who produced the very fine plates and bowls with the "Love London" touch. Usually there are four touches on a single piece, or four components of one touch variously arranged: the word "Love," the word "London," the symbol "x" over a crown, and a pair of confrontal birds—love birds, of course. For years, all that seemed to be known of these pieces was that they were of American fabrication. (The misleading "London" was a not uncommon advertising gimmick, hopefully indicating quality in about the same way the term "imported" does today.) Speculation added that they were of Philadelphia origin, and that "Love" probably meant the City of Brotherly Love; that "Love" was either the real or the assumed name of a pewterer the details of whose life were never made a matter of record; and that the confrontal birds were evidence of Dutchland origin. (Confrontal birds are not uncommon in Pennsylvania Dutch chalk, iron, paper, stone, and needlework.)

Within the last decade, however, owing to a combination of luck and brilliant spadework on the part of such competent pewter sleuths as Edgar Sittig of Shawnee-on-Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Thomas Williams, of Litchfield, Connecticut, it has been established, on the basis of incontrovertible evidence, that "Love" pewter was the work of one John Andrew Brunstrom, who worked in Philadelphia from 1783 to 1793. Associated with him were two others—Abraham Hasselberg and Adam Kehler, both relatives. Hasselberg, however, also worked earlier; at least some of his pieces were made in the 1760's. Kehler's dates are almost identical with Brunstrom's.

"Love" pewter is fine pewter and, unlike the work of Will or Heyne, exists in considerable quantity. That the price has trebled or quadrupled since the discovery that Brunstrom and "Love" are identical—and thus that the last possible question of provenance had been removed—is perhaps no more than one might expect. This pewter is not beyond the reach of the collector of moderate means.

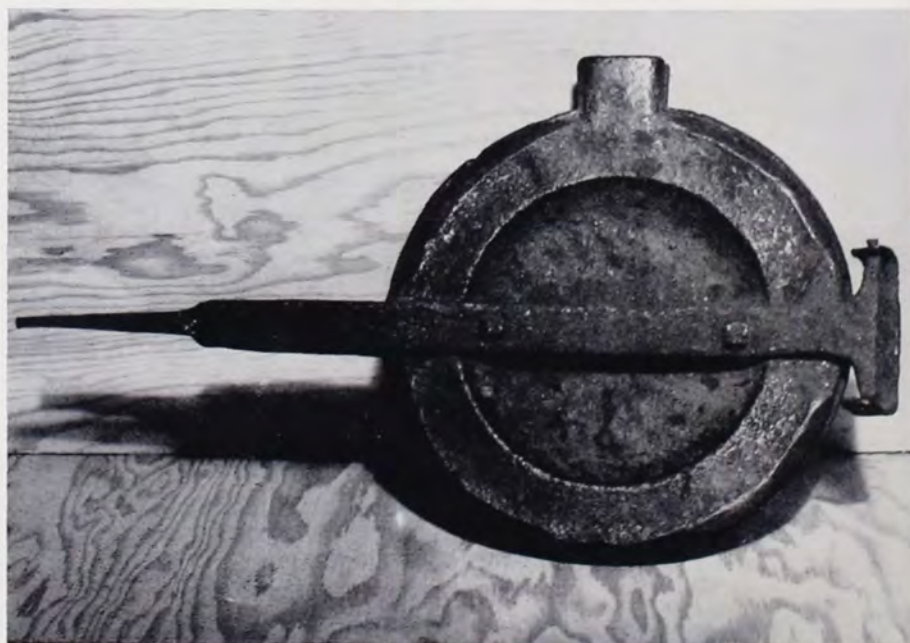
Almost all important American pewter is pewter of the 18th Century or earlier. However, there was a market for pewter as late as the mid-19th Century. By that time the composition of the alloy had changed, and the term "pewter" gave way to the more popular "britannia" or "britannia ware." Like many fabrications of the Victorian period, while some of it was attractive, more was not.

It is interesting to note that, for all its presumed obsolescence, pewter has always been made somewhere in America, and is being made now. Some of it is frankly modern in design; some of it seems to copy imported pieces—notably those from Denmark; and some of it is chaste and simple enough that, until the novice starts looking for the touch marks which are not there, it appears to be a newly discovered piece out of the past.

A word of caution to the collector who is intrigued by an attractive but unmarked piece of pewter: American pewter commands much higher prices than does that of Europe. Pewter was made all over Europe in vast quantities, and an enormous amount of it made its way to America. In recent years, some superb antique Jewish pewter, both ceremonial and non-ceremonial, has come to America. Some is marked and some is not—but if the collector is paying the price for American pewter he should take the necessary steps to be sure of what he is getting. There are three invaluable works on pewter, for the beginner and also for the seasoned collector: Ledlie Laughlin's *Pewter in America*; Carl Jacobs' *Guide to American Pewter*; and J. B. Kerfoot's *American Pewter*. An investment in one or all of these would be one of the smartest investments any collector could make.

Mold for making pewter plates, shown closed. The artisan had a good deal of work still to do in smoothing and polishing after plates came from the mold.

—Courtesy of Henry J. Kauffman



GRAIN in the ATTIC

By ROBERT C. BUCHER

Since our research on the early Pennsylvania Farmstead indicated that the large barns, with granaries, were not built during the early pionering days, our associates have frequently asked us where the family grain supply was stored during this period. Inevitably, this question led to speculation as to the origin of the Pennsylvania barn, and the character and use of our early houses and the type of farm buildings in use during the early and middle 1700's.

There is little authentic information in our libraries to tell us of 18th Century life in Pennsylvania, and evidence is lacking concerning the storing of the precious family grain supply from harvest time to harvest time.

Therefore, we believe it is of considerable importance that we report our recent discoveries which reveal the evidence of grain storage in the attics of our Pennsylvania houses.

In this article we will present photographs of the exterior and interior of four 18th Century Pennsylvania houses and will give details concerning their history, location, age and the storage of grain in their attics. The fact that this article is the first to report authentically on this important 18th Century practice indicates the dearth of past study

of pioneer days in Pennsylvania and shows the possibilities still open in 1962 to study and to document the important but almost forgotten way of life of the 1700's.

The four houses described herein are the Valentine Viehman house in Milbach Township, Lebanon County; the Mock house in Schaefferstown, Lebanon County; the Handwerk house in Lehigh County; and Graeme Park in Montgomery County.

The Valentine Viehman House—1767

Having searched for three years for this great house, without success, we commissioned Messrs. Harry Stauffer and Sam Heller to assist us. Finally, during a snow storm in the winter of 1960-61, these gentlemen spotted the house when they stopped to see a flock of sea gulls walking in the snow opposite the Viehman driveway. While examining the exterior of the house they noticed the outline of an opening in the west gable that had been filled in with stone. This opening, which rises from the attic floor level, is shown on one of the photographs. Another photograph shows the modern plaster used to seal the interior of the opening which



The Valentine Viehman house in Milbach Township, Lebanon County. Grain was hoisted to attic through opening in gable on left.



Vertical mortar lines show outline of opening once used to take grain into attic of Viehman house. This is a most unusual feature.

was the size of a large window. Other photos show further details of the Viehman attic, its hoist and the vestiges of the grain bins.

The Valentine Viehman (also Feeman) house, now owned by the Warren Kurtz family, is an outstanding example of Pennsylvania Dutch Colonial architecture and represents the "great" house of the type built by wealthy farmers during the period 1749 to 1769. It was a great joy to find, during our first visit to this house, that not only was there

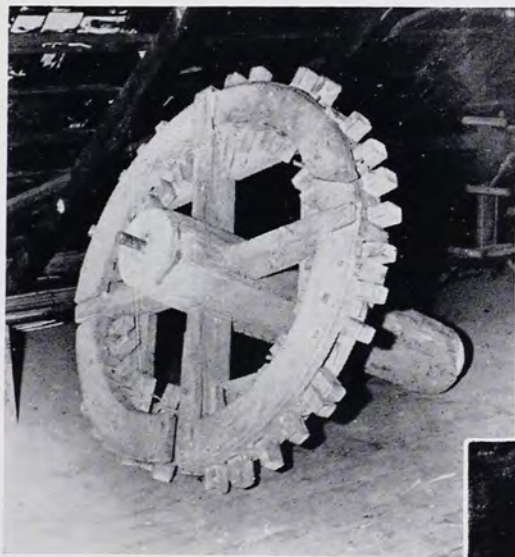
considerable evidence of grain having been stored in the attic, but that a number of parts of the hoist, used to elevate the grain, were still here to be seen and photographed. The writer has not determined how these parts of the hoist were used, but the ladder and the large wheel, shown in the photographs, appear to be key parts of the hoist. A round opening about three inches in diameter and a one-inch opening can be seen in the sides of the ladder in the attic, and one of the three-inch openings still has an iron bushing

New mortar on inside wall of west gable of Viehman house marks area once open for hoisting grain to attic.





Attic of Viehman house showing 1" x 3" strips on under side of king rafter, just above floor level on right. These strips held board sides of grain bin in place. Full width of attic was used for grain storage between strips and stone wall in rear of photo.



Wooden device believed to be integral part of Viehman grain hoist.

in its outer periphery. The other part of the hoist is the large wheel of about 30 inches in diameter, with a shaft about 6 inches thick. This wheel seems to be one of the key parts of what was once an efficient system for lifting grain bags from the ground below to the attic floor through the opening in the stone wall of the west gable.

In reviewing the grain handling system of the Viehman house it is not difficult to understand why it should be so large and unusual. The builder was a wealthy man who owned a very large farm and was able to build a very expensive house and supply service facilities of the same type. Therefore, it is not surprising to find what may have been the only installation of its kind in the Colonies, a



Another view of hoist. Exact method of operation has not been explained.



Wooden ladder with 1" opening at bottom and 3" opening in center, believed to be a key part of grain hoist.

mechanized hoist for elevating grain to the attic of a house through an opening in the stone gable of said house.

Since the custom of that day was to carry grain to the attic in bags, using the regular stairs to the attic, it seems likely that a distillery or other large grain-consuming operation may have operated on this farm in the 18th Century.

The grain bin in the west end of the Viehman attic was very large and may have had capacity for a thousand bushels of wheat. An idea of its size can be obtained by examining the photographs which show the vestiges of the bins. Nailed to the under side of the king rafter, from the attic floor level to the bottom of one of the cross braces, are two wooden strips about 1" x 2" x 30" long which served to support the board sides of the bins. (See right side of photo.)

The Viehman house had a tile roof originally and some of these original tiles are still stored in the attic. It also has a closely fitted log first floor joist arrangement and carved sandstone pillars or posts which once held the wooden rails around the colonial garden.

The Charles Mock House—Schaefferstown

This interesting Lebanon County house is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mock. In the early days it was used as a tavern and was a medical doctor's home for some years. The house seems to date from about 1740 to 1760 and has several unusual features and a voluminous history.

Exterior of Charles Mock House in Schaefferstown, Lebanon County. Much evidence of grain storage in attic, unusual roof structure. House had tile roof originally.





One attic floor board has been removed showing grain between attic floor joists of Mock house.

In examining the attic of the Mock house we found hulls of grain under the attic floor boards to a depth of as much as 5 or 6 inches and most of these hulls seemed, strangely, to be oat hulls. Practically the entire floor area was filled with these residues from grain storage in the attic. In the north corner of the attic were found the typical openings of 1" x 3", where the vertical framing members of the grain bin had once been fastened to the floor.

This house, like the Viehman house, had a red tile roof originally, and the most unusual roof timbering ever seen by the writer. Not only are the timbers of heavy construction but they are spaced only eleven inches apart! This construction must have been made to hold an unusually heavy tile roof.

Unusually sturdy roof structure of Mock house, built to hold heavy tile roof.





The Handwerk house, 1769, near Germansville, Lehigh County. House has rare reception hall inside front door (white).

The Handwerk House—1769

The Handwerk house north of Germansville in Lehigh County is an excellent continental-type house with the medieval character much in evidence. It has the typical arches over the windows and a barn-like appearance. This house has the only reception hall ever found by the writer in a continental-type farm house and the treatment of this feature is worthy of note. Apparently this was an attempt to build a formal atmosphere in the severely plain farmhouse.

In the north corner of the Handwerk attic can be seen the outline of the original grain bin, framed by 1" x 3" members still nailed to the floor in their original position. (See photo.) There is some evidence, however, that the entire end of the attic may, at times, have been used for grain storage, rather than the one corner shown in the photos. The board, nailed in upright position against the roof rafters at the floor level, was probably a part of the rear wall of the bin.

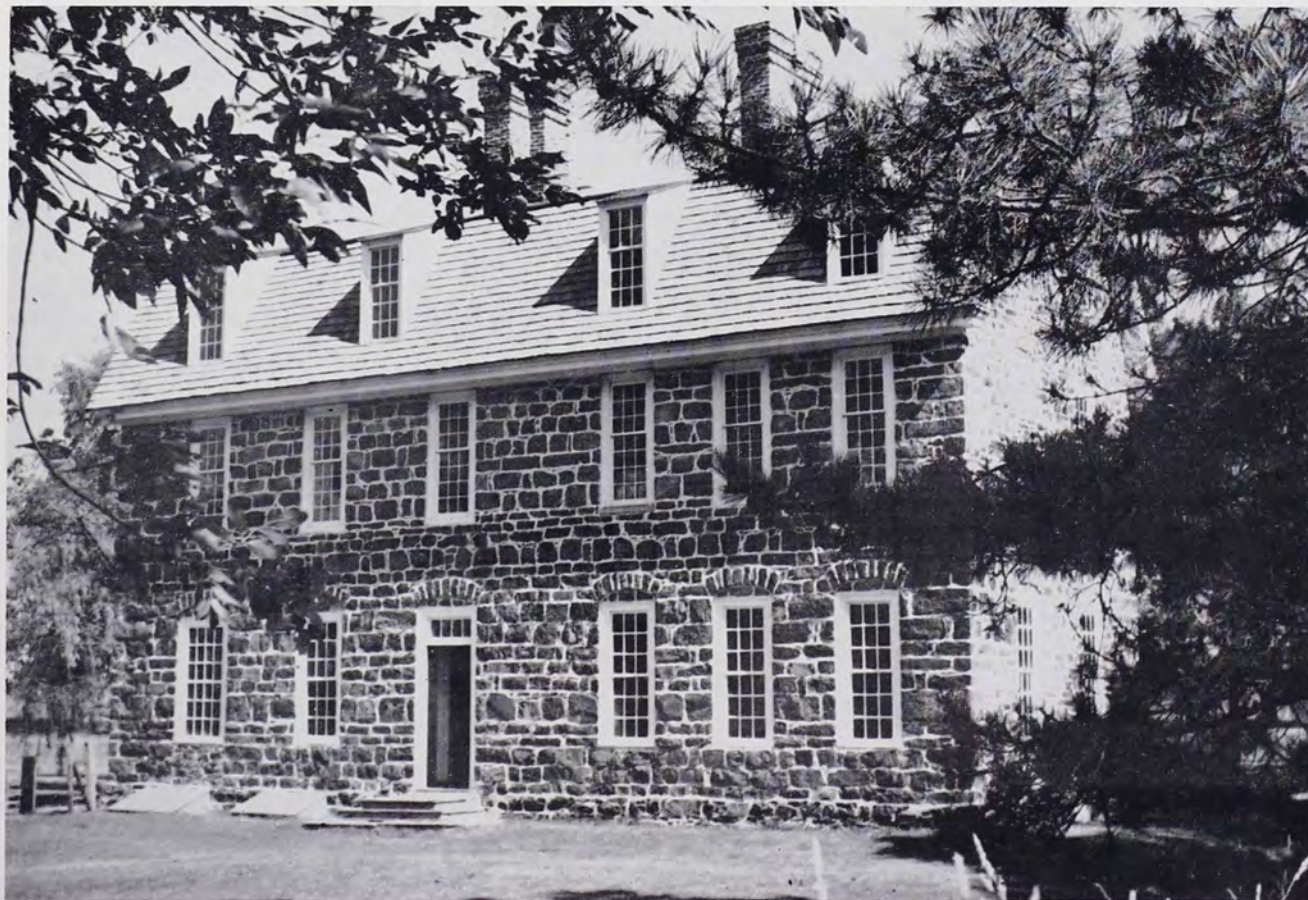


North end of Handwerk attic, showing outline of original grain bin.

Close-up of grain bin area in Handwerk house. Bins originally had wooden board sides about 3 feet high.



Graeme Park in Montgomery County. Supposed to have been built as a malt house. Grain storage room in attic next to stone gable on right of photo.



Graeme Park—1722

Graeme Park in Horsham Township, Montgomery County, and Hope Lodge in Whitmarsh, Montgomery County, are two 18th Century English farmhouses believed to have had grain storage in their attics.

It is stated that Graeme Park was built originally as a malt house and in examining the attic during September, 1962, the writer found a room which bears strong evidence of having been used for grain storage in the west end of the attic. Openings in the base board and floor show definite evidence of old partitions which probably formed bins in this room.

Larder or grain storage room in attic of Graeme Park. Vertical board behind door frame on right and vestiges of partitions, now removed, indicate room was used for storage of grain and other provisions.



Grain in the Attic—A Lost Tradition

Although the practice of storing grain in the attic is still common in Europe today, we have been unable to find a single person living in Pennsylvania today who knows anything about this old tradition. Most old people in Pennsylvania today know nothing about grain storage in the attic and they are unaware that this practice was ever followed here. Most people would probably wonder why anyone would want to keep his grain in the attic when there is a barn for this purpose. At any rate the writer would like to hear from anyone who still has some knowledge of the practice.

This illustrates how completely our knowledge of the 18th and 19th Century practices has been lost and how urgent it is to collect the remaining evidence of our primitive, pioneer way of life.

In previous articles we have speculated on the origin of the Pennsylvania barn, which was so famous during the 1700's and was so vividly described by travelers through Pennsylvania. And we wondered why people stored their precious grain in their attics instead of in their granaries in the barns. We knew that the last of the great, steep-roofed Continental houses was built in 1769 and that this year marks the end of the Continental tradition in South-eastern Pennsylvania—our country was on its way, the

spirit of progress was in the air and our houses began to follow the English gable fireplace tradition after 1769.

This same period 1760-1770 seems to mark the beginning of the building of the great Pennsylvania barns. The first settlers had grown old and their sons were destined to build the larger houses and larger barns to accommodate the large families and increasing crops from an expanded acreage of cleared land. Grain crops grew larger and it became less important to hoard the family grain in the dry attic of the owner's house as was done in the early and middle 1700's. In the latter part of the 18th Century our barns were built with granaries and, therefore, grain storage moved from the house to the Pennsylvania barn, although the practice of keeping grain in the attic must have continued until the middle or late 1800's in some parts of the country.

Why Was Grain Kept in the Attic?

When our ancestors came to Pennsylvania, from the European Continent, they brought with them the custom of keeping their grain in the attic of their houses. The attic was dry and safe for grain storage. In Europe all excess grain was sold at harvest time, and only enough

grain was kept to supply each adult with 100 kilograms or 220 pounds of wheat. An allowance was also made for the proper quota of grain to maintain each chicken and pig owned by the family.

During the winter, the European farmer took one bag of grain to the mill at a time for grinding into flour and he looked forward to the social gathering that took place there. Many a good time was had at the mill and sometimes refreshments were enjoyed to excess. The writer well remembers the feeling of "*gemüthlichkeit*" he experienced during the winter of 1960-61 when he visited the office of an operating mill South of Stouchsburg. The miller in Europe kept a certain part of the flour as his pay for the milling of it but the baker was paid in cash. Sometimes grain was used as money for bartering.

This was the kind of grain tradition our ancestors brought with them to America and which they followed for fifty or a hundred years in the new country. In the Palatinate along the Rhine, the word "*speichera*" was used as a verb to describe taking the grain up the stairs to the attic. "*Speicher*" is the dialect word for attic or upper story and the writer wonders whether any living Pennsylvanian remembers this word as it applied to grain storage.

There are a number of references in our history books which mention the storage of grain in the attics but these are usually so general in content that they do not convey the feeling of authenticity. The writer believes that it was the general practice in the early and middle 18th Century to follow this custom in America and that grain was kept in the safest place to prevent pilferage and to insure a dry grain for milling and for seeding. In the writer's native Montgomery County it is told how the soldiers of General Washington's Army, encamped at Schwenksville, went to the house of Christian Weirman in 1777 and demanded some of his grain. Being stingy and probably a bit stubborn, he refused at first but then the soldiers fired two shots through his front door and promptly received the grain. Our historian James Y. Heckler in 1884 states, "I can remember seeing the holes in that old door yet." This incident indicates that Mr. Weirman, in 1777, probably still kept his grain supply in the attic of his old Continental house. Another reference from Hunterdon County, New Jersey, referring to a stone house, of Holland Dutch origin, at Quakertown, New Jersey, built *circa* 1725, states, "It had kitchen and cellar on the first floor. The fireplace was very large, we could put in a back log 8 feet long. The joists were large enough for girders in a barn. There was a long flight of steps on the outside to reach the second story,

which made it look very odd. The second floor had 3 rooms, one large one and 2 bedrooms. The garret was one long room and was used to store grain in, and it was no light task to carry it up those 2 long stairways. The roof was quite steep or would be in our day."¹

Just recently I received from Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker three references to grain storage in houses. These were taken from wills now filed in the courthouse in York, Pennsylvania. First, the will of Christopher Kurtz of Fawn Township, June 8, 1777, states "and shall give her yearly thirty bushels of wheat ready thrashed and cleaned and delivered and put on the garret of her house . . ." From the will of Daniel Ammer of Paradise Township, October 3, 1785, "and all the grain which shall be at the time on the loft of the house and in the barn . . ." The last reference is from the will of Jacob Sarbach of Berwick Township in 1787, as follows: ". . . said bread and seed to be taken from the grain either on the loft, or in the straw, or in the ground, according to the time of the year my disease should happen . . ." ". . . yearly six bushels of wheat, six bushels of rye, three bushels oats, three bushels buckwheat, one bushel of Indian corn, said grain to be put on her part of the loft."

In conclusion, the writer would like to state that it was the practice in Pennsylvania to sell the wheat crop for cash and to convert the rye into bread for the family. This testimony has been received frequently from old people who confirm the fact that rye bread was used by our farm families and was considered their basic food, while the white (wheat) bread was regarded as a luxury.

One interesting and rather remarkable thing was discovered by the writer during this study. In the Handwerk house, the Mock house and the Viehman house there was found a board of 10 inches to 12 inches in width and from 12 inches to 18 inches long. In each case the board looked like a short piece of paneling or a section sawed from a floor board. It is the writer's thought that these boards may have been used to close an opening in the side of the grain bin, at the floor level, where the wooden shovel was inserted to withdraw grain from the bin.

Another observation revealed that the grain bins were located at one end of the attic, not in the center. Is this location due to the attic smoke-room being located next to the chimney in the center of the attic?

It is hoped that this article will stimulate further study of the grain tradition in Pennsylvania and that answers may be obtained to some of these questions. In such a study more of our early Pennsylvania houses should be located and described and a definitive article written on grain storage on the Pennsylvania homestead.

¹ M. C. Vail, *History of Land Titles in the Vicinity of Quakertown, New Jersey* (Flemington, N. J., 1915), page 11.

Dryhouses in the Pennsylvania Folk-Culture

By AMOS LONG, JR.

The dryhouse or "schnitz house," also known in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect as the *Darr-Hous* or *Drickel Heisley*, was probably the smallest of the many outbuildings which comprised the early Pennsylvania farmstead.

It was used to perform but one of the many phases of domestic industry associated with the early farm; primarily that of preserving the vegetables and fruits from the family garden and orchard for use during the winter months. It was used essentially during the latter part of the 18th and early 19th Centuries, particularly on those farmsteads which were inhabited by large families or when large quantities of foods were preserved by drying for marketing. The dryhouse also provided a faster and surer method of drying with far less effort.

A number of farm-sale advertisements before 1850 included the *Darr-Hous* among other buildings listed. An

advertisement which appeared in the *Lancaster Volksfreund* of October 23, 1832, reads as follows: Farm for Sale—Joseph Hochstetter, Warwick Township, ". . . ein Dürnhaus . . ."

The dryhouse was usually located not too distant from the dwelling-house. Many times it stood beside the smokehouse.

There was some variation in size and structure to be found among these buildings but most of them were small, simple, portable, frame structures which measured approximately four feet square and six feet in height. The doorway in front measured about three feet long and twenty inches wide—just enough of an opening to allow access to the stove.

Others were much larger and more sturdy. These were constructed with stone or brick and were designed similar to the outdoor bakeoven with an overhang. These larger, stationary types measured up to eight feet square and eight feet high so that one could easily work inside.

Most of these buildings had a gable type roof. Usually



LANCASTER COUNTY DRYHOUSE. Built about 1850, this attractive brick dry-house stands on the Noah Getz Farm, Route 3, Lancaster. It was last used in 1946. Measurements: length 5 ft., width 7 ft., height 8 ft., height to overhang 6 ft. Four top drawers are 5 ft. long and 24 in. wide. The eight drawers, four on each side, are 5 ft. long and 16 in. wide. The overhang extends two ft. forward. Photo taken 1961 by Amos Long, Jr.

Photographs by Amos Long, Jr.



DRYHOUSE AT PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE MUSEUM. This wooden structure was located originally on the Frank Horning property near Clay, Lancaster County. Measurements: approximately 4½ ft long, 4½ ft. wide, and 5½ ft. high. Three trays on each side with access from the side and another tray on top on each side, with access only from the doorway.

the smaller structures were covered with wooden shingles and the larger ones were protected with tile or slate.

To provide a draft for the stove which was located within the building, there was in most instances an opening in the roof or to the rear of the building. Through this opening a standard size stovepipe could be inserted and attached to the stove. This opening was usually closed off when not in use. After the drying season was over, the pipe was removed and stored inside the building so that it might be properly protected until the next drying season. The larger stone and brick dryhouses in most instances had a permanent brick or stone chimney attached.

Inside the dryhouse were the trays on which the foods were placed for drying. The number and size of the trays varied. Their size was determined largely by the length and width of the building and the number by the height of the structure. Usually the smaller dryhouses contained a minimum of six trays and the larger ones had as many as twelve and sometimes more.

These wooden trays were built into the front on each side of the door or into the side of the building. With some of the structures, the trays were accessible only by pulling them out from the front or side. The larger buildings allowed entry inside on each side of the stove so that the vegetables or fruits to be dried could be placed or

removed from the trays from the inside.

The depth of these trays varied from two to three inches. The bottoms of the trays within the earliest structures were constructed with thin wooden slats to hold the foods and allow the heat to pass up through easily. Later these wooden slats were replaced with a fine wire mesh which served the same purpose. The contents of the trays were stirred occasionally and the trays shifted from one level to another within the building to provide more even drying. These trays were always built into the upper portion of the dryhouse; also high enough above and away from the stove so that the foods were not too close to the heat, and to prevent any danger of fire.

The size of the building also largely determined the size of the stove. The heating unit was placed in the center so as to be easily accessible from the doorway. The very earliest dryhouses had a plate stove to provide the heat for drying. These in time were replaced with a chunk or pot-belly type which in most instances are still in use today.

Just prior to or at the time the foods were placed on the trays within the dryhouse, a fire with fine, dry wood was started in the stove. In caring for the fire, it was important that a steady temperature be maintained and that the stove was not allowed to get too hot.

DRYHOUSE ON JOSEPH D. BURKHOLDER FARM, EPHRATA, R. D. 2. Measurements: 4½ ft. long, 4½ ft. wide, 5½ ft. high. Still in use. Photographed 1961.



Dried Apples or "Schnitz"

Fruits such as apples, pears, cherries, peaches, plums, grapes, berries and occasionally others were dried in season. Apples were usually dried in larger quantities than any of the other fruits. Generally large quantities of both sweet and sour varieties of apples were preserved for winter use.

In preparing sweet apple varieties for drying, the core was removed and the peel was allowed to remain. Each apple was then cut into quarters, eighths or smaller sections depending on the size of the apple and size of "schnitz" desired. These sections or slices of apples, after being dried, are known as "schnitz" in the Dutch Country.¹ The drying process required from twenty-four to forty-eight hours depending on the size of the apple slices, the temperature of the dryhouse inside and the weather outside. After the "schnitz" were thoroughly dried, they were put into paper bags such as flour or cornmeal sacks, large glass jars or other airtight containers and stored away in a safe, dry place away from the children and vermin. How many of the readers of this article can recall, as a child, having raided the family "schnitz" supply whenever an opportunity arose? When properly protected from moisture and theft, these apple "schnitz" could be kept indefinitely.

When the "schnitz" were to be used, they were soaked several hours or overnight, then cooked as needed for sauce, dessert or for *Schnitz oon Gnepp*. *Schnitz oon Gnepp* was a delicacy among the Pennsylvania Dutch and it is still a popular dish throughout the Dutch Country today. It is prepared by cooking a piece of ham, later adding the "schnitz" and about fifteen or twenty minutes before serving, a thin dumpling batter is dropped into the boiling broth containing the ham and apples, a spoonful at a time. It is

important that the kettle be covered tightly without lifting the lid during this last period of preparation to allow the *Gnepp* (dumplings) to rise. Sometimes potatoes were added since they were and still are a basic food among the Pennsylvania Dutch.

The sour or tart apples which came later in the season were generally cored and peeled. These were usually cut into smaller sizes than the sweet apple "schnitz" and were dried in the same manner. Sulphur was used many times in the drying process in order to have the fruit retain a lighter color. Usually a shallow pan or small dish containing the sulphur was placed on top of or near to the stove within the dryhouse.

These "schnitz" also had many uses as a dessert but they were most frequently used for making "schnitz" pie which is another delicacy among our people. To show how conservative these early Pennsylvania Dutch families were, the peels from these apples were frequently used to make apple jelly or vinegar.

Vegetables such as yellow and green string beans, corn, carrots, squash, hot peppers, dandelion and herbs of many kinds were also dried in the dryhouse. One informant told of drying tomatoes although this proved not too practical because of the long time required to dehydrate them. There are still those folks in the Dutch Country who dry large quantities of sweet corn because of the distinctive flavor gotten only by drying. It has been learned from the various contacts that many string beans are also still being dried because of their pleasing taste.

The writer recalls as a child having had to take string beans, sweet corn and sections of Summer Rambo apples to be dried above the ovens in a nearby pretzel bakery. Because of the extremely warm temperatures in these upper chambers and otherwise ideal conditions, it took a relatively

¹ For additional information on "Schnitz," see Don Yoder, "Schnitz in the Pennsylvania Folk-Culture," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, Fall 1961, pages 44-53.

short period of time to complete the process as compared to drying these foods in the sun or in the oven of the kitchen range.

Peach Leather

Another use of the dryhouse and a product which delighted the children particularly at Christmas time was the making of apple or peach leather, *Eppel oder Parshing Ledder*.² Although apples and peaches were most commonly used, nearly any other fruit was satisfactory for use.

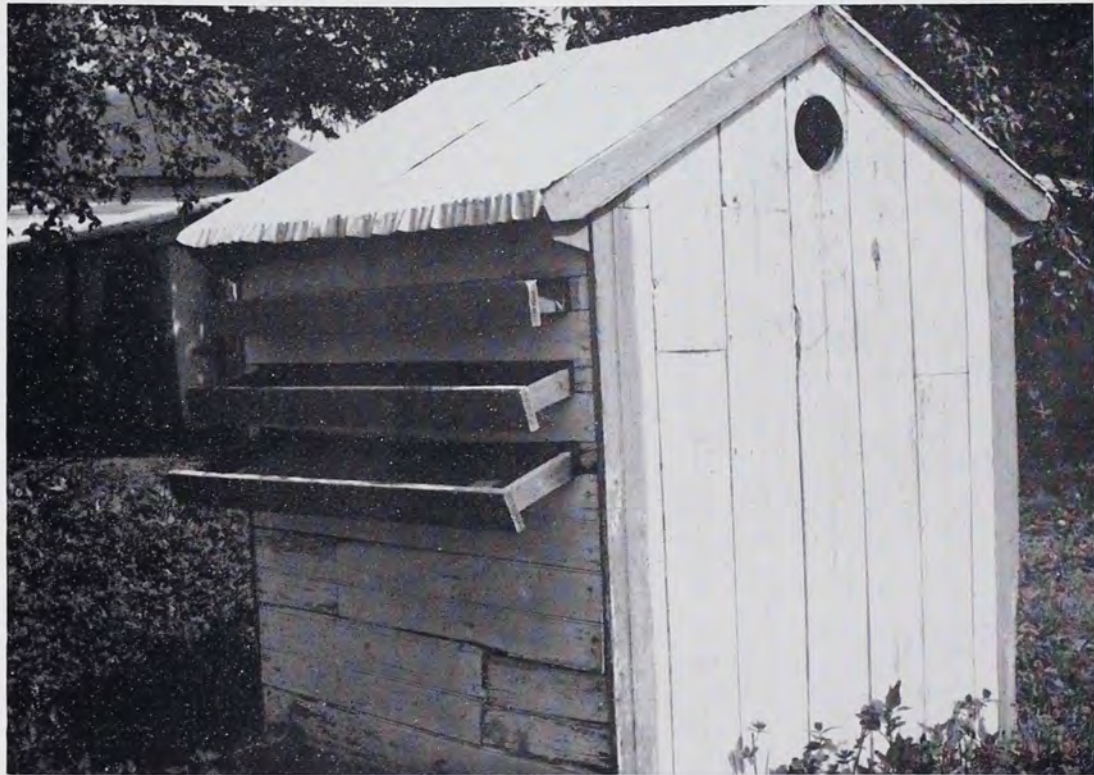
To make the "Ledder" as it was known, the fruit was peeled and mashed until fine. The raw mashed fruit was then poured into a long shallow pan to a height of approximately two inches. Sugar was usually not added although in some instances it was depending on availability. The pan with its contents was then placed in an upper tray inside the

dryhouse to dehydrate slowly. Usually thirty-six to seventy-two hours were required to complete the process, depending on the temperature inside and outside the building and the amount and kind of fruit that was put into the pan. The end result was about one-eighth to three-sixteenths of an inch of dried fruit. This was then taken out of the pan, rolled and cut into thin sections like noodles. On special occasions and during the holidays, it was served as candy. This "Ledder" was made while the fruit was in season and during the process of drying the other foods.

The Sun-Drying Process

There were also other methods used to dry foods on those farmsteads which had no dryhouse. The earliest and most primitive way was to put the food to be dried into shallow pans which were then placed on a flat roof or up off the ground to dry in the sun. The pan was usually covered

REAR VIEW OF BURKHOLDER DRYHOUSE. Note opening for stovepipe.



²This very interesting confection has been made and served at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festivals at Kutztown and at the Pennsylvania Folklife Museum near Lancaster. The Folklife Society is interested in determining how traditional this recipe is, how widespread it is in the Pennsylvania counties, and how widely it is known outside Pennsylvania. The name "peach leather" would suggest a folk-cultural origin, but we invite additional information from our readers. The earliest printed reference we have found to it comes from *Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery. Directions for Cookery, in its Various Branches*, 49th edition (Philadelphia, 1853), page 271: "PEACH LEATHER.—To six pounds of ripe peaches, (pared and quartered), allow three pounds of the best brown sugar. Mix them together, and put them into a preserving kettle, with barely water enough to keep them from burning. Pound and mash

them a while with a wooden beetle. Then boil and skim them for three hours or more, stirring them nearly all the time. When done, spread them thinly on large dishes, and set them in the sun for three or four days. Finish the drying by loosening the peach leather on the dishes, and setting them in the oven after the bread is taken out, letting them remain till the oven is cold. Roll up the peach leather and put it away in a box. Apple leather may be made in the same manner." Dr. R. T. Trall, *The New Hydropathic Cook-Book* (New York, 1872, copyright 1853) contains a simpler recipe: "Peach leather and tomato leather are prepared by squeezing out the pulp of the very ripe fruit, spreading it out thinly on plates or shingles, and drying in the sun, or by hot air or steam, until quite hard and tough. They may also be dried in a brick oven."—EDITOR.

DRYHOUSE BUILT IN SUMMER OF 1961. Located on Isaac Lantz Farm, near Gordonville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, it measures 5 ft. long, 3 ft. wide, 5½ ft. in front, 5 ft. in rear. Contains 14 trays and is heated by pot-bellied stove. Photographed 1962.



with a thin, loosely woven cloth to keep out the flies. How many readers can recall having to lay everything aside suddenly to get the drying foods in from the roof or out of the weather because of a sudden shower?

Many times seeds which were to be used for next summer's planting, also herbs and teas, were dried in this way. There were those folks who believed that herbs which were to be used for medicinal purposes had to be dried in the sun. Some foods such as green and yellow string beans, mushrooms, and sections of pumpkins and apples were hung on a string outside in the sun or in the kitchen or attic to dry.

One informant told how her grandmother peeled bushels of apples which were dried by hanging them from a string attached to the kitchen ceiling. These were then stored and used for bartering with the huckster when he made his visits.

Mrs. Christine Bomberger, Lititz R. D., told of peeling many bushels of Watermelon and Pound apples which were dried for winter use. She stated that in her home, as in many others, apples were a staple food.

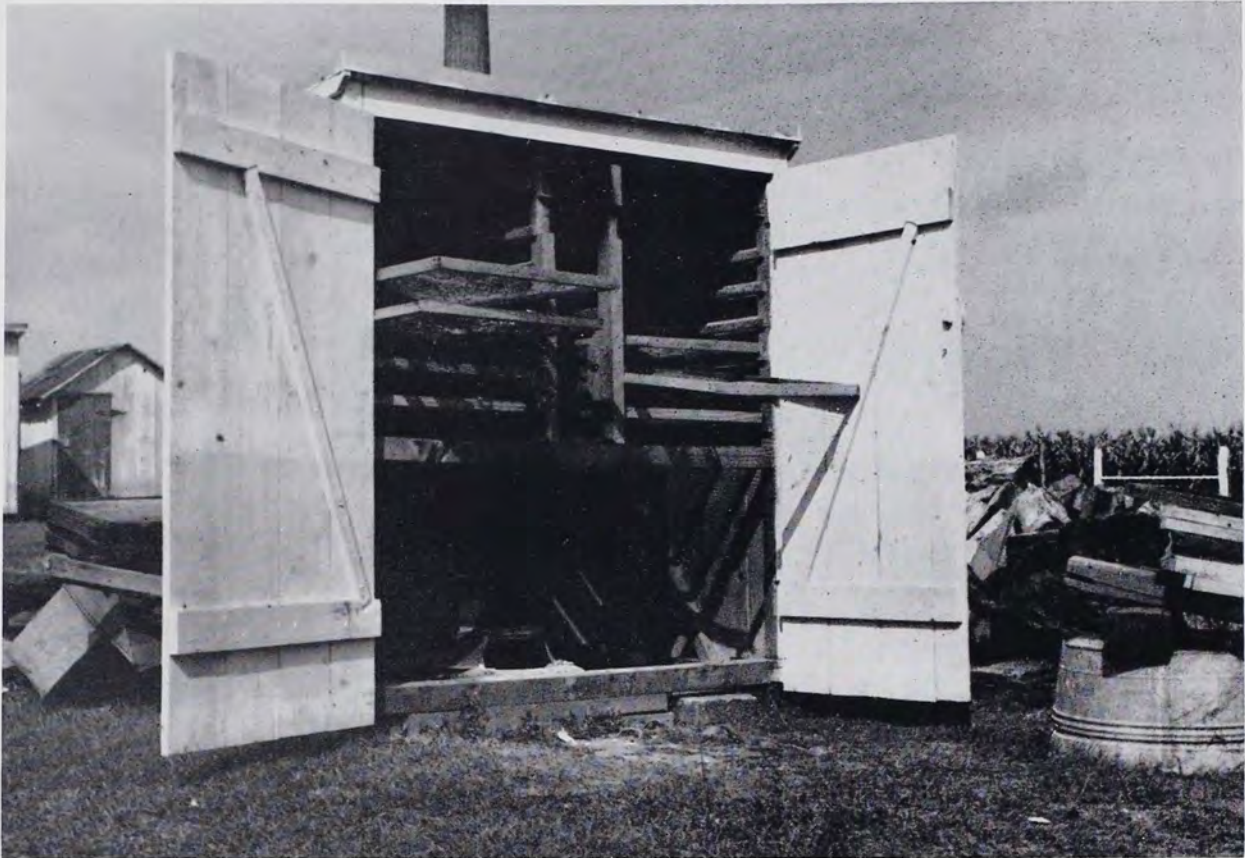
Mrs. Elly Beck who now resides in Verona, New Jersey, related how as a child in her native Germany, her mother dried apples on oats straw which was placed on the barn floor. She told how it was her responsibility to shuffle them occasionally and how she found it necessary to sample them each time.

Another informant told how her mother placed apples, peaches and other foods immediately beneath a large tin roof of a shed at her home to dry.

Drying Fruits in the Bakeoven

Those homes and farms which had an indoor or outdoor bakeoven, used it to dry the fruits and vegetables they desired. These bakeovens retained much of their heat as long as forty-eight to seventy-two hours after baking. This heat was many times utilized for drying foods.

Paul Blatt who lives near Bernville, Pennsylvania, still uses his bakeoven, located in the backyard, for drying sweet



OPEN VIEW OF LANTZ DRYHOUSE. Near Gordonville, Lancaster County.

"schnitz." He told how they prefer to use it rather than the kitchen stove because it eliminates the heat in the kitchen during the hot summer days. Mr. Blatt has specially constructed trays which he made to fit into the oven. In preparation for drying, several bricks are laid on the oven floor and the trays containing the "schnitz" are placed on the bricks to prevent the trays and the contents from becoming too hot.

Kitchen Drying

Later after the introduction of the cook stove and kitchen range, many foods were dried in the oven or warming closet. In many instances, "schnitz" dryers were used. These were nothing more than several layers of trays which were built on top of each other to fit into the oven of the stove, thus providing more space to dry larger amounts at one time.

Dehydrating pans which were filled with hot water were also brought into use shortly thereafter. These were generally kept near the rear of the stove so that the water was kept warm while the dehydration took place.

Dryhouses No Longer Standing

Although there are few dryhouses in existence today, there are a number of folks whom the writer contacted

who recall having used or having seen these buildings during their earlier life.

Harry Hay, of Hamburg, Pennsylvania, told of a dryhouse that existed during his early youth which was built of stone and had a hearth to provide the heat.

Lloyd Leatherman, Gettysburg R. D., Pennsylvania, tells of a dryhouse which was located on the property on which he previously lived. It measured approximately eight feet in length, eight feet in width, and seven feet high. The structure had a wooden shingle roof. He recalled that it contained eight shelves on each side and was used to dry large quantities of vegetables and fruits for market. The building has since been dismantled because of deterioration.

Mrs. Mae Reininger, Spring Hope, Bedford County, Pennsylvania, tells of a frame dryhouse which was located on the property, where she lived as a child, until thirty years ago. It measured ten feet long, six feet wide and eight feet high. It was in this building that her parents dried all their fruits and vegetables for winter use. The structure was large enough so that the attendant could walk in on each side of the chunk stove to care for the trays. The trays, she related, were filled from the inside which helped to prevent the flies from entering so freely. She also told of drying hundreds of pounds of sweet corn which was sold to the huckster.

She recalled how in preparing the corn for drying that it was cooked steadily in a large iron kettle over an open fire for about five minutes or enough so that it could be eaten from the cob. It was then cut off the cob, placed on trays and dried in the dryhouse. She also related how much joy it was for her at that age to eat cob after cob of sweet corn heavily spread with homemade butter and sprinkled with salt. "Corn," she said, "just doesn't taste like that did anymore!"

She told also how her younger brother used to continually raid the dryhouse when laden with fruit and eat large quantities. On one occasion, in an attempt to keep him away, he was told by a visitor, after eating a large quantity of dried cherries and drinking a considerable amount of water, that if he continued to do so, the water would cause the cherries to expand and he would burst. Shortly thereafter, her brother did get "bellyache" and he became so alarmed that he asked his mother if he would burst and die.

Mrs. Christine Bomberger, Lititz R. D., Pennsylvania, told of a dryhouse built at her parents' home during the early 1920's, after World War I. She stated that it was built at this rather late date because the hearth which was used previously for drying had to be torn down because of its condition. Her mother, Mrs. Levi Bucher, insisted that a dryhouse be built to replace it. She related also that her

mother had considerable trouble in that her canned foods would not keep well, and for that reason she wanted the dryhouse. However, as she and her sisters grew older and took over the task of preserving the foods, the drying of fruits and vegetables was slowly discontinued.

Mrs. Paul Hassler, Ephrata, Pennsylvania, tells of a dryhouse used at her home when she was a young girl in Juniata County. It was built by her father and measured approximately five feet long, four and one-half feet wide and five and one-half feet high. The chunk stove located on the inside was accessible only from the rear of the building. The six drawers could be pulled out only from the front. There were three drawers on each side of the stove.

The structure was used primarily for drying sweet corn which was sold each year at the Port Royal Fair. She related that one year her mother was obliged to attend the fair but hesitated to do so because there was still a large stand of corn to be processed which she feared might get too old and hard until after the fair.

Without being told to do so but because her mother feared the corn would get too hard, she had her younger brothers and sisters gather the corn which amounted to a wagon load. She realized after cutting the corn from the cob that it had not yet matured as fully as it should have. She was very

CONCRETE BLOCK DRYHOUSE BUILT IN SUMMER OF 1959. Located on John Groff property, Farmersville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Measurements: 4 ft. long, 4 ft. wide, and 5½ ft. high. Still in use. Photographed 1960.



much aware of this because her mother's concern was always to allow it to develop to its fullest but not allow it to get too hard.

But it was too late! Even though the children meant well, the mother was very much disturbed because of the loss of weight which resulted in not allowing the corn to mature to its fullest.

Mrs. Velma Miles, who now resides in Ellicott City, Maryland, tells of a dryhouse used about forty years ago. It measured approximately eight feet long, eight feet wide and seven feet high with its opening and large overhang in front of the structure. The thing she remembered most vividly about it was that it was extremely hot to care for the fire in the summer. The trays inside had wooden slats instead of wire mesh at the bottom.

Kenneth Graybill, Manheim R. D. recalled using the dryhouse at his parents' home as a playhouse during his youth.

Mrs. Frank Barkboll who now resides near Hagerstown, Maryland, told of a drying oven used by her mother that was built beside the bakeoven. The heat, she stated, was provided from the bakeoven. It was built this way because the bakeoven alone did not provide sufficient space for the drying that was done. She recalled also that it was usually her duty to build and care for the fire.

John Brubaker, Lititz R. D., had a dryhouse which measured eight feet long, eight feet wide and seven feet high until fifteen years ago when it was dismantled.

Dryhouses Still Standing

Dr. E. P. Flanders, of York, informs us of one on the property of George Herold in Chapman, Snyder County. It is used at present only for storage.

A small frame dryhouse, now the property of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society, was originally located on the Frank Horning farm near Clay, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. It measures four feet long, four feet wide and about four and one-half feet high. It contains three trays, with wire mesh bottoms, on each side, with access from the side of the structure. Another tray is located on each side, on top of the other three, with access only from the doorway.

The dryhouse located on the Noah Getz farmstead, Lancaster County, and pictured in our illustrations, was built when Noah Getz, the present owner, was five years old. The writer was told how Mr. Getz's mother helped her husband to build the structure. The brick dryhouse with slate roof and an overhang of two feet is the largest existing example the writer has found. It measures five feet long, seven feet wide and eight feet high. It contains twelve large trays with access from the front.

Mrs. Getz stated that it was used regularly until the end of the depression years of the 1930's but seldom after that time except to dry "lazy-wife beans" which her family enjoys greatly. It was last used in 1946 during the latter part of World War II when fruit was dried to help the needy in other countries.

The building, still intact, contains a chunk-type stove. Originally it had a ten-plate stove but this was replaced

with the present one after the original no longer functioned properly. There is stored within the building, a thirty-inch-long standard stove-pipe which can be inserted through the roof and attached to a pipe-fitting on the stove to provide the necessary draft when the stove is used.

Mrs. Getz also told how as the drying process progressed, the lower trays containing the fruit or vegetables were moved higher and the upper trays were moved lower because those trays closest to the stove dried quickest. Sometimes the trays were also shifted from one side of the building to the other. She stated also that large quantities of foods could be dried quickly and with little trouble within its chamber.

Victor C. Dieffenbach, "Der Oldt Bauer," of Bethel, Pennsylvania, tells of a dryhouse that existed earlier on the family farm which stood only two feet from the smokehouse. For heating, it contained an old chunk-type wood-stove. In addition to using it for drying fruits and vegetables, he told of cutting a hole into the side of the smokehouse, attached a stovepipe and elbow to the stovepipe on the stove inside the dryhouse and then inserted the stovepipe through the hole into the smokehouse. He then built the fire in the stove within the dryhouse which provided the smoke for the smokehouse.

One of the most recently built dryhouses found by the writer is located on the homestead of John Groff near Farmersville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. It is a concrete block structure which was erected in 1959 after an earlier one had to be dismantled. It is still used each season by various members of the family and neighbors to preserve sweet corn, apples and string beans.

Another built during the summer of 1961 is located on the farm of Isaac Lantz near Gordonville, Lancaster County. It was built then to replace another structure which had burned down the previous summer.

As shown, it is a simple, flat, tin-covered roof structure which measures five feet long and three feet wide. The height is five and one-half feet in front and five feet in the rear. It contains fourteen trays, seven on each side, which measure approximately half the size of the building.

This Amish family on whose farm it is located use it to dry apples and sweet corn. The writer learned also from the family that large amounts of yellow field corn are dried in it to make cornmeal for making mush and scrapple or *ponhaws* as it is known in the dialect. Cornmeal was a staple food of our early settlers and still is a basic food in a number of large farm families among the Pennsylvania Dutch.

Today these buildings continue to be used most widely among the Amish and other Mennonite groups particularly in Lancaster County. They are also still used to some extent in Adams and Franklin Counties for drying fruits. They have also been found in use in the Kitchener, Ontario, Canada area which has also been settled by Pennsylvania Dutch elements.

Most of these structures, however, have been allowed to deteriorate or have been dismantled through the years because of better, faster and easier methods of preparing foods which were not available then.

THE AMISH BARN DANCE

By RICHARD H. SHANER

Barn dancing as a form of group recreation has always been popular among the Pennsylvania Dutch people. There is, however, a significant distinction between the barn dances held by the Amish and those formed by the "Gay Dutch." Of the two types it is likely that the Amish barn dance has gone through less changes than that of their Gay Dutch cousins.

In the contemporary Dutch Country only the Amish consider the barn dance as the major social activity for their youth. Although the Gay Dutch are enthusiastic about dancing, their children participate in the more diversified "worldly" opportunities for socializing. Since the Amish

still cling to an absolute rural culture, the barn dances held by their ancestors have continued in popularity among the sect. The Saturday night barn dances offer Amish youth (1) an opportunity to meet and court the opposite sex, (2) a chance to meet with neighbors and talk of agriculture and current affairs, and (3) an enjoyable night away from the back-breaking chores on the Amish farmsteads.

The robust and active Amish youth are always anxious to attend any barn dance held by one of the sect. From spring to autumn a dance is usually held every Saturday, except during busy harvesting periods. On some occasions dances are held after the "sing" on a Sunday evening, but do not last long. Amish youth enjoy barn dancing and every dance is always a success.

There is no public advertisement of dances, and the host of a dance might only announce it about one week in advance. Dances are usually held by the various youths when they can foretell that there will be enough room and space on the farmstead to have a dance. Also the whereabouts of the parents are a vital factor since the Amish youth like others prefer privacy. When the proper time is available for a dance the host (or hosts) merely announces the fact that he is having a dance and that everyone should come. News of the dance is circulated among the young men and women and becomes common knowledge in just two or three days. Since there may only be one or two barn dances held on the same night, the youth can easily decide which one they are going to attend.

AMISH—GAY DUTCH BARN DANCE. Photograph taken at first Pennsylvania Dutch Harvest Frolic (1961) showing six Amish boys demonstrating Amish folk-dancing.





"BIRDIE IN THE CAGE." Amish folk-dance demonstrated at 1962 Harvest Frolic, Pennsylvania Folklife Museum.

Previous to the announcement of a barn dance the Amish host must be sure that there will be a band available to play for the dancing. Amish musicians are divided according to experience, and the older Amish band is always sought after first. If the host is unable to secure the senior band there are usually enough of the younger boys available to form a second band of fairly comparable quality. The typical band instrumentation is guitar, fiddle (violin), mandolin and in some instances harmonica. Needless to state none of the stringed instruments are electrified as in the case of the Gay Dutch dance bands. The groups have no particular names or special dress, each band is referred to according to its leader. Amish youth are very conscientious about their music making and will not accept a dance unless a certain instrumentation can be arranged which is a balance of both harmony and talent.

Amish musicians are not usually paid a certain fee, but instead receive money which has been collected by passing an Amish hat around at the dance. After completing the music arrangement there are only two other details for the host to attend to: (1) Technical problems and (2) Domestic farm problems.

The most disturbing technical problem which faces the host is that when 200 to 300 of the Amish get together at a dance it is difficult to hear the music. Although the band may be on top of a spring-wagon in the middle of the double threshing-floor their music still cannot be heard over the many conversations on the floor. The only solution found to compensate for this condition is to take out the

twelve-volt battery from the buggy and hook up a microphone. In the early hours of the dance this works well, but as the night progresses the amplification decreases. Not only is amplification a problem at such an event but lighting also. The host will have to ask some of his friends to bring gas lamps along which can be pumped with air and will supply a bright glow for a short time. During the dance the lamps must be pumped or turned up as the event progresses. Where there is not enough room for everyone in the barn, gas lamps are suspended from trees or posts outside so that the festivities will not be limited.

Of the domestic farm problems the main one is that the host's parents are well away from the farm before the dance starts. Usually the parents have decided to visit a married son or daughter and to stay at that farm over night. Even though the son or daughter's farm may be only a few miles away the parents will stay there to allow the Amish youth the freedom of that night. Once the dance has been announced it is up to the host to make sure the farmstead is capable of parking many courting buggies and boarding several fine horses. The people, the vehicles, and the horses are a considerable responsibility of the host and cannot be neglected. After the dance the host and his brothers and sisters or neighbors must clean the farmstead grounds and have it immaculate before the parents arrive home the following day.

Having made all the necessary provisions for the barn dance the host as well as his guests are set for an evening of fun. The first guests begin arriving at 9:00 p.m. and a

steady stream of buggies continue to arrive till about 12:00 midnight. All the young men wear their black hats, vests, pants, and coats. Except for the white shirts and striped suspenders there are no contrasting colors. The women wear their white caps, brightly colored blouses and black half-aprons, stockings and shoes. Usually the young women stay to one side of the barn and the men to the other, except of course if you brought a girl to the dance. There are a surprising number of young men and women who come to the dance alone. Thus there is a variety of girls which one could select a dancer from. Most of the youth remain segregated according to sex not because of shyness but because of mutual interests and to discuss agriculture. There are no married couples at the barn dance at all, not even in the band engaged for the evening. The married folk of course do not have the time to spend on entertainment that they did when they were young and courting.



The sets which are formed in the Amish barn dance contain on the average six to eight couples. When the music starts a member of each set acts as the caller and calls the various steps of the dance which the other five or seven couples must follow. Most dances start with all hands around but other than that, there are very few steps which are similar to square dancing. After the beginning steps each set on the floor dances differently according to the callers of the various sets. The dancers do not jig at all to the beat of the music. In fact in Amish dancing the dancers do not dance to the music as they would in general American square dancing. The rhythm is constant and the only variation caused in dancing is that which is designated by the caller or leader of that particular set. Often the dances become very standardized and one dance may be repeated by several callers. In Amish folk-dancing the

originality of the dance is left to the individualistic ability of the caller.

During the course of the evening at times the sets on the floor combine to form one large set and continue dancing as one set. There are various specialty dances which are used in the evening such as the "John Paul Jones." In this particular dance one large set is formed with the girls going clockwise and the boys counter-clockwise grasping the girls' hands as they meet. Unexpectedly a boy will whistle and everyone must change partners. Occasionally other boys will slip into the set causing a deficiency of partners.

There is no modern, i.e., social dancing at a barn dance whatsoever. In some of the barn dances a couple is given the chance to swing anyone in that set and they do just that. However when an Amish boy swings his partner he does not use the elbow swing but embraces his partner as though they were ready to do the fox-trot. While the boy is embracing the girl they proceed to shuffle back and forth in rather a jiggling fashion, and then he quickly goes to the next partner.

The Amish barn dance does not compare to the Gay Dutch form of square dancing in several ways. (1) In square dancing only four couples are in a set to form a square, but in Amish folk dancing the number of couples are limitless because they do not form a square. (2) Unlike the square dance the Amish do not have one central caller, but have as many callers as there are sets on the floor. (3) The Amish do not dance to the rhythm of the music and the pace of the dance remains fairly constant, whereas the Gay Dutch alternate dance rhythms according to the central caller, and some parts of the dance may tend to be faster than others. (4) Most Amish dances are shorter than the Gay Dutch square dances probably because of the lack of experience and originality of the several callers on the floor. (5) In contemporary square dancing among the Gay Dutch there is a great deal of jiggling which is not part of the Amish fashion of dancing.

An Amish barn dance lasts till about two to three o'clock in the morning. Since many of the couples have a great distance to cover with horse and buggy it is impossible to arrive early at the dance. Likewise since the distance is equally long going home it does not make sense for the young couples to cut the evening short. At the dance all of the Amish youth speak English and surprisingly well. Only a few expressions are exchanged in Pennsylvania Dutch. There are no outsiders at the dance, for the Amish do not socialize with the outside world. There are no refreshments at the dances either, unless someone brings something along with their party.

When the dance is over the youths are faced with the problem of getting home. Rides are arranged between brothers and neighbors so that no matter where you live you will have a ride home. On the moonlit road leading from the farmstead a steady stream of buggies again lines the macadam avenues of rural Lancaster. In the distance can be seen the yellow light that was illuminating the barn and the various members of the clean-up crew rearranging the farmstead.



A SUPPER OF MUSH AND MILK IN 1807. This is the earliest Pennsylvania drawing illustrating the use of "mush." Drawn by the York folk-artist Lewis Miller, it portrays "Dr. John Rause, and Family, at the dinner table Eating Nudelsup, and in the Evening meal, mush and milke." Original in the Collections of the Historical Society of York County.

PENNSYLVANIANS CALLED IT MUSH

By DON YODER

"Pennsylvanians call thee mush . . ."

These words, from Joel Barlow's satiric poem, "The Hasty Pudding" (1793), will introduce us to our folk-cultural study of one of the favorite dishes in Pennsylvania's cookery in the past—plain old cornmeal mush.¹

Pennsylvanians called it "mush," but New Englanders called it "hasty pudding," New Yorkers "suppawn." It was a generally eaten dish among the population of the 13 Colonies, on the Eastern Seaboard as well as the western frontier in the 19th Century, and remained a staple on rural as on urban tables well past the year 1900. It was, along with the maize-complex as a whole, a gift from the American Indian to American civilization.

¹This article will form a third chapter in our projected folk-cultural history of Pennsylvania's cookery. The preceding articles have been "Sauerkraut in the Pennsylvania Folk-Culture," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, Summer 1961; and "Schnitz in the Pennsylvania Folk-Culture," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, Fall 1961.

Let us examine the history of mush, beginning with a study of the mush-terminology.

The Term "Mush"

"Hasty pudding" was an English term applied to an American dish. "Mush" is an Americanism for "porridge," the earliest reference to which can be documented in the year 1671.

Two sources have been suggested for the origin of this plain old American word "mush." The probable solution is that offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, that it is "apparently an onomatopoeic alteration of MASH," meaning to crush, pulverize, crumble, reduce to pulp. This may, the editors suggest, have been affected by Dutch *moes*. The principal authority on the influence of Holland Dutch upon the English language suggests that it is "probably not an

alteration of English *mash*," but a development from Dutch *moes*, "mash, pulp, stewed greens or fruit . . ."²

"Mush," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is "North American," and means "a kind of porridge made with meal (chiefly of maize) boiled in water or milk until it thickens."³

The earliest known reference to "mush" comes from the year 1671. J. Hardy, in his *Last Voyage to the Bermudas*, speaks of Indian corn, "Which being groun'd and boyl'd, Mush they make Their hungry Servants Hunger for to slake."⁴ Hugh Jones' *The Present State of Virginia* (London, 1724), also speaks of mush in connection with Indian corn: "This grain is of great Increase and most general use, for with this is made good Bread, Cakes, Mush, and Hommony."

Mush in this sense—porridge made of maize flour—is also called *Indian Mush*, *Corn Mush*, and *Cornmeal Mush*.



INDIAN GIRLS PREPARING A MUSH-SUPPER? Illustration accompanying Joel Barlow's poem, "The Hasty Pudding," in Harper's New Monthly Magazine, July, 1856.

²E. C. Llewellyn, *The Influence of Low Dutch on the English Vocabulary* (London, 1936), Publications of the Philological Society, XII, 175.

³I prefer this definition to that in Mitford M. Mathews, *A Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical Principles* (Chicago, 1951), which defines mush as "porridge or hasty pudding made of cornmeal."

⁴From the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), for which, with Mathews (MDA) we are indebted for a great many of our early references to mush, suppawn, samp, etc.

A Mush Vocabulary

So pervasive was mush in folk-cuisine, so important a staple it was, that we can speak of a mush-complex within the early American maize-culture. In fact we can compile a "mush dictionary" of over a dozen terms in this mush-complex.⁵

mush-meal: used occasionally in Eastern and Central Pennsylvania, for cornmeal. An influence of the Dutch dialect which uses the word *mush-mail* (mush-flour, mush-meal) for cornmeal. The Dutch called maize "*welshkon*" (strange corn, foreign corn) because they had not known it in Europe. But the flour made of it they called *mush-mail* (because it was principally used for mush), never *welshkon-mail*.⁶

mush-and-milk: the commonest way of eating boiled mush. The earliest historical reference to the term reported in Mathews comes from Edward Kimber's *Itinerant Observer in America* (Savannah, 1878), an account of travels in the colonies in 1745-1746: "The meener Sort you find little else but Water amongst, when their Syder is spent, Mush and Milk, or Molasses, Homine, Wild Fowl, and Fish, are their principal Diet." William Cobbett's *Treatise on Cobbett's Corn* (1828), ix, § 156, describes the dish: "Taking off a lump of the mush at the time, and putting it in the milk, you take up a spoonful at a time, having a little milk along with it; and this is called mush and milk." Like mush, the term "mush-and-milk" was borrowed by the Pennsylvania Dutch and appears as early as 1787 in German (*Neue Unparteyische Lancaster Zeitung*, September 12, 1787); for the full quotation see Section II, below. The term has also been used figuratively: cf. Mark Twain, *Letters from the Sandwich Islands*, 1866 (Palo Alto, California, 1938), page 151: "I'm disgusted with these mush-and-milk preacher travels."

mush-and-molasses: A second popular way of eating boiled mush, with molasses instead of milk. See Barlow, *The Hasty Pudding* (1793), Section VI, below, for the reasons for seasonal preferences here. "They have mush and molasses twice a day" (*Massachusetts Spy*, January 24, 1810, Boston & Worcester). A 20th Century reference—Upton Sinclair's *The Metropolis* (New York, 1908), page 162: The common people "ate mush and molasses."

fried-mush: after boiled mush, the most popular way of eating cornmeal mush. What is left over from the mush-and-milk supper is allowed to cool and solidify and is fried for breakfast. A favorite breakfast dish in rural Pennsylvania, even in urban Pennsylvania in the 19th and early 20th Centuries. For the term in print, see *Monthly Journal of Agriculture*, Volume II, No. 1 (July, 1846), page 10; also Mrs. Goodfellow's *Cookery As It Should Be* (Philadelphia, © 1865), page 165, recipe for "Fried Mush."

mush-soup: an Eastern Pennsylvania term for cold mush served with hot milk. The term exists in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect: "*mush-soop*." Thus far I have found no documentation on either the English or the dialect term other than oral reports of its usage in Eastern Pennsylvania.

⁵The following terms in our "mush vocabulary" are not found in either OED or MDA: *mush-meal*, *mush-soup*, *plug-mush*, *mush-stick*, *mush-cakes*, *mush-pone*, *mush-supper*, and *mush-party*. The editor will welcome further documentation on these terms from any part of the United States.

⁶Indian corn was also called in early New England "Guinny wheat" and "Turkie wheat." Alice Morse Earle, *Customs and Fashions in Old New England* (New York, 1894). Cf. German *Türkisch-Korn*.



JOEL BARLOW INSPIRED BY HIS BOWL OF "HASTY PUDDING." He it was who blushed, to hear the Pennsylvanians call it "mush." Illustration from Harper's Monthly, July 1856.

I should like to know how widespread the term is in Pennsylvania, also whether it can be documented outside Pennsylvania.

plug-mush: a synonym for mush-soup, above, from Bald Eagle Valley, Centre County, furnished me by Flora (Brugger) Curtin, of Jensen Beach, Florida, a native of Unionville (Fleming P. O.), Pennsylvania. According to her description, the "plugs" were cold solidified mush cut into squares and placed in a bowl and eaten with hot milk poured over them. I should also like very much to know from what other counties this term can be cited.

mush-cakes: either a kind of pancake or "breakfast cake" made of cornmeal flour (also called corn-cakes), or a heavier mass of mush-batter fried on a griddle (something like a Potato Cake?). *Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery*, 49th edition, revised (Philadelphia, 1853), pages 368-369, contains a recipe for "Indian Mush Cakes." The terms *mush-kichelchar* and *mush-koocha* (mush-cakes) are used in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. See section on "Mush Recipes," below, for documentation.

mush-pone: a synonym for corn-pone? Mentioned in *Monthly Journal of Agriculture*, Vol. II, No. 1 (July, 1846), page 10. See complete reference below.

mush-bread: a kind of mush-pudding—milk, eggs, and butter added to cornmeal mush—baked in the oven. See *The National Cookery Book* . . . (Philadelphia, ©1876), p. 190. A recipe for "Cornmeal Mush Bread" appears in M. Minerva Lawrence, "Food Conservation to Help Win the War: Recipes for Saving Wheat, Sugar, Meat, and Fat," *University of Texas Bulletin*, No. 1756, October 5, 1917, p. 6.

mush-kettle: a kettle or pot, usually of iron, used over an open fireplace or on a kitchen range, for boiling mush. At a Centre County farm sale in the Spring of 1962 the auctioneer held up an iron kettle and referred to it as a "mush-kettle." Reported by Marion Mattern Cronister,

Port Matilda, Pennsylvania. See also *mush-pot* and *mush-pan*, below.

mush-pot: same as mush-kettle. Henry Howe's *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1847) says of Johnny Appleseed: "Johnny, who wore on his head a tin utensil which answered both as a cap and a mushpot, filled it with water and quenched the fire." A Pennsylvania reference appears in Robert Boyd's *Personal Memoirs* (Cincinnati, 1862); see below, Section II.

mush-pan: either a tin kettle used for boiling mush, or a rectangular tin pan with high, outward-sloping sides used for cooling mush in preparation for making fried mush. John S. Robb, *Streaks of Squatter Life* (1847), page 59, speaks of "Betsy Jones' . . . Tumble in the Mush Pan."

mush-stick: a heavy wooden paddle or spoon used for stirring mush as it boils; a pot-stick. Used in *Miss Leslie's Lady's New Receipt Book*, 5th ed. (Philadelphia, 1850), page 464: ". . . between every handful stir hard with the mush-stick (a round stick about half a yard long, flattened at the lower end) . . ." See Section V, below.

mush-supper: either an ordinary family supper where mush is the main (or only) dish—cf. Robert Boyd, *Personal Memoirs* (Cincinnati, 1862), page 191: "I would, therefore, advise the preacher not to extol the mush supper in a strange place, lest he should get into a trap"—or a social gathering where mush is made and served; see also *mush-party*, below. The *Jeffersonian Democrat* (Brookville, Pennsylvania), reports on June 27, 1888, that "the old mush suppers" are now all the rage.⁷

mush-party: reported from Central Pennsylvania, Centre and Blair Counties in particular, from the 1860's to the early

⁷ From Phil R. Jack, "Some Customary Practices of Rural Life, 1870-1913, in Parts of Indiana and Jefferson Counties, Pennsylvania," unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1954, p. 201. This extremely valuable folk-cultural study is one of the first of its kind done in Pennsylvania.

1900's. A social afternoon gathering of the older women of a community who gather for gossip and some sort of communal work like quilting or sewing. Mush is boiled and served as the piece de resistance at the end of the work. Probably a feature of village or town life rather than of rural areas? The term can be documented as early as 1866 in the Blair County newspapers, according to Os Figard, historical columnist of the *Altoona Mirror*: "There were many 'mush parties' held through 1866, 1880, and most of those parties were for adults. These affairs were usually a quilting party, or fancy knitting party. In 1877 an invitation to a taffy-pull and mush-soup party, was considered a bid to join the elites, and during the same year those same elites gave a similar party for the poor and needy in Altoona, that drew 210 adults and 46 children to Minster's Hall located then at what is now Chestnut Avenue and 10th Street."⁸

In addition to these usages, all of which refer to cornmeal mush, the term mush was in the 19th Century occasionally applied (in cookbooks especially) to other concoctions, so that we have the terms: *oats-mush* (oatmeal), *rye-mush*, *wheat-mush*, *rice-mush*, and *potato-mush*. The first four of these are documented in Trall's *Hydropathic Cook-Book* (New York, 1872, copyright 1853).

The term *potato mush* is, I am informed by Alta Schrock of Penn Alps, Grantsville, Maryland, the common word for "mashed potatoes" among the Pennsylvania Dutch groups of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and adjoining sections of Maryland. In fact "mush" normally means "mashed potatoes" in that area, unless one specifies "cornmeal mush." The term *potato mush* was also used in Pennsylvania Dutch dialect in Eastern Pennsylvania. Astor C. Wuchter's poem, "*On der Lumpa Party*" (At the Rag Party), describes the

food served at such gatherings and mentions "*grumbier mush*"—"potato mush."

Oats-mush (i.e., oatmeal) also made the transition into Pennsylvania Dutch as *hovver-mush*. Many years ago a native Montgomery Countian, long a resident of the Midwest, revisited her old home area. When asked what the people ate there she said: "*Die Yankees essa nix wee hovver-mush*"—"The Yankees eat nothing but oats-mush, i.e., oatmeal."⁹

Hasty Pudding, Suppawn, and Stirabout

Barlow's rhyme ("Oh, how it makes me blush to hear the Pennsylvanians call thee Mush") was quoted in an article on "Mush" in *The Plough, the Loom, and the Anvil. Farmer and Mechanic*, Part II, Volume V, No. 4 (April, 1853), page 247. "Our Yankee friends," the Editor tells us, call it "hasty pudding." "If they prefer the word," he adds, "they can call it 'Hasty Pudding'; or if any of the descendants of the Knickerbockers insist on calling it 'Suppawn,' no body will quarrel with them. Mush, Hasty Pudding, and Suppawn are all the same thing."

What of these rival terms? It would appear that by the 19th Century, "mush" was the most popular term—possibly sanctified by the numerous cookbooks emanating from Philadelphia?—although the variants "hasty pudding" and "suppawn" continued in New England and New York.

Over the term "hasty pudding" we need not linger. Everyone recalls the reference to it in "Yankee Doodle"—the Continental troops came to town and paraded, "as thick as hasty pudding"—and the continued use of it in the name of the Harvard "Hasty Pudding Club."

The term *suppawn* was the term preferred in New York State, although it can be documented in Canadian sources in

⁸ I was first introduced to this term by Mrs. Ida (Robinson) Leitzell of Port Matilda, Pennsylvania.

⁹ Collected by Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker from Clarence Kulp, Vernfield, Montgomery County, March 31, 1962.

NEW ENGLAND FAMILY EATING
"HASTY PUDDING." Illustration,
Harper's Monthly, July, 1856.



HUSKING FROLIC IN COLONIAL DAYS.
Apples and cider served now, but a mush-
supper awaits the huskers at the end of
the evening. Illustration, Harper's Monthly,
July, 1856.



the 19th Century and in Pennsylvania (North Carolina) Moravian sources in the 18th Century. Timothy Dwight's *Travels in New England* (1823), IV, 93: "The house contained neither bread nor flour, and we were obliged to sup upon sipawn" (reference dated 1817). Charles Fenno Hoffman's *A Winter in the Far West* (1835), I, 141: "I helped myself with an iron spoon from a dish of suppawn." Mrs. Traill's *Backwoods Canada* (1836), page 189: "A substantial sort of porridge, called by the Americans 'Supporne'." B. J. Lossing's *Hudson* (1868), page 122: "He went to the church every night at eight o'clock . . . to ring the 'suppawn-bell.' This was the signal for the inhabitants to eat their 'suppawn,' or hasty-pudding, and prepare for bed." These from OED, which also reports its use in Holland Dutch sources of the 17th Century as *sapaen* and *suppaen*.

The most interesting reference to the term from the standpoint of Pennsylvania sources, however, comes from Moravian sources. Moravian missionaries from Pennsylvania to North Carolina report subsisting on pumpkin-sauce and mush in November, 1753, after their arrival at Bethabara, North Carolina. They called it *Sapan* (Suppawn), the Indian variant term. November 19, 1753: "We began to make a bake-oven, so that we can again eat bread, which for a time has been pretty rare for us. Our principal fare is now pumpkin-sauce (*Kürbis-Brey*) and mush (*Sapan*), and we are quite well with it."¹⁰

In New York State the term "suppawn" lasted into the 19th Century. An account of rural life in New York State

in the last century tells us that "another of grandfather's favorites was supawn, which was nothing more or less than corn-meal mush."¹¹

Stirabout is a final Pennsylvania synonym for "mush." The Scottish term "stirabout," applied in Scotland to oatmeal porridge, was in the Wyoming Valley applied to mush, according to Stewart Pearce's *Annals of Luzerne County* (Philadelphia, 1860), page 419. For the documentation in full, see the poem, "Mush and Milk," in Section VI, below. How widespread this usage was I do not know.

A Note on Samp

Another favorite corn-dish in New England, related to mush but *not* the same, was "samp," eaten as "samp and milk," etc.¹² The early descriptions of "samp" and "nasaump" in the New England Chronicles are somewhat difficult to understand, but from them it seems clear that samp was not the same as mush. Samp was coarse hominy (cracked and hulled corn) boiled and eaten as a porridge with milk. Mush or hasty pudding was cornmeal flour boiled in water into porridge and eaten with milk. In pioneer days when the hominy block and hand mills were used samp and mush would not be too different.

Roger Williams tells us that "nasaump" is "a kind of

¹⁰ Jared Van Wagenen, Jr., *The Golden Age of Homespun* (Ithaca, N. Y., © 1953), p. 57. This book, dealing with rural life in New York State in the pioneer period, is one of the best of its kind produced for any American region.

¹² According to OED, the U. S. term "samp" comes from Indian terms meaning "softened by water." Actually it comes from the same Indian root as "suppawn." See Trumbull, in *Archiv. Stud. Neu. Spr.*, LV, 454. Suppawn comes from the Natick word for "softened."

¹⁰ *Diarium einer Reise von Bethlehem, Pa., nach Bethabara, N. C.* Edited by William-J. Hinke, *German-American Annals*, New Series, Vol. III, No. 8.

meale pottage, unpartch'd. From this," he continues, "the English call their *Samp*, which is the *Indian* corne, beaten and boild, and eaten hot or cold with milke or butter, which are mercies beyond the *Natives* plaine water, and which is a dish exceeding wholesome for the *English* bodies."¹² John Josselyn's *New-England's Rarities*, another 17th Century work, describes "The New Englands standing Dish" as follows: "It is light of digestion, and the English make a kind of Loblolly of it to eat with Milk, which they call *Sampe*; they beat it in a Morter, and sift the flower out of it: the remainder they call *Homminey*, which they put into a Pot of two or three Gallons, with water, and boyl it upon a gentle Fire till it be like a Hasty Pudden; they put of this into Milk, and so eat it."¹³

Early New England's uses of corn and cornmeal are described in detail by John Winthrop, Jr., in a famous article on "Indian Corne," part of which appeared in England in 1678. Winthrop counters Gerard's *Herball* (1636) which condemned it as food, by saying (of samp) that "it is a food very pleasant and wholesome, being easy of Digestion, and is of a nature Divertical and Cleansing and hath no Quality of binding the Body, as the *Herball* supposeth, but rather to keep it in a fitt temperature . . ." It "may be taken," he adds, "in Sickness as in health, even in feavers and other acute Diseases."¹⁴

At any rate samp—along with hasty pudding or mush—remained a favorite dish in New England into the 19th Century. Whittier, in his "Corn-Song," rebukes those who would demote corn-dishes from the table, and lets us know that samp was one of his boyhood favorites:

*Let vapid idlers loll in silk
Around their costly board;
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,
By homespun beauty poured.*¹⁵

II. THE HISTORY OF MUSH

Mush, like Indian Corn in general, was one of the many gifts of the Indian to American life. In fact, anthropologists have used Indian maize-culture as a favorite example of a culture-complex transferred from a primitive civilization to a higher civilization. Not only were the foods themselves transferred, but the ways of planting corn, and harvesting corn, and even the husking festival.¹⁷

The principal historian of Pennsylvania agriculture says of Pennsylvania's appropriation of the Indian maize-culture: "Corn being unknown in Europe, the first settlers adopted Indian varieties and cultural methods, including seed testing,

planting in wide-spaced hills, interplanting with pumpkins, squash and beans, use of a husking pin, corn cribs larger at the top than the bottom and set on posts, and drying seed by hanging up ears by their husks, and such food uses as roasting ears, pone, hominy and mush. The Indians had two kinds of field corn, flint and dent, but others soon developed through seed selection. They also had pop corn and sweet corn."¹⁸

Heckewelder, the Moravian missionary among the Pennsylvania Indians, has described the Indians' use of corn as food.¹⁹ "Their *Psindamócan* or *Tassmanáne*, as they call it, is the most nourishing and durable food made out of the Indian corn. The blue sweetish kind is the grain which they prefer for that purpose. They parch it in clean hot ashes, until it bursts, it is then sifted and cleaned, and pounded in a mortar into a kind of flour, and when they wish to make it very good, they mix some sugar with it. When wanted for use, they take about a table spoonful of this flour in their mouths, then stooping to the river or brook, drink water to it." This of course refers to the Indian and pioneer use of dry parched cornmeal, which was carried in bags on hunting trips and eaten in the manner described.²⁰

The nearest we get to a description of mush in Heckewelder's account is the following: "If, however, they have a cup or other small vessel at hand, they put the flour in it and mix it with water, in the proportion of one table spoonful to a pint. At their camps they will put a small quantity in a kettle with water and let it boil down, and they will have a thick pottage. With this food, traveller and warrior will set out on long journeys and expeditions, and as a little of it will serve them for a day, they have not a heavy load of provisions to carry." However, he warns his Pennsylvania countrymen not to eat too much at a time

¹⁷ Clark Wissler, "Aboriginal Maize Culture as a Typical Culture-Complex," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXII (1916), 656-660. See also A. Irving Hallowell, "The Impact of the American Indian on American Culture," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (April, 1957), 201-207. The most useful bibliography on the subject is Louise O. Bereaw et al., *Corn in the Development of the Civilization of the Americas: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington, D. C., 1940), U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Economics Bibliographies No. 87.

¹⁸ Stevenson Whitecomb Fletcher, *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life 1640-1840* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1950), pp. 148-149.

¹⁹ John Heckewelder, *An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs, of the Indian Nations, Who once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States* (Philadelphia, 1818), Chapter XXIV, "Food and Cookery," p. 187.

²⁰ Cornmeal, for mush, johnny cakes, and other staple preparations, was normally taken along on the Western expeditions of exploration in the Far West in the first half of the 19th Century. It was easily transported and easily worked up into mush (all one needed was a kettle and water!), added to buffalo or venison broth, or made into johnny cakes to bake on a stone over an open fire. The following references to cornmeal (mush is implied but not always specified in the accounts) appear in Thwaites' 30-volume *Early Western Travels*: "3 bushels of parched corn meal," listed among provisions for S. H. Long's Expedition, 1819 (XV, 190); on the Long party each person carried "a small blanket, ten or twelve pounds of bison meat, three gills of parched corn meal, and a small kettle" (XVI, 13); "The poor fellows had had no meat for some time, and had lived on maize, boiled in water, without any fat" (Maximilian's Travels, 1832-1834, XXIV, 48); "We subsisted entirely on maize broth and maize bread . . ." (same, XXIV, 63-64); Farnham, in 1839, describes rich fare—"A dish of rich cocoa, mush, and sugar, and dried buffalo tongue, on the fresh grass, by a cool rivulet on the wild mountains of Oregon!" (XXVIII, 325-326).

¹² Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America . . .* (London, 1643), reprint in *Collections of the Rhode-Island Historical Society*, I (1827), 33-34. Williams became one of the first in a long line of American "apostles of corn." He even thought (page 94) that if introduced abroad, "it might save many thousand lives in England, occasioned by the binding nature of the English wheat, the Indian Corne keeping the body in a constant moderate looseness."

¹³ John Josselyn, *New-England's Rarities . . .* (Boston, 1865), reprint edition, pp. 101-102.

¹⁴ Fulmer Mood, "John Winthrop, Jr., on Indian Corn," *The New England Quarterly*, X (1937), 121-133, quote from pp. 130-131. Part of Winthrop's article had appeared in *Philosophical Transactions*, 142 (1678), 1065-1069.

¹⁵ Another Indian synonym for "samp" appears to be "conahenna," which is described as being made of hulled corn, pounded, wetted with lye, and boiled several hours "until it becomes about the consistency of gruel" (Mrs. George A. Perkins, *Early Times on the Susquehanna* [Binghamton, 1870], p. 275). The time, about 1818, the locale, the South?



FATHER STIRS THE MUSH-POT. Table is set with mush-bowls and milk-pitchers, for late huskers' snack of mush-and-milk. Illustration, Harper's Monthly, July, 1856.

—the concoction is “apt to swell in the stomach or bowels.”²¹

The Swedes on the Delaware adopted the mush practice too. Their historian, Aerelius, writing in 1759, says of their eating habits: “The arrangement of meals among country people is usually this: for breakfast in summer cold milk and bread, rice, milk pudding, cheese and butter, cold meat. In winter, mush and milk and milk porridge, hominy and milk. The same also serves for supper if so desired.”²² Of course the noon-day meal, dinner, had more variety, with vegetables and meat dishes. It was the “big meal” of the farmer’s day.

The Quakers also made use of this favorite Pennsylvania dish. The Quaker population of Bucks County around 1730 were reported as eating “mush or hominy with milk and butter and honey for supper.”²³

Describing the food eaten by Chester Countians around 1800, “Monitor” wrote in 1877, “The people ate rye bread and corn mush and milk.” And again, “Mush and milk constituted the common everyday supper for the farmers’ families; the mush was made about the middle of the afternoon so as to boil it thoroughly, and then the pot was raised a few links higher to keep it warm until supper time.”²⁴ At any rate it kept them strong for the “chopping bees” and other strenuous farm work described by the same writer.

²¹ For cornmeal mush among the Moravians, see Elma E. Gray and Leslie Robb Gray, *Wilderness Christians: The Moravian Mission to the Delaware Indians* (Ithaca, N. Y., © 1956), p. 238.

²² Israel Aerelius, *Description of the Former and Present Condition of New Sweden* (Philadelphia, 1874), pp. 158–159, original edition, Stockholm, 1759.

²³ John Watson, “An Account of the First Settlements of the Townships of Buckingham and Solebury.” *Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Memoirs*, I (1826), 304.

The most eloquent testimony on Quaker use of mush comes from the pen of Wilmer Atkinson (1840–1920), Bucks County Quaker who founded the *Farm Journal* in 1877. Speaking of his boyhood in his autobiography—an extremely valuable document for Pennsylvania folk-culture—he writes:

The Warwick farm almost supported the family. A sack of corn was taken from the crib, a bag of wheat from the bin, carried to the mill, often on horseback, and ground into meal for mush and bread. In return for grinding the miller would retain part of the grist, some thought a little too much at times. The meal was made into mush and from this we got much of our sustenance. Mother knew how to prepare and serve the mush, now one of the lost arts. She put it on the fire to cook at noon, or it may have been in the morning, and kept it there all the remainder of the day. I can almost fancy I hear it puffing and bubbling now. When thoroughly boiled in this slow way, allowed to get cool and fried, it made, with molasses or gravy, a delicious breakfast dish which went to the right spot and stayed there until the next meal. Few of this generation really know what a wholesome and appetizing dish fried mush can be made. We had it for breakfast nearly every morning, fried potatoes sometimes taking the place of mush at night.²⁵

²⁴ “Habits and Manners of the People of Chester County 75 Years Ago,” *Local News* (West Chester), December 15, 1877, January 5, 1878.

²⁵ Wilmer Atkinson, *An Autobiography* (Philadelphia, 1920), pp. 38–39. Also this reference: “We always had molasses on the table at every meal and freely helped ourselves to it. We used it on buckwheat cakes, on cornmeal mush, and on bread with butter” (p. 35). Chester County Quakers also relished mush. Howard H. Brinton, Quaker historian, wrote me that “corn meal mush was in our family a frequent breakfast cereal and fried mush occasionally appeared on the table at other meals to our delight.” This from the West Chester-Brandywine area in the latter half of the 19th Century (Letter, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, June 25, 1962).

Along the frontiers of Pennsylvania in the 18th Century the Scotch-Irish were great consumers of mush. The histories of the Scotch-Irish and of those counties in Central and Western Pennsylvania which were heavily settled by Scotch-Irish attest to this fact. "The customary fare of the Scotch-Irish pioneers," writes Professor Dunaway, "included fried mush with wild honey, roasting ears and succotash, pone bread, johnny-cake, hominy, potatoes, turnips, wild fruits, game, and fish. Perhaps the most typical dish was pioneer porridge, consisting of mush and milk, although mush was frequently eaten with molasses, bear's oil, and the gravy of fried meat."²⁰

Pennsylvania's historian of agriculture writes of the Scotch-Irish that "being Scots, they were desolate without oatmeal porridge, but corn meal mush was more readily available." And among them, "ordinarily Johnny cake or pone was the only bread for breakfast and dinner; for supper, porridge or mush and milk. When there was no milk, mush was eaten with molasses, honey or meat gravy."²¹

In Northwestern Pennsylvania among the favorite foods of the pioneer settlers were "buckwheat cakes, corn mush and milk, rye mush and milk, bread, hominy. . . ." From Southwestern Pennsylvania comes the testimony: "Fried mush, scrapple, smoked sausage, *Schmierkäse*, and coleslaw were always popular."²²

Among the Connecticut settlers in the Wyoming Valley, "corn mush and milk was a favorite dish for children."²³ In the Northern tier of counties, settled largely by New Englanders and New York State farmers, the related dish "samp and milk" continued in use as late as the 1890's.²⁴

Mush in Pennsylvania Dutchdom

The earliest reference to "mush and milk" among the Pennsylvania Dutch comes from 1787, when one "Stoffel Ehrlich," in a letter written in the *Neue Unpartheyische Lancaster Zeitung* of September 12, 1787, described his personal eating habits as follows: "In the morning I drink neither tea nor coffee, but eat my mush and milk or sour milk soup and a piece of bacon with it, like my late father, and then end with a sip of brandy" (*Ich trinke weder thee noch kaffee, esse morgens mein mosch und milch oder saure*

²⁰ Wayland F. Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1944), p. 189. He cites evidence from Northwestern and Southwestern Pennsylvania in particular. The Scotch-Irish of Franklin County counted mush and milk as a staple food. According to one of their historians, ". . . mush and milk constituted the invariable offering for supper in the late fall and winter months, with bread and milk or 'rivil' soup in summer time" (M. A. Foltz, "A Backward Glance to the Traits, Traditions and Personality of the Early Scotch-Irish," *The Kittchtinny Historical Society*, IV, 22).

²¹ Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 409-410.

²² William J. McKnight, *A Pioneer Outline History of Northwestern Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1905), p. 226. He also reports the common use of "wheat and rye mush."

²³ Samuel P. Weaver, *Autobiography of a Pennsylvania Dutchman* (New York, © 1953), p. 58. This by a professor of constitutional law at Gonzaga University!

²⁴ Henry B. Plumb, *History of Hanover Township . . .* (Wilkes-Barre, 1885), p. 239.

²⁵ Hugh W. Alger, writing of his boyhood days on a Bradford County farm: "Another dish was called 'samp.' It, too, had the hulls removed and then the kernels were broken up into coarse bits, something like hominy grits. After a thorough cooking, it made a good lunch eaten with milk. We generally spoke of it as 'samp and milk'" ("Crops and Chores: Pennsylvania Farm Life in the 1890's," *The Pennsylvania Magazine*, LXXXV [1961], 395).

milchsupp, und ein stück speck dazu, wie mein vater seliger, und setze dann ein schluck schnaps darauf).

Even preachers among the Pennsylvania Dutch counted mush as a favorite dish. According to his son's reminiscences, Father Helffrich (Johannes Helffrich, 1795-1852), Reformed pastor of Lehigh and Berks Counties, had two favorite dishes. One was the old-fashioned Dutch potato-soup, the other—naturally—was mush (*Vater ass gern Kartoffelsuppe. Es war dies nebst Mosch sein Lieblingsgericht. Die Suppe musste jedenfalls mehrmals die Woche Abends aufgetischt sein.*)²⁵

H. L. Fischer, the dialect poet of York County, has not only sung the praises of mush in verse (see Section VI, below), but describes for us his grandfather Harbaugh's predilection for mush.

"On his journeys to and from Antietam," writes Fischer, "my grandfather used to stop overnight at our home in Franklin County. On such occasions he always looked for, and got his favorite dish—'Mosch un' Millich,' for his supper. Even at that time, however (1829-1830), this good oldtime, simple and healthful evening dish had become somewhat unpopular, and had been succeeded by 'Hinkel, Brodworscht, Flannel-Kuche, Waffle, Butter, allerle' Preserves, Coffee un' Te, &c. [Chicken, sausage, flannel-cakes, waffles, butter, all kinds of preserves, coffee and tea, &c.] But an old thing revived is ever attractive. The great old *Zinnich Schissel* [pewter bowl] was summoned from its banishment in an obscure corner in the great *Küche-Schank* [kitchen cupboard], bright as a silver dollar, filled with fuming hot *Mosch*, and once more enthroned in the midst of the great old family table. And now, more from love and veneration for Grandfather than for the *Mosch*, all joined him in the rustic feast; we—children—exchanging, the while, many a sly glance and mischievous grin at the comparative novelty of the scene. At such times, little was said; on the part of the children, literally nothing, unless spoken to; and then the answer was brief, respectful and to the point."

Grandfather was evidently the last to finish. "On one such occasion," continues our account, "as one by one, all had ceased eating—throats cleared and mouths wiped—and while all sat waiting (as was the custom) for Father to move first from the table, there remained standing in the middle of the great old pewter dish, a little pyramid of mush—solitary and alone, when Grandfather took his spoon and tremblingly lifted the little pyramid from the dish to his bowl, facetiously remarking, '*Des schämt sich doch juscht do, so gans alle in dere grosse Schissel*' [Why, that's ashamed of itself there, all alone that way in that big bowl!]. Even the children had permission to laugh, but never loud or boisterously, in the presence of age and superiority. That, however, was the last of the mush and of Grandfather too, so far as my observation went, for I never saw him again."²⁶

From Southeastern Pennsylvania come three very interesting and revealing references to mush. Hugh Lindsay,

²⁶ William A. Helffrich, *Lebensbild aus dem Pennsylvanisch-Deutschen Predigerstand: Oder Wahrheit in Licht und Schatten* (Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1906), p. 9.

²⁷ H. L. Fischer, '*S Alt Marik-Haus Mittes in D'r Schtadt, Un Die Alte' Zeite.*' *En Centennial Poem in Pennsylvanisch Deutsch. In Zwe Dheil* (York, Pennsylvania, 1879), "English preface," pp. x-xi. The grandfather was Jost Herbag (1741-1831), of whom an interesting profile exists by the York folk-artist, Lewis Miller.

Pennsylvania's most famous 19th Century puppeteer, in describing his boyhood, tells of living in Blockley Township, Philadelphia County, in 1814, at the age of 10 years. "While I lived at his house," he writes, "there were two bound girls living there. We got every day mush and milk to eat morning and evening, and for dinner fat pork and potatoes."³⁴ John Strouse of Berks County, born in 1780, reminiscing in the 1870's about his early life, makes the statement: "Cider soup for dinner, mush and milk for supper and rye bread and butter for breakfast, with plenty of speck, was about the general run of dishes then served."³⁵ And a reference from Lancaster County: "The children were the innocents, no good for them. At the table they had to stand to eat their mush and milk supper from tincups, and their panbaas breakfast from pewter plates."³⁶

So popular had mush become among the Pennsylvania Dutch that according to a Lancaster County historian one of the 18th Century German emigrants returned to Germany, taking with him "some corn meal carefully put up, that he might teach them to make and use Pennsylvania mush."³⁷

Mush Goes to School

At the early colleges and academies in Pennsylvania mush was a prominent dish in the early years of the 19th Century. The novels of Agnes Sligh Turnbull, dealing with Western Pennsylvania life in the 19th Century, have several references to mush. In *Rolling Years* (New York, 1936) she describes how young David enrolled in the Elderidge Academy and did his own cooking—the main bill of fare was mush.³⁸

Mush was also served at Quaker boarding-schools in Eastern Pennsylvania. The historian of Westtown School tells us that the students in the period 1800–1825 preferred the "pie nights" to the "mush nights." "There are two kinds of nights at Westtown: the nights, five in the week, when the supper consists of bread and milk or corn-meal mush and molasses, and the other two, delightful in memory, when there is pie, delicious pie with flaky, well-browned crust, baked on the premises in an oven preheated by a wood fire built inside it."³⁹

Mush and Methodism

The Methodist circuit-riders who rode the Allegheny frontier in the early 19th Century had plenty of occasion to sample mush, for it was the staple among the poorer classes and mountain farmers among whom they made their early foothold.

³⁴ *History of the Life, Travels and Incidents of Col. Hugh Lindsay* (Philadelphia, 1859), pp. 6–7.

³⁵ *Reading Gazette*, February 12, 1876.

³⁶ *New Holland Clarion*, series of articles beginning February 13, 1897.

³⁷ Aaron B. Grosh, "Early Memories and Other Articles," *The Marietta Times* (1880), No. VI, in Lancaster County Scrapbook, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Grosh was a Universalist minister and historian who grew up at Marietta.

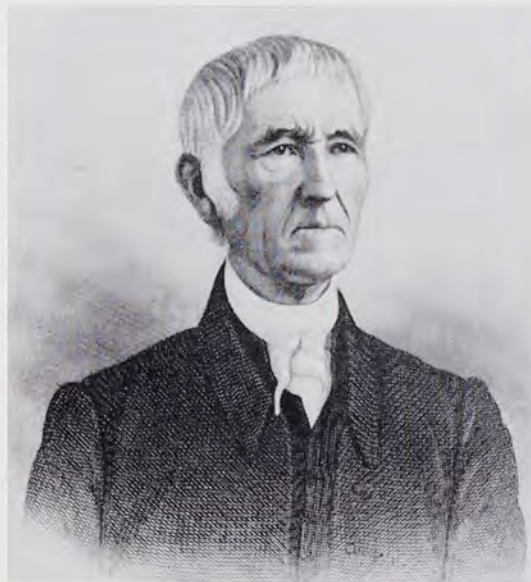
³⁸ From Earl W. Dickey, Altoona, Pennsylvania, in letter dated October 2, 1962.

³⁹ Helen G. Hole, *Westtown Through the Years 1799–1942* (Westtown, Pennsylvania, 1942), p. 86. The pies were of fresh fruit in summer, dried fruit in winter, baked in a dish 13 inches in diameter and 3 inches thick at the center. The pie was broken in pieces and eaten in pewter porringers with as much milk as desired. A "pot of mush" was also a feature of the camp suppers of the Westtown scholars later in the 19th Century (p. 273).

Bishop Asbury complained on one occasion that mush affected his health. Writing to George Roberts from Portsmouth, Virginia, March 26, 1801, he confesses that "the want of water, the changes of mush have affected me some . . ."⁴⁰

A Pennsylvanian named Robert Boyd (1792–1862), a Scotch-Irishman born in Westmoreland County, who became a Methodist circuit-rider in Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio, found occasion to criticize the mush-preparation of the Methodist sisters in whose homes and cabins he had to stay. In those days, mush *was* served when the preacher came to stay overnight.⁴¹ It was often mush or nothing. Let us listen as Brother Boyd registers his complaint, late in life, after a lifetime of frontier cooking that he, as guest, had to put up with:

It is with some degree of embarrassment that I proceed to notice the afflictions caused by unskillful cooks, as it looks so much like meddling with women's business. And were it so that none but women had to eat the things prepared, I might pass this matter in silence. But as they cook for *men*, not only preachers, but the common day-laborer, I shall, therefore, as a representative not only of preachers but my sex generally, call attention to this afflicting matter. And I wish it distinctly understood that my complaint does not lie against poverty, or the want of variety or rich fare. The ground of my complaint is just as applicable to the pot of mush or johnny-cake as the most costly fare. And now while I am at the mush-pot, permit me to say that this simple, cheap fare may suffer as much proportionable loss in the hands of an unskillful cook as the most costly dish. Just look for a moment at the difference between a mess well salted, *long* and well cooked, and a *hasty*, thin splash, nearly raw. Now, this latter is just the kind of mess that is had in many genteel families. I would, therefore, advise the preacher not to extol the mush supper in a strange place, lest he should get into a trap.⁴²



PORTRAIT OF ROBERT BOYD

⁴⁰ *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury* (New York, 1958), III, 202.

⁴¹ Despite the folktale that mush wasn't good enough to serve the preacher. See VI, below.

⁴² Robert Boyd, *Personal Memoirs: Together with a Discussion upon the Hardships and Sufferings of Itinerant Life; And Also a Discourse upon the Pastoral Relation* (Cincinnati, 1862), pp. 189–191.

A Central Pennsylvania Methodist preacher, reminiscing over his ministerial career in the second half of the 19th Century, strikes a somewhat apologetic note in introducing his subject, his own life, and uses the term "mush and milk" as symbolic of his humble origins: "That no one may look for an extra dish of 'bake-meats' instead of a plain dish of 'mush and milk,' I will here and now volunteer the information that the writer is only an unfinished and incomplete product of one of the many humble Christian homes of the 'Blue Juniata' section of the Keystone state."⁴³

That mush was considered a "lower class" dish after the Civil War is borne out by the fact that a reporter on the Lancaster *Intelligencer* in 1878 tells us that mush was popular among Pennsylvania's Negroes. Writing in the issue of November 21, 1878, he explains that "'Pawnauss' (or Ponehoss) was corn meal stirred into the liquid in which liver puddings had been boiled; and made a very agreeable mess to those who were fond of liver puddings and hasty pudding, or 'mush,'—popular among those of 'African descent.'"

Johnny Appleseed's Mush-Dipper

Even Johnny Appleseed, that midwestern character who replenished his supply of seeds in Western Pennsylvania's flourishing apple-orchards, is connected with our chronicle of mush.

In an article on "Old Johnny Appleseed," in the Lancaster *Intelligencer*, January 29, 1879, we are told that "for a long time he wore the large tin dipper in which he cooked his mush while traveling."

An earlier reference to Johnny's dependence upon mush appears in Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1847), page 432: "Johnny, who wore on his head a tin utensil which answered both as a cap and a mushpot, filled it with water and quenched the fire."

We must, however, despite its attractiveness, consign Johnny's tin hat to the realm of myth. "Just who first told the story of the mushpot hat," writes the principal 20th Century authority on Johnny Appleseed, "is not now clear. Not a single authentic instance of its having been actually seen has been preserved. Yet it has stuck most firmly of all the headgears in the Johnny Appleseed tradition and is now inextricably attached to the myth."⁴⁴

Mush and the Shakes

A Pennsylvania-born schoolteacher "boarding around" in the vicinity of Findlay, Ohio, in 1838, gives us our next reference to mush.

"I had taught only a few days," he tells us in his memoirs, "when one day I had a shake of the ague, during school hours. This was followed by a high fever and a severe headache, until sometime in the night, when I got into a perspiration, and the headache and fever abated. My next boarding-place was with the family of Esq. Morris, about half a mile west of the schoolhouse, on a public road, running East and West. . . . Here they made me Pepper Tea to cure the ague. And it did stop the shakes for three weeks.

"My next boarding place was at old Mr. Bushong's. . . . The first evening I was there, they had mush and milk on

the table for supper. And I was glad, for I liked mush and milk. But they would not allow me to eat of it, saying, mush and milk were not good for a person who had the ague. I was sorry for this, and mentally doubted its correctness. But they had an abundance of other good wholesome food, of which I was allowed freely to partake."⁴⁵

Mush was presumably not considered good for the ague because of its heating qualities.

Mush in the Civil War

The least appetizing chapter in our chronicle of mush deals with its use in the Civil War.

Cornmeal was naturally used by the Pennsylvania regiments on their way through the South. The history of the "Bucktail" Regiment from North Central Pennsylvania tells us that their "rations were half flour, half hard crackers and [once] in a while some Indian meal."⁴⁶ Out of this they could make corn-dodgers, "slap-jacks" (corn-cakes), or mush.

Mush was also "served" in the Confederate prisons. In a description of his long stay in the notorious Andersonville Prison a member of the 118th Pennsylvania Regiment tells us: "Our bill of fare was something like this. First two weeks—cooked rations. On alternate days we received a piece of corn-bread and a very small piece of bacon, then again corn-mush. Balance of month—raw rations. A pint of corn-meal which, I think, was made from corn-cob as well as corn. Sometimes a little rice, and occasionally some stock beans or peas, full of bugs. Ground corn-cob, peas, bugs, all went down. We could not spare anything. Very often it would happen that on mush day it would rain and by the time it would be divided and subdivided it would be saturated with rain and would have a very sour taste. A member of our regiment was in the habit of speaking about buckwheat cakes and Jersey sausages on these occasions, which we bore with good grace for a while, but finally threatened to annihilate him if he did not stop it while we were eating our sour mush."⁴⁷

At Andersonville wood was so scarce that when the prisoners did make their own mush it was difficult to make it with any degree of perfection: "Imagine a stick of cord-wood cut up into ninety pieces, and one of those pieces made to cook a day's ration of meal. It required economy of the closest character, and we were often compelled to eat the mush or the cakes that we made hardly warmed through."⁴⁸

⁴³ John Dickson Sours, "Sours Family & Personal Reminiscences," manuscript in private hands, Adams County, Pennsylvania, typescript courtesy of Donald F. Garretson, Aspers, Pennsylvania, p. 23. J. D. Sours (1815-1912) was a native of Adams County who became a school teacher and Methodist local preacher in Ohio, later returning to Pennsylvania. Mush was also used in folk medicine in the Midwest. W. L. McAtee, in his article, "Home Medication in Grant County, Indiana, in the 'Nineties,'" mentions that "hot corn-meal and oatmeal, mushes, as well as mashed potatoes, sandwiched in cloth, were applied as poultices. . . ." (*Midwest Folklore*, V [1955], 214).

⁴⁶ O. R. Howard Thomson and William H. Rauch, *History of the "Bucktails"* . . . (Philadelphia, 1906), pp. 64-65.

⁴⁷ William H. Henning's "Prison Experience," in *History of the 118th Pennsylvania Volunteers: Corn Exchange Regiment* . . . (Philadelphia, 1905), p. 665.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 622-623. Cornmeal was also used to make "corn beer" or "sour beer" (pour water on cornmeal and allow it to ferment in the sun), thought to be good for the scurvy (pp. 617, 665-6); corn dodgers (p. 662); corn-cakes (p. 611); corn-bread (p. 613); corn-coffee (pp. 623, 633); and corn-vinegar (p. 626).

⁴⁴ "Bro." Hicks, *Semi-Centennial Paper: Recollections, Reflections, Sunshine and Shadows, of a "Yankee Preacher" in the Land of Reconstruction During that Period* (n.p., [1916]), p. 7.

⁴⁵ Robert Price, *Johnny Appleseed: Man and Myth* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1954), p. 168. A picture of Johnny topped with his mushpot hat appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* for November, 1871.

It appears that mush was not so popular among the Massachusetts regiments, who preferred to use their cooking-kettles for baking beans. John D. Billings, in his *Hardtack and Coffee: Or the Unwritten Story of Army Life* (Boston, 1887), pages 118-119, tells us that his mates rebelled first at hardtack and then at mush, by parodying a popular song of the day, "Hard Times," which had the refrain, "O greenbacks, come again once more," into "O hard crackers, come again no more!"

"When General Lyon heard the men singing these stanzas in their tents," he tells us, "he is said to have been moved by them to the extent of ordering the cook to serve up corn-meal mush, for a change, when the song received the following alteration:

*But to groans and to murmurs
There has come a sudden hush,
Our frail forms are fainting at the door;
We are starving now on horse-feed
That the cooks call mush,
O hard crackers, come again once more!*

Chorus:

*It is the dying wail of the starving,
Hard crackers, hard crackers, come again once more;
You were old and very wormy,
but we pass your failings o'er.
O hard crackers, come again once more!*

Mush for Sale

In the 19th Century mush was an urban as well as a rural favorite. By the 1870's it appears that Philadelphia housewives could buy pans of mush, to make fried mush

for breakfast or other meals, at market or butcher shop.

The editor of the *Farm Journal* reports in January, 1878, that "city housekeepers now usually buy their Indian mush of their grocer and butcher, who obtains it of the manufacturer at one and a quarter cents per pound, and sells at double that price to the consumer. A Mr. Brustar, on Spring Garden Street, is the leading manufacturer and has an immense trade. It is sold to dealers in tin pans holding ten pounds each."⁴⁹

Even some Lancaster County Mennonites may have bought mush by 1900, according to Helen R. Martin. Tillie the "Mennonite Maid" is told by her "Aunty Em," "Here, Tillie, you take and go up to Sister Jennie Hershey's and get some mush. I'm makin' fried mush fur supper." "Here's a quarter," she adds. "Get two pound." Sister Jennie's husband Jonas had a "pork-stall" at market; he was the "country pork-butcher" who made mush on the side. When Tillie arrives and says, "I've come to get two pound of mush," Mrs. Hershey answers, "It's all. We sold every cake at market, and no more's made yet. It was all a'ready till market was only half over."⁵⁰ Evidently Hershey's Mush was a saleable item at Lancaster Market.

Mush in the Farm Papers

For late 19th and early 20th Century Pennsylvania use of mush, one of the best sources is the monthly or bi-weekly farm papers that were once part of the farmer's diet of winter reading. The two most important of these for Penn-

⁴⁹ *Farm Journal*, Vol. I, No. 11 (January, 1878), 86.

⁵⁰ Helen Reimensnyder Martin, *Tillie A Mennonite Maid: A Story of the Pennsylvania Dutch* (New York, © 1904), pp. 147, 150, 152, 155, 223.



COLONIAL GENTLEMEN EATING "HASTY PUDDING" (MUSH). Once a general American dish, mush lost favor by the 20th Century, and is rarely served now, except in the breakfast form of fried-mush. Illustration, Harper's Monthly, July, 1856.

sylvania are *The Farm Journal*, founded in 1877 by the Quaker Wilmer Atkinson—and still going strong as a national farm paper although it has lost the strong Pennsylvania flavor it once had. The other is *The Pennsylvania Farmer*, founded in 1900 and edited from Harrisburg, which once also used to have a great deal of local Pennsylvania folk-cultural flavor.

Two items from this massive body of sources must suffice. Editor Atkinson of the *Journal* could be counted upon in the Fall and Winter months to publish nostalgic items like this one in October, 1881: "Hurry up the mush, or 'hasty pudding,' as the Yankees call it. Dry some corn in the oven and send to the mill to be ground. Fried mush for breakfast, the year round, is not bad to take."⁵¹

In 1917, when the country was tightening its belt in the throes of the World War I crisis, a valuable article appeared in the *Pennsylvania Farmer* urging the use of more cornmeal, pone, and mush, in the farmer's diet. The article implies that mush was even then a somewhat old-fashioned dish:

Possibly no other article of food has passed from the diet of the average farm home more rapidly the past few years than has cornmeal. It is doubtful if one visitor out of a dozen, stopping for meals at the farm homes, would be served a bowl of cornmeal mush or a plate of 'corn pone.' And yet the dishes prepared from cornmeal are as appetizing and as valuable heat and energy foods in the diet as they were to our grandparents and our parents.

While prices of food stuffs keep soaring, as predicted by experts and commissioners, cornmeal should become one of the most popular heat and energy foods of the diet. From the standpoint of food value alone, corn is one of the cheapest food products obtainable. A number of dishes made from cornmeal will afford a variety in the diet, besides furnishing the main article of at least one meal each day. Meal ground from new corn, selected from the farmers' crib, is usually best, as well as most cheaply secured. A few local feed mills still grind and bolt the meal at five to ten cents per bushel.⁵²

The article concluded with some mush recipes which we have included in Section V, below.

III. PREPARATION OF MUSH

The "mush season" in rural Pennsylvania once extended from September to April. However, as one of my informants puts it, "the preparation for it began in May—corn planting time."⁵³

Not just any corn was used for cornmeal or "mushmeal." My informant continues: "We kept and grew a special variety of corn from which we obtained our *mush-mail* (cornmeal). The variety was a species of flint corn. We never had any meal made from dent corn. The flint variety had a very hard kernel—glassy-like. There was a great difference between the meal made from flint and that made from dent corn. A few rows of flint were enough to give us sufficient meal for the '*mush oon millich*' season which began in September and ended in April."

Another Dutch informant, from Lehigh County, said her family always used "*ocht-royich gail feld-welshkon*"—"eight-rowed yellow field-corn" for making mush-meal.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *The Farm Journal*, Vol. V, No. 13 (October, 1881), 216, in "How To Do Things Column."

⁵² *Pennsylvania Farmer*, February 10, 1917, p. 150, article on "Use of Cornmeal in the Diet."

⁵³ William F. Yoder, aged 85, of Duncansville, Pennsylvania, a native of Hegins, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, retired school teacher, Letter, August 13, 1962.

Yellow or White Corn: Regional Preferences?

It would seem that there are regional preferences for yellow or white corn for cornmeal. The South traditionally preferred white cornmeal, Pennsylvania traditionally prefers the yellow. These preferences continue to this day.

One of the earliest articles dealing with this division appeared in 1824 in a Baltimore farm paper, stating that white corn is purchased almost exclusively in the South, intended for the "blacks," who dislike yellow corn. Yellow corn is used in the Eastern States (New England) where there are no slaves, but there it is used as horse feed. In Baltimore, it is mostly white corn that is used.⁵⁵

Roasting the Corn

The distinctive flavor of Pennsylvania Mush—at least in Eastern and Central Pennsylvania—comes from the fact that the corn is always roasted (toasted, parched) in an oven before it is ground into cornmeal.

Earlier this year the Folklife Society received a letter from a New York State subscriber, who expressed interest in the fact that a bag of yellow Pennsylvania cornmeal which we used in illustrating an earlier article on "Corn Culture in Pennsylvania" (*Pennsylvania Folklife*, Spring 1961) says on the bag label, "It's Roasted." "Why is corn roasted?" asked the York Stater, who goes on to say, "I believe roasted or toasted corn meal is not sold up in this part of New York State. I wonder if a demand could be created for it." And finally he asks, "Do you have to change your recipe when using roasted corn meal in place of regular corn meal?"⁵⁶

This to illustrate the fact that not every area in the United States is familiar with this refinement in mush-preparation.

The "roasted cornmeal belt" would seem to be limited to the folk-culture of Southeastern and Central Pennsylvania, and the adjoining parts of Delaware and Western Maryland. The farther South one goes, one sees the familiar Southern white, untoasted cornmeal in the stores. The farther West one goes even in Pennsylvania, the toasting of corn for cornmeal preparation becomes a rarity. Even in some areas of Eastern Pennsylvania, it appears that some groups like the Quakers did not always roast their corn.

For example, Howard Brinton states that in his memory Chester County Quakers "did not, like the 'Dutch,' roast corn or dry it in the oven before having it ground but bought meal which had been ground at the mill."⁵⁷

Prof. Phil Jack of Brownsville, Western Pennsylvania, has this to say about roasting corn before grinding it into cornmeal. "Recently I had a chance to talk with a flock of my people about roasting corn for mush. All of them said that it was new to them. I was interested in their reaction which was one of surprise. This was in northern

⁵⁴ Elmira Layton, Slatedale, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, July, 1962.

⁵⁵ "On the Cultivation of Indian Corn," *The American Farmer* (Baltimore), I (1824), 39-40. A writer in the *Monthly Journal of Agriculture* in 1846 maintains that white corn makes "nicer bread" than yellow, and that the Southern Negroes prefer white (Vol. II, No. 1 [July, 1846], 46).

⁵⁶ Letter from Martin M. Hyzer, Andes, New York, January 25, 1962.

⁵⁷ Letter from Howard H. Brinton, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, June 25, 1962.

Indiana County. All stated that mush was *never* made from roasted corn."⁵⁸

What is the answer to this folk-cultural puzzle? It would appear that the Pennsylvania Dutch culture—Eastern and Central Pennsylvania and Western Maryland—is the roasted cornmeal belt. Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker has suggested as the reason for this geographical limitation that the Pennsylvania Dutch consistently had bakeovens while some of the other early groups did not. Large quantities of corn could not very well be roasted over the fireplaces where cooking was done in most pioneer homes. True, the Indians had parched their corn in hot fire-ashes but this method was not always acceptable to the white settlers. It seems probable that the Pennsylvania Dutch settlers, with their large bake-ovens (part of their Continental heritage) developed the added refinement of roasted cornmeal as their contribution to the early American mush-culture.⁵⁹

On Kiln-Drying Corn

Kiln-drying of corn for commercial cornmeal is mentioned in the agricultural press in the 1840's, but its relation to the home drying and roasting of corn has not been determined. It is interesting, however, that kiln-drying of corn for export cornmeal was centered in the Brandywine area of Delaware and Southeastern Pennsylvania.

In 1846 it was reported that the Brandywine Mills in Delaware have had "almost [a] monopoly of the kiln-dried corn meal business—for now upwards of fifty years." Experience has taught that cornmeal *must* be kiln-dried for exportation. "This process, I am informed," writes a correspondent from Wilmington, "was attempted in Connecticut at the close of the Revolution, and about the same time at the Brandywine Mills—the Connecticut millers using the *white corn*, and producing an inferior article of meal, owing to want of skill in preparing it and defects in the construction of the kiln. The Brandywine millers perfected their kiln and adopted the *yellow corn* by way of distinction, more for the purpose of signaling their brand, than by any supposed superiority over the white."⁶⁰ According to this account, the Brandywine mills captured the West India cornmeal market and thus induced farmers to grow yellow corn.

The following year (1847) kiln-dried cornmeal was introduced as a novelty into the Buffalo markets. According to a report in a farm paper, "A new commodity has been introduced into Buffalo market, in the shape of kiln-dried corn meal, which bids fair to become an important article in trade. It is manufactured at Toledo, where is erected an apparatus capable of turning out 2,400 bushels per day, and it is put up in very neat packages similar to flour."⁶¹

⁵⁸ Letter from Prof. Phil Jack, California State College, September 11, 1962.

⁵⁹ The Pennsylvania Folklife Society is of course looking for colonial and early 19th Century evidence on all of these important folk-cultural questions. Another problem is the limitation of another member of the corn-cuisine, hominy, to Central and Western Pennsylvania. It was extremely popular among the Scotch-Irish and—from the evidence that we have thus far assembled for our chapter on hominy—less popular East of the Susquehanna River, among the Pennsylvania Dutch groups. Mush was popular on both sides of the river!

⁶⁰ "Indian Corn. Experiments in Manufacturing Corn Meal," letter to John S. Skinner, Editor, from James W. Thomson, Wilmington, dated June 12, 1846, in the *Monthly Journal of Agriculture*, Vol. II, No. 1 (July, 1846), 40-41.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, No. 7 (January, 1847), 331.



MUSH-POT AND STEAMING MUSH-BOWL. And there are the spoons, an individual bowl, a milk-pitcher and a molasses-pot. Mush was a full meal in itself, nothing else was served. Illustration, Harper's Monthly, July, 1856.

The Home Roasting Process

The old way of roasting the corn was to use the farm bake-oven. These became rare after 1900, except among the "plain" sects, and the second method was to roast the corn in the kitchen stove.

Here is a description of the "old" method, from Schuylkill County: "After the corn was husked, the ears were put in the oven (*der bock-uffa*). The oven was first heated from a blazing wood-fire. After the embers were consumed, the coals were raked out with the '*bock-uffa kitch*.' The bricks of the arch and the stone bottom had absorbed enough heat to dry the corn thoroughly and to lightly parch those on the bottom of the heap. The parched ears gave a delightful taste to the meal and mush."⁶²

The use of the bake-oven for roasting corn continued much longer among the Central Pennsylvania Amish. According to our Mifflin County informant, who grew up among the Old Order Amish of the Big Valley, cornmeal was prepared as follows: "We went to the corn crib with two large bushel baskets and picked out the nicest ears making sure there was no mold on the outside. Then we washed it with water in a tub or 'spritzed' water over it. Then after mother was finished baking the pies and bread she put the corn in as the last thing and usually left it in until the next day. It was removed after the browning and toasting process and put through the corn sheller. Then it was ready for grinding. We took it to the village mill sometimes but later when we had a hammer mill we put it through the feed grinder two or three times. A batch like this would last perhaps two months. In the fall we often took the corn from the stalks and dried it in the bakeoven and it made especially good corn meal. Of course

⁶² From William F. Yoder, Letter, August 13, 1962.

it is still made in Big Valley this way and in the outdoor bakeoven. One can buy corn meal from the village mill or in the town store, but it was not considered the best in my family. It was too pale and flat and not toasted the way we wanted it."⁶³

The cookstove method of roasting corn for mushmeal is described as follows by a native of the Bald Eagle Valley in Central Pennsylvania: "Our mush had the flavor of well-cured corn of the best quality. From childhood I remember that Father laid aside a couple bushels of the best ears of corn while husking and brought them to the house to be cured for mushmeal. It was piled in rows on a shelf which was suspended from the ceiling rafters of the spacious kitchen. When dry it was laid in the old cook stove oven with the door on each side left open. A slow fire was made to finish drying it slowly and to brown the ears slightly that touched the sides and bottoms of the stove. The parched grains, ground with the others, gave a 'pop-corn' scent to the meal and a delicious flavor to our mush, that can't be equalled in any other way. To bring out the best flavor it must be cooked slowly for two or three hours."⁶⁴

Shelling and Grinding the Corn

The next step was shelling the corn.

When I asked one of my Centre County informants how to make mush, she burst out with, "First have a lot of children to shell the corn!"⁶⁵ When shelling the corn was a household task in pioneer days—rather than a barn-job turning the corn-sheller as in later years—it was a favorite child's task in the Fall and Winter evenings. There were also some interesting by-products. A Chester County historian writes in 1877 that "much of the corn was shelled in the evenings, in the kitchen, and the little boys would exercise their architectural skill in building cob houses and enjoyed it very much."⁶⁶

In more mechanized days, "the shelling was a matter of only a few minutes with the hand-turned corn-sheller. Needless to say, the gristmill performed the last process before the meal went into the iron pot."⁶⁷

A group of people interviewed near Herndon in Northumberland County in 1962 reported "that the roasted kernels were taken to a grist mill for grinding, none stated it was ground at home. If the mill had enough stones, one was reserved for cornmeal grinding. Otherwise, it was ground on one special day of the week after the stones were cleared and cleaned of the residue from other grinding. One informant stated, feed grinding stones were used and not flour stones, since they would grind it too fine. After grinding, it was cleaned by sieving and blowing out the hulls, coarse particles, etc., then it was ready for use as cornmeal mush."⁶⁸

⁶³ Letter from Prof. John A. Hostetler, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, June 16, 1962.

⁶⁴ From Flora (Brugger) Curtin, Jensen Beach, Florida, aged 75, a native of Unionville (Fleming P. O.), Centre County, Pennsylvania.

⁶⁵ From Miss Anna Grace Clark, aged 86, of Tyrone, Pennsylvania, a native of Buffalo Run Valley in Centre County.

⁶⁶ "Habits and Manners of the People of Chester County 75 Years Ago," by "Monitor," *Local News* (West Chester), January 12, 1878. Of course when the cob houses were finished the corncobs were used as one of the most popular early Pennsylvanian forms of *papier hygiénique*.

⁶⁷ From William F. Yoder, Letter, August 13, 1962.



ROASTED CORNMEAL AVAILABLE AT PENNSYLVANIA GROCERIES. This bag shows the most widespread variety—Brinser's Best Yellow Corn Meal, manufactured by S. C. Brinser's Sons, at Middletown, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, established 1880. A recipe for "Corn Meal Mush" appears on the bag, and the advertising tells us that Brinser's Meal "takes less meal to stir up a mush." Three pounds of this meal "will make 18 lbs. of mush." Other brands of yellow cornmeal (roasted in the Pennsylvania fashion) are available from the smaller, local mills in Eastern and Central Pennsylvania and Western Maryland.

Cornmeal roasted and ground in the old way is still available from several mills in Eastern and Central Pennsylvania and Western Maryland. Among these are the Brinser Mill at Middletown (see cut of Brinser Cornmeal Package), the Menges Mill in York County, the Dreibelbis Mill near Shoemakersville in Berks County, the Bohner Mill at Pillow in Dauphin County, the Wetzell Mill near Landisburg in Perry County, Rote's Mill at Spring Mills in Centre County, and the Shank Mill near Emmitsburg in Western Maryland.

When buying cornmeal at the country store, as a Quaker cousin of mine warns me, first see that it's yellow cornmeal and not the white Southern variety. Second, see that it's roasted. And third, reach to the back of the shelf because that's where the fresh cornmeal is!"

⁶⁸ From George Land, Herndon, Pennsylvania, 1962. My Centre County grandmother, after carefully roasting her mushmeal corn in the stove, used to say when her sons took it to the mill, "Boys, be sure to bring ours back."

Boiling the Mush

Now that the cornmeal is ground, we are ready to boil mush.

"Making good mush," writes our Schuylkill Countian, "was not done in a haphazard way. Violent boiling or any boiling was to be avoided. Nor was it a process of a few minutes. A slow and long simmer before a boil produced the best mush. On our stove the pot was going for an hour or more. A hissing and 'blup-blup' sound often continued for quite a while. Heat that would scorch it was to be avoided. In a neighbor's kitchen it happened that there was too much heat so that one of the family called, '*Herr Yessus, Mam, der mush brennt aw!*'" which became a by-word after that in our community."⁶⁹

The *Farm Journal* in the winter of 1877-1878 gave similar instructions. "*Indian mush* must boil at least one hour to be good, and the meal should be stirred in, beating hard all the time. Mrs. Howard M. Jenkins, of Wilmington, says that unless the meal is thus stirred in the mush will have a raw taste, even though it cooks a long time. The salt should be put in the water."⁷⁰

Three hours seems to be the longest time reported for boiling mush. Ida Dry, aged 89, of Fry's Mill, Berks County, informed Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker on December 17, 1953, that her family used to cook their mush in a large iron kettle over an open fire. She said that it was boiled three hours long.

From Bald Eagle Valley comes the following description:

Mother cooked ours in a big iron pot that stood on three legs on top of the stove. Water must be boiling as the cornmeal is sifted or sprinkled slowly into it, and stirred constantly so the mush will be smooth. It is cooked uncovered, slowly so the big bubbles don't splash out, and stirred often to prevent a crust from forming on top.

Water and cornmeal were never measured—the iron pot was partly filled with water and enough cornmeal used to make the 'potstick' stand up. More water was added as it boiled, if needed.

Making mush was usually an afternoon job so we could have 'mush and milk' for supper. What was left was fried in ¼ inch slices for breakfast—but we considered mush good food for any meal if we didn't have company. It was thought too heating to eat in summer so was mainly a winter food.⁷¹

Fried Mush

While boiled mush (mush and milk, mush and butter, mush and molasses, etc.) was normally a supper dish, because of the length of time it took to prepare it, the remainder was allowed to "set" in a mush-pan and fried in slices next morning for breakfast. In the old days, fried mush was perhaps the most popular breakfast dish in rural Pennsylvania, at least after scrapple or ponhaws, its more sophisticated sister-dish.⁷²

A description from Mifflin County: "After supper, the mush was returned to the kettle on the stove which was still hot. Then the mush was poured into cake pans for cooling and left overnight to set. In the morning it was

cut in slices for frying in a hot greased pan. We always had fried mush at the table for breakfast together with liverwurst and eggs and cooked cereal. We never ate mush in any other way for breakfast. The frying takes time, and often mother would put it on the stove to fry while she went to the barn to milk the cows together with the rest of the family" (John A. Hostetler, 1962).

From Adams County: "Mush was also fried in a pan on the cook stove. A bit of lard was dropped into the frying pan; after it was sizzling hot, convenient-sized pieces of cold mush a half inch or more in thickness were dropped into it. When the pieces of mush became brownish in color, they were ready for serving. Usually, molasses (then called New Orleans molasses) was spread on the fried mush. In sections of the state where sugar maple trees grew, maple sugar was often used instead of molasses" (Willis W. Eisenhart, Abbottstown, Pennsylvania, 1962).⁷³

From Northumberland County: "Fried mush was generally eaten with bulk barrel dark molasses, as the spread on the hot fried strips. In our family, we also used honey or occasionally jelly or applebutter, although molasses was mostly used. What accompanying dishes were used with fried mush was a family preference. With us it was fried mush only. Many ate it that way. Some people stated that '*liverwurst filsel*' (heated pudding meat) was the usual other accompanying dish. I know that with some families '*liverwurst filsel*' and fried potatoes is the sole winter breakfast dish today yet. Although fried scrapple, fried potatoes, fried eggs, or fried sausage may also have been used, especially potatoes" (George Land, Herndon, Pennsylvania, 1962).⁷⁴

Cleaning the Mush-Pot

The unpleasant task of cleaning the mush-pot is eased by the following suggestion which appeared in a farm paper in 1853: "Let me suggest for the comfort of those who stir it an hour or two, and then labor a great while to wash out the pot in which they boil it, that all this trouble may be saved by cooking it in a tin pail, set in a pot of boiling water, and after it has cooked, letting it cool in the same, after which it will slip out in a mass, leaving all clean behind it. Whosoever tries this plan will never try the old one again, for it prevents the possibility of burning the mush, and dispenses with all care and trouble except occasionally to replenish the water in which the pail is set

⁷² It would be interesting to know exactly when hot cereals such as oatmeal began to displace fried mush and scrapple for breakfast in Pennsylvania. "Oat meal should be well cooked," says the *Farm Journal* in 1878. "As it is usually made a breakfast dish, it may be soaked over night, and then boiled, like mush, for say half an hour, while the other parts of the breakfast are getting ready" (*The Farm Journal*, Vol. II, No. 1 [April, 1878], 114). Another reference in the same year refers to "well-boiled oatmeal mush or porridge" and informs us that oatmeal sometimes ends up on the griddle as "oatmeal griddle cakes" (*The Farm Journal*, Vol. II, No. 3 [June, 1878], 134).

⁷³ A statement from Somerset County: "We used brown crumb maple sugar with mush and milk or maple syrup. Personally, I always preferred cream instead of milk, but this wasn't always permitted on our farm as it was necessary to use cream for the churning of butter which could be sold for a few dollars which was badly needed on many farms in Somerset County. Our fried mush was always served with pure maple syrup" (Letter from Earl W. Dickey, Altoona, Pennsylvania, October 2, 1962).

⁷⁴ I was introduced to this use of "pudding meat" (*liverwurst*) on fried mush when I went away to college, at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I had never tasted it before. The combined taste is very similar to scrapple except that the two ingredients are separated.

⁶⁹ From William F. Yoder, Letter, August 13, 1962.

⁷⁰ *The Farm Journal*, Vol. I, No. 11 (January, 1878), 86. Mrs. Jenkins was Editor Atkinson's sister, and wife of Howard M. Jenkins, Quaker historian and journalist.

⁷¹ From Flora (Brugger) Curtin. The potstick reference was a household word in my own family. My mother always said that you know when the mush is done—when the potstick stands up.

to boil. As to the length of time required, the rule is, 'the longer the better.'⁷⁵

And now that our mush-pot is clean, let us examine other aspects of Pennsylvania's mush-culture.

IV. WAYS OF EATING MUSH

There is great variation in the ways of eating mush.

With hot mush, the question was, *with* sugar or *without* sugar?

Our Schuylkill County informant tells us that "in our early days we did not have sugar on the table, consequently we ate it unsweetened. Even in later years when the sugar bowl was on the table, only one or two of us used sugar on this dish." Since this was my own family, I might state my own impression, from my boyhood in Central Pennsylvania, that it was "wrong" to eat sugar on hot mush—extravagant, not spartan enough.⁷⁶

I seem to have gotten a double dose of this impression, since my Mother's family, from Centre County, had the same practice—no sugar with mush and milk. A cousin on that side of the house told me that "the Dallas Cronister-Nora Kelly Family always had mush for Sunday evening supper. It was served with milk and they never ate it with sugar. When Nan Cronister went to Buffalo to train for nursing they served mush for breakfast in a small sauce dish and the girls ate it with sugar. That was her first experience with eating sugar on mush."⁷⁷

Amish Mush

The Amish of Mifflin County—like most Pennsylvanians—ate and liked mush.

Prof. John A. Hostetler, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, who grew up in the Old Order Amish community of Big Valley, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, gives us the following information on Amish use of mush: "Mush and milk together with fried potatoes made a meal in my home, usually on a Friday evening. Mush was cooked slowly on the stove for at least an hour, and molasses was often added as well as seasoning. At the table in the evening it was put in a big dish with a big dipper in it. We each helped ourselves from the dish in two ways. One way is to put it on your plate and stir some brown sugar into it and eat it. Another is to mix it with fried potatoes which is the way I like mine. A third way is to put a dipper of mush into a cereal bowl containing milk. I liked it this way also."

When the Hostetlers moved to Iowa in 1930, the same mush-culture was continued there by the Pennsylvania Amish families.

To this interesting reference to mixing fried potatoes

⁷⁵ *The Plough, the Loom, and the Anvil. Farmer and Mechanic*, Part II, Vol. V, No. 4 (April, 1853), 247.

⁷⁶ In my boyhood in Central Pennsylvania I recall many delicious fall and winter meals of mush and milk, often Sunday evening suppers. On such occasions nothing else was eaten, as mush and milk is a meal in itself. The prohibition on eating sugar with mush and milk seems to have been inherited from earlier days when sugar was a luxury that was not always available. The same held true of the summer evening dish of bread and milk. On mush-and-milk being a full meal in itself, see the Reminiscences of Mrs. John Schwoyer, aged 80, of Rothrockville, in 1894, in the *Reading Weekly Eagle*, January 13, 1894: "Butter milk soup was largely used, so were mush and milk. I know that quite a number of families never had a particle of other food during the meal at which they had mush and milk."

⁷⁷ Letter from Marion Mattern Cronister, Port Matilda, Pennsylvania, June 19, 1962.

with boiled mush should be added the evidence I have found from Lancaster and Lehigh Counties of families that liked to mix cooked vegetables, carrots, etc., with their boiled mush.⁷⁸

Also this note. When I first went away to college in Lancaster I found that Lancaster Countians like to eat fried mush in a way that I had not been familiar with before—with "pudding meat" (*liverwurst fäsel*) instead of with molasses.

Boiled Mush with Butter

Pennsylvanians occasionally ate boiled mush with butter rather than milk.

From the maple sugar country of Somerset County comes this note, from Earl W. Diekey, now of Altoona, in a letter to the author, October 2, 1962: "I sometimes ate the boiled hot mush with butter." Asked how often Somerset Countians served mush, he replied, "I would say that the country people of Somerset County in the great majority of cases served mush and milk and fried mush almost weekly." His own family "generally had mush and milk as a Sunday evening dish on the farm."

Also from Western Pennsylvania comes this note from Prof. Samuel P. Bayard of the Pennsylvania State University, in a letter to the author, June 26, 1962: "My mother (English, German, Scotch-Irish, Welsh) used to serve both fried mush, in little slabs, like pieces or slices of scrapple, along with molasses or (oftener) syrup, but first garnished with butter. She also served mush and milk. My father's mother (so far as I know, straight Pennsylvania Dutch, though from an Ohio colony) used also to serve it in these ways; but at her home we also ate 'mush and butter'—that is, boiled mush without milk, but liberally doused and mixed with butter, which naturally melted all through it, and imparted a delicious flavor."

Cultural Conflict Over the Mush-Bowl

Occasionally cultural conflict resulted when two different approaches to "right and wrong" ways of consuming mush were united in the bonds of matrimony.

When one of my Dutch aunts, a native of Schuylkill County, served her first mush and milk to her second husband—a Lebanon Countian—he asked, "Where is my [other] bowl?" He was used to having a separate bowl of cold milk, salted. His way of eating mush was as follows. He would first dip his spoon into the hot mush, then dip it into the cold milk. This keeps the milk cool, whereas if it is poured over the hot mush, the milk soon becomes lukewarm.⁷⁹

Candace (Woodring) Mattern of Half Moon Valley, now aged 88, told me in May, 1962, that it was her Grandfather Harpster who "taught her how to eat mush." You put milk in a bowl, dip your spoon in the milk, then dip mush from the plate. "It's good that way," says Candace. Collins Mattern, Candace's husband, ate it in the more usual way—in a bowl, with milk and sugar. Candace's son eats it with pepper and salt and butter⁸⁰—no milk!—and mentioned to me that applebutter is good on fried mush.

One of my Quaker cousins in Central Pennsylvania, whose

⁷⁸ Information from William B. Yeakel, Route 1, Coopersburg, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, July, 1962.

⁷⁹ From Ida (Yoder) Miller, aged 92, Annville, Pennsylvania, October, 1962.

⁸⁰ This combination—boiled mush without milk but with butter, salt, and pepper—is also a favorite in the Dutch Country. Reported by Fred Rebeck, Hegins, Schuylkill County.

wife is of Pennsylvania Dutch background, told me the only "fight" he ever had with his wife was over how to fry mush. His Quaker aunts who had "raised" him used to fry the mush very crisp, using little grease—just brushing the griddle with a greased rag. The Dutch way was to fry it *in* grease. The new Dutch wife, says Cousin D., "refused" to fry the mush *his* way. Result: "We didn't have mush for a while."

Plug Mush

Mush and milk was eaten twice a day in Cumberland Valley before 1818, according to Henry Harbaugh's description of his grandfather who died in 1818. "In the evening," he writes, "they had hot mush and cold milk; in the morning they had cold mush and hot milk."⁸¹

This is intriguing, because it suggests a "new" way of eating mush. The puzzle was resolved for me by Flora (Brugger) Curtin, a native of the Bald Eagle Valley in Centre County, aged 75, who told me that her grandmother "often made what she called 'Plug Mush.' She cut cold mush into dice shapes large enough for a bite—filled a bowl for each one and poured hot milk over it. Each one seasoned it as they wished—some liked sugar on it, others salt and lots of butter."

Obviously this was another way, besides the more common fried mush, of using up the residue of the boiled mush supper. In Eastern Pennsylvania this method of eating mush is called "mush soup."

Flora Curtin adds some additional notes on mush in Bald Eagle Valley. "Mush in cold milk or fried were the usual ways of serving it. However we sometimes dipped large spoonfuls of hot mush from the pot, into a pan of hot fat and fried them like fritters. Thus we served it cooked in two ways for one meal." Asked about the status of mush in her family, Flora wrote: "I don't recall that mush was ever served to company—it seemed to be a family dish for a cold wintry night. Yum, yum."

V. MUSH RECIPES

Even that social and gastronomic arbiter of early 19th Century Philadelphia, Eliza Leslie, considered mush worthy of entrance into her long series of cookbooks. In fact she published an *Indian Meal Cookery Book*, first as a pamphlet, later as an appendix to her standard recipe collections.⁸² Here is her recipe for Indian Mush:

INDIAN MUSH—Have ready on a clear fire, a pot of boiling water. Stir into it, by degrees, (a handful at a time), sufficient Indian meal to make a very thick porridge, and then add a very small portion of salt allowing not more than a level tea-spoonful to a quart of meal. You must keep the pot boiling all the time you are stirring in the meal; and between every handful stir hard with the mush-stick, (a round stick about half a yard long, flattened at the lower end), as, if not well stirred, the mush will be lumpy. After it is sufficiently thick and smooth, keep it boiling an hour longer, stirring it occasionally. Then cover the pot closely, and hang it higher up the chimney, or set it on hot coals on the hearth, so as to simmer it slowly for another hour. The goodness and wholesomeness of mush depends greatly on its being long and thoroughly boiled. It should also be made very thick. If well made, and well cooked, it is wholesome and nutritious; but the contrary, if thin, and not sufficiently boiled. It is not too long to have it three or four hours

over the fire, first boiling, and then simmering. On the contrary it will be better for it. The coarser the corn meal the less cooking it requires. Send it to table hot, and in a deep dish. Eat it with sweet milk, buttermilk, or cream; or with butter and sugar, or with butter and molasses; making a hole in the middle of your plate of mush; putting some butter into the hole, and then adding the sugar or molasses.

Cold mush that has been left, may be cut into slices, or mouthfuls, and fried next day, in butter, or in nice drippings of veal, beef, or pork; but not mutton or lamb.

As if that were not enough, Miss Leslie includes another recipe.

INDIAN HASTY PUDDING—Put two quarts of milk into a clean pot or sauce-pan. Set it over the fire, adding a level teaspoonful of salt, and, when it comes to a boil, stir in a lump of fresh butter about the size of a goose-egg. Then add (a handful at a time) sufficient Indian meal to make it very thick, stirring it all the while with a mush-stick. Keep it boiling well, and continue to throw in Indian meal till it is so thick that the stick stands upright in it. Then send it to table hot, and eat it with milk, cream, or molasses and butter. What is left may be cut into slices, and fried next day, or boiled in a bag.

Other recipes which are included in this collection are "Indian Meal Gruel" ("an excellent food for the sick"), "Rye Mush" ("considered very wholesome, especially in cases of dyspepsia"), Common Hoe-cakes, Johnny Cakes, Griddle Cakes, "Very Plain Indian Dumplings" (also of corn-meal), "Very Plain Indian Batter Cakes," Indian Muffins, Virginia Griddle Cakes, Missouri Cakes, Indian Flappers, Indian Crumpets, Corn Meal Breakfast Cakes, Indian Light Biscuit, Indian Cup Cakes, Nantucket Pudding, Samp Pudding, A Farmer's Indian Pudding, Summer Saccatash, Winter Saccatash, Hominy, and other corn dishes. Miss Leslie had done her best to publicize the culinary uses of America's favorite native cereal.⁸³

In another volume she includes a recipe for "Indian Mush Cakes":

INDIAN MUSH CAKES—Pour into a pan three pints of cold water, and stir gradually into it a quart of sifted Indian meal which has been mixed with half a pint of wheat flour, and a small teaspoonful of salt. Give it a hard stirring at the last. Have ready a hot griddle, and bake the batter immediately, in cakes about the size of a saucer. Send them to table piled evenly, but not cut. Eat them with butter or molasses.⁸⁴

Mrs. Goodfellow on Mush

Another Pennsylvania cookery book editor, Mrs. Goodfellow, whom Miss Leslie acknowledges as her "instructress," pays tribute to mush:

⁸³ Almost equally impressive is the list of corn-dishes given in the article entitled, "Various Uses to Which Corn and Corn Meal Are Applied," written for the *Farmers' Library* and published in the *Monthly Journal of Agriculture*, Vol. II, No. 1 (July, 1846), 10: "Parched corn is good to quiet hunger, and has served often our starving soldiers, when they gained the liberties of this free land we are now so proud of.—When ground into meal, it is used in every variety of mode, and after every fashion: for instance—mush, crush, dodger, fried-mush, fried-bread, ash-cake, fat-cake, hoe-cake, baker-cake, journey-cake, thin journey-cake, crackling journey-cake, corn-dumpling, griddle-cake, pone, light-pone, mush-pone, short-cake, muffin, egg-pone—improves buckwheat cakes—is mixed with rye and wheat flour, and improves both." The author of this list added, "Of the above modes I can furnish recipes if deemed necessary," and the editor of the *Farmers' Library* replied, "Pray, good friend, let us have them all—it can do no harm, any how!"

⁸⁴ *Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery. Directions for Cookery in its Various Branches*, 49th edition, revised (Philadelphia, 1853), pp. 368-369. This volume also contains a recipe for "Burgoo," which "is made precisely in the same manner as mush, but with oatmeal instead of Indian" (pp. 301-302).

⁸¹ *The Guardian*, February 1868, p. 42.

⁸² *Miss Leslie's Lady's New Receipt-Book* . . . , 5th edition, enlarged (Philadelphia, 1850), pp. 464-465, section on "Indian Meal Preparations, &c." Both recipes, Indian Mush and Indian Hasty Pudding, are from this source.

MUSH OR HASTY PUDDING. Stir into a half pint of cold water, enough sifted Indian meal to make a thick batter. Have on the fire a pot containing three or four quarts of water, when it boils, pour in the batter, stirring it fast; let it boil a few minutes, then add sifted meal by the handful, till it is quite thick, and a spoonful of salt. Keep it boiling slowly, and stir it frequently, the more it is stirred, and the longer it is boiled, the better the mush. To be wholesome, it must be boiled at least two hours. This is a good receipt.

FRIED MUSH. Mush to be fried, should be boiled an hour longer to evaporate the water, and have half a pint of wheat flour stirred into it about half an hour before it is done. Take it out of the pot, and put it in an earthen dish and let it stand until perfectly cold, then cut it in slices half an inch thick, and fry them brown.⁸⁵

In her section of suggested meals, Mrs. Goodfellow included "fried mush" as a Spring dish, for Monday breakfast: "warm bread, cold bread, boiled ham and eggs, fried mush, or hominy" (page 348); also for summer: cold bread, fish, fried mush (page 349). Her menus were for four meals: Breakfast, Dinner, Dessert, and Tea.

Mush and Hydropathy

One of the health fads of the 19th Century was the so-called "water-cure" (hydropathy) which urged among other things a reform in diet, especially the use of fewer meat dishes. Naturally in such an emphasis the tried and true cornmeal dishes were favored. In fact Dr. R. T. Trall's *New Hydropathic Cook-Book* (New York, 1872, copyright 1853) contains a separate section on "Mushes and Porridges" (Chapter VIII, pages 173-176).⁸⁶

Among the "mushes" (note interesting use of plural) are Cracked Wheat Mush, Hominy, Sump, Rye-Meal Mush, Oatmeal Mush, Wheat-Meal Mush, Farina Mush, Rice Mush, and various porridges, as well as Indian-Meal Mush, of which he gives us a "quick" version that I am sure would have been accepted by very few Pennsylvania housewives who happened to see his book:

INDIAN-MEAL MUSH. White and yellow corn meal are made into the well-known mush called *hasty pudding*. Either kind is equally agreeable to most persons. It should be stirred very gradually into boiling water, so as to prevent *lumping*; it will cook very well in fifteen minutes, but half an hour's gentle boiling improves its flavor.

In his general instructions he points out that "salt is not mentioned as an ingredient of any recipe in this book." "In all the cook books I am acquainted with, salt is put down as a fixture of every dish; and mushes, especially Indian and rice, are usually considered as unendurably flat and insipid, unless abundantly salted. A little experience with unsalted food, and a little self-denial, will, however, enable all persons to relish not only mushes, but all other farinaceous preparations, with no other seasonings than sugar or milk."

Mush at the Centennial

When the Women's Centennial Committees of the great "International Exhibition of 1876" were asked by foreign

⁸⁵ Mrs. Goodfellow's *Cookery as it Should Be: A New Manual of the Dining-Room and Kitchen* . . . (Philadelphia, © 1865), pp. 164-165. The book was a Pennsylvania product, copyrighted in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and published by T. B. Peterson & Brothers, who published so many early novels of regional interest, as well as the *Saturday Evening Post*.

⁸⁶ R. T. Trall, M.D., *The New Hydropathic Cook-Book: With Recipes for Cooking on Hygienic Principles* . . . (New York, 1872), copyright 1853. The 1872 edition was published by Samuel R. Wells, author and publisher of books on phrenology, physiognomy, and other 19th Century fads.

visitors for America's "national dishes," they decided to put out an American cookbook.⁸⁷ In it there is a long section on "Preparations of Indian Corn" (pages 183-198), which naturally includes mush.

MUSH. Mix the corn meal with cold water and salt enough to season the whole, and stir it into a pot of boiling water. If it is not thick enough, add more meal. Stir it all the time, to prevent lumps. It will take about an hour to boil. To be served hot and eaten with cold milk. They also included a separate recipe for "Fried Mush."

FRIED MUSH. Make a large potful of mush; turn it out into a deep pan. When cold, cut the mush in slices, sprinkle them with wheat flour, and fry them in butter, over a brisk fire. To be eaten at breakfast.

Additional recipes are included for "West India Mush" (page 189), a mush with much butter added in preparation, with orange peel, and stick cinnamon, and flavored with vanilla or peach water; also "Mush Bread" (page 190), which most people would call corn-bread. There are plenty of "Corn Cake" recipes.

A last recipe is for "Hasty Pudding (Though Not Made in Haste)," page 198, admitting that to do it right takes three or four hours. The authors of that receipt must have been Pennsylvanians.

Recipes in the Farm Papers

Occasionally one finds a "recipe" for mush in the farm papers, in the "home" departments. We give two of these. The first is from a Lancaster farm paper of 1881.

MUSH, or HASTY PUDDING. Set on a quart of water to boil; in the meantime stir half a pint of sifted Indian meal into water enough to make it smooth, with two teaspoonfuls of salt. When the water boils, stir in one spoonful and let it boil, then another and let it boil, and so on till you have the thickening in; then add enough sifted raw meal gradually, stirring all the time till thick enough, and it is done. This is a very nice receipt.

FRIED MUSH. Made as above the day before it is wanted, and cut in slices and fried with fat enough to prevent it from sticking to the griddle.⁸⁸

In 1917, when the *Pennsylvania Farmer* was hinting that farmers had better use more cornmeal to help the war effort, the editors offered the following recipes—"tried recipes chosen at random":

CORNMEAL MUSH. To 2 quarts boiling water, salted to suit, add 3 pints sifted cornmeal by allowing it to run slowly between the fingers, stirring the liquid as the meal is added to prevent lumps from forming. Place the mush (in kettle) in the oven and allow it to bake slowly for an hour to give it a sweet and delicious flavor. Mush made in this way is suitable for frying. If desired for use as 'mush and milk,' a little less meal may be added.

CORNMEAL CHICKEN OR SPARE-RIB MUSH. To mush made as in the former recipe, add finely shredded chicken or spare ribs, along with the broth in which they have been boiled until tender. Possibly a part of the meal will need to be displaced by the meat. Add while hot. Allow to cool. Slice and fry as in the previous recipe.⁸⁹

Mush for the U. S. Army

The cooking schools of the U. S. Army in the first decade of the 20th Century instructed army cooks in the preparation of mush. Here are the recipes:

INDIAN CORN MEAL MUSH. Take 5 ounces corn meal, 2 quarts boiling water, 1 ounce salt. Mix corn meal

⁸⁷ *The National Cookery Book, Compiled from Original Receipts, For the Women's Centennial Committees of the International Exhibition of 1876* (Philadelphia, © 1876), pp. 188-189.

⁸⁸ *The Lancaster Farmer*, November, 1881, page 174.

with cold water before putting it in, to prevent lumping. Stir in slowly but be careful to keep the water boiling. Cover closely and let boil 2½ hours. Stir frequently, to prevent scorching. Take off when thick and let cool. Eight pounds corn meal enough for 80 men.

FRIED MUSH (for 20 men). Take 2 quarts beef stock, 2 quarts water, 1 ounce salt, and set on stove and let boil for 4 or 5 minutes. Add 2 pounds corn meal. Put the meal in a flour sieve and shake it gradually, stirring thoroly all the time, until it commences to thicken. Then set on back part of stove and let simmer for about 1 hour or till done, when it drops freely from the paddle. Pour into dish pan about 1 inch deep and set aside to cool. When cool cut into 2-inch squares. Have about ½ pound lard in frying pan. Fry to nice brown color. Serve hot with sirup.⁹⁰

VI. POETRY

Joel Barlow and "Hasty Pudding"

Joel Barlow (1754–1812), one of the "Connecticut Wits," dates his reminiscent and humorous poem, "The Hasty Pudding," in praise of the New England staple, at Chambery, Savoy, January, 1793.⁹¹ In the French Alps, he became reminiscent and, in mock-classic style, invoked his muse to

*sing the sweets I know, the charms I feel,
My morning incense, and my evening meal—
The sweets of Hasty Pudding.*

If he knew "what lovely squaw, in days of yore . . . first gave thee to the world," the "tawny Ceres" who first learned "the well-dried maize, through the rough sieve to shake" and "in boiling water" to stir "the yellow flour"—he would dedicate his poetic effort to her. But alas, her name is lost to history.

It seems that the immediate inspiration of his poem was being served a European variation of hasty pudding in Savoy.

*Dear Hasty Pudding, what unpromised joy
Expands my heart, to meet thee in Savoy!
But here, though distant from our native shore,
With mutual glee, we meet and laugh once more.
The same! I know thee by that yellow face,
That strong complexion of true Indian race,
Which time can never change, nor soil impair,
Nor Alpine snows, nor Turkey's morbid air.*

The dish will be found, he is confident, "through every mild domain, where grows the maize." However, the name may vary in different realms.

*Thee the soft nations round the warm Levant
Polanta call; the French, of course, Polante.
E'en in thy native regions, how I blush
To hear the Pennsylvanians call thee Mush!
On Hudson's banks, while men of Belgic spawn
Insult and eat thee by the name Suppawm.
All spurious appellations, void of truth;
I've better known thee from my earliest youth;
Thy name is Hasty Pudding! thus our sires
Were wont to greet thee fuming, from their fires. . . .*

Canto II describes the growing of maize, Canto III the husking frolic of "brown, corn-fed nymphs, and strong, hard-handed beaux"—who attack the pile of corn on the barn floor, amid rustling of husks and cracking of corn-cobs, songs, laughter, and cider-drinking.

⁹⁰ *Pennsylvania Farmer*, February 10, 1917, page 150, article on "Use of Corn Meal in the Diet."

⁹¹ *Recipes Used in the Cooking Schools, U. S. Army* (Washington, 1906), pp. 21–22. Issued by the Government Printing Office.

⁹² I have used the illustrated edition which appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, XIII (1856), 145–160. The first edition appeared in Boston in 1815.

During the process the farmer's wife has been preparing a hasty pudding supper for the huskers.

*Meanwhile, the housewife urges all her care,
The well-earn'd feast to hasten and prepare.
The sifted meal already waits her hand,
The milk is strain'd, the bowls in order stand,
The fire flames high; and as a pool (that takes
The headlong stream that o'er the milldam breaks)
Foams, roars, and rages with incessant toils,
So the vex'd ca'dron rages, roars, and boils.
First with clean salt she seasons well the food,
Then strews the flour, and thickens all the flood.
Long o'er the simmering fire she lets it stand;
To stir it well demands a stronger hand;
The husband takes his turn: and round and round
The ladle flies; at last the toil is crown'd;
When to the board the thronging huskers pour,
And take their seats as at the corn before.
I leave them to their feast. . . ."*

The poet has "more copious matters" to relate, "nice rules and wise, how pudding should be ate."

*Some with molasses line the luscious treat,
And mix, like bards, the useful with the sweet.
A wholesome dish, and well deserving praise;
A great resource in those bleak wintry days,
When the chill'd earth lies buried deep in snow,
And raging Boreas dries the shivering cow.*

When Spring returns,

*Milk, then, with pudding I would always choose;
To this in future I confine my muse.
Till she in haste some further hints unfold,
Well for the young, nor useless to the old.
First in your bowl the milk abundant take,
Then drop with care along the silver lake
Your flakes of pudding; these at first will hide
Their little bulk beneath the swelling tide;
But when their growing mass no more can sink,
When the soft island looms above the brink,
Then check your hand; you've got the portion due:
So taught our sires, and what they taught is true,*

And so on, describing the types of spoons and bowls best suited for his favorite dish.

Some Pennsylvania Rhymes on Mush

Horace P. Biddle's long descriptive poem, *American Boyhood* (Philadelphia, 1876), written for the Centennial, pays tribute to mush in his list of pioneer foods:

*A homely plenty soon we had:
Green corn and succotash,
New pone, and rye and Indian bread,
Cashew and golden squash,
Fresh mush-and-milk and honey-comb,
Warm johnny-cake and jerk,—
All raised, procured, or made at home,
And earned by honest work.*

He also uses the term "hasty pudding":

*When frost had browned the hill and glade
And dried away the sleet,
New corn our hasty-pudding made,
And 'dodger' rich and sweet.⁹²*

A Quaker poet reminiscing about a Quaker wedding of 1836 suggests that it is sometimes a difficult transition to get back to the reality of "mush and milk" after the delicacies of the wedding feast:

⁹² Was mush ever served to huskers at the husking frolics of early Pennsylvania? I have no documentation on this.

⁹³ Copyright 1875, this poem is full of valuable references to Pennsylvania rural life and customs. The selections quoted are from pages 103–104.



MUSH AND MILK

*I pass the supper given that night,
When Quinby home was reached again.
I pass the wedding parties, too;
Perhaps they didn't give them then.
I sort of think they're out of place;
It seems like such a downward come,
From wedding cakes, preserves and such,
To pork and mush and milk at home.*

This from the poem by Thaddeus Kenderdine, the "bard of Cuttalossa," on the 50th anniversary of the wedding of Wilmer Atkinson's parents, Thomas Atkinson and Hannah Quinby, at Solebury Meetinghouse, Bucks County, in 1836. It appears in Wilmer Atkinson, *An Autobiography* (Philadelphia, 1920), page 29.

Mush became an "institutional meal" in the prisons of the 19th Century. There was a song the boys used to sing in Reading in the 1870's when they saw the prison van moving away from the Court House with its new load of prisoners:

*Oh! they'll have mush for breakfast,
And they'll have mush for tea;
And mush good may it do 'em,
Too mush for you and me.⁹⁴*

Frank Cowan's doggerel poem, "The Story of Poor Little Sue," which he published in one of his numerous and little-known volumes on Western Pennsylvania life, contains a reference to putting "little Benny" to bed—"without his bowl of mush."⁹⁵

Mush in Folk-Rhymes

I was able to find at least three folk-rhymes about mush. When one of my uncles was a little child, in Schuylkill County in the 1870's, the family were to have mush and milk for supper. He was crying and his Mother told him that they were going to have mush-and-milk, which he liked very much. He is said to have cried out, still in tears:

*Mush un millich—
Un denovet brill ich!*

"Mush and milk—and I'll cry tonight!"⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Berks & Schuylkill Journal*, December 5, 1874.

⁹⁵ Frank Cowan, *Southwestern Pennsylvania in Song and Story* (Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 1878), p. 207, from "The Story of Poor Little Sue," a "memento of the Washingtonian temperance revival" in Southwestern Pennsylvania in 1840-1842.

"MUSH AND MILK"—SCHOOL-GIRL'S CARTOON (1925). In 1925 statewide prizes were offered for cartoons by Pennsylvania schoolchildren. This one was drawn by Ruth M. Till of Hegins, Pennsylvania, and involves a kind of visual pun on the word "mush." The cartoon is evidence that in 1925 schoolchildren knew what "mush-and-milk" was—today that would not be the case. The cartoon did not win the statewide prize but is said to have raised plenty of laughs in Harrisburg. We hereby award it a belated blue-ribbon.

Mush from the mush-kettle is extremely hot and one can easily burn one's mouth on the first few bites. In fact the Dutch have a proverb about this phenomenon:

*Mit mush—
Farbrennt mer sich de gush*

(With mush you burn your mouth, literally, snout). Collected by Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker from James Henry, aged 75, of Port Clinton, Schuylkill County, December 3, 1955.

This was turned into a competition at county fairs in the early days. John Smith described amusements at colonial fairs as follows: "Eating hot hasty pudding or mush with a spoon was mostly performed by the Negroes. This was required to be eaten as hot as was possible to bear, and he who finished his portion first was awarded the prize."⁹⁷

In the Bald Eagle Valley of Centre County a rhyme is recalled about mush in the Kelly-Cronister family. My mother's aunt, Nora (Kelly) Cronister (1858-1929) used to recite to her children the following rhyme as she was making mush:

*When I was making mush one night,
My true love he came in,
And I was put in such a fright,
I got my mush too thin.⁹⁸*

Musch un Millich

The only Dutch poem on mush that has turned up is Henry L. Fischer's doggerel effort which appeared in 1879 as part of his long descriptive poem, *Die Alte Zeite*.

It is of interest folk-culturally since in verse 2 "Dchek" (Jake), who couldn't wait until Father finished grace, burned his mouth on the hot mush. Verse 4 describes hot mush and cold milk, that favorite winter-evening supper, while verse 5 gives us our final reference to the breakfast dish of cold mush and hot milk.

*1. Mit Messer un Gawel hen m'r gesse,
Juscht Mosch un Sup doch net;*

⁹⁶ From Ida (Yoder) Miller, aged 92, Annville, Pennsylvania, October, 1962.

⁹⁷ W. J. Buck, *Local Sketches and Legends* ([Philadelphia], 1887), p. 175, in chapter on "Amusement at the Fair."

⁹⁸ From Nan (Cronister) Dutton, St. Petersburg, Florida, a native of Martha Furnace, Centre County. Her mother, Nora (Kelly) Cronister, was taught the rhyme by her mother who was a Woodring from Bald Eagle Valley. Via Marion Mattern Cronister, June 19, 1962.

- En jede hot sei Leffel g'hat,
Un hat sich gesse, dick un satt,
Bis er war dick un fett;
Ebmohls war Sup un Mosch so hees,
Es war ken winner war m'r bös.*
2. *D'r Fater hot am Disch gebeet,
Nord ware m'r all schtill;
D'r Dchek hot schier net warte kenne—
Hot müsse's Maul mit Mosch ferbrenne,
Schunsch grigt er fleicht ken füll;
Un härly war d'r Mosch fersucht
Hot'r, so leis, a bissel g'fucht.*
3. *Des hot'n nord als Nachts getruwelt,
Nord hot'r a'h gebeet,
Un g'heilt un g'sad 'r dhel browiere
For'n Parre—g'wiss ich leeb—schtudiere,
Wan's net wär for die Mäd;
Bis nächst mohl das m'r Mosch hen gesse,
War Sind un Truvel all fergesse.*
4. *So Winter-owets Mosch un Millich—
Was war d'r Mosch so hees!
Was war die Millich doch so kalt!
Un wan sie war a'h noch so kalt
War Mosch a'h noch so hees,
'S war awer hart uf Zäh un Gumme
Wan Hitz un Kält sin zamme kumme.*
5. *Doch Morgets hen m'r's annerscht g'hat—
Was war d'r Mosch so kalt!
Was war die Millich doch so hees!
Un wan sie war a'h noch so hees
War Mosch a'h noch so kalt;
Un wan m'r leebt uf Mosch un Millich,
Dan leebt m'r noch so g'sund un billig.⁹⁹*

Mush and Milk

By the Methodist Preacher

The most extensive Pennsylvania verse on mush appeared in the first half of the 19th Century, in the Wyoming Valley, and is, in a sense, a Pennsylvania reply to Barlow's "The Hasty Pudding."

Stewart Pearce, in his *Annals of Luzerne County* (Philadelphia, 1860) tells us the background of the satire: "The following was written by a venerable superannuated Methodist preacher, who, several years ago, resided in Luzerne county. He was in the habit of rhyming, during the long winter evenings, for the amusement of his wife and children. The old gentleman, after reading his effusions aloud, generally committed them to the flames, but when 'Mush and Milk' was read and laid on the table, a mischievous son cautiously slipped it away, and next week, to the astonishment of the aged preacher, it appeared in the town newspaper."⁹⁹

*As dame and I sat by the fire,
One cold and stormy night,
I said to her, 'My dear, I feel
The rhyming maggot bite.
'Come tell me what to write about'—
'Why mush and milk, you dunce.'
She said, and seemed in snappish mood;
'Agreed,' said I, 'for once.'
I took the hint and went to work,
Each word and line to scan,*

⁹⁹ H. L. Fischer, 'S *Alt Marik-Haus Mittes in D'r Shtadt, Un Die Alte Zeite*. *En Centennial Poem in Pennsylvanisch Deutsch, In Zue Dhel* (York, Pennsylvania, 1879), pp. 126-127. One verse omitted, title and verse numbers added. The poem was evidently reprinted in this form in the almanacs. It was recited to me, as memorized from an almanac version in the first quarter of the 20th Century, by Herbert Miller of Kutztown, Berks County, in 1962.

¹⁰⁰ I wonder if the author of this witty selection might not have been Stewart Pearce's own father, Marmaduke Pearce (1776-1852), Methodist circuit-rider known for wit as well as piety.

And, wrapt in true poetic fire,
My work I thus began:—

*Bob Burns applauds the Scotchmen's haggis,
And tells how well it fills their baggies;
John Bull brags much of beef and stout,
And Dutch folks of their speck and crout;
Let me, in verse Hudibrastic,
Stretch my muse like gum-elastic.
To sing the praise of mush and milk,
That ne'er made saint or sinner wilk;
Though many speak in scorn about it,
And if they could from earth would scout it.*

*The Yankees call it—stop! dod rot it,
How strange it is, that I've forgot it;
O, now I have it—hasty pudding,
Though they confess it is a good 'un,
And would be glad, in times of want,
To fill their slab-sides with a 'mess on't.'
Dad Matthews, too—the darned old lout—
They say, nicknames it—'stirabout,'
And strange enough, that the canaille—
Whether they thresh with horse or flail,
Or cut the wheat with scythe or sickle,
Should put patricians in a pickle—
Find so much fault, and scold and pout,
And in contempt turn up the snout;
Blazing it round to saint and sinner,
That they get mush and milk for dinner;
Backbite their betters and be huffy,
Unless they have their tea or coffee!
Good gracious! why fair Queen Victoria,
Often exclaims 'sic transit gloria';
And though she's clad in gold and silk,
Fills her wame with mush and milk:
It does me good to see the wenches
Knocking about the chairs and benches,
And o'er the old pot twist and bend,
Until the potstick stands on end;
And then to see the precious stuff
Blister and swell, and snort and puff,
Just like wild horses in a frolic,
Or AETna when she has the cholice.*

*Hail mush and milk, my heart's delight!
I could sup thee day and night;
It gives its lovers bone and muscle,
And fits for boxing or for tussle;
It sets class-leaders dancing jigs,
And turns old Tories into whigs;
It is by far the cheapest food,
That hogs or poor folks ever chewed.
To see it on the table smoking,
Would be to Job himself provoking;
And then the tin-cup and the spoon,
'Ready for action' night and noon!
Though I ought perhaps to tell ye,
It sometimes sadly scours the belly;
Yet should you fill choke-full your gizzard,
You'll never dream of De'il nor wizard;
Nor yet of spooks nor midnight hag,
Galloping round on broomstick nag,
Nor grinning ghosts—*

*Thus I was going on, when dame
Screamed out with all her might—
'I never was so terrified
As I have been this night!*

*'Why, what a cruel man you be,
To scare your nervous wife;
Confound your varmints, I believe
You mean to take my life.*

*'Whoever heard such awful things?
It makes my blood to chill,
To hear such talk of grinning ghosts;
For goodness' sake be still.*

*'Do stop your nonsense—go to bed—
'Tis now half after ten;
I'm scared to death—I'll die this night'—
Quoth I—"agreed again!"*

VII. MUSH IN FOLKSPEECH AND FOLKTALE

Mush features in Pennsylvania folkspeech in several interesting expressions.

mouth full of mush: "He talks as if his mouth was full of mush." Talks indistinctly, garbling his words. Central Pennsylvania.

full of mush: Central Pennsylvanians use the expression "full of mush" to mean crazy, or completely in the wrong. "If he thinks that, he's full of mush." This has been an expression in my own family as long as I can remember. It comes from my Mother's side of the house—Bald Eagle Valley, Centre County.

oh, mush!—an expression to express contempt or disbelief. Recorded from Bald Eagle Valley, Centre County, by Marion Mattern Cronister, of Port Matilda, Pennsylvania.

boiling mush: Said of a person while sleeping, who lets his mouth open and close in a puffing operation, resembling the opening of the "craters" in the boiling mushpot. The way it was used: "Did I snore when I was sleeping?" "No, but you were 'boiling mush.'" This expression from Bald Eagle Valley, Centre County. A variant from Cumberland County: "boiling turnips." From Mrs. Robert Bear, New Kingstown, Pennsylvania. In what other counties are these or similar expressions known?

mush-head: a stupid fellow. Some people claimed that mush made people stupid. A schoolboy failing to make a good grade in an examination once excused himself by saying, "*Ich hop mush gfressa geshter ovet*" (I ate mush last evening). This from Schuylkill County, from William F. Yoder, formerly of Hegins. See Mathews, *A Dictionary of Americanisms*, for other documentation on *mush-head*.

mush-pot: also used figuratively as a term of derision, as of some preacher or any person who tells an unbelievable tale. Also from Bald Eagle Valley, Centre County, reported by Marion Mattern Cronister, of Port Matilda, Pennsylvania.

frying the mush on one side: Centre Countians have a jest about "frying the mush on one side." Of a certain little town near State College it is said that "people fry their mush only on one side there." The explanation is plain when you see the town—there are houses only on one side of the main street. This from Marion Mattern Cronister, Port Matilda, Pennsylvania, 1962.

stir the mush: mush appears also among children's games, in a game called "Stir the Mush," mentioned with other children's games in the *Democratic Press* (York, Pennsylvania), under date of December 29, 1846. As played traditionally in Lehigh and Northampton Counties and featured by the Paul R. Wieand Pageant Group at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festivals at Kutztown, the game is called "*Mush-reera*" or "Stirring Mush."¹⁰¹

Bitter Mush

Two very interesting items of "mush lore" come from Berks County, Pennsylvania, from the researches of Victor C. Dieffenbach, "*Der Oldt Bauer*" of Bethel.

One of them refers to "bitter mush." "If you plant corn on Ascension Day, and you have some of that corn ground into meal, the mush will taste bitter." From Victor C. Dieffenbach article on corn, Pennsylvania Folklife Society File 577-231-60.

¹⁰¹ Mush had yet another application in the field of recreation. Mrs. Elmira Layton of Slatedale in Lehigh County, reports its use, fried hard, of course, as bait in carp fishing. Robert C. Bucher of Schwenksville R. D., Montgomery County, also reports that this was once common bait for carp in his area, although another similar bait was *kon-broat* (rye bread).

The second puts the mushpot into the role of weather prognosticator. "When the mush bubbles high in the kettle, there's a storm imminent" (*Won der mush im kessel in de hay gwollert, no gebts shtarrem naigstlich*)—Victor C. Dieffenbach in *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, January 25, 1950.

Jests About Mush

In Pennsylvania there are in circulation several jests about mush. One of them reflects the situation where mush was served too often for the hired men, others the complaint of being served dirty mush.

Too Much Mush

About fifty years ago a farmer from Indiantown Gap had a hired man.

Each morning the breakfast in this farmer's family consisted of the same fare—fried mush. So one morning, when called upon to say grace the hired man prayed:

Oh Gott! sei gnaidich,

Ich bin der mush so laidich! Amen.

(Oh God, be gracious, I'm so tired of this mush! Amen.)
—From Anna Fry Heilman, Cleona, Lebanon County, published in *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, August 11, 1949.

Didn't Want It All at Once

A hired boy was working on a farm. He quit after about a week. His family asked him why.

"Well," he said, "all they had to eat was mush and milk."

"What's wrong with that?"

"The mush was made out of the cornmeal from the barrel that they fed the calves from. It was too dirty."

"Oh, well," said his mother, "you're supposed to eat a peck of dirt a year anyway."

"Yes," said the boy, "but I don't want it all at once."

—From Berton E. Beck, D.D.S., 350 East 236 Street, New York 70, N. Y., native of Coganhouse Township, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania.

He Didn't Stay

One time a man came to a farmhouse about noon, and the woman said to him that he could stay there for dinner.

"Yes, well," the man said about it, "that depends."

The woman was stirring mush. She had a big wooden spoon in the one hand, a handful of mush-meal in the other, and a drop on her nose. She kept scattering the meal into the kettle, and with the other hand stirred it fast with the spoon. She rocked back and forth and trembled as she stirred.

The drop finally fell into the kettle.

The man left.

—From Victor Dieffenbach, "*Der Oldt Bauer*," Bethel R. D., Berks County, Pennsylvania.

Defense of Mush

Old Dan Burkert of Bernville was a big man, and a mighty fine singer. He was also what we call in English a very good story-teller. And when something was on his mind, he spoke out!

One time Old Dan went to Pottsville and had to stay at a hotel over night. It was in the Fall of the year, and when the guests sat down to the breakfast table next morning there was fried mush on the table.

There was a young fellow at the table who was something of a smart aleck. He hadn't noticed the old foresinger when he sat down at the upper end of the table. But Dan saw him, and he knew him too.

The young fellow had just speared a piece of mush with his fork, lifted it up in the air and said, "What kind of a preparation is this?"

"Ei!" Old Dan cried out, "that is mush. Mush! Do you hear? *Mush!* Damn it, *mush!* You and I Dutch potato-farmers of Berks County were brought up on it! Yes, MUSH!"

—Also from Victor Dieffenbach. This is related in theme to the folktale of the Dutchman who goes to the city on a visit and comes back "unable" to talk Dutch. The young man in this story pretends he doesn't know what mush is because he feels he is above it, it is poor man's fare and *he* is a gentleman.

Same Pot but Another Hole

One time there were some Dutch farmer folk and they had a whole troop of children. In the evenings the wife cooked a big kettle full of mush, and poured it into a big, low, pewter bowl.

The next morning she set the bowl on the table, and they all sat down around it. Each one had a spoon, and dug himself a little hole in the mush, poured in some milk, and ate, each one out of his own hole in front of his place.

The smallest of the boys sat on his daddy's lap and he ate out of the same hole as the old man.

One morning the little fellow made a little hole beside the other one, poured a little milk into it, and shouted out very loudly, "Hay, Daddy! Now I have my own hole!"

—This story is also from Victor Dieffenbach. It is of extreme interest because it reflects the earlier custom of eating mush out of a common dish. Additional evidence of this custom is given by W. J. Hoffman in his article on Pennsylvania Dutch rural life in the *Journal of American Folklore*, 1889, 23: "Hot boiled corn meal mush was often used at supper, and served in one large dish. Milk was poured over it, and each helped himself directly therefrom with his own spoon. At such times quarrels among the children frequently resulted on account of encroachments upon the recognized portion or space of a less rapid neighbor."

President Buchanan and the Mush

The most common story about mush told in Pennsylvania, however, is the story of the visitor to a Pennsylvania farmhouse who arrives unexpectedly for dinner, on a day when the family have mush and milk scheduled on the menu. In some versions of this widespread tale, the flustered women, ashamed to serve mush to company, prepare something else. In other versions the visitor himself requests the mush, saying it is a favorite dish.

The story used to be told in Pennsylvania about President Buchanan. On a trip back to his home country the President stopped at a farmhouse at supper time. The distraught farmwife had made mush for supper, which was hardly thought of as company fare, so the mush pot was shoved under the table. The president smelled the mush and told them to bring it out. "Mush is my favorite meal," he said, "I was raised on it."

"Parre" Pomp and the Mush

The same story has been told of Pastor Pomp, Reformed preacher of Easton.

Mr. Pomp, the minister, once went to visit a family out in the country and he happened to come there just as they were sitting down to their meal. He was very quick with his eyes, and he saw they had put some dishes on a shelf under the table. He was asked to sit down, which he did,

and the women folks went to get something for the minister.

Mr. Pomp had seen what had been put away, and reaching under the table, as if by accident, he asked, "Hello, what have we here?" and bringing out the mush pan, he exclaimed, "This is what I like, now bring along the milk, for there is nothing I want more than mush and milk."¹⁰²

The Girl with the Two Beaux

A mother and daughter lived together. The daughter had a plain, common beau and a stylish beau. One day she asked the plain beau to stay for supper.

He heard them talking in the kitchen. "Mush and milk will do for supper—that's good enough for him."

Then the girl's stylish beau arrived and they altered the menu in favor of shortcakes and tea.

When the plain beau was asked to ask the blessing he said:

*Shortcakes and tea on the table I see,
When mush and milk was intended for me.*¹⁰³

No Mush After All

A more elaborate version comes from Mrs. Candace (Woodring) Mattern, aged 88, a native of Bald Eagle Valley in Centre County. This story is related both to the one that precedes it and to the tale about Pastor Pomp, for again the visitor is the preacher.

The preacher called on one of the families in his congregation. There was a young girl in the family. Her beau was there and since he was practically one of the family, they were going to serve mush and milk for supper.

When the preacher arrived unexpectedly, they flew around and got something special, changed the menu.

When the preacher was called upon to ask the blessing, he said:

*The Lord be praised,
I'm so amazed,
To see how things have ended!
Biscuit and tea
For supper I see,
When mush and milk was intended.*

MUSH

We close our dissertation on Pennsylvania's mush-culture with the poem by Victor C. Dieffenbach, "*Der Oldt Bauer*," of Bethel, Berks County, dialect newspaper columnist and rural philosopher whose insights and researches into Pennsylvania folk-culture have enlightened the Pennsylvania Folklife Society on many subjects.

*The mush is bubbling in the pot,
I like it while it's boiling hot,
With milk that still has all the cream,
And then to bed, and dream and dream.*

*But better yet, is when it's fried,
I wonder how many times I've tried
To slice it thin, and fry it brown,
And leave the middle soft as down.*

*I like my mush from Fall to Spring,
But once the froggies start to sing,
And flies are crawling on the wall,
I want no mush until next Fall.*

*Once I get old—can't work no more,
I'll squat upon the kitchen floor—
I'll eat my scrapple and my mush,
And sweep the crumbs up with a brush.*

¹⁰² Interview with Grandmother Lehman, granddaughter of George Taylor, Easton, Pennsylvania, 1883, in *The Sunday Call* (Easton, Pennsylvania), October 28, 1883.

¹⁰³ From Miss Anna Grace Clark, aged 86, Tyrone, Pennsylvania, a native of Buffalo Run Valley, Centre County, who heard it from her mother.