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Pennsylvania
FOLKLIFE

DECEMBER 1964



Cover: *"Kriss Kringle's Christmas Tree"* (Philadelphia, 1845), was the most influential Christmas book in America. Twice reprinted, once in New York, it established Kriss Kringle as one of the triumvirate of Christmas gift-bringers in this country. From Alfred L. Shoemaker, *"Christmas in Pennsylvania: A Folk-Cultural Study"* (Kutztown, Pennsylvania, 1959).

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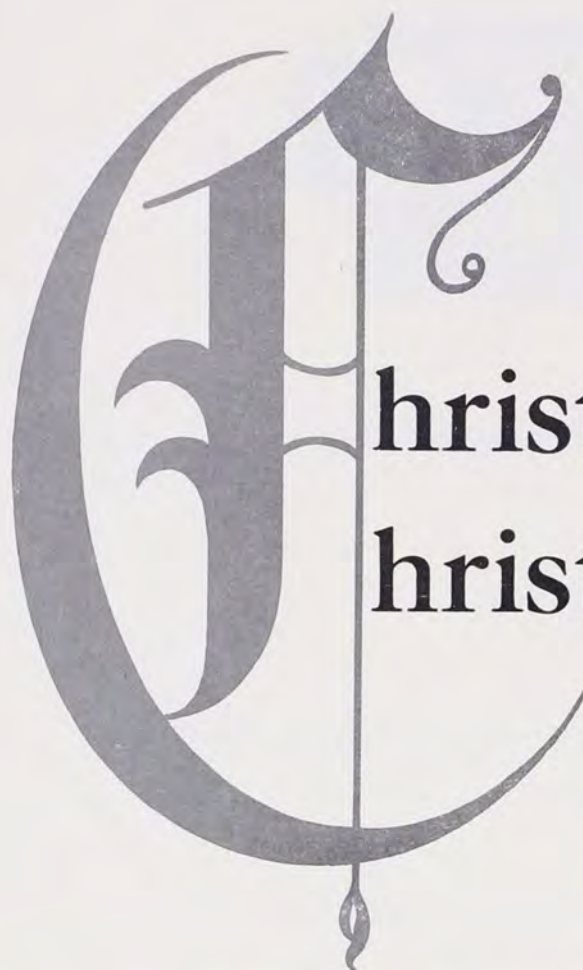
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Christmas Fraktur, Christmas Broad­sides

By DON YODER

Christmas folk art, folk art with the theme of Christmas, is somewhat of a rarity in the Dutch Country. The folk artist concerned himself more, it seems, with "rites of passage"—birth and baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death—than with special days in the Dutchman's calendar and the customs associated with them.

Christmas as a family holiday was celebrated with great joy by some Pennsylvanians, and avoided, almost religiously shunned, by others. In 1800 the breakdown would include Pennsylvania's "Gay Dutch"—the Lutherans and the Reformed—plus the Moravians and the Episcopalians, in the pro-Christmas party. Everybody else—the "Plain Dutch" plus all the English sects of Puritan provenance (Quakers, Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists) were on the anti-Christmas side. By 1900, with the exception of a few small sectarian enclaves of resistance, the joys of Christmas had won out, and the "American" Christmas with Santa Claus and Christmas Tree, was well established.

For details on every phase of the once unique "Gay Dutch" Christmas—with Belsnickels and Christmas Mummers; Barring out the Schoolmaster; Metzel Soup and Christmas Money; Matzabaum, Moshey, and Bellyguts; Christmas Cookies and Cooky-Cutters; Pyramids and Putzes; the Christmas Tree and its History; Second Christmas Day; even the Firecracker Christmases of Western Pennsylvania—see Alfred L. Shoemaker, *Christmas in Pennsylvania: A Folk-Cultural Study* (Kutztown, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Folklife Society, 1959).

The "folk art" in celebration of Christmas featured in this article involves several types of early Americana—manuscript (fraktur) as well as printed (broadside) documents. Most of our examples come from the upstate Dutch

counties, with a few broadsides from Philadelphia.

1. *Christmas Addresses*. Throughout the 19th Century newspapers, businesses, and groups of public servants in the cities issued broadsides either at Christmas or New Year's, distributing them as Christmas or New Year presents among their patrons. It was good public relations and good advertising, and a tip from the patrons was usually forthcoming.

We include several examples from Easton, Pennsylvania, from B. M. Youells' "Museum Barber Shop," dated from 1855 to 1865. These include long poems by local poetasters, giving national and local news, with humorous references to local persons or situations.

The most common example of this type of broadside was the New Year's Address given to patrons by the "carriers" of the town and city newspapers. These were usually published as separate broadsides, but at times they were printed as part of the New Year's issue of the paper itself.

Because the New Year "Carriers Address" tradition has been treated elsewhere,* we include two "Christmas Addresses" by the night watchmen of Philadelphia.

The first of these is the attractive "*N.E. City Watchman's Address, For Christmas Day, December 25, 1835*," (reproduced from *Christmas in Pennsylvania*, page 101). Included are vignettes of the American eagle, two ships

* For the New Year's broadside tradition in Pennsylvania, see Walter E. Boyer, "The New Year-Wish of the Pennsylvania Dutch Broadside," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, Vol. X, No. 2, Fall 1959, 45-48, which deals with 19th Century examples; also the forthcoming study of 18th Century New Year's broadsides by Harold Krelove, to appear in Robert H. Byington and Kenneth S. Goldstein (eds.), *Two Penny Ballads and Four Dollar Whisky: Pennsylvania Folklore Annual—1965*.

WATCHMAN'S ADDRESS,

N. E. CITY

FOR CHRISTMAS DAY,

DECEMBER 25, 1835.



Again returns dread winter's gloom,
And Nature's beauty dies;
The rose and lily cease to bloom,
The whirlwind walks the skies.

All that was fair in Summer's reign,
Is faded—withered—dead;
No flower is seen upon the plain,
Sweet summer's joys are fled.

Heak howls the blast along the shore,
Chill falls the frost and snow,
The Robin's note is heard no more,
The streams no longer flow.

Cheerless and cold the wintry nights
E'en to the rich must be,
But ah! how dear to him it proves
Who lives in poverty.

Still drearier is the night to those,
Whose duty 'tis to guard
The Cities from midnight foes,
And for a small reward.

No storms the Watchman's course impede,
Fulfilling still his trust,
The drizzling rain he cannot heed,
Let winter do its worst.

The spoiler of the rich man's wealth,
The thief and robber's dread;
To guard from them he wastes his health,
Not gains he but his bread.

While others sleep, 'tis his to roam
O'er all the City's bound,
Leaving the domestic joys of home,
And walks his nightly round.

Such is the hapless watchman's fate,
Such are the ills he knows,
Such is his hard—his lone estate,
While thus thro' life he goes.

And will you now reward disclaim—
Unnoticed pass him by,
Refuse with coldness or disdain
Him on whom you do rely?

Long may you live in blissful peace,
Still may new pleasures spring,
While your earthly joys increase,
Your hearts with rapture sing.

May eury ne'er your peace molest,
Nor rob you of repose;
But tranquil be your life, and blest
With all that Heaven bestows.



Regulations of the State House Bell, in case of Fire.

North—One, one, one.
South—Two, two, two.
East—Three, three, three.

West—Four, four, four.
North East—One three, one three.
North West—one four, one four.

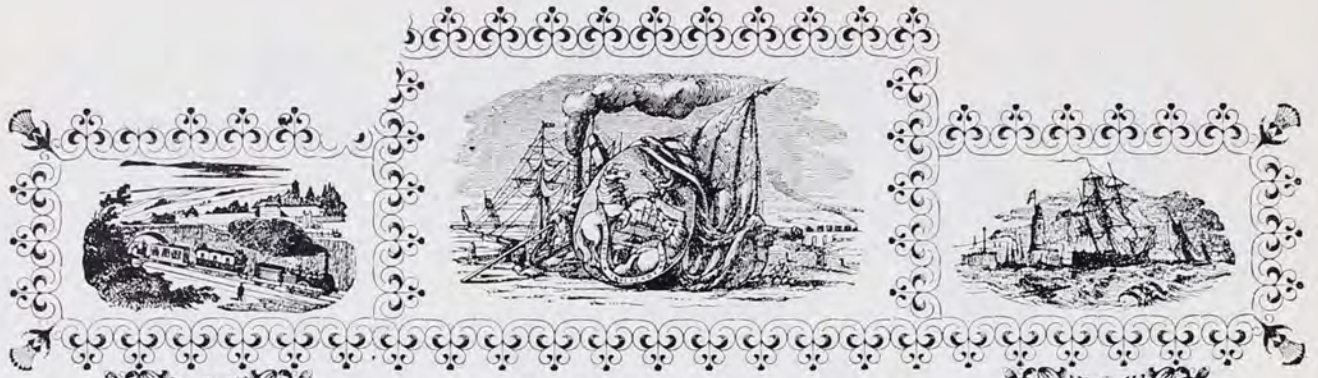
South East—Ten three, two three.
South West—Two four, two four.
When the fire is close by the State House,
the strokes are in rapid succession.

ALMANAC FOR 1836.

Month	S.	M.	T.	W.	T.	F.	S.	Month	S.	M.	T.	W.	T.	F.	S.
January, 31 days.	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	October, 31 days.	31	30	29	28	27	26	25
February, 28 days.	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	November, 30 days.	30	29	28	27	26	25	24
March, 31 days.	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	December, 31 days.	31	30	29	28	27	26	25
April, 30 days.	30	29	28	27	26	25	24								
May, 31 days.	31	30	29	28	27	26	25								
June, 30 days.	30	29	28	27	26	25	24								
July, 31 days.	31	30	29	28	27	26	25								
August, 31 days.	31	30	29	28	27	26	25								
September, 30 days.	30	29	28	27	26	25	24								

All kinds of Printing neatly executed on reasonable terms by
SAMUEL W. SEALL, No. 3 EA GRANGE STREET,
Formerly Hartung's Alley, near Christ Church, Philadelphia.





**THE
SPRING GARDEN
WATCHMAN'S ADDRESS,**

ON THE RETURN OF
CHRISTMAS DAY, 1848.

Once more doth peace her pinions spread
O'er the far land where freemen tread ;
The harvest hymn's been sung, and now
Stern Winter comes with ruffled brow ;
Yet in its train the season brings
Some joys upon its icy wings :
Among them to delight appear,
Gild CHRISTMAS and the New-born year.

And Jack Frost will you surpass,
Sketching rich landscapes on the glass,—
Not Fancy's, Nature's sketches bold ;
So beautiful, and yet so cold.
And all will shun old frosty Jack,
To his bleak breath all turn their back ;
Tho' out of doors all now would place him,
Your Watchman thro' the storm must face him.

The sweet domestic joys of life
Are yours, nor do you fear the strife
Of elements when raging high,
For you in calmest slumbers lie ;
And dreams of pleasure or of gain
Now o'er your sweetest slumbers reign,
While faithful Watchmen are awake,
To see no ill those slumbers break.

Or, if you have a sleepless night,
How pleasant is the torches' light
Gleaming along your chamber clear,
To tell a watchful friend is near.
Your friend when you repose in bed,
The vagrant's fear—the robber's dread,—
And when the night would threaten harm,
His rattle springs the loud alarm.

'Tis this that makes your slumbers sound,
Your Watchman goes his wakeful round,
To guard your homes from ev'ry ill,—
Tho' oft slandered, faithful still.
Then midst the gaily and mirth
That circles round the Christmas hearth,
Remember him in your delight,
Who guards your happy homes at night.

Oh while your hearts with pleasure beat,
May be a Christmas Welcome meet,
And with the greeting leave your door,
Smiling, as he has oft before.
Then while the Old Year bids farewell,
Oh may the New your bosoms swell
With happiness, and bless your board
With all the comforts life affords.

WATCHMAN'S CALENDAR, FOR 1849.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
Jan.	1	2	3	4	5	6		May	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Sept.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			6	7	8	9	10	11	12			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			13	14	15	16	17	18	19			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27			20	21	22	23	24	25	26			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
	28	29	30	31						27	28	29	30	31					30							
Feb.		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	June.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Octr.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			10	11	12	13	14	15	16			7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			17	18	19	20	21	22	23			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	25	26	27	28							24	25	26	27	28	29	30			21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Mar.		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	July.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Nov.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			8	9	10	11	12	13	14			4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			15	16	17	18	19	20	21			11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				22	23	24	25	26	27	28			18	19	20	21	22	23	24
April.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Aug.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Dec.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15			12	13	14	15	16	17	18			9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22			19	20	21	22	23	24	25			16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			26	27	28	29	30	31				23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	29	30																		30	31					

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

NIGHT WATCHMAN'S CHRISTMAS ADDRESS, PHILADELPHIA, 1848
Franklin and Marshall College Library

CHRISTMAS ADDRESS

To the Patrons of B. M. Youell's
MUSEUM BARBER SHOP,
BY JAMES BRISON AND DANIEL TROY
FOR THE YEAR 1855.

A merry good Christmas, kind Patron to you!
Good morning friend Youell's! why, how do you do?
Christmas or New Year, you always are merry,
I believe in my heart you never are sorry,
Sorry! Why should I, I've nothing to mourn,
My face is well shaved, my hair is well shorn,
My children well clothed, wife and all in good health;
My business is good, contentment is wealth;
What more can we ask? What more could be given,
If we live as we should live, there's pleasure in living,
The World's a great Barber shop, each man has his turn,
Be patient kind patron and you shall have yours—
Examine the Museum, you're nothing to do,
You'll acquire information—I keep a free show,
And teach by example our duties as men,
To never be idle, but learn all we can,
To acquire information, some travellers go
From eternal sunshine to eternal snow,
O'er sea and o'er land the whole world they would roam.

What valuable knowledge you must have
How you've prospered in business, incre
Improved in your mind, your appearance
Is owing no doubt, in a wonderful way
To what little time in the Museum you
Reflect I entreat you, what care and w
The proprietor has taken to profit his
How much of your painings you right
To your humble servant who keeps
Can't you spare him a dollar, two, th
Perhaps by the by you can spare hi
A quarter, a half, (I will be thankf
O, a Five!! I thank you! Is this
You would'nt cheat a poor Barber

And now my good Patrons a w
I've recounted your gains in the
The year that's to come next el
Continue your custom, you sh
all wa
es, the
er all

Christmas Address

TO THE PATRONS OF
B. M. YOUELL'S MUSEUM BARBER SHOP,
BY ROBERT B. YOUELL,
FOR THE YEAR 1853.

One moment halt, my worthy friend,
And lend a listening ear,
Into my simple plea attend,
Ere you depart from here.

I have not much to say to you,
I mean to be quite brief,
My words shall be but short and few,
My case to you I leave.

I merely want to wish you, sir,
A merry Christmas day,
A very pleasant Christmas, sir,
All joyous, bright and gay.

A Christmas, such as ne'er before,
In all your life, you knew;
A Christmas such as evermore,
You'd willingly renew.

But while this Christmas you enjoy,
Remember those in need;
Who now his case would plead,
To give you peace and joy.

Or "quarters" too though not so sweet,
They sound so much like tin,
Add gold don't make so *RAI* a sock,
A little at a time,
Too much of course would whirl around,
And spoil it—like my rhyme!

I'm not particular, you know,
In what you give to me,
For silver, gold, or *RAI* make
As "Tees," I'll thankful be.

Thank you, Sir, kindly, that looks fair,
I hope some more there'll be,
Like music on the midnight air,
That silver sounds to me.

You cannot fail, Sir, to enjoy
Yourself this Christmas day,
The blessings of the Barber boy,
Go with you on your way.

Ben Youell is always very proud
Of his customers they say—
He has a fine and noble crowd

CHRISTMAS ADDRESS

TO THE PATRONS OF
B. M. YOUELL'S
Museum Barber Shop.
BY ROBERT AND THEODORE YOUELL.
FOR THE YEAR 1864.

A merry Christmas to you all,
My worthy Patrons, great and small,
A merry Christmas now—and when
A hundred years have passed away,
May merry Christmas come again,
And find you young, and well, and gay,
And happier than you are to-day—
For war's all devastating hand,
Cannot forever curse our land!
And sorrow cannot always dwell,
Within the home we love so well.

Many changes have taken place,
Since, with a kind and smiling face,
You handed me a dollar bill,
Last Christmas day, in this same place
But you and I are waving still!
The din of battle has rolled along
The steady valleys and hills among,
Through many a golden summer day,
And all the moon, with placid face,
Looked down upon a bloody fray.

Proud Mobile heard the thunder roar,
Of the Yankee guns one sunny day,
As Farragut, called to the mast, did pour
His shot and shell across the bay.

And little Phil Sheridan, brave and true,
Has whirled the ragged rebel crew,
From the valley below like frightened sheep,
While guns and pioneers by the mile
Were the trails he would always reap.

And Sherman, kept smug and you at play,
Before Atlanta fell many a day,
Till the valiant Hood had curly head,
When he packed up his "duds" and wifely bed,
Leaving a ghastly pile of dead,
When Sherman found he had gone away,
He promised his boys a holiday,

And gave them a furlough to go and play,
Some practical jokes in Georgia!
Unconditional surrender Grant,
With his fighting boys—a valiant band—
Has swarmed from the Appomattock's shore,
Clear down to Richmond's very door,
And many a hard fought field they won,
As the noble Lewis journeyed on,
The wide of the Wilderness will tell
That many a noble fore fell,
And Spotsylvania's bloody field,
Can tell how his boys their weapons wield.

But "onward" fill their battle cry,
Re-schooled far along the sky,
Till the rebel bands now are and fell,
Their only bound by a wall of steel!
Not long may the noble heroes stay,
Ere this fond rebellion is dead for aye.

Ah! many a bloody battle was fought,
And many a noble soldier fell,
And all the anguish and sorrow wrought,
No mortal pen nor tongue can tell.

Yet many a home is silent now,
And many a vacant chair is seen,
When weeping ones in sorrow bow,
And long for joys that once have been.

And many a mother's head is bowed,
And dead is her heart to every joy,
For the winds that blow so wild without,
Are waiving over her fallen boy.

But we are blessed, alive and well—
—How long no mortal tongue can tell,
So let us kindly deal with those
Who feel to-day misfortune's blows,
And not forget, in grateful joy,
The poor, but faithful *BARBER BOT!*

CHRISTMAS ADDRESS

TO THE PATRONS OF
B. M. Youell's Museum Barber Shop,
BY T. R. S. YOUELL AND JOHN HESS.
EASTON, Pa., 1865.

Once more we meet, my patrons dear,
Just on the verge of a New Year,
All sound and well,
What joys we had, what hopes have fled,
What sorrows felt since last we met,
You best can tell.

For death has rendered many a tie,
And pain gave birth to many a sigh,
And sorrow filled full many an eye,
With tears that fell.

Perchance upon a loved one's grave,
Whom love and friendship could not save,
But you and I, with health and life,
Passed through the year of Sixty-Five,
While many a husband, child, or wife,
Passed o'er the Styx.

But what may be for us in store,
Throughout the coming year is more
Than we can tell, or know, before
The end of Sixty-Six.

'Tis wonderful, I do declare,
To see the changes everywhere
Have taken place throughout the year,
On every side.

Grim war has fled and left us peace,
The price has changed in bread and cheese,
If only taxes now would cease,
All woe would be right.

Young men might marry pretty wives,
And all insure their precious lives,
Then snugly live in little hives,
And end their days.

As other folks have ended theirs,
With lets of cash and lots of heirs,
Both boys and girls in equal pairs,
To take their place.

The rebels found the famous "ditch,"
They sought no help, and into which
Our Generals sent them with a pitch,
That made them roar.

And now a little less supreme,
They come to lick the mellow cream,
From Uncle Samuel's Soup Tureen,
Just as before.

We'll let them come if they behave,
And come to our shop to slave,
If not we'll lather every knave,
And send them back.

For Dixie's line is blotted out,
And chimney beneath a cloud,
While Yankee are plenty here about,
Both white and black.

John Bull is in a little fog,
Since "Mr. Davis" donned his frock,
And rebel Bonds and cotton stock
Have tumbled down.

He lates those little "prints bills,"
Which Uncle Sam stuck to his heels,
For cannons, ships, and leaden pills—
The filthy clown!

The French across the Rio Grande,
Are now a sorry looking band,
Without a frog in either hand,
To make a stew.

They caught the famous "Elephant"
And now like sorry feds they stand
And wonder what in all the land,
With him to do.

Grim war has fled our blessed shores,
No more is heard the cannon's roar,
And hushed the battle's awful din,
And turned the tide of death within
Some other channel just as grim,
As you well know.

For thousands now are killed, or break
Their bones upon the Railroad track,
While corporations turn their back
On all this woe.

But here in our Museum Shop,
Nothing has changed, nor seemed to stop,
(Except our ever faithful Bot.)
We still are here.

Ready to meet our friends of old,
In rain, or sunshine, heat or cold,
With razors sharp, and trim as gold,
With brush and shears,

To shear, shampoo, or trim their hair,
To sell them hair oil sweet and rare,
That brings the curls on heads quite bare
For many years.

And if they will not grow—why "fair,"
We have a Wig that always takes—
If others take it—made by Dixie,
A clever "brick,"

Who lives in Philadelphia,
But sends to us without delay,
For decent price, and ready pay,
A splendid Wig.

So men need not go unshined,
Nor let their heads go unwooded,
Nor make their crowns go barefooted
For want of hair.

When Dixie's Wig is sold in town,
In colors Black, or Red, or Brown,
But count their Emerald pictures down,
And take their share.

But I must stop my foolish song,
And do what I neglected long:
Wish you, my friends, both old and young,
Both rich and poor,

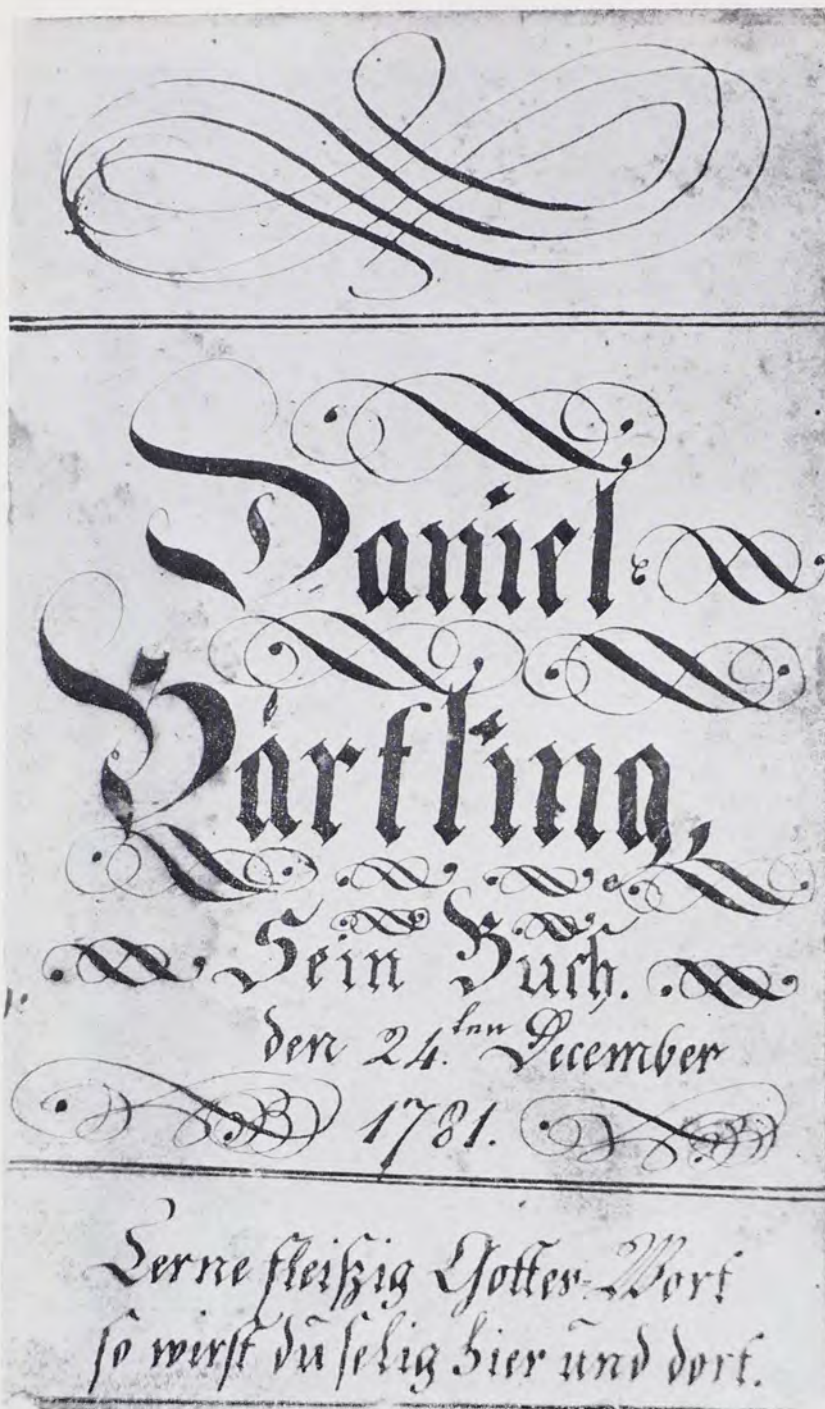
A very Merry Christmas day,
With all you need or wish or pray,
And if you please—don't turn away—
I'm not quite sure

But that I wish another thing—
I wish you would a dollar bring
Within the box which you see swing,
Just by your side,
And there are youthful Barber Boys,
Whose hearts will very much rejoice,
To see the sight.

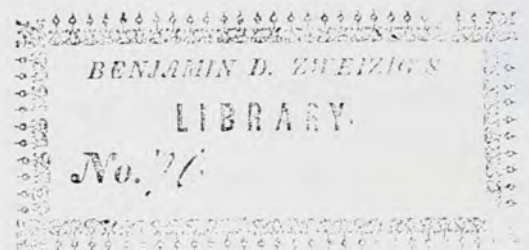
THE BARBER'S CHRISTMAS GREETING TO HIS PATRONS.

The "Museum Barber Shop" of Easton, Pennsylvania, issued "Christmas Addresses" in the expectation of tips from year-round patrons.

Franklin and Marshall College Library



Benjamin D. Zweizig's Book
 Received on the 24th of December.
 (Christmas Day) 1845.
 No. 45 St. John's Church at
 (Sunday School Society) Hamburg.



THE PASTOR RECEIVES A
 CHRISTMAS PRESENT, 1845.
 Don Yoder Collection

CHRISTMAS BOOKPLATE FROM 1781.
 "Daniel Härtling, his book, the 24th of December,
 1781. Diligently study God's Word, so shalt thou
 be saved here and in eternity."
 Free Library of Philadelphia

a-sailing, a bespectacled Dr. Franklin, the coat-of-arms of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (with the motto "Virtue, Liberty, and Independence"), and a woodcut of a cloaked watchman with lamp and ladder leaving his octagonal watch-box for a tour of duty. At the bottom appears the calendar for 1836.

The second example is "The Spring Garden Watchman's Address, On the Return of Christmas Day, 1848."

2. *Christmas Bookplates.* Of Christmas bookplates there are many examples in the public collections of fraktur. We include one from the Free Library Collection—from a book given to Daniel Härtling on December 24, 1781, with an admonition to study God's Word in order to be saved on earth and in heaven.

Another book-inscription takes us back to Christmas of 1845. The Reverend Benjamin D. Zweizig, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church at Hamburg, Berks County, received a present from his Sunday School Society—a copy

of the *Useful Miscellany for Sabbath School Libraries*, Volume II (New York: S. W. Benedict & Co., 1833). According to the bookplate which he pasted below his Christmas inscription, the book was No. 76 in his private library. Benjamin Zweizig was a member of a Pennsylvania Dutch family which is still producing ministers in the Reformed (now United Church) tradition.

3. *Dutch Madonnas.* Very rarely did a fraktur artist try his hand at the Christmas theme of the Madonna. The Dutch Madonna which we include is from the Free Library Collection. It portrays a somewhat un-folkish madonna, obviously copied from a print of a Renaissance painting, flanked by two admiring cherubs, and lighted by stars that would have made excellent Dutch Country "hex signs." The hymn at the bottom, "Gelobet seyst du, Jesu Christ," was a favorite German hymn for the season of Advent, dealing with the Incarnation. It appears in most of the early Pennsylvania Lutheran and Reformed hymnals.



1. Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ,
 Daß du mensch geboren bist,
 Von einer jungfrau, das ist wahr,
 Des freuet sich der engel schaar,
 Halleluja.

2. Des ew'gen Vaters einzig kind
 Seht man in der Krippe findt,
 In unser armes fleisch und blut
 Verkleidet sich das ew'ge gut,
 Halleluja.

3. Den aller welt-kreis nie beschloß,
 Der liegt in Marien schooß,
 Er ist ein kindlein worden klein,
 Der alle ding erhält allein,
 Halleluja.

1. Das ew'ge licht geht da herein,
 Gibt der welt ein' n neuen schein,
 Es leucht wohl mitten in der nacht,
 Und uns des lichts kinder macht,
 Halleluja.

2. Er ist auf erden kontumen arm,
 Daß er unser sich erbarm,
 Und in dem himmel mache reich,
 Und seinen lieben engeln gleich,
 Halleluja.

3. Das hat er alles uns gethan,
 Sein grosse lieb zu zeigen an:
 Des freuet sich alle Christenheit,
 Und dankt ihm des in ewigkeit,
 Halleluja.

A PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH MADONNA.

Free Library of Philadelphia

Dating from the first half of the 19th Century, the madonna and angels were obviously copied from a renaissance print, but the stars could double as Pennsylvania "hex signs."

It is interesting to compare this Pennsylvania Christmas item with the Gustav S. Peters engraving of the Madonna and Child, published at Harrisburg about 1845, and reproduced in *Christmas in Pennsylvania*, page 7.

4. *Fraktur Sketches.* Two additional items from the Dutch Country which take us back to Christmas in the past are undated fraktur sketches in the author's collection. They stem obviously from the first half of the 19th Cen-



"O Jesus Christ! Thy
 little crib is my para-
 dise, where my soul
 feeds."

Don Yoder Collection.

"The blessed Creator of all things
 put on a servant's lowly body,
 that He might win flesh with
 flesh, and that His creation might
 not ever be destroyed."

Don Yoder Collection



TWIN CHRISTMAS FRAKTUR SKETCHES.

Dating very probably from the early 19th Century, these sketches reflect Christmas
 themes of the Incarnation and the Cult of the Infant Christ.

Math: 1. 21.

And sie wird einen Sohn gebähren, des Nahmen
wird JESUS heißen, dann Er wird
sein Volck selig machen von ihren
Sünden.

Kein Nahme ist so schon, als meines JEsus Nahme,
Weil er auf Deutsch so viel als Seligmacher heist,
Es ist auch dieses Kind der rechte Weibes-Saame,
Der uns allein den Weg zum ewigen Leben weist;
Den Nahmen will ich mir tief in mein Herze graben,
Und in der letzten Noth in meinem Munde haben.

Auf das heil. Weinachts Fest 1 7 6 9.

Fac simile of Christmas Greeting printed at Ephrata by the Bruderschaft.

Courtesy Harry Stauffer, Ephrata

AN EARLY AMERICAN CHRISTMAS GREETING.
EPHRATA, PRINTED BY THE BROTHERHOOD, 1769.

ture and seem to have been done by the same artist, thus forming a pair with Christmas themes. Were they given as gifts, as for instance, the more elaborate *Vorschrift* pieces were given by country schoolmasters as rewards to "good pupils," in the German schools of the Dutch Country? Possibly so.

One of the pair has the verse "O Jesu Christ! Dein Kripplein ist Mein Paradies, da meine Seele weidet"—"O Jesus Christ, Thy little crib is my paradise, where my soul feeds." On the reverse side is written the name, in crude German script, of "Joseph Xander."

In identifying its source, one thinks immediately of the Pennsylvania Moravian tradition, with its mystic cult of the *Jesulein*—the Baby Jesus or Child Christ—and its elaborate *putz* tradition. Its precedent in Christianity lies in medieval Franciscanism, and parallels can be seen in the contemporary cults of the *Bambino Gesu* in South Italian Catholicism and of the Baby Krishna in Hinduism. In all these cults God is worshiped in the form of a child.

The comparison piece deals with the more conventional Christmas theme of the Incarnation. The German verse, evidently from a favorite Christmas hymn, reads:

*Der selge Schöpfer aller Ding
Zog an ein's Knechtes Leib gering,
Dass Er das Fleisch mit Fleisch erwürb
Und sein Geschöpf nicht all's verdürb.*

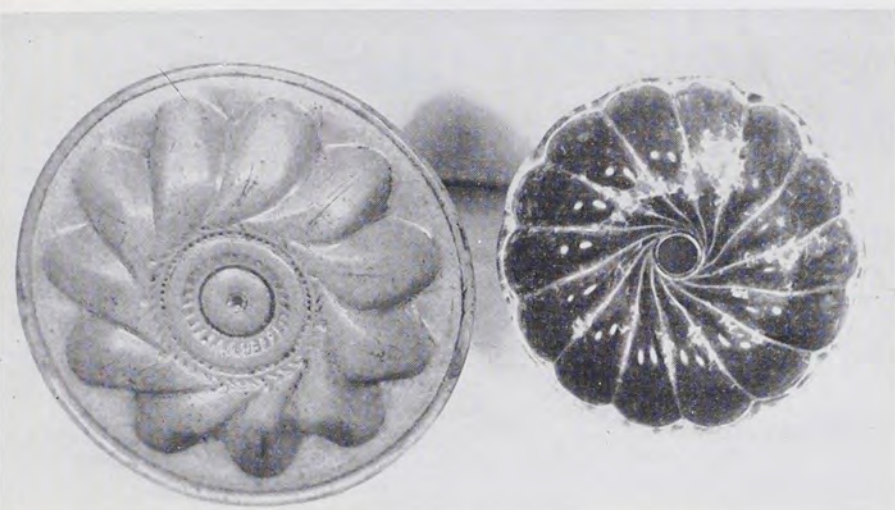
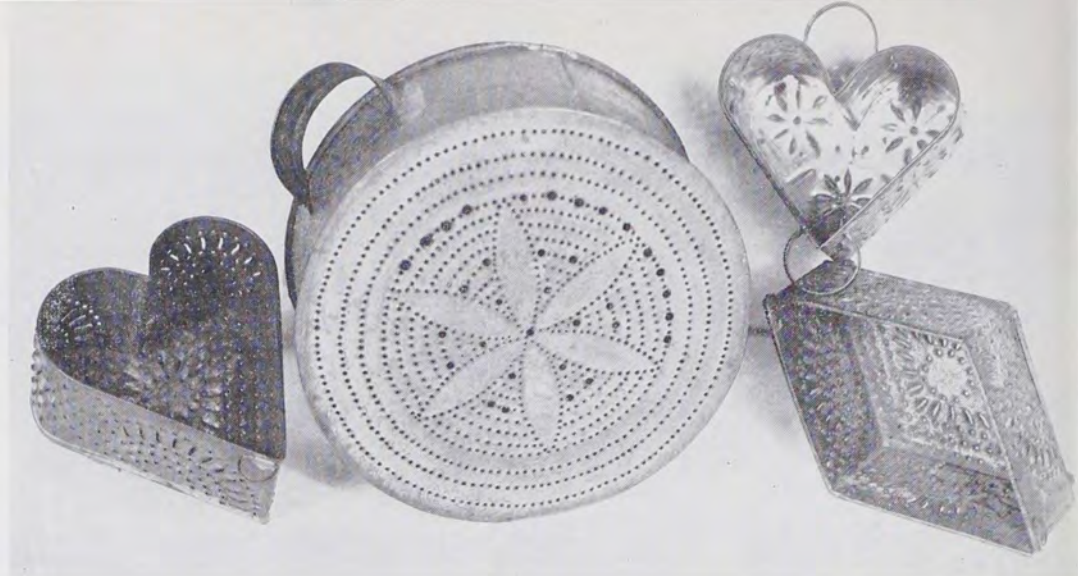
Which can be translated: "The blessed Creator of all things took upon Himself a servant's humble body, that He might win flesh with flesh, and that His creation might not ever be destroyed."

5. *Christmas Cards.* Although our present-day custom of the Christmas Card stems from Victorian England, occasionally Christmas broadsides turn up which might be claimed as isolated forerunners of the American Christmas card.

One such is the rare Ephrata broadside Christmas greeting, printed by the Brotherhood on the cloister press in 1769. It begins with the scripture verse: "And she shall bear a son, whose name shall be Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1: 21), and a German hymn-verse which can be translated: "No name is so beautiful as the name of my Jesus, because in German he is called Saviour. This child is also the true seed of the woman, which alone shows us the way to eternal life. His name I will bury deep in my heart, and have it on my lips in my last hour." At the bottom are printed the words: "For the Holy Festival of Christmas 1769."

For the privilege of using several of our illustrations, our thanks and a Merry Christmas to Herbert B. Anstaett, Librarian, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Miss Ellen Shaffer, Librarian, Rare Book Room, Free Library, Philadelphia; and Harry Stauffer, Cloister Printer, Ephrata, Pennsylvania.

Cottage cheese took on fancy shapes and patterns when the curds solidified in containers like the ones shown here. The whey drained away through holes punched (by hammer and nail) into the tin. The rough edges of the nailholes were always on the outside.



THE SHAPE OF FOOD THAT WAS

By EARL F. ROBACKER

Turk's-head molds (the name deriving from the supposed resemblance to the folds of a turban) were the ne plus ultra for cakes—especially sponge cakes—in Victorian times. The whorled pattern at the right is in the ware known as Pennsylvania Bennington. The thin, shallow form shown at the left represents redware at its most competent and intricate stage of development.

**Photos by
Steve Karas,
Hartsdale,
New York**

Fancy shapes for puddings were created by the use of tin molds. Melon-shaped molds are sometimes found with covers, but in general the receptacles were lidless. Pudding containers are found commonly in tin, less frequently in pottery or glazed clayware. The central mold shown here is tin plate-over-copper.



We do not know who first thought of putting frosting on cake, of crimping the edge of pie crust, or of perforating the top lid of a pie in a fanciful design. We do know, however, that in each case the aim was to enhance something about the original article—if not necessarily the flavor, at least the appearance. Making things look better, while by no means an invention of the Pennsylvania Dutch, was second nature to them; using, and in some cases creating culinary gear which would give food a particular, special shape, was more likely to happen in early Pennsylvania than almost anywhere else.

The paraphernalia for making things look better came into existence as early as the 18th Century, in the days of fireplace cookery. As we look back now, to the earliest implements which have survived, it seems clear that as time marched on and the work load of the housewife became easier, two things happened: Heavy, cumbersome appurtenances gradually but steadily gave way to lighter ones—and the fanciful, decorative, creative touch diminished in corresponding degree.

Waffle irons—and waffles—may be used to demonstrate the point. Waffles may actually *taste* better now than they did two hundred years ago, and probably no one would try to find fault with the fragile, crisp, golden-brown oblong, smothered in butter and maple syrup, which comes to him at breakfast. Just possibly, though, he may think longingly of waffles which once were heart-shaped instead of rectangular, even though he has never eaten any—waffles made by ladling the batter into an iron with yard-long handles, and then baked over fireplace coals. Not only would the waffles be heart-shaped; they would bear the added imprint of

a star or of some motif beyond the little square hills and valleys with which we are familiar today.

Waffle irons of this sort—cast iron—must have been among the first to go when fireplaces gave way to cook-stoves, and waffles could be made by means of a contraption which fitted, for heating, snugly over the aperture created by removing a stove lid. This kind of waffle iron lasted well into the 20th Century. It had to be flipped over, half way along in the baking process, so that both sides of the waffle would brown—and either an inept cook dumped the whole business into the fire or a skillful one produced a waffle as tasty as if it had been baked over the fireplace coals. The two final steps in the evolutionary process are familiar to all of us: the electric waffle iron plus the packaged mix from the supermarket, and the pre-cooked, frozen waffle which needs only thrusting into a hot oven long enough to defrost.



Cast iron containers for baking various kinds of quick-breads took on a great many fancy shapes, among which the heart has always been popular.

All articles shown are from the Robacker Collection



18th Century waffle irons, of cast iron, were enormously heavy and cumbersome. The heart shape was a much admired one. Over all, this implement was 38 inches long.

Wafer irons, left, operated as did those for waffles: The iron was heated in or over the coals; the batter was poured on one half of the open iron; then the iron was closed and returned to the coals. The strawberry-and-tulip design shown here is considered especially desirable.

Similar in intent to the long-handled waffle iron was the wafer iron of the 18th Century. Wafers were almost paper-thin, were elaborately designed, and were made for very special occasions only—ordinarily for the celebration of Holy Communion in churches. Some wafer irons, however, bear the names of individuals, and from this fact rather than from any actual tradition we deduce that wafers were also made for non-religious purposes.

Perhaps one in a thousand of today's housewives would recognize a cast iron muffin pan if she saw it—provided that one were somewhat selective in his choice of a thousand and took them from an age group of fifty and over. There is a whole galaxy of small, sweetened breads which have disappeared from the American scene because of the difficulty in making them or because of the time involved. The muffins or "gems" baked in cast iron should be counted in with these, and perhaps popovers and home-made cream puffs as well. Others, like plowlines, funnel cakes, and fasnachts, never got very far beyond the Dutch Country—although the relationship between the fasnacht and the doughnut is a story in itself.

Muffin tins which were really tins and not iron must have been hailed with relief by housewives in the first half of the 19th Century because of the ease with which they could be handled. Ordinarily there were a dozen individual units in each "pan." Each little container was soldered or riveted to a large sheet of tin. The shapes were pleasing; the heart, the star, and fluted designs seem to have been most popular. Those familiar to the writer were made in Allentown; the initials of the company which turned them out are stamped on the tin at various spots. Muffins or small cakes made in these molds were likely to make their appearance whenever full-size cakes were also made. One reason for their complete disappearance from the culinary scene is the fact that the base on which the individual containers were fastened, cheek by jowl, was almost impossible to clean satisfactorily.

Pudding molds, principally, we must suppose, for holding cornstarch pudding, were of tin, or of copper which had been coated with tin. The capacity of these ranged upward from about a pint. Sides were plain or fluted; the bottom—which became the top, of course, when the pudding was unmolded—contained the major design. The sheaf of wheat was apparently very popular. Other designs were the ear of corn, animals, and flowers. Since the molds tended to be rather deep, one assumes that the pudding itself was of firm consistency or it would have lost its fancy shape when it was turned out of the mold.

While layer cakes were "wonderful good," they were baked in plain round pans or, if the occasion warranted, in large oblong ones. As many layers were put together with frosting or filling as the cook wished, but three would be reckoned a meager minimum. Cakes baked in special shapes were less common and were tricky to handle, but served well to demonstrate the skill of their creator. The horseshoe shape appears to have been admired, but the star, difficult as it must have been to handle, was undoubtedly more spectacular. Heart-shaped tins have continued in popularity down to the present time.

A peculiarity in the serving of layer cakes at church suppers or picnics obtained in the largely Pennsylvania Dutch villages of German Valley and Newfoundland, in the Poconos, for many years. The cakes were usually five layers tall and about a foot across—truly gargantuan affairs. To obviate the likelihood of spoiling the tip of each wedge



Some of the most competent and pleasing non-professional woodcarving in America is found on butter molds. One might expect delicacy of line and detail in a hard wood, like walnut, but even pine molds show a high degree of skill. The molds shown here are considerably older than the cow and the sheaf of wheat popular with some collectors.



Chocolate Easter candy molds, almost always utilizing rabbits as decorative motifs, were a development of Victorian times. The molds were in two pieces, fastened by small clamps rather than by hinges. Only half of each mold is shown here.

in the cutting, especially in a crumbly coconut cake, a central core was first removed, so that an unspoiled wedge became possible. A small boy, watching the operation on the occasion of a Sunday School picnic, mustered up enough courage to ask what the women did with the "cores." "We throw them away!" he was told. "Who would want to eat them? They aren't the right shape!"

"I would," he offered, visions of chocolate, coconut, and feathery white vanilla cylinders filling his head. However, the visions remained visions only, and the mystery a mystery. Now, after the lapse of many years, a nagging curiosity has replaced the mystery: Those cylindrical cores were removed by tin cutters about an inch and a half across, and deep enough to penetrate the depths of an eight-inch-tall cake. Were they invented for the good ladies of the Moravian churches at German Valley and Newfoundland? Was their use a merely local idiosyncrasy? If there were or are others used for the same purpose in other places, why have they not appeared in stores or in antique

Cookie cutters in almost infinite variety constitute an art form in themselves. Tin is the usual medium, but a few are to be found in brass (like the jack-o'-lantern shown here), a very few very early ones in tin nailed to wood, and a very, very few whittled out of wood, like the rooster shown at the left.



A convenient way to keep muffin tins in order was to rivet them to a more or less solid backing. Stars and hearts were popular shapes. Tin utensils came into use when kitchen ranges supplanted the open fireplaces.

Wooden springerle molds fall into two categories: the finely detailed imported European pieces and the more simple American version. Whether European or American, the mold was pressed into the prepared dough to create the design. The two-panel mold at the left and the 12-panel one at the right are believed to be American.

shops? And—if they still exist—what would one call them?

The Turk's-head mold, familiar to us in pottery and in tin-lined copper—more rarely in tin alone—seems to have been in every home. Since one name for it is simply "sponge cake pan," it may be assumed that it was commonly used for sponge cake. There is a considerable range in sizes in Turk's-head molds, especially in copper; some are a mere four inches across, but others as much as ten. There is a lesser range in sizes in redware pottery molds. The glazing on some of the pottery pieces is particularly fine. Those which have a whorled rather than a fluted design are generally preferred by collectors.

Cottage cheese, in a day when copious supplies of milk constituted a problem, had a kind of mold all its own. The cheese mold ranged in capacity from less than a pint to about a gallon, and resembled a tin colander except for two things: It was perforated by hand, with the sharp edges of the nailholes outside; and it was fashioned in the form of a heart, or less commonly a tulip, a diamond, or a plain circle. Into this container were poured the scalded curds and whey; the whey drained off, and the resultant cheese solidified into a cake which was reasonably easy to handle. Heart-shaped cheese strainers, admittedly in a very simple form and machine-made, are still sold in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Butter molds are generally considered more attractive than the butter they have beautified, perhaps because in the mold the design is clean-cut and in the butter it is likely to be blurred. Some of the best wood carving in old Pennsylvania was done by the unrecorded artists who cut or whittled the designs in butter molds—and it should be pointed out that these were amateurs, not professional wood carvers. The purpose of the mold was actually two-fold: to beautify a commodity lacking any special attractiveness in itself and to identify the ware of a woman who took it to market. There was a wide range in quality in homemade butter—and each farmer's wife apparently felt that her own product was superior. By using her private ornamental stamp, she could be sure that her regular customers could secure, even in her absence from market, what she had made.

Butter was stamped in several different ways. In cold weather it did not have to be placed in a stone butter crock, but could be made into prints or rolls. If it was made into a print or "pad"—in New England it would have been pronounced "pat"—it was weighed first and then stamped. Many of the butter molds one sees now were actually just the plungers for round—rarely rectangular—containers into which one or two pounds of butter could be packed. Some designs were so elaborate that they



A multiplicity of small molds in pottery, wood, tin, and occasionally glass gave fancy shapes to maple sugar. A few molds like the tin specimen shown second from the left were hinged so that the design was created in the round. These were usually used for marzipan. Moravian mints seem nearly always to have been "cast" in shallow, heart-shaped tins like the one shown. The butterfly mold, one of a set of six, is a rarity.



Cakes were baked in fancy shapes for special occasions a hundred years ago much as they are today. The horseshoe was not uncommon—but one wonders what the special occasion for its use might have been. Pies did not lend themselves to fancy shapes, but the piecrust crimpers shown probably put as good an edge on the appetite as on the crust!

Single-block cake molds are few in number and stand as *curiosa* rather than as part of a tradition. Letters on the oblong pine block shown here, when read from right to left, form the words "GUT ZUKER BROT"—that is, "Good sugar bread." The antlered deer at the left, in *intaglio* rather than *repoussé*, in spite of its appearance, is of redware; the peacock, also in *intaglio*, is of walnut.



were carved on two separate semi-circular plungers which fitted together to create an over-all pattern.

Butter made into rolls for selling was usually stamped with a small, simple design. Butter in crocks was decorated with a plunger and perhaps a small stamp in addition. When butter in a crock was salt-preserved for use at some distant date, it was stamped in the usual manner, for a starter. Then a piece of cheesecloth was laid over the design, with a half-inch-thick layer of fine salt following. Last of all, the crock was secured with a covering of paper and tied with a string. It seems a pity that the artistry thus became hidden but no doubt it served its purpose at the proper time later. One housewife in the village of German Valley, mentioned above, had a special foible in packaging her butter: She would use only a red-and-white string for securing the paper covering on the crock, and after the knot had been tied she scalloped the paper neatly with a pair of shears.

The entire range of folk motifs in Pennsylvania is apparently to be found in butter molds. To mention some of the designs most popular with collectors: the eagle, the cow (a late, not an early design), the heart, the tulip, the whirling swastika, the sheaf of wheat, the swan—with hundreds of attractive variations, particularly in the heart

and the tulip. Once in a blue moon a butter mold is found in glass or in pottery.

Various kinds of molds for various types of candy are to be found. One of the most distinctive is perhaps the shallow, heart-shaped tin container used for making Moravian mints—a container for each mint. This candy is a simple fondant, "worked" on a large platter up to the last possible moment and then poured quickly into the little tins to harden. These tins were also used for maple sugar in the upper stretches of the Dutch Country—as well as for "tasters" for the youngsters when Mother was baking a cake. Also used for maple sugar were other receptacles made especially for the purpose—simple fluted tins, tins like miniature pudding molds, and shallow tins with floral or leaf designs. Long, heavy wooden molds for maple sugar—the sugar taking shape in gouged-out depressions—are found farther north, in New York and Canada.

Marzipan molds, most of which are European in origin, exist in a rather wide range of forms—in tin, in lead, and in wood so close textured and heavy that it is more like *lignum vitae* than the beech it often is. Marzipan never achieved in America the popularity it had in Germany and Switzerland as a confection, but remained essentially a Christmas tree decoration not intended to be eaten. Even



European springerle mold unusual in that it has two general types of designs—circular and rectangular. The back of this mold is also carved, but since the designs are oddly spaced one deduces that the carver was probably trying his hand at some experimental motifs.



A two-piece candy mold of major importance—the only redware candy mold thus far reported. The design is that of a lamb; protuberances which look like legs and tail are handles—not part of the design.

so, much of the most competently molded and decorated marzipan was imported. The English term “marchpane” for the same confection is seldom if ever heard in the Dutch Country.

There appears to be an area of overlapping between marzipan and springerle cakes. Marzipan was essentially almond paste plus powdered sugar plus coloring matter, with each little flower, animal or fruit separately executed in the round. Springerles are hard, flat cakes with the designs ordinarily set in a two-inch square of dough. They may or may not be decorated with vegetable dyes; those from Germany often are, but those from Pennsylvania, almost never. It has unkindly been suggested that the softer springerles resemble hardtack, and the really firm ones, slate! Some springerle molds are so constructed that they produce a design free in form, and thus might have been used for either springerles or marzipan. There are also wooden molds of various kinds, principally long, narrow boards, which were used in the making of cakes which were not springerles but which were flattish and of firm texture. Such molds are European, coming from Holland, from Switzerland, from the Ukraine—or half a dozen other places. They are attractive, but are not native to the American culinary tradition.

Two-part tin molds, sometimes hinged, were used for “casting” the chocolate in Easter eggs, rabbits, baskets, etc.

These molds, stemming from the Victorian era and of both European and American provenance, are excellent in detail and proportion. Many of them have obviously served as prototypes for similar candies in our own time.

The most frequently used mold of all is undoubtedly the cookie cutter—once so common in antique shops and now so hard to find in any except the most ordinary designs. Almost all cookie cutters are of tin, but a very few all-brass ones have been discovered and—deep in the heart of the Dutch Country—some with wooden backs and tin cutting edges. A very few all-wood ones have been reported, and one or two of pottery.

Redware gives us two apparently unique molds. One of them is for candy in the Easter tradition but with a shaggy dog (lion?) design—a two-part mold, glazed inside, comparable except for the medium with the Victorian tin chocolate molds. A second is of unglazed redware in what seems to be a simple springerle pattern. Considering the fact that moist clay hardly lends itself to carving, as wood does, this little tile-like creation is a remarkable piece of work. But what price, time and effort? The whole story of Pennsylvania Dutch ornamentation is one of careful attention to quality and detail, with other considerations merely secondary.

Readers interested in pursuing further the subject of Pennsylvania Dutch cookery might be interested in some of the following works:

- Leonard S. Davidow, *Pennsylvania Dutch Cook Book of Fine Old Recipes*. Reading, Pennsylvania: Leonard S. Davidow, 1934.
- John Ebersole, *Hey Mom!* White Plains, N. Y.: Sutherland Press, 1963.
- J. George Frederick, *The Pennsylvania Dutch and Their Cookery*. New York: The Business Bourse, 1935.
- Ann Hark and Preston A. Barba, *Pennsylvania German Cookery*. Allentown, Pennsylvania: Schlechter's, 1950. One of the best regional cookbooks.
- Nell Heaton and Andre Simon, *A Calendar of Food and Wine*. London: Faber and Faber (n.d.).
- Edna Eby Heller, *The Dutch Cook Book*, Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center, 1953.
- Edna Eby Heller, *Dutch Cookbook*, Vol. 2. Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Intelligencer Printing Co., 1958.
- Ruth Hutchison, *The New Pennsylvania Dutch Cook Book*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958.
- Ladies Auxiliary, Homestead Welfare Club of Homestead, Iowa, *A Collection of Traditional Amana Recipes*. Homestead, Iowa, 1948. Interesting for comparative purposes; a Pennsylvania Dutch cook would have felt completely at home in the Amana community!
- Henry K. Landis, *Early Kitchens of the Pennsylvania Germans*, in *Pennsylvania German Society Proceedings*, Vol. XLVII. Norristown, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania German Society, 1939. Important study.
- August Oetker, *Schul-Kochbuch*. Bielefeld, Germany: Ceres-Verlag, 1937. Important book for those who can read contemporary (and colloquial) German—and who can translate spoonfuls and cupfuls into grams and fractions of liters.
- Virginia Pasley, *The Christmas Cookie Book*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1950.
- Earl F. Robacker, *Pennsylvania German Cookie Cutters and Cookies*. Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania: Mrs. Naaman Keyser, 1946.

Squirrel-tail oven, located on the Peter Forensky farm, Bernville, Berks County, constructed of brick sides and stone back. Note the frontal position of chimney

**Photography
by Amos Long, Jr.**



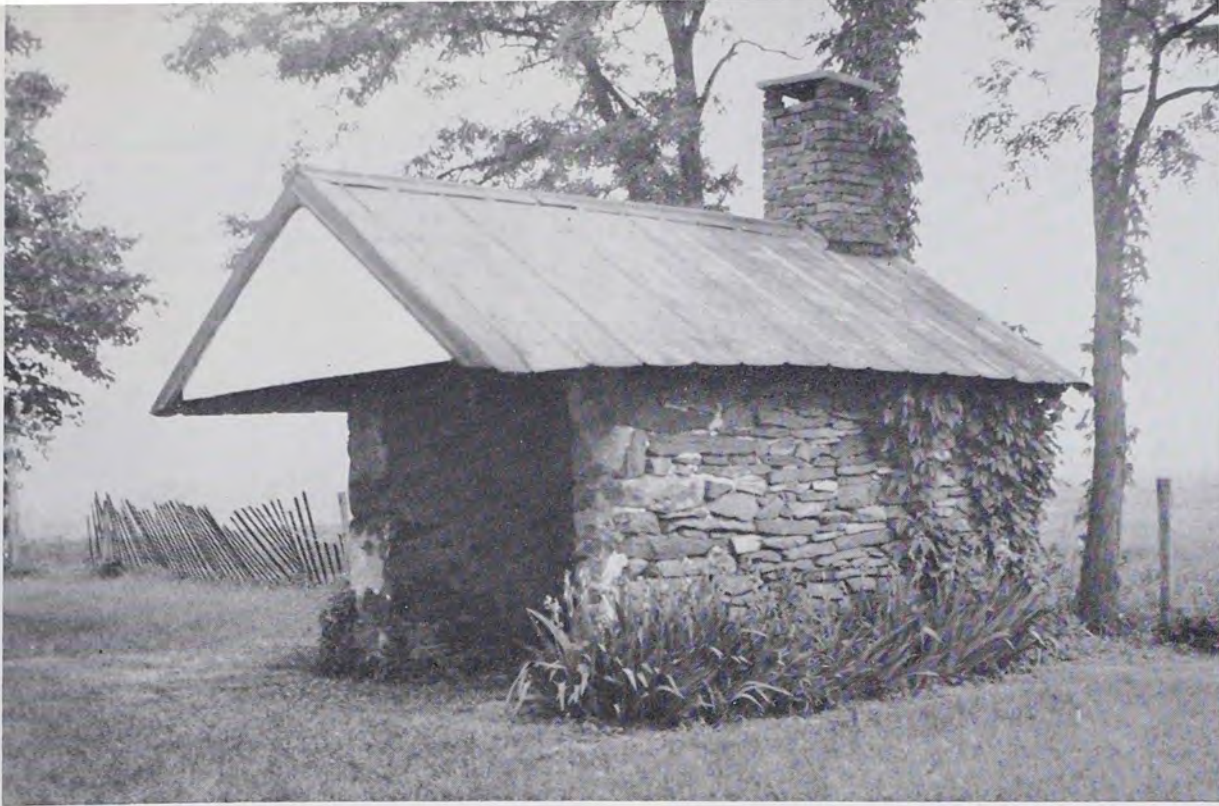
Combination bakeoven-smokehouse-fireplace structure, on the Kintzer property, Robesonia, Berks County, is 18 feet high. Built in early 19th Century of brick and stone, the smokehouse in the upper front portion is reached by eleven steps. Bakeoven is on the side, fireplace in the rear.

19th-Century attached bakeoven on the Roy Sherk farm, South Annville Township, Lebanon County, constructed of brick, stone and wood.

BAKEOVENS

By AMOS LONG, JR.





Outdoor bakeoven of primitive stone on the property of Wayne Kelbach, Bernville, Berks County, Pennsylvania.

n the Pennsylvania Folk-Culture

The bakeoven, *s' backoffe*, as it is known in the dialect, had an important role in the culture of early America. With this structure is associated much of the domestic industry related to the early Pennsylvania Dutch homestead and farm. Bread was a staple food among our people; consequently all the bread and pastry consumed within the household were baked in one of these crude but efficient ovens. It is for this reason that few dwellings during the colonial period were without an oven. Some of the ovens built and used by the early Pennsylvania Dutch settlers or their descendants are still to be found in the more remote areas of rural Pennsylvania.

In the Dutch Country the bakeoven was one of the first requisites of a new dwelling. In an article reprinted from the *German American Annals* edited by William J. Hinke, involving a group of Germans after their arrival in America, we have the following information given to help us realize the importance of the bakeoven in the economy of the early settler's home: "*Wir fingen an einen Backofen zu machen, damit wir wieder Brodt essen können, welches uns eine Zeit her zieml. seltsam ist.*"¹ (We have begun to build a bakeoven in order that we may again eat bread which since our arrival here has been pretty scarce.)

Sangmeister² relates to us that a large brick oven was one of the first buildings erected by the Seventh-day Baptists in Ephrata. The allotment of work at the oven and the distribution of its products sometimes caused trouble among the solitaries. "Several large brick bake-

ovens were also built to supply *Pumpernickel* to the indigent settlers. The bread thus baked was distributed to the needy without charge. These ovens were all under one roof and opened into a large room with troughs for the mixing of the dough."³

The early ovens varied in dimension and design. Many were unusually large, occupying an entire side of the kitchen area. The more primitive ovens were solidly constructed of stones and mortar; others in later years were built of stone and brick or brick alone. Some of them had walls which measured thirty or more inches in thickness with deep, heavy foundations.

Some ovens formed a part of the summer house, smokehouse, wash-house, or other outbuilding. Those built as an adjunct to the summer house are to be found more frequently although the author found other combination structures still in existence. The following excerpt taken from the *American Agriculturist* will help to show the demand for these dual type buildings. "We are requested to give a plan for a bakeoven and a smokehouse in one building. These are common adjuncts to the farm house in eastern Pennsylvania and are generally built of stone or brick."⁴

Some of the ovens had openings into the kitchen fireplace from the side or back. Some were located in the basement of the main dwelling. Those attached at one end of the farmhouse kitchen were housed in a building whose roof structure often extended to the eaves of the kitchen roof.

¹ William J. Hinke, Ed., "*Diarium Einer Reise von Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, nach Bethabara, N.C.*," November 19, 1753, in *German-American Annals*, New Series, Vol. III, No. 8.

² Ezechiel Sangmeister, *Mein Leben*, Vol. IV, Ephrata, 1826.

³ J. F. Sachse, *German Sectarians of Pennsylvania, 1708-1742*, Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1899, p. 192.

⁴ *The American Agriculturist*, XXX (1871), 455.



This outdoor bakeoven, located on the Urias Urich farmstead, South Annville Township, Lebanon County, is a combination stone and frame structure with brick chimney. Below, the interior view shows large ashpit beneath oven chamber, wooden drying trays inside oven and one resting on bench. Baking utensils, on left, are scraper and peel.



The outdoor ovens with their quaint bit of old-world architecture characteristic of the Rhineland and Palatinate were sheltered in a detached building located a short distance from the kitchen. Many of the earliest ovens were housed in a simple frame shed which consisted of four posts dug into the ground at each corner. These structures usually had a rather steeply pitched gable roof generally covered with hand-hewn oak shingles often side and end lapped. Clapboards, usually whitewashed, enclosed the sides, back, and upper front portion of the building.

Some of the outdoor ovens were more sturdy and elaborately built and had solidly constructed walls of stone or brick. The average building, housing the oven including the overhang, measured approximately twelve feet long, eight feet wide, and eight feet high. The roofs of the early stone and brick structures were frequently covered with native Pennsylvania red tiles.

The projecting roof found on many of the structures provided shelter from inclement weather and from the heat of the burning sun for the attendant. The overhang extended over the front of the oven approximately three feet and about six feet from the ground. Beneath the overhang on one or both sides of the building, usually three or four shelves were built to provide an area for cooling the bread after it had been withdrawn from the oven or for storage of equipment and utensils. On many of the outdoor oven structures, there was an open space between the oven and roof which provided for additional ventilation, light, and storage space for the long-handled baking utensils.

It has been claimed that the Pennsylvania Dutch were the first folk group in the colonies to practice baking in an outdoor oven. The outdoor oven meant great progress, it was more desirable, and had a number of advantages over the fireplace bakeoven which prevailed elsewhere in the colonies. The outdoor oven was much safer and eliminated the intense heat of the kitchen during the summer months. Because of its larger hearth, it permitted up to two dozen large loaves of bread or an even larger number

of pies in large, deep, earthen dishes, to be baked at one time. It provided for more convenience and comfort while drying the many vegetables and fruits during the ripening season in the summer and early fall months. The outdoor ovens were slightly inconvenient during inclement weather and the cold winter months.

The outdoor ovens were generally constructed by erecting two walls of stone or brick laid in clay or mortar to a height of two or two and one-half feet. The area between the bases enclosed by the bottom of the hearth served as the ashpit. There were one or more openings on the front, side or rear of the wall from which to remove the ashes. Long flat stones or planks were placed horizontally across the two walls. Over these, other flat stones were laid in clay which was often gotten from the beds of nearby streams. A layer of clay several inches thick was then plastered over the stones to form the bottom of the hearth. On some ovens, a thinner layer of clay was used and a horizontal layer or two of bricks were laid on top of the stones or planks. Sometimes the bricks were plastered over with clay, other times they were left exposed. Many of the later ovens were completely built with brick.

The floor, usually oval in shape, measured from four and one-half to six feet in depth and three to four and one-half feet in width. The height of the oven interior measured from one and one-half to two feet; some of the larger ones measured up to thirty inches high at the center inside. Most of the oven floors contained a trap device or opening through which the wood ashes were scraped. When there was no opening, the embers and ashes were

Bakeoven-smokehouse, on the Clarence Naftzinger property near Bernville, Berks County, measures 16 feet long, 7½ feet wide and 9 feet high.

Stone, brick and frame construction were used in this outdoor bakeoven in the Bernville area, owned by Leroy Forry.



scraped out of the hearth through the main opening and emptied into a smaller door located beneath the hearth floor provided for that purpose. If there was no trap or ashpit, the ashes were piled in front of the oven.

The side walls of the oven chamber of most of the later structures were built of brick. After the clay or mortar which helped form the bottom of the hearth had dried, the side walls were built up about four inches or two layers of brick. Sand, soft earth, small wood chips or bark were then placed on top and pressed down upon the hearth in an oval shaped pile about eighteen to twenty-four inches high in the middle and sloped down on all sides except the front to within the four inches of the margin of the foundation. The walls which surrounded the oven were excellent non-conductors and retained the heat for a long period of time. One informant told of placing sand around the dome which was enclosed within the outer walls to supply additional insulation. He stated that such ovens would maintain a temperature high enough to bake bread several hours after the fire had gone out. On some of the later ovens, the top and sides were lined with sheet iron.

The draft hole on some of the early ovens was made by placing a six inch pipe vertically near the back end and on top of the built-up material. The pipe extended up through about a four inch layer of clay mixed with straw which was placed over the top of the pile to form the arch of the oven. On the brick ovens, the brick work was constructed over the built-up material, around the pipe, usually in two layers. The bricks were usually soaked for a few hours previous to being laid so that they did not absorb



the moisture from the mortar before it set. The brick dome was then plastered over with mortar. On some ovens, the arched dome was slightly truncated on top. When the oven was completed, it stood idle for several days and if wood particles formed the arch, they were set on fire or otherwise removed. The fire not only removed the wood debris but also baked and hardened the clay. This formed the inner chamber of the oven. When earth or sand was used to form the arch, it was also removed after a like period of time.

The ovens were usually built with an iron door at one end and a chimney at the other. The front rectangular openings were closed by doors which were made of heavy cast or wrought iron; some elaborately designed with decorative latches and hinges. These doors measured from fifteen to thirty inches wide, from twelve to eighteen inches high and were located from twenty-four to thirty inches from the ground or floor. Some of the ovens had a half oval-type door or a small door in the center of the larger one. Some had hinges extending the entire length of the door. Many times the ovens inside were the same height as the door opening into them. On some of the older and more primitive ovens, the main door had no latch and was held in a closed position while baking by the handle of a shovel or other tool resting against it. Other ovens were built with a small, level working surface just beneath the main door for convenience when inserting and withdrawing the baked or dried foods. In some instances it was a stone base or a stove plate set upon a stone base beneath. Directly beneath the main door or on the side or rear of the lower chamber was a door or opening leading into the lower vault or ashpit which usually extended the full length of the oven. The size and arrangement of the doors varied considerably.

The chimney, usually located at the rear or on one side of the oven, extended from the top of the wall so that it reached higher than the peak of the structure in which the oven was housed. In a few instances some of the early ovens had no chimney or no other outlet except the open-

Double-chambered bakeoven located in Hopewell Village, French Creek State Park, Berks County. Note large overhang.



ing into the oven; the smoke then passed out the main door. Some fireplace ovens had a chimney but no flue connection; the smoke then escaped through the door and passed up the chimney of the fireplace.

On the "squirrel tail" oven the chimney was located in front. A flue opening extended from the rear of the oven over the top of the arch to the large chimney in front. This arrangement was known as a "squirrel tail" because the shape of the flue resembled the tail of a squirrel while in a sitting position. This cleverly devised chimney was supported by stone piers, twelve or more inches thick, built on both sides of the oven door. Inside the oven there was a large horizontal cavity through the brick lining. This cavity extended upward and forward and ended inside at the base of the chimney about ten or twelve inches above the oven door. The smoke from the oven followed through this horizontal flue toward the front and then found its way up the chimney. It was possible with ovens of this type to stand in front of the oven door and look directly between the oven and overhang toward the sky.

Most of the early bakeovens had some type of flue connection. It may have been just a brick or two which could be removed from the wall to provide the necessary draft while baking. Some ovens were ventilated through the main opening into the oven. Others had a small opening in the back which made it necessary to go to the rear or outside to regulate the draft. In some instances the opening was rather large and located so that it could also be used to build the fire and rake out the ashes and embers. In most of the ovens, the draft opening was located in the front either above or below the main oven door. These openings measured from four to six inches wide and about six inches long. On some ovens there was a damper or opening with an adjustable iron slide on or near the top which was used to regulate the draft inside the oven. Some ovens had more than one draft opening which led into the oven or flue.

In the era of the bakeoven, baking was a major task. We

are told that the housewife took as much pride in her baking as she did in her spinning and weaving. Most housewives knew exactly what proportions of each ingredient to take to prepare the dough mixture, this knowledge having been passed on from grandmother to mother to daughter. Sometimes baking became the chore of the maid or older daughter. The baking was done toward the end of the week, usually Friday or Saturday, so that the bread and pastry were fresh for use over the weekend. If the farm family was large or if there were a large number of hired workers to be fed, baking may have been a semi-weekly chore. Since the Pennsylvania Dutch were heavy consumers of bread and pastry, a trait which is evident among their descendants even today, it was not uncommon to consume a loaf or more of bread at each meal. Consequently as many as two dozen loaves of bread and a dozen or more pies, in addition to the cakes and cookies, were required each week among large farm families.

An article entitled "Lykens Twenty Years Ago," by Charles L. Miller, M. D., Lykens, Pennsylvania, which appeared in the *Lykens Register* in the year 1876, relates the following information concerning bakeovens:

"On Friday afternoon, in the days long since gone by, these ovens were a remarkable sight to behold. It was then that their true meaning could be most advantageously studied. As a youth, we were passionately fond of this kind of studying, always selecting the largest in the neighborhood as the most worthy of our attention, and we have never had reason to regret the mental labor bestowed upon any of them. Those Friday afternoons, sad to relate, however, are passed forever for us, but the sweet memory of their fragrance still haunts our hungry senses. We seem to see, as of old, the long rows of pans, heaped high with dough, ready for the heated oven; the busy housewife, with her pinned-up dress and her kerchief bound tightly upon her head, the knots beneath her chin rendering deglutition extremely dangerous; the long-handled wooden

shovel; the iron scraper, the pile of ashes by her side. The scents of a Persian garden could not outvie the delicious odors wafted through the air from the mouth of that oven, as it stood uncovered for a few moments only, from time to time. Were we a heathen, in a far-off country, and badly in need of an idol, the Dutch oven, with its good-natured grin and pot-bellied benevolence, should be set up everywhere in the public high places of our heart and habitation."

Phoebe Earle Gibbons in her article "Pennsylvania Dutch" wrote: "Friday is baking-day, but in the middle of the summer, when mould abounds, we bake twice a week. The Dutch housewife is very fond of baking in the brick oven, but the scarcity of wood will gradually accustom us to the great cooking-stove."⁵

Since the bread had a tendency to mold or dry out if it was not properly stored, a dampened cloth was often wrapped around the bread and certain cakes to help retain their freshness.

Rye bread was a favorite among the early Pennsylvania Dutch settlers. Sachse points out that "the bread made of rye flour was of three kinds. These were known as *Schwartzbrod* (blackbread), *Kümmelbrod* (bread with caraway seed), and *Pumpernickel* (Westphalia rye bread). The last was the favorite, as it was supposed to give the most strength. It was made of unbolted rye flour into large loaves often weighing half a hundred-weight. The dough for these loaves was set without either yeast or leaven, and had to bake in the oven from twelve to fourteen hours. This bread was very dark and heavy, with an extremely hard and thick crust."⁶

⁵ P. E. Gibbons, "Pennsylvania Dutch," *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1869, p. 484.

⁶ Sachse, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

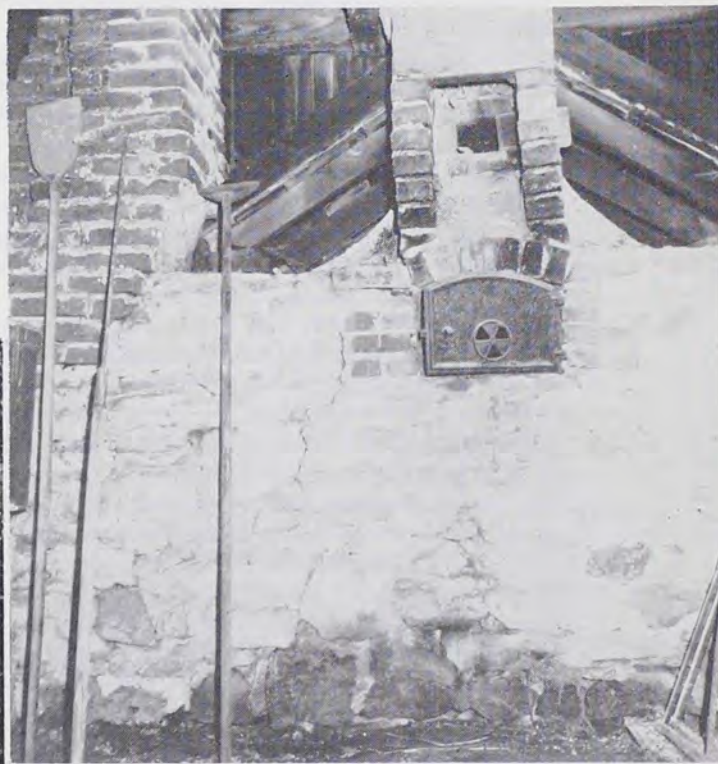
Conrad Richter in his book, *The Trees*, points out the scarcity of bread on the early American frontier. In the novel, the mother, who is ill, has strong desire for bread and we learn that her youngest children are completely unfamiliar with it. This must have been a common experience among some of the settlers.⁷

During the frontier era, bread was made from corn, barley, oats, a combination of cornmeal and rye flour, and less frequently from beans and acorns. It has been reported that some of the Indian tribes used a kind of acorn bread. Sachse reports that among the early settlers in Ephrata, acorns were used as a substitute for rye and wheat in making bread. "For making bread the acorns were first soaked in water or steamed, to eliminate the bitter principle (*entbittert*); they were then dried and ground into meal, which was baked in the usual manner. The bread, *Eichelbrod*, was about as palatable as *Pumpernickel*, but much less digestible."⁸

Cornmeal, a principal cereal food during this period, was made from the ears of corn which were roasted in the bakeoven during the fall and winter months and then hauled to the grist-mill to be ground into meal by the

⁷ Conrad Richter, *The Trees* (New York, 1940), pp. 44-45.

⁸ Sachse, *op. cit.*, p. 194.



Attached bakeoven on Leesport, Berks County, farm of Edwin Strause, with slate roof. In closeup interior view, the utensils on the left consist of a peel and two scrapers.

miller. In addition to bread, the cornmeal was prepared in numerous other ways through the years. Hoecake, Johnny-cake, and corn-pone are but a few of the products which resulted from its use.

The grains from which the meal and flour were ground were a product of the homestead or nearby farm. The bumper crops of the Pennsylvania Dutch were wheat and rye. In addition to rye and corn, wheat was also ground into flour but it was much less common. Wheat was considered a cash crop on most of the farms and consequently most of this grain found its way to the market. Rye flour was less valuable and less costly and the end product was more sustaining. Wheat bread was used mostly during weekends, holidays, or on special occasions. Studies indicate that bread made from wheat flour was not very common until after the American Revolution. Stories have been told of some women during the frontier era who were dissatisfied with their husbands as providers because they could not supply white bread for the family.

Most of the early houses had a small room or area in which a flourbarrel or meal-chest was kept. This was known as the meal-room and it was here that the flour or meal that had been ground by the miller and equipment used for baking were stored. Ezra Grumbine in his article, "Stories of Old Stumpstown," tells how the miller who did the grinding in these earlier days received as a toll one-tenth of the amount of grain he ground. He measured his share with a small wooden box called a *mulderbexly* which amounted to one-tenth of a bushel. Every family then got the flour from their own grains.⁹ Although this custom no longer exists, it is possible to take wheat to the mill and have it ground into flour, but rather than receive the flour from one's own grains, it is usually exchanged for like value in flour. Flour was not ground or sifted as much during this earlier period; consequently it was not as fine as it is today. More of the bran was left in it which resulted in a sweeter and more nourishing bread. The bran which was separated from the flour was used for feeding the livestock.

Yeast baking was firmly established among the Pennsylvania Dutch and was a more difficult task during the early period of settlement than it would be today. Yeast, *sots*, a necessary ingredient of the dough mixture, which causes the alcoholic fermentation producing a carbon dioxide gas which makes the dough expand, leaven, and rise, often presented a problem. Henry B. Plumb¹⁰ wrote that *saleratus* (baking soda) used for cooking and baking was very scarce. As a substitute, corncobs were burned to ashes and allowed to settle, the clear water was used in place of *saleratus* as late as 1825. Usually the yeast was made from home grown hops. If the hops were grown in the garden, they were plucked from the stem in late summer or fall after the flowers had dried and were stored in an air tight container. When they were to be used, steeping hot water was poured over several of the flowers to prepare the hop brew. Frequently some of the brew was kept in a crock or jar in the cellar or springhouse. Before it was to be used, the container containing the liquid was brought into the kitchen and warmed by the fireplace or stove.¹⁰

There were other substitutes which were used to make

⁹ Ezra Grumbine, "Stories of Old Stumpstown," *Lebanon County Historical Society*, V (1910), 263-264.

¹⁰ H. B. Plumb, *History of Hanover Township and the Wyoming Valley* (Wilkes-Barre, 1885), p. 244.



19th-Century attached bakeoven located on the James Monteith farm, North Annville Township, Lebanon County. Note opening into ashpit.

the dough rise when yeast or leaven was scarce or not available. One informant told of using a peach leaf brew. Another told of salt rising. Buttermilk was also used. A homemade leaven was most frequently used as a substitute.

To prepare the leaven or "starter," the frugal housewife took a small portion of the raised dough or the scrapings from the doughtray were rolled out, dried, and then cut or broken into small pieces. These pieces were stored in an air-tight container until the next baking. It was possible to keep the scrapings for several months and yet be effective as long as they were properly preserved. When the scrapings were to be used, warm water was poured over and allowed to soak which prepared them for use. Communion bread commonly used among the Dunkards for love-feasts is unleavened.

The flour and other ingredients used for making the dough were mixed at one end or corner of a wooden container known as the dough-trough or *die Backmold*. Rectangular in shape, their size and dimensions varied depending on the size of the family and the amount of bread to be baked at one time. The average family dough-trough, sometimes referred to as doughtray, was three to four feet long, a foot or more wide, and ten to fourteen inches deep with ends and sides which tapered inward toward the bottom. Some were slightly smaller or larger and could be set on legs or a stand of appropriate height. The dough was mixed the evening before or early in the morning of the day the bread was to be baked. The trough was kept well-floured to prevent the dough mixture from adhering to the sides. It was important that the dough be mixed thoroughly; since it was entirely hand-kneaded, the task many times became very tiresome. Flour was added until the dough



Restored attached bakeovens at Ephrata Cloisters, Lancaster County, constructed of stone and wood with tile roof.

formed a smooth round ball and that it did not stick to the fingers.

After the mixing and kneading were complete, the dough-trough was covered with a lid, the underside many times was also used as a dough-board, and placed nearby the open fire for several hours or over night until the dough had risen and stiffened sufficiently. It was then kneaded again and proper portions were put into round straw baskets, *brotkorb*, or wooden bowls, *holzne schissle*, which had been floured inside for the final raising. Many times a light cloth was covered over the baskets and bowls until the dough had raised. The baskets were made with coiled rye straw and hickory splints.

In the meantime, before the bread could be baked, a fire had to be built on the oven hearth. Even to start a fire many times presented a difficult problem during the early period of settlement. Since matches did not exist and when there was not other flame, a member of the family was sent to the nearest neighbor and returned with some embers, or sparks were struck from a flint. By patient and laborious fanning, the sparks which were made to fall on to dry tinder could be ignited into flame.

After a flame was started, brushwood, *briggelholz*, was used to get a quick fire. Dry kindling or fire wood was then fed into the oven to heat it. Old chestnut rails and locust posts, cut to size, were frequently used for the purpose. Many times entire rails or posts were fed into the mouth of the oven and left to burn until they would be shoved inside entirely. One of the informants recalled his task as a child of having firewood available at all times for the oven. He remarked, "*Ich war immer am holz cidrauga*" (I was always bringing in firewood.)

When the fire had been burning for an hour or more

and the oven properly heated to a temperature close to four hundred degrees, the draft was shut off and the burning embers were left spread over the hearth until shortly before the bread was to be introduced. To get the proper temperature inside the bakeoven and to maintain it sometimes presented a difficult problem for the attendant. The temperature and draft could be regulated by closing the openings, or by adjustment of the damper on the chimney or oven door to retain the heat. Sometimes the oven door was opened for a short time to allow for escape of heat when the oven was too hot. It was important that the temperature be proper when the raised dough was introduced. If the oven was overheated, the bread became parched and soured; if the temperature was too low, the bread would not raise properly and became heavy.

Although most housewives knew by their long experience from the glow of the oven when it was just right; it is interesting to know the numerous ways that were used to help determine when the oven had attained the proper temperature. There were those who could determine this from the appearance of the bricks in the arch of the oven. The bricks had to take on a neutral or grayish color; if they were not white enough, more wood was fed into the oven chamber. It was told that some women could determine if the temperature was proper by spitting into the oven. Another informant said that she could tell by placing her hand into the chamber for several seconds. Similarly one told of placing her elbow into the opening of the oven for just a few moments. Sometimes chicken feathers were used, if they curled upon throwing them into the oven, it was hot enough. It was also tested by placing some flour on the peel and inserting it into the oven or throwing flour on the hearth of the oven. If the oven had the proper temperature, the flour blackened quickly without igniting. Among the files of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society are other methods given which have been collected by Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker. Henry Bailey from Albany Eck said that the women used to test the bakeoven to see if it was too hot for baking by laying a cabbage leaf, *grautblatt*, into it. Another informant said there was a woman in the village of Bowmansville about whom they said, "*Sie hot als in die pann gschpaut fa seena eb sie heiss iss*" (She used to spit in the pan to see if the oven was properly heated).

The hot embers and ashes were raked from the oven into an opening or trap which was located on the hearth just inside the oven door. This was done with a long-handled, wooden or metal, hoe-shaped scraper known as the *backoffe-kitsch*. Many of the traps were covered with a movable, metal plate. Some of the ovens had no interior trap, so the ashes had to be withdrawn through the main opening to a pile beneath. The ashes were left to remain on the pile or shoveled into the ashpit opening until the pit was filled or until the ashes were to be used for making lye, a required ingredient for making homemade soap.

The wood ashes had other uses. They were used as a fertilizer in the family garden. *Uf der Asche Mittwoch soll mer esch in der garte schtree, no griks gartesach ken leis.* (Spread ashes over the garden on Ash Wednesday to prevent lice on garden vegetables.)¹¹ They were used as a medication in the practice of folk medicine. If one had a sore, it was soaked in water containing a wood ash solu-

¹¹ Edwin M. Fogel, *Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans* (Philadelphia, 1915), p. 195, No. 951.

tion. It was common for one who had stepped on a nail to soak the foot several times in a woodash solution which was supposed to have healing properties.

The carbon and ashes which remained on the oven hearth were cleaned with a crudely prepared mop or swab known as a *huddel-lumpe*, or *huddel wisch*. It consisted of a piece of cloth attached to a long pole or handle. The swab was plunged into a pail of water and then quickly drawn over the floor of the oven before the bread was introduced on to the bare hearth. Some carbon or wood ash naturally stuck to the bottom of the bread but this was thought "to improve the flavor." The *huddel-lumpe* had another use. It was said that if a child continued to "wet the bed" at night, the condition could be cured by striking the child over the "behind" three times with the swab.

Now that the oven was ready, the baskets containing the dough which had raised sufficiently again were turned upside down, air passed through the hole in the bottom of the basket and the dough dropped on to a long-handled, broad, flat, wooden or iron shovel or sliding board known as a peel, *backoffe-schiesser*. The shovel or paddle part, rectangular or slightly oval in shape, measured from twelve to sixteen inches in length, up to twelve inches wide and was tapered toward the handle. The size was determined largely by the size of the loaves of bread baked and the length of the handle by the depth of the bakeoven.

With a great amount of skill, the unbaked loaves were quickly transferred from the peel far into the oven directly on top of the heated hearth; the peel was quickly withdrawn and the oven door closed. The bread was put far to the rear of the oven in order to leave space in the front if the pies were to be baked at the same time. Since the pies baked more quickly they were the first to be removed. Sometimes the pies were put into the oven at the same time as the bread and then removed when baked. Some housewives timed it so the pies were put into the oven so they could be removed with the bread. Others prepared the pies and cakes while the bread was baking so that when the bread was withdrawn the pies and cakes were put in. This was the most customary procedure.

Some ovens had an arrangement of heavy planks about a foot wide which were fitted into the interior. These were placed on top of bricks or flat stones which were laid on top of the oven floor. The bread was then placed on top of the planks for baking. One had to carefully regulate the temperature of the oven to prevent the planks from igniting. Many times the planks became charred or parched as is evidenced by those which are yet to be found among the debris within or about old oven chambers.

In the years which followed, the bread was baked in forged iron pans instead of being placed directly on the hearth; but the pans were expensive so they were not used by many families. Gradually the dough was transferred from the dough-trough into metal pans entirely replacing the baskets and bowls.

After the dough was introduced into the oven, the heat killed the yeast. This caused the gas to expand leaving small pockets which formed within the dough mixture changing the moisture into vapor causing the loaf to raise still more. The heat also hardened and darkened the outer layers into crust. When these changes were complete, which took an hour or more depending on how much was being baked and whether or not the contents were introduced at the same time, the bread was withdrawn from the oven with the peel. The brown crust on top was often rubbed



Side view showing ash-pit in the stone wall.



Outdoor tile-roofed bakeoven on the farm of Paul Blatt, near Bernville, Berks County. It is a stone, brick and frame structure. Dimensions are: length, 12 feet; width, 6 feet; height, 8 feet.



Two closeup views show the four shelves on each side and baking utensils. Observe the charred door.



with a bacon rind or a small amount of butter to make it glossy.

The baked bread was generally placed in a large cloth-covered basket, on side shelves beneath the overhang, or on a hanging shelf, *brot-hank*, prepared especially for this purpose until the bread had cooled. It was important that the bread was not removed before it was completely baked or it would fall flat and become a solid mass.

The loaves measured upwards of forty or more inches in circumference; they had a diameter of twelve to fourteen inches, and were three or more inches high. One informant stated that it was a common practice with her family to cut the round loaves through the middle first. The halves were then placed cut side down and then sliced for use.

Among the utensils found near the bakeoven on baking day was the *schepp-bool*, *schepp-leffel*, a long-handled, wooden or iron ladle used to fill the lower pie-crust. Many housewives preferred to fill the crust only after it was placed inside the oven to prevent the filling from being spilled.

After the bread and pies were baked, there was still the cleaning and scrubbing which had to be done. In addition to the swabs and brushes used to scrub, there was the small, curved, metal scraper, *die diegkitch*, which was used to scrape together the remaining dough particles from the dough-trough. Lye water was frequently used to clean the planks when they were used. Shortly after the baking was finished, one could usually find the tools and accessories within close range of the bakeoven sitting in the sun to dry.

In addition to baking, the ovens were used to prepare large roasts of meat for special or large gatherings. One informant told of roasting whole shoats and how nicely this was accomplished with the oven. The ovens were used also to dry large amounts of vegetables and fruits which were grown in the garden, fields, or orchard for use during the winter months. The ovens, when properly constructed, would retain much of the heat for long periods of time. Usually the foods to be dried were prepared so that they could be placed within the oven after the baked goods were removed. In this way the heat which remained in the oven was not wasted.

Although practically all kinds of vegetables and fruits were dried, corn and beans were the most common among the vegetables and apples ranked first among the fruits. Peach and pear slices, cherries, elderberries and other less common fruits were also dried. Sweet apples, used to make *schnitz un knepp*, were cored but not peeled and cut into quarters. If it was a tart apple, used in *schnitz* pie, it was peeled, cored and cut into smaller sections. Frequently specially made driers, designed to fit into the interior of the bakeoven, or short sections of boards or planks, were used to hold the foods. Sometimes the driers were set on several bricks or flat stones which were laid inside the oven to prevent the driers from becoming too hot.

There are many pleasant recollections and anecdotes concerning the bakeoven. The fascination and delight it held for those children who experienced the delicious and tantalizing aroma which issued from its mouth when baking bread, pies, and cookies of all kinds is one that can never be forgotten. Many readers will recall having to gather fine wood and corncobs to start the fire in the bakeoven. There are those who will recall seeing mother or grandmother break off a broom sprig (*beesem-schtreissel*) and using it to test the baked goods to see if they were baked completely. Some can recall eating the leftover pie-dough

which had been rolled out and baked along with the other pastry. To eat the *s' iverrescht* with a favorite jelly or some warm bread with homemade butter was a treat as a child and one that shall always be remembered and cherished.

When preparing for Thanksgiving or Christmas or a wedding or funeral ceremony, it was not uncommon for dozens of pies, several cakes, and piles of cookies to be baked. Sandtarts in the form of beasts, stars, and flowers, molasses and honey cakes, *lebkuche*, were most common during the Christmas season. Pumpkin and mince pies were baked for the holidays. Raisin and *schnitz* pies were usually baked for use at the funeral meal.

The *York County Star* of November 26, 1857, carried the following item which helps to illustrate the thriftiness of the Pennsylvania Dutch. A member of the household, "wishing to have early mush and johnny cakes, had some corn on the ears put into the bakeoven in order to dry and prepare it for grinding." The article further relates that the family maid put a chicken into the oven chamber after the ears of corn had been removed, to eat the kernels which had fallen on the hearth.

Dr. Arthur D. Graeff, in his column, *Scholla*, relates a folk tale concerning "The Bewitched Bakeoven" contributed by E. Douglas Kains, Wyomissing, Berks County, Pennsylvania:

"A wealthy man from New York State some time ago bought a farm in Coopersburg, Lehigh County. He started to modernize the fine old stone house and engaged local laborers to clear away some small buildings in order that the landscape architect could lay out the grounds. The laborers performed their tasks thoroughly until they received orders to tear down an old bake-oven. This they hesitated to do, saying that the structure was bewitched.

"Pressed for details the workingmen explained that occult forces were present in the old oven. Bread baked there would come out of the oven with distinct letters embedded or raised on the underside of the loaves. The owner was alarmed. He consulted a hex-

doctor and was informed that it was the work of witches who were trying to convey a spirit message to the people on earth. The practitioner's advice was that a record should be kept of all the letters as they appeared and an effort made to assemble the letters into some message.

"Several bakings yielded no clues, the letters were always the same, or nearly the same in appearance. Then the practitioner advised that the oven should be abandoned, explaining that the witches had probably adopted the oven as their home and therefore they objected to the hot fires of baking-day. They might take vengeance, he warned, if their protests were disregarded.

"The New Yorker refused to be terrified. Assuring the workingmen that he would assume all the blame the witches could heap upon him, he ordered the oven torn away. When the stone floor was uncovered it was found that at the back of the oven there were footstones from a nearby cemetery on which were carved the initials of persons who had been buried there. When the cemetery was modernized the footstones had been removed to facilitate the moving of the plots and the thrifty mason who built the baking oven had used them, letter side up. They had made out a pretty good case for the witches, but not quite good enough."¹²

Ezra Grumbine in his *Stories of Old Stumpstown*, tells of a certain economical housewife who when boarding laborers, baked a supply of bread two weeks in advance in order to have it stale and consequently last longer.¹³

The 1871 issue of the *Agricultural Almanac* by John Baer's Sons reads, "A good brick oven for baking bread, pies, and cakes is worth all the ranges and cook stoves that one could store in his kitchen.—In such an oven everything will be baked just right, above and below, through and through."

¹² Arthur D. Graeff, "The Bewitched Oven," *Scholla, Reading Times*, March 9, 1942, and *S' Pennsylvawisch Deutsch Eck*, March 18, 1944.

¹³ Grumbine, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

Fireplace bakeoven located in the summer house of the Edward Hartman property, north-east of Reading. The iron kettle in front of the oven is used to heat water for the laundry.





Outdoor bakeoven at the Ephrata Cloisters, Ephrata, showing interior view. Observe the tile roof.

An article entitled "Der Kindheits Christtag," (The Childhood Christmas) in the December 25, 1859, issue of the *Reformirter Hausfreund*, describes a Christmas scene with cookies baked in a bakeoven and given to the children for gifts. "Für jedes derselben Kinder setzt sie einen Backkorb auf einen Stuhl in der 'feddere Stub.' Der Korb wird mit einem weissen Tuch bedeckt un mit allerlei erfreulichen Geschenken gefüllt" (For each child, a bread basket was set on a chair in the front room. The basket was covered with a white cloth and filled with all types of good things.')

The Reverend Benjamin Bausman in his article, "An Old Time Christmas," which appeared in the January, 1871, issue of *The Guardian*, wrote: "The second day before Christmas the cake baking was done. Large tables in the bake-house were covered with cakes, in all manner of forms—birds, horses, hearts, lambs, stars all carefully spread out on paddy pans. The children, meanwhile, watched the progress of events, burdening the bakers with many curious questions. A great memory to my child mind was the large bake oven which for the season seemed to devour all put into it. I peered into its glowing cavern, and watched with watering mouth the nut-brown cakes which it brought forth."

Mrs. Urias Urich, who resides in South Annville Township, has an outdoor bakeoven just outside the kitchen door. She told of using her bakeoven for baking and drying foods during the summer until about 1950. She said she would still enjoy to use the oven occasionally for baking but had to discontinue using it because she could get no one to crawl inside the chamber to repair the mortar between the bricks. As a result, she had to resort to using the oven in her kitchen range.

There were a number of informants who told of having to crawl inside the oven to clean or repair it. The task generally fell to one of the older children or an adult who could get into the oven and out again with the least difficulty.

Mrs. Anna Balthaser who resides east of Bernville, Berks County, Pennsylvania, told of baking bread in her outdoor oven as recently as twelve years ago during the summer and more recently than that for drying *schnitz* and corn. She told how she preferred using the oven during the summer months because it eliminated the heat in her kitchen.

Mrs. Leonard Tarr, R. D. Franklin, Pennsylvania, told how her great grandfather, one of twenty-one children, was the only one of his family alive after an Indian raid because he had hidden in the family bakeoven.

Mrs. Lester Watkins, R. D. Gibsonia, Pennsylvania, recalled that each Friday at her childhood home, her mother baked sixteen loaves of bread and eight or nine pies because they had a large family. She said the pies were prepared while the bread was baking. Their oven had a wooden door which was unusual because most of them were metal. She told how her mother hung a burlap bag which was soaked in water over the door to keep it from igniting. She recalled how the entire oak and chestnut posts and rails were fed into the mouth of the oven. When they had burned sufficiently, the balance was pushed inside. There was always a pile of pine kindling and scrap boards beside the oven which were used for starting the fire.

Community bakeovens were used to a great extent in many European countries and to a lesser degree in early America. Each family was designated a day and time when the oven was for their use. One informant related that in the village of Metz near Kassel in the province of Hessen, Germany, the community bakeoven was enclosed in a separate structure. He recalled having to crawl into one of the ovens on a number of occasions to clean it. He related that they could bake bread and cakes only once every other week because of the number of families using the oven. He told how the dough was prepared and allowed to raise at home and then carried on flat boards to the oven. He said the loaves of rye bread weighed as much as ten pounds each and recalled how heavy several of the loaves became as they were being carried home.

The writer has not been made aware of any community-type ovens used in the Dutch Country of Pennsylvania. If there are any readers who can recall an oven which was shared by several families in a settlement, will they please make it known to the author or editor of this publication?

Walter Kleinfelter, RD 4, Lebanon, Pennsylvania, related that his father told him of bread that was baked by the combined efforts of residents in the area of Jonestown, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, in various ovens and shared the bread with the Union soldiers who passed through that area on their walk homeward from Harrisburg after the Civil War.

There is a humorous reference to a bakeoven in the Lewis Miller Drawing Book at the York County Historical Society. Mrs. Weiser in a discussion in 1808 is describing the elephant to Mrs. Geistweit. "I can tell you—between his head and tail he is like a bakeoven and his ears like my apron and his feet like a butter churn, his head like an old stump with roots sticking out."

Among the files of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society is the following anecdote relating to the bakeoven: It involves the "hut" of the oven. The "hut" is the swollen belly-like dome built over the hearth to contain the oven's

heat. When a woman, eight or nine months pregnant, her shape at that time strongly resembling that of the bake-oven dome—is delivered of her child, the folk-dialect expression was, “*Dar back-offa iss rei-gefalla*” (Her bake-oven has collapsed.).

The following are some of the early folk beliefs relating to the bakeoven: Dr. Ezra Grumbine in his paper *Folk-Lore and Superstitious Beliefs of Lebanon County* wrote, “Rub the warts with a piece of bacon rind with which was greased the top crust of the newly baked loaves of bread as they came out of the oven, and to bury the bacon the same way.”¹⁴ “A young person marrying before the older sisters and brothers is said to ‘put them on the bake-oven.’”¹⁵

Edwin M. Fogel in his book, *Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans*, relates: “*Wammer fergesst del fum sach in der ofe zu du wammer am bake is schtaerbt en ganz nekschter freind*” (A very near relative will die if you forget to put in the oven all the articles you intended to bake.)¹⁶ “*Wammer fergesst en leb brot aus em ofe zu nemme, schtaerbt ens*” (Forgetting to take a loaf of bread out of the oven will cause a death.)¹⁷ “*Wann en jingers heiirt, misse di eldre lettiche gschwischdre ime seidrook danze oder der bakofo reite*” (If the youngest member of a family gets married, the older single members must dance in pig’s trough, or they must ride on the bake-oven.)¹⁸ “*Wann der bakofo singt, schtaerbt ens*” (If the bake oven sings it is an omen of death.)¹⁹ “*Wann di brotgruscht losschpringt iberm bake is der bekr drin*” (If the crust separates from the loaf of bread, the baker is in it.)²⁰ “*Bletsch me bettpisser der arsch mit satzbritsch odern hudelwisch*” (Spank the bedwetter with a yeastladle or bake-oven mop.)²¹ “*En bettpisser wipt mer mit me hudelumbé*” (Whip a bedwetter with a bakeoven mop.)²² “*Warze soll mer mit bune reibe un no in der bakofo schmeisse un faertschpringe as mer si net hert fergrache*” (Rub warts with beans, then throw the beans in the bake-oven, running away so as not to hear them burst.)²³ “*S salz wu mern warz mit reibt soll mer no in der bakofo schmeisse*” (Rub a wart with salt which is then thrown into a bakeoven.)²⁴ “*Wammer satz macht dut mer drei schmaerte weibsleit nei no get er*” (When starting yeast,

put in the names of three capable women.)²⁵ “*Wammer satz macht soll mer a mannsleit nei du*” (When starting yeast, put into it also the names of some men.)²⁶ “*Wammer satz macht soll mer drei bese weiber nei du*” (When starting yeast, put into it the names of three shrews.)²⁷ “*Brot as mer uf der Himmelferdak bakt waert net brot-zieh*” (Bread baked on Ascension Day will not become mouldy.)²⁸ “*Wammer ken drechterkuche bakt wammer ausgedrosche hot, gebt selli frucht ken gut mel un di weibsleit hen ken gut glik mit irm bakes*” (Funnelcakes should be baked after all the grain has been threshed, else the flour made of that grain will not be good and the housewives will have poor luck at baking.)²⁹ “*Wammer kuche bakt un will habe as si luk waerre muss mer juscht ene wek rire*” (To make cake light, it must always be stirred the same way.)³⁰ “*Der dak as mer bakt daerf mer net in garde schaffe oders sach waert mildaich*” (Vegetables cultivated on baking day will mildew.)³¹ “*En weibsmensch soll ken aerebse oder bone blanze uf ir bakdak*” (A woman should not plant peas or beans on the day that she does her baking.)³² “*Uf der Kaerfreidak daerf mer net bake oders gartesach waert mildaich*” (Baking on Good Friday will cause garden plants to mildew.)³³ “*Mer daerf net kere wammer brot bakt oders brot get net in di he*” (If you sweep the kitchen on baking-day, the bread will not rise.)³⁴

Brendle and Unger in their book *Folk Medicine of the Pennsylvania Germans* relate the following concerning the oven: “A child with *abnemmes* is passed through a double rooted briar; underneath a chair; around a table leg; or is placed in an oven.” “. . . Putting the child in an oven was probably originally nothing more than a symbolical birth, from which, with matters rightly adjusted, as at birth, an unimpeded growth should result.”³⁵

Reichmann in his article “Bread of our Forefathers,”³⁶ lists the following lore much of which is also found in Fogel’s book:

“Bread plays a great role in Pennsylvania German folklore. It stands for home; therefore it is the best remedy against homesickness. When moving to another place one should send a broom and a loaf of bread ahead to prevent homesickness. One will not become homesick if she sews salt and bread in her petticoats.”

“Bread is also the symbol of life. Therefore if a man has been drowned and the body cannot be found, a loaf of bread should be thrown into the water. The loaf will remain on the spot where the corpse lies. Life is stronger than the forces of darkness. If one throws a loaf of bread into water it will drive out the witches.”

“It can be used also as a remedy for sickness. Whooping cough will be cured by a piece of bread given by a neighbor. When cows do not give milk, a piece of

¹⁴ Ezra Grumbine, “Folklore and Superstitious Beliefs of Lebanon County,” *Lebanon County Historical Society*, III (1905), 279.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

¹⁶ Edwin M. Fogel, *Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans* (Philadelphia, 1915), p. 116, No. 513.

*Additional bakeoven omens portending death include “*Wann di brotgruscht losschprint iberm bake schtaerbt ens aus der familie*” (If the crust separates from the loaf of bread while baking, it is an omen of death in the family)—Fogel, p. 116, No. 516. “*Wanns brot iberm bake in der Mitt ufshpringt bedeits en leicht*” (If the crust of a loaf of bread cracks across the middle it forebodes a death in the family)—Fogel, p. 116, No. 515. “*Wammer middaks frisch brot uf em disch hot un di ur schlakt 12 wammer am disch hokt, schtaerbt ens aus der familie*” (If the clock strikes twelve while taking dinner at which fresh bread is served, some one will die in the family)—Fogel, p. 114, No. 501. “If you overturn a loaf of bread in the oven, you will have a death in the house”—Fogel, p. 117, No. 523. “If a cake or something else you are baking jumps out of the oven, it portends a death in the family”—George F. Moore Collection, No. 5, Pennsylvania Folklife Society Files.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117, No. 523.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71, No. 236.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 123, No. 557.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188, No. 916.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 282, No. 1484.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 282, No. 1485.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 320, No. 1697.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 322, No. 1710.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 187, No. 906.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 187, No. 907.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187, No. 908.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 187, No. 905.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188, No. 915.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 189, No. 918.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 187, No. 911.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 188, No. 912.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 188, No. 913.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 188, No. 917.

³⁵ Thomas R. Brendle, and Claude W. Unger, *Folk Medicine of the Pennsylvania Germans*, *Pennsylvania German Society*, XLV (Norristown, Pennsylvania, 1935), 147.

³⁶ Felix Reichmann, “Bread of our Forefathers,” *Historical Review of Berks County*, IX, No. 1, October, 1943.

bread received from a neighbor without a word being spoken will cure the cattle."

"Bread must be handled with care. It should not be laid on the side 'or it makes the angels weep.' It is God's blessing and should not be cut without first making the sign of the cross with the knife."

Ruth Hutchison in her cook book wrote: "Loaves were expected to be crisp and golden—if there were holes under the crust 'the baker was in it,' they said, and it was not acceptable." "Friday was a lucky day, so it became baking day." "Bread was not to be placed on the table upside down, lest the family should quarrel." When 'fitting', "the dough-trough was to be carried into the new house before anything else."³⁷

Stories have been told of children who had been sent with a small container to a cross old neighbor woman for a small amount of yeast. It was said the crosser the woman the better the yeast.

Barba in his book, *Pennsylvania German Cookery*,³⁸ relates an old dough-trough story that used to be told the daughters of the household as a lesson in frugal housekeeping. "A canny young Pennsylvania German farmer sent word throughout the community that he had a sick horse that required frequent dosages of dough-trough scrapings. A number of girls responded promptly with generous amounts of scrapings. But one replied saucily that she never had any scrapings left over. She was just the sort he was looking for. They were happily married and prospered."³⁸

Among other beliefs relating to the bakeoven is the following one by Robert L. Graham and collected by Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker. "The most fascinating cure that Huber told me was one that his grandfather would use for curing a rupture. He said that his grandfather would send the patient out to get an egg from the nest of a black hen and not to speak to anyone on the entire trip. When the patient brought the egg back to the doctor's office, the doctor would rub the egg across the ruptured area three times and then put the egg in an oven and close the door. When the white and yolk of this egg were completely evaporated, the rupture of the patient would be gone."³⁹

In Berks County, when a younger brother or sister married, a girl friend would sew a decorative patchwork cushion, small enough to fit into an envelope. This cushion was then sent through the mail to the older brother or sister who when riding the bakeoven, his or her "behind" would not scorch.

Albert Bushnell Hart in his article "The Pennsylvania Dutch," wrote concerning the Amish: "Their weddings last all day and if there be an unmarried brother or sister older than the bride, the guests go through the ceremony of setting the person thus passed by 'on the bake-oven'."⁴⁰

The following sayings collected by Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker are found in the files of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society. John Clauser of Auburn, Pennsylvania, said the old-timers used to say: "*Wammer aus da welt gee will, brauch mer yuscht in der backoffa schluppa*" (If we want to leave this world, we need just slip into the bakeoven.). Ida Fry of Fry's Mill said, "If a younger sister married before an older one, at the wedding, the older, *hen sie uff*

der backoffa kockt" (they sat her on the bakeoven).

Among the traditional rhymes of the Pennsylvania Dutch concerning the bakeoven are these to be found in the files of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society. The following one collected by Dr. Shoemaker from Monroe Howerter, R.D., Pitman, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania.

Solomon der Weissa schpricht
Hinnich dar backoffa, scheisst mer nicht
Fanna schteckt mer die kucha nei
Un hinna muss's luft loch sei.
Solomon in his wisdom spake
Do not behind the bakeoven defecate
Up front the cakes go in, you see
Behind, there needs a draft-hole be.

The following from Joseph P. Deibert's poem "*Der Mudder Ihre Disch*."

Backkarb Leeb, gebacke drauss
Im grosse alde Backoffe,
Mit de siesse Holsesch Gruscht,
Hot alles iwverdroffe.
Loaves raised in straw baskets
Baked in big old out-door ovens,
With sweet and fragrant wood ashes
Surpassed all else.

The following riddles, collected by Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker, are found in the files of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society. This one related by George K. Hoffman.

Won kon mer an backoffa uff mer an goul sana?
Won mer dar goul ride un saned an back-uffa.

This one from William Ruoss, Fritztown, Pennsylvania.

N schtall foll brauni schoof
Un n hilsni arrigel hinna-nooch.
A bakeoven is the stable full of brown sheep and
the *hilsni arrigel* (wooden organ) is the *back-offa*
schieesser.

The following from Isaac Eshleman, R.D., Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania.

Miel roo (freshly ground flour)
Backoffa wawrm (freshly baked bread, warm from oven)

This one from Jacob H. Yoder, Devon, Pennsylvania.

Was fer'n huut kammer net weeara?
Ei, n huut uff'm backoffa.

There are many other beliefs, sayings and riddles which have undoubtedly not been recorded. If any readers can recall others, the author and editor will be very happy to learn of them.

The outdoor oven which at one time dotted our rural Pennsylvania landscape and the fireplace oven which became so firmly established on the early homestead and farm had served their function well for over a century. With the passing of time, the ovens were replaced with the cast-iron cook stove or coal, gas, or electric ranges, until today there are very few working examples to be found; most of them having been abandoned or completely demolished. Of those the writer found in the Dutch Country, none are being used for baking purposes. With the exception of the few which are still being used for drying fruits and vegetables, most are serving as storage areas for lawn and garden tools, as an incinerator for accumulated trash and garbage, or the ashpits are being used as dog or other animal shelters.

With the arrival of the commercial bakery, one of the most delightful aspects of domestic household industry has been practically eliminated and homebaked bread is becoming a memory of the past.

³⁷ Ruth Hutchison, *The Pennsylvania Dutch Cook Book* (New York, © 1948), page 15.

³⁸ Ann Hark and Preston A. Barba, *Pennsylvania German Cookery*, (Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1950), pp. 12-13.

³⁹ Robert L. Graham, Folklore Term Paper in files of Pennsylvania Folklife Society, No. 589, p. 3f.

⁴⁰ Albert Bushnell Hart, "The Pennsylvania Dutch," originally in the *Boston Globe*, reprinted in *Lancaster County Historical Society Proceedings*, XII (1908), 96-97.

DEIVELS-DRECK (*Asafoetida*) YESTERDAY and TODAY

By DONALD ROAN



Traditional asafoetida bag as once commonly worn by rural school children.

Just what is this commonly remembered, but less used today, drug? Why does it have such a picturesque Dutch name? Why in the world would anyone use it? How do you spell it? These are the questions most frequently asked about asafoetida at the 1963 Folk Festival at Kutztown, Pennsylvania.

To answer them best is to take a long deep smell of asafoetida and discover the surprising essence that has been called a mixture of garlic, onions, limburg cheese, and old feet. From this pungent odor the German language has derived the name *deivels-dreck* or devil's filth, or more properly in the dialect, devil's 'shit'.

Berks County residents chuckle when *deivels-dreck* is mentioned because it brings to mind the story of the English (non-Dutch) salesman who stopped at a country store to exhibit his wares. The storekeeper asked if he carried *deivels-dreck*. The Englishman did not understand the dialect and when told of the translation replied, "The devil didn't 'shit' yet."

The most frequently asked question was—how do you spell it? Asafoetida can be properly spelled in its aforementioned Latinized form and in the accepted, English form, asafetida. Many incorrect spellings have been attempted, the most common being the English folk-dialect form of "asafedity" or "assafedity" and "asafetity" or any combination of the letters used above. The English name is derived from the Latin *foetidus*—fetid or having an offensive smell, stinking—a proper and fitting name for the drug.

The color of the German name kept its spelling always before the Pennsylvania Dutchman, but the English name did cause difficulty. A common tale in the Berks-Lehigh County area tells of a little boy who went into the town drug store and asked for a nickel's worth of asafoetida. Upon receiving his foul smelling purchase, he told the druggist to charge the purchase.

"*Wos iss dei nama?*" the druggist asked. "Monroe Bennawell Glingelheffer," came the reply. "Take your purchase and go," said the druggist angrily. "I will not spell Monroe Bennawell Glingelheffer and asafoetida at the same time and on the same line."

In order to establish what asafoetida is it is necessary to go to the pharmacologist and his resources. The natural order of asafoetida is *umbelliferae*, or to relate it to more familiar terms, it is a member of the parsley family. Asafoetida is native to Persia and India and is a large perennial herbaceous plant from six to nine feet high. The official drug is a gum-resin obtained from the living roots of mature plants.¹

The drug can be best described as made up of lumps or small masses of varying size, from the size of a pea to the size of a lump of stove coal, opaque and white on cutting,

¹ Heber W. Youngken, *Pharmaceutical Botany* (Philadelphia, 1921).



Asafetida bag found nailed over the threshold (arrow) of a Berks County cow stable. The bag is tacked in the center of the lower lintel.

but after short exposure to air it becomes yellow-brown to brown.

Now that a particular description has been furnished, the reader can go into the field and search for asafetida plants. As ridiculous as this seems once the origin of the plant is known, a number of area people mentioned in all seriousness that they had spent many years looking for asafetida plants.

Historically, the plant was first in use by the ancient Assyrians and has come down to us in medicinal texts from the Middle East. During the Middle Ages it was used extensively in Europe as a medicine, and has been recorded as being prescribed by Galen, the father of Pharmacy, as a medicine for cold in the stomach.

"From the more strictly therapeutic view, the outstanding characteristic of the Middle Ages is polypharmacy, the use of an enormous number of remedies of a fantastic or distinguishing character in a single mixture.. The Germans have an expressive term *Dreckapotheke*—filth pharmacy."² Asafetida was one of the most popular drugs in this filth pharmacy, possibly because of its unique odor.

As medicine progressed and enlightenment came, these drugs were relegated to the herbalist, the quack, and the occultist. Filth pharmacy did have one important effect. It codified and catalogued many cabalistic, astrologic, and herbalistic medical remedies into charms, many of which were worn around the neck to prevent diseases, in which the common people placed great faith. It is from this medieval influence that we derive one of the most common folk-medicinal remedies of the past generation—the asafetida bag.

Contrary to the ideas of many Dutchmen, the asafetida bag was not only a common experience for the children of our area, but was quite common in most parts of the United States. Persons at the 1963 Folk Festival willingly shared

their bag-wearing experiences, and it can be geographically established that throughout the rural Northeast, asafetida-bag-wearing was quite common. In addition, the Mid-west and South also had an exceptionally large population of bag-wearing residents. It is interesting to note that amongst the rural Southern Negro, the practice of wearing an asafetida bag was as prevalent and almost as long-lasting as in the Dutch Country. The two geographic areas of our country where few examples of bag-wearing were found seem to be the Southwest and New England. The author feels that enough evidence is present to support his belief that it was also common to New England, but that admission of this fact hurt "New England pride."

This much can definitely be established. Asafetida bags were worn throughout rural America until the 1920's and in the metropolitan areas until after the turn of the century, with the exception of their revival in the great influenza epidemic of 1918-1920.

It must be realized that the concept of foul smelling bags hung around the neck to prevent disease and keep away germs was not limited to rural America. The city dwellers, to be sure, wore asafetida bags, but on a very limited scale compared to the rural resident. Rather than asafetida bags, the metropolitan resident wore garlic or camphor bags for exactly the same purpose. This practice was limited more to the foreign element, but was applicable to all groups. Evidently the children of south and central European families wore garlic bags while the children of northern European parents tended to wear the camphor bag.

The wearing of an asafetida, or for that matter camphor or garlic, bag seemed to be primarily confined to school children, but there are many, many cases where adults wore them for the same purpose. The greatest period of adult use was in the aforementioned influenza epidemic. People were desperate to protect themselves from this scourge, and they tried the remedies their grandmothers had used. Those who had never worn a preventive bag, but had only heard of them, wore one and form the bulk of living metropolitan residents who recall such an experience.

Children in the Dutch Country wore these bags probably longer than in many other parts of the country, with examples having been recorded as recently as the late 1940's. The diminution of the one-room schoolhouse and the advent of bus transportation and the central school brought about a reluctance to wear such a smell in public. There was always a reluctance on the part of the school child to wear his bag, but Mother always insisted that it must be worn to keep away disease. Throughout the Dutch Country there are tales of the reluctant scholar who would discard his bag at the mail box before leaving for school and return it to his neck as he returned.

How does one determine who wore an asafetida bag? Obviously, you took a deep breath and you were immediately informed who wore one. It is interesting to record the comments of the rural school teachers who had to put up with these foul smelling bags.. Their opinion can be summed up with such colorful descriptives as "Putrid, horrible, terrible, and thank God for spring when the windows could be opened." This last comment is especially apropos when you imagine every child, twenty to forty in a room, wearing a bag next to his warm body in a warm wood-stove heated school room.

Every fall it was customary to send a child to the drug store or the country general store to purchase a nickel or a dime's worth of asafetida, hence the previously mentioned tale. For a nickel, the traditional amount, one could purchase a chip of one of the druggist's lumps about the

² Harver Ward Felter and John U. Lloyd, *King's American Dispensatory* (Cincinnati, 1909), I, 285.

size of a lead pencil mounted eraser. This lump would be taken home and sewn into a small square or rectangular bag approximately one to one and one-half inches in size. Although muslin seemed to be the most popular material, any material would do and frequently the bags were quite colorful. A string was tied to one ear or corner of the bag in such a way that it would hang around the neck without visual detection.

Asafoetida bags have been recorded as used not only for the prevention of disease and the protection from germs in general, but also as a preventive of specific diseases. "As a protection against smallpox, an onion, garlic, sulfur, or a bag of asafoetida was carried on the person. These articles were supposed, on one hand to absorb the disease, on the other, to ward it away through the offensive odor."³ "Whooping cough is prevented by putting an asafoetida bag around your neck!"⁴

The former transcription indicates another phase of the use of asafoetida, that of carrying a lump in the pocket to initiate the same effect as the bag. This seems to be the form most adults took when they used the drug for its preventive purposes. The practice of carrying asafoetida was not as widespread as wearing a bag, but it was none-the-less an accepted method of disease prevention in the Dutch Country and elsewhere.

Other medicinal forms of the use of the drug have been recorded in the past. "Nearly everyone wore an asafoetida bag. I do believe the germs were afraid to come near on account of the dreadful odor if there was any truth in its being a preventative; many made each member of the house eat a tiny bit for breakfast."⁵ Eating this foul smelling drug seems a repulsive thought, but it was none-the-less used in this manner. In the past and in the present, this use was practiced in the Dutch Country. The most interesting example comes from Mr. Chris Shirk, of Snyder County, Pennsylvania, a former employee of the Wernersville State Hospital, Berks County, Pennsylvania. Chris tells that in the winter of 1920, every patient at the hospital was given an internal dose of one-half ounce of asafoetida (interval unknown) for the prevention of disease. Dr. Samuel S. Hill was superintendent at the time.

Wilbert Gaul, Pharmacist, of Kutztown, Pennsylvania, tells that he has an elderly customer living in Kutztown who still purchases asafoetida for internal use. "She takes a pea-size piece and eats an onion for her breakfast every day. She has never been sick a day in her life to my knowledge," Mr. Gaul said.

Internal dosages of asafoetida were frequently taken for a bad stomach. Most advocates of this form relate that it helps digestion. Although the practice of eating the drug was not as common as wearing it or carrying it externally, it was, and is, used internally as a home remedy by many, many people. The practice has diminished, but it is still practiced on a limited scale throughout the Dutch Country, but it seems to have almost disappeared elsewhere.

Asafoetida was used for many purposes in addition to its medicinal value for human beings. If taken internally, the drug acts as a carminative, producing stomach gas, and in larger quantities, intestinal gas. An old gentleman living in Lehigh County tells that "When we were young, we were 'son-of-a-bitches' in school. We used to eat *deivels dreck* in the morning before coming to school, so that we could

'fart' in school." At Lebanon Valley College in the 1930's, asafoetida was given to prospective fraternity brothers in the morning, unidentified to be sure, for the same purpose.

Asafoetida was also very useful to the farmer. It was a common remedy for a horse that had stomach gas from eating wet food. It was given to the animal to make more gas and make natural passage possible. Fred Bieber, of New Jerusalem, Pennsylvania, tells that "If a horse has too much gas in his belly, give him 'asafisie' to make him belch."

Another use the farmer of yesterday and today had for asafoetida was for chicken lice. Finely ground asafoetida was placed in the chicken feed to help keep down the lice. This is quite common in the eastern Lancaster County area and is practiced by the Team Mennonites in the Kutztown area.

The drug was an extremely common remedy for horse colic, just as it was in smaller doses a remedy for the same disease in humans. Again, as with the chicken lice control, it was placed in the feed of the animal.

Farm boys used the drug to attract pigeons. Lumps were placed on top of the barn wall, on the ledge that formed where the gable-end met the wall, and on the rafters. The boys could then stand on top of the high-piled hay of the hay den and capture the birds as they landed. This proved to be a good source of pocket money.

Asafoetida was, and still is, used by the outdoorsman. Many fishermen use it mixed in with dough-bait, a mixture of sugar and boiled cornmeal, as an effective method of attracting and catching catfish. The wife of a county agent in Lancaster County tells that her husband used it as skunk bait for trapping. The observation was later made that one stench must attract another equally obnoxious one.

With a name like *deivels dreck* one might presume that it is associated with the occult of the Dutch Country. This assumption is correct and can be traced in part to John George Hohman in his *Long Lost Friend*: "To Prevent Evil Persons from Getting to the Cattle in the Stable. Take wormwood, black caraway, cinquefoil (five-finger grass), and asafoetida of each three cents worth; take a hog's bean straw, the sweepings from behind the door of the stable, and a little salt, all mixed together and placed in a little bundle in a hole in the threshold where the cattle pass in and out, and plug the hole with lotus wood. It certainly helps."

One of our illustrations shows a *deivels-dreck* bag over the cow stable threshold on the Fred Bieber farm near New Jerusalem, Pennsylvania. This bag has been there for about sixty years, as the barn was rebuilt just after the turn of the century. The farm previously belonged to the DeLong family. Fred tells that he thinks someone was bothering the cattle by either stealing their milk or stopping them from eating, and it was for this reason the bags were placed above the door. It must be noted that every animal entrance is so protected and the bags are still in good condition, although the smell is no longer evident. Fred further explains that the DeLong family had the "Hexa-notion," that is, they believed strongly in *Hexerei*.

How prevalent this practice was in the past is very difficult to ascertain because of the easily destructible nature of the cloth and the organic matter within. However, it can be assumed to have been a common practice in the past, as were the rest of the *Hexerei* practices of the Dutch Country.

Those who had a belief in *Hexerei* said that if asafoetida was carried on the person, either in lumps or in bags, it would ward off evil spirits and keep one safe. An old

³ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, XLV, 97.

⁴ Recorded from Lillie Brubaker, Lancaster, R. D. 8, from R. B. Long, *Folklore Term Paper*, page 6. Pennsylvania Folk-life Society Files.

⁵ *Lebanon County Historical Society Papers*, IX, 354.



Asafoetida gum in 1963. The drug is the large box on the center shelf, second from left, also on left above the allspice jar (arrows). Courtesy Gaul's Drugstore, Kutztown, Pennsylvania.

gentleman living in Fredericksville, Pennsylvania, was given a bag of *devels-dreck* by the author. The next week he told that now he always carries his bag in his pocket, day and night. For the first time in twenty years since his wife died, he is now able to sleep the whole night through, as someone had been "bothering him" during the night.

Another excellent method of keeping evil spirits or persons away was related by an elderly informant living near Mertztown, Pennsylvania: take asafoetida, bread, and salt and place them in a bag worn around the neck. The informant told of wearing one as a child. He had eaten jelly bread at an old woman's house in the neighborhood, and after that he could not eat, a sure sign that someone was bothering him. His mother placed a bag around his neck and his appetite was restored.

What is the setting of asafoetida in the middle of the 20th Century? It has been called an obsolete drug by pharmacists out of the Dutch Country, but it is known or remembered. It is still produced in its traditional form (lumps) by S. B. Penick and Company, the major supplier of raw drugs in the country today. In addition, it is being produced in a form that has succumbed to the 20th Century—chocolate covered pills. These pills are produced by the Eli Lilly Company, a national distribution company, and by such local companies as Park Brothers, and Hance Brothers and White of Philadelphia. The following statement appears on the label of the Lilly product, and is similar to that appearing on the other manufacturers' products, "These tablets are useful as a carminative for the relief of flatulent colic."

Pharmacopoeias and dispensatories of the first part of this century credit the drug as being a "Stimulant and antispasmodic used in croup, hysteria, spasmodic nervous diseases of females, colic, and minute doses for increase of mammary secretion, and functional wrongs of the stomach."⁶ Later editions seem to have placed the drug in the background, although none of the earlier information is deleted.

A geographic check of the Dutch Country shows that the drug was available but has almost completely disappeared, in the country store where it could be purchased in the past. Intercourse and Strasburg, Lancaster County, report they have not carried it for a few years. Huff's Church and Lenhartsville, Berks County, report the same, while Pikeville in Berks County carried it until about ten

years ago. Each merchant said that they kept a supply on hand for a few years after the demand stopped, but discontinued it when no call was evident.

The drug seems, in 1963, to be purely a pharmaceutical item, but obtainable with difficulty, in some cases, even within the Dutch Country. Schwenksville, Montgomery County, does not carry it in traditional form, but does have the pill form, although no sales have been recorded for the drug within five to six years. Honey Brook, Chester County, reports carrying it only in traditional form, mainly for an oldtimer who uses it for fish bait. Strasburg, Lancaster County, reports no call for the last ten years and carries none in stock, but at New Holland, Lancaster County, it has been purchased in recent years. Lebanon City reports that it has been purchased as *devels-dreck* within the last three months. Kutztown, Berks County, reports carrying it in both traditional and pill form.

For a more vivid description of the setting of asafoetida in 1963, Wilbert Gaul, of Gaul's Pharmacy, Kutztown, Pennsylvania, was consulted. As was previously mentioned, Mr. Gaul both stocks and sells the drug. It is located in a position of prominence in a shelf in the front part of the prescription room which is situated immediately behind the store.

It is of interest to note that in 1963 such raw drugs as sassafras bark, mace, sweet marjoram, aniseed, Spanish saffron, whole and ground flaxseed, powdered rhubarb, Pluto Water, and dog oil are still obtainable and still dispensed. The Pennsylvania Dutch have a tradition of collecting medicinal plants from the woods, fields and gardens, and these few drugs mentioned are among the most popular ones used. Although collection in the wild state, purchase in the raw state, and even manufacture of these drugs has diminished from that of twenty-five years ago, it is still possible to purchase these valuable and effective remedies from Mr. Gaul, and other pharmacists throughout the Dutch Country.

The answer to the question about the use of asafoetida today seems to be that it is purchased for such things as fish and animal bait, and that it still has a rather limited use among the older generations of the area for either medicinal or occult use. Its use as a disease preventive in bags or otherwise seems to have waned about fifteen years ago, but it must be pointed out that it is impossible to search pockets and beneath clothing. Is it prevalent today? Take a good sniff and 'see.'

⁶ *King's American Dispensatory*, I, 286.

REMINISCENCES OF CENTERPORT 1876-1885

By LEWIS EDGAR RIEGEL

In the early fall of 1876 I was still wearing dresses. My parents had gone to the "Centennial" at Philadelphia, and on their return—walking from Mohrsville to Centerport—the old German cigar-maker and I met them on the way.

I can still remember within ten or fifteen feet the spot where we met, the color of dress I wore, and that he piggy-backed me, for I was his pet.

This German whose real name was Bobb and not Charley Walters was one of many cigar-makers in those days who seemed to be on the go all the time—drinkers, sometimes gamblers, and never dependable. Several years later he turned up again and I recall buying a clay pipe from him which I think cost one cent.

My parents had bought for me at Philadelphia a "boy's" suit—my first—and I recall that it was the best in the vicinity of Centerport, but its pockets were so small that I could not put my hands in them.

In those days clothes were made at home or at the local tailor's, and children's clothing in particular was handed down from the oldest boy in the family to the next, so on down to the last.

Visiting My Grandmother

Visiting my grandmother meant a buggy or carriage trip to my Uncle Harrison Brossman's farm in Lower Bern township, a short distance beyond Bernville. She was a well preserved lady with few gray hairs, had good vision and hearing.

Well I remember how she would sit on her rocker, peel an apple, then scrape it and feed me with it, how she hunted for candy in her bureau drawers and found some. It may have been there for a long time and consisted of nothing more than lozenges or stick candy—which practically covered the choice of candy at that time—but it was candy just the same and greatly appreciated.

She was usually active with any work she could do sitting down such as peeling potatoes and apples, shelling peas, doing the family mending, crocheting and knitting. Never did I see her doing any work on her feet. She never drank any water. The coffee pot was always at least warm on back of stove.

While there I slept with her—a good plan to keep her warm.

[Also at grandmother's I] had the pleasure of being on a horse as he was going in a circle attached to a long pole with [a] grinding-machine in the center. They used a small

apple peeler which looked much like a pencil-sharpener except that it had two prongs to hold the apple. Lots of apples were peeled and Uncle Harrison spent many hours stirring the cider in a large copper kettle before the mixture, including spices, was ready to be put into crocks as applebutter. This was the first and perhaps the only time I was homesick—being left there alone for several days.

The Miracle of Irish Creek

Aside from the balls of twine we had covered with leather at the saddler shop and the sleds we built, our toys consisted of little more than a few children's books, rubber balls used when playing jacks, tops, a few dolls and kites—of the latter most were made by us.

I must have been about five years old when the family bought a sled for us. It was well built and greatly appreciated.

One day I ran away with it. There had been a heavy snow followed by light rain which froze the top to a solid smooth surface. I lifted the sled over a rail fence and instead of it staying there it started sliding down grade until it reached Irish Creek. What a predicament! The sled started floating down the creek. A little further down I noticed a thin sheet of ice covering the water. I got on it, watched the sled floating towards me, and as it hit the ice I reached down and got it.

You may realize that I was very happy to retrieve the sled, but imagine the risk I took pulling out the sled on such a thin piece of ice. A hired man on the farm nearby saw what I was doing and later reported to my father but it was then a thing of the past and nothing could be done about it but to give me a lecture on safety.

Winter Scene

The most beautiful and impressive snow scene in my life was the one approaching the home of my uncle Obed Rothenberger on or near Christmas—coming there on a blockie from Centerport.

He lived on a farm owned by the Reading Rolling Mill at the end of 9th Street, and it was located on [the] right side of North 9th—from city line to Alsace church. Turning in a lane we could see the front of the house which was then in good condition. The daughters were still all at home and helped in the kitchen, especially on occasions such as this. They ranged in age from about seventeen to twenty-two and, including both father and mother, lived a rather carefree life. Obed was interested in horses and

always had at least one fast one. He never worked on Saturday p.m., but drove to the old Berks County House on Penn below 8th and spent his time with old friends and acquaintances.

Adam Eyrich, Jr., son of my Uncle Adam, was their adopted son and the milkman going daily over his route in the city. On this day he stopped at Schoffer's Bakery which was then located on North 8th Street opposite to what is now Luden's factory and bought some buns that had a top coating of icing.

I suppose this was my first taste of bakery products and I thought it wonderful! So fresh and light in comparison to anything I ever had before.

The mill (Reading Rolling Mill) is gone and the fine home then occupied by the general manager and where I attended a party years later. The Rothenberger home and all its surroundings are a mess—small frame sheds, piles of scrap iron, etc.

Sleeping with a Drunk

I don't remember just why or how long I slept in our attic but recall an incident which made quite an impression. I was with John Daniels who was practically deaf. He, like most other cigarmakers liked his beer, but regardless of his condition he made no nuisance of himself.

The bed we occupied was the usual kind—rather high posted with rope stretched from side to side over wooden pegs and then crosswise from head to foot serving as a foundation or spring. On top of that was a chaffbag and for a top cover, a feather bed. We had a stove pipe going through one room on [the] second floor and a grate in [the] floor of another which helped slightly, but with no heating and no inner lining to [the] walls on garret and roof it was not surprising that snow would sift in between shingles and cover the bed.

I would put my shoes or boots at [the] foot of [the] bed post, hang up my clothes on [the] post, and wrap my scarf around all of it. On top, my hat.

Seemingly, nature called on John to get up one cold night when he was well filled up with beer. He mistook my clothes for a man's upright toilet bowl—at least I found my clothes frozen stiff when I got up in the morning

and also found a considerable area of ice on the floor. Luckily the next day was Sunday and I could wear my best suit while the other went through the cleaning process.

Butchering

Butchering was one of those important annual events which meant work and good planning to get what you need and what you like best out of a hog and a side of beef when weather has turned definitely cold. Most families in town had at least a penned off space to keep a pig for a few days before butchering even if they did not raise any for themselves.

Our next-door neighbor, Mr. Williams, was the man who did most of this kind of work in the community and well I remember how he sharpened his tools, kept touching the edges until he was satisfied they were in perfect condition, how he would cut the pig's throat and how it would squeal until it had lost enough blood to weaken and lie down. A trough of hot water was ready for it to be washed in and its bristles softened so that they could be removed easily. The pig was then hung up, its belly cut open from top to bottom and entrails removed. What a mess! Cleaning stomach, etc.

I helped cut up fat for lard and pressed down [the] long handle of [the] container to force ground meat into sausage skins through a spout.

Because of lack of refrigeration much of sausage, hams and bacon was smoked; liver pudding (*ponhaws*) was put into crocks covered with lard. Some meat was put in brine. We also made pigs' foot jelly. Scrapple was made of the last scraps of meat boiled with cornmeal. Bristles were mixed with regular plaster for indoor work in particular for such as covering for laths on walls.

Whether true or not we were warned against eating too much of these things on the day of butchering, for fresh meats would give us a bellyache.

Outdoor Activities

I imagine we kids in Centerport were extremely lucky as compared with most others in so far as outdoor activities are concerned. Not only did we have fish, frogs, muskrats, etc., in our streams but also a scattering of turtles, snakes, and rabbits in the woods.

We could pick wild strawberries, elderberries, raspberries, blackberries, cherries, pears and apples along the creeks or highways without encroaching on private property. We picked wintergreen—got bark from birch trees and some good tasting roots in the woods. There was no great quantity of the things I mentioned but there surely was variety.

In the fall we gathered walnuts, hickory nuts, butternuts and chestnuts. Hickory nuts were usually dried for a time before we cracked them using a heavy flat iron squeezed between our legs as a base. Many times the old iron slipped, fingers got bruised and shells scattered over the kitchen floor. Chestnuts were roasted in a pan on the stove or boiled before eating.

An outstanding event was a trip to the Blue Mountains above Shartlesville with our horse and wagon. John Shappell, a deaf mute, was one of the party. He was some distance away from the rest of us when he saw a large snake, killed it and made a loud sound to attract our attention, for he was very proud of his accomplishment.

All four of the woodlands we explored are now cleared farming land, trees and bushes along roads and streams are no more, blight killed the chestnut trees so that the present generation is compelled to get along as best it can with Hop Along Cassidy, cokes and imitating wild west life with cowboy suits and toy pistols.



Map of area mentioned in this account.

Christmas

Christmas was a big day in our family as it was in most others. There was always the stuffed roast turkey and mince pie, but little of fruit and vegetables except such as were "put up" by mother, since there was nothing of that kind in our general store—except canned oysters.

Usually the "Belsnickel" or Santa Claus would arrive about dark on Christmas eve, [and] make [a] noise at doors and windows. He was then permitted to enter and started to ask if we were well behaved during the year, etc. He would then start throwing some candy and peanuts on the floor and we would scramble around to pick it up while he would beat us on the bottoms with a light stick.

At Sunday School we always had better attendance just before Christmas than usual for on our Christmas eve we always had a short entertainment session and got a small bag of clear-toy candy and perhaps some peanuts and an orange—but [I] am not so sure about the latter.

[I] recall our tree was decorated with a few ornaments, some cookies and candy, and illuminated with small tallow candles. The tree was located at our front window and could be seen from the small elevation as we returned from the church just below town.

Toys were so few that, if we did get any, they made no impression upon me. The cookies were mostly of the cut-out type representing stars, dolls, animals, baskets, etc., and were decorated with a sprinkling of various colors of sugar.

Small tallow candles were quite a risk of fire and were not used by many and in fact were discontinued as soon as electric lights and colored bulbs came on the market.

"New Year"

New Year's eve and New Year's day were not of special interest to kids in my day. I recall that we stayed up until the clock struck 12 and heard a few shots fired at a distance, but to see the new year coming in was hardly worth the effort of staying awake so long.

At the hotel they kept on raffling until just past midnight, using ten large pennies (which were then going out of circulation) and an old plug hat.

The traditional habit of going from house to house in the country, waking their friends and neighbors, expressing New Year wishes and then firing their guns and then going to the next place, may have been done to some extent but [I] am not so sure since I never saw such activities—only heard about it.

During New Year's day, aside from raffling and some card playing at the hotel there was competition in marksmanship. A sheet of paper was attached to a tree stump lying on its side and shots were fired from a certain distance. No bullets were used so that winners had to be chosen because of [the] density and location of shots on that paper. The New Year "shooters" were supposed to have breakfast at the last place they visited and of course had some kind of drink at every stop.

"Reddy" Adams and John Daniels, cigarmakers, would not miss a chance to play cards at some country school, and always managed to make a winning of goose, chicken or turkey. Their honesty was doubted (and for good reason) and therefore [they] were not permitted to play at some places.

Clothes for the Male

The Civil War and a severe depression in the '70's had their influence on everybody in the years following, especially in regards to clothing since most of it was home-made.

Our old doctor who was a surgeon in the Civil War still wore his old plug hat and a shawl in winter. Some wore rather broad-brimmed hats, similar to Truman's, some low crowned ones with flat brims, some rather high with turned-up brim. Among the farmers especially were seen caps, double in the rear that could be pulled down and protect the ears in winter. [Men wore] straw hats in summer. Everybody wore rather long and heavy home-made woolen scarfs. My father wore a very heavy overcoat with cape but no sleeves. I don't remember anything about overcoats but father surely must have worn one of modern style by the time he was in the state legislature in the winters of '79 and '81. A few Civil War overcoats were still worn.

Some men and boys wore no underwear. Those who did had them made out of cotton or woolen cloth—all home-made. In place of underwear or overcoats it was necessary in cold weather to wear two pairs of pants, several vests and two coats. Woolen home-made socks were worn by all in winter, a protection against cold and dampness.

Men's work shirts were buttoned in front, dress shirts had a stiff bosom and were buttoned in the rear. For coolness or for the sake of economy you could wear a bosom only. Collars for dress shirts were always separate from the shirt, [and] varied from year to year, starting I think with a low "turned over" one, then straight up high ones, "piccadillies," turned over highs, low, tight-fitting, loose—ad infinitum.

Ready-made bow ties and long ones similar in appearance to our "4 in hand," wide flat, [were] followed by the "puff," since coats and vests were buttoned so high little of the bosom could be seen especially when the man wore one of the two latter styles or when he had a large beard. Cuffs were a part of a dressed-up man.

Since clothing was usually made at home or by the local tailor they were usually loose-fitting and had to be held up by a pair of suspenders. Only tramps wore belts at that time. Pants had no creases. When those with creases appeared they were at once recognized as factory-made and took second place in popularity. Of course overalls were the exception. Boots and shoes were made on the same kind of laths—no "rights and lefts" in our vicinity. The first pair of "R & L" factory-made boots my father had were bought at Harrisburg while he was member of [the] legislature. They looked very nice but on wearing them in damp weather [they] were found to have paper soles and therefore [were] soon discarded. Styles of shoes changed quite frequently in the late '70's and early '80's. Aside from the boots worn by most every one, especially on the farm and by the older people, there was a drift toward buckle shoes on the farm by the younger men, especially in summer time. In town, button shoes were the thing. For cool and restful summer wear they had the gaiters. These had no buttons or strings to keep them in place but an inset of rubber material on each side of each shoe. We had long pointed shoes for a season or two but [they] were too long and of extra size so that they were really not comfortable. Then came a very broad-toed style that was comfortable. Many of the boys' shoes were metal tipped to prevent hard wear. In summer time most boys were barefooted. Shoe strings were not in use till years later. Summer suits for men were of extremely thin cloth. "Seersucker" was the most popular for a number of years.

[There were] no cuffs on pants.

Pulse warmers were for men and boys only.



Women were considered old at thirty-five.

Rubber coats, boots and shoes were rather disappointing because of a brittleness that no longer exists. It was affected by heat and cold.

The black cloth generally used for making dress suits, especially the Prince Albert, was inclined to turn very shiny by use. (This does not include most expensive kind.) I recall my Uncle David Eyrich coming to Centerport dressed in [a] black Prince Albert, white shirt, flowing bow tie, broad-brimmed hat and pants hanging on top of boots. He was a picture of the driver of slaves as depicted in old Southern scenes.

Heavy silver key-winding watches attached to a heavy chain were the most prominent until the stem-winders came along. Then we turned to fobs, to watch pockets and to open-faced watches. As higher priced gold watches came along the watch on fob disappeared. All coins were carried in [a] pocket book or in strong cloth bags with [a] drawstring at the top. Hardly ever would you see anybody carrying money loose in his pocket—except occasionally a few pennies.

Plug or twist, "Bull Durham," clay or briar are really not articles of clothing but usually one or the other was a part of a man's outfit as was also the "bandanna" handkerchief—blue or red—but usually red.

What Women Wore

Some bonnets were in common use by all women—winter and summer—from the time they were old enough to play outdoors. For dress up, many of the older ones wore a somewhat different shape of black cloth bonnet—shorter and not so much face covered. Younger women wore hats or bonnets that had trimming on a metal frame which fit tight on the head.

Women's hair was encouraged to grow as long as possible; [then] was twisted into a sort of bun and held in place by long pins and a rather long comb. Children's hair were held back by a long, curved comb. Hair was usually parted in the middle.

Shawls were used by all adults, folded so as to almost reach the floor. Dark brown and black were the favorite colors.

Basques and skirts (the same material for each) were the style. There was always an edge of lace at the collar and some puff or extra layers of material in the rear of the skirt and often a large ribbon bow on top of that. For common house wear there was nothing in particular except that all wore large-sized aprons, usually a blue shade plaid. While dresses were long they were usually only to the top of a woman's foot or her shoes and not street sweepers as were those that came in later. Women were not supposed to have legs after once passing the young girl stage when short dresses had been used. It was very improper to even mention the word "leg." One referred to the female's "limb" instead.

Shoes were always high buttoned ones with medium to rather low heels. Stockings were usually black cotton—no silk.

Girls had [the] lobes of [their] ears punctured very young for ear-rings and started wearing some in their teens. Grownups usually had long dangling styles of ear-rings. Diamond and other high priced ones came later with the smaller and more tight-fitting ones.

The custom of wearing small head covers by old ladies did not change very much, comparing past with present. Light weight petticoats in summer and woolen or quilted ones in winter.

Small waists were so very important with [the] style of dresses worn, everybody in the teens or over had to wear corsets as tight fitting as possible. There were no bras and no long dangling elastic straps to be attached to top of stockings. They used only the regular garter below or above the knees.

Nubis did a triple service—cover for [the] head, to wrap around [the] neck or to fall loosely over [the] shoulders when somewhat cool indoors.

Women were considered old by the time they reached thirty-five and hardly ever wore anything but very dark brown or black after that.

A loosely knit bag or one made mostly of ribbons with drawstring at top was the nearest to our present-day handbags. At most it contained only a key, hankie—and perhaps a few lozenges and a powder puff. "Unmentionables" are hardly worth mentioning. With long and loose fitting petticoats and skirts such things were not at all necessary or convenient in summer and therefore not used to any great extent. Just what they did in winter I don't know but [I] imagine it was quite a problem.

Townpeople

Centerport was an ideal small Pennsylvania Dutch town with population of less than 100. There were 32 of voting age, of which one was a bachelor and one a widower.

The women included one widow and one old maid.

Over half of the men were self employed. Thirty voted Democratic and two the Republican party ticket; the latter being Dr. C. G. Loose who moved to Reading about a year before we did and the other—Mr. Berkey—was a retired storekeeper who owned more houses than any other man in town. The highest rent paid was by Dr. Loose—45 [dollars] per year and the lowest was 15 a year.

There was no show of social strata, no bad feelings among the men nor the women. The men went about their daily work and the women to theirs of keeping house and to bring up their children.

Social affairs were practically non-existent except to take care of relatives who might come on a visit. [There were, of course,] Sunday School picnics, funerals, and vendues.

Children were usually left to their own resources. There

were no smart alecs or spoiled brats.

The hotel-keeper at [the] lower end of town was a heavy, gruff-looking man with a small wife. He was really kind and gave me a 5c plate of ice cream for 4c which was all the money I had at that time. He would occasionally stand at a rail fence across the street from the hotel and look in the direction of Mrs. W—, the large fat woman who lived next door to us. He was suspected of having an "eye on her" because of this.

At the next corner was the general store where Mr. Mull was the clerk in charge. Mr. Mull was always fully dressed up including hat. When Robert was about 4 and I was recovering from nervous breakdown at Centerport, Mr. Mull cut Robert's hair at the store for 5c. Next to the store was the widow who stopped the stage and asked if there was any mail for her.

Next door to the widow lived the tailor who had made the trip to Kansas at the time of the first big rush to that state.

Others on that side of [the] street included the doctor whom I saw taking blood from a woman, the cabinet-maker who made anything from coffins to bed-room suits and at time of [the] Sunday School picnic had charge of the kids, made small paper bows out of colored paper and pinned them to their blouses or dresses, marched them to the picnic and saw to it that each one got a glass of lemonade free.

The shoemaker was an extremely religious man and at one time when away with my father attracted considerable attention in a restaurant by kneeling down beside his chair after the meal and praying in a loud voice. Father did not like that. Across the street from the shoemaker was the town's outstanding character—Dan K—[of him] more later. Back of him lived the old maid who would frequently sing outdoors in the evening (during the summer). Her voice was easily heard all over town.

Coming down the Main Street was a Mr. Suess who was running the other general store and who had a fight with Dr. Loose, rolled him on the street and gave him a black eye. (Dr. Loose had my sister Annie as [his] third tracheotomy case when she was about 3 years of age and the second to recover. He was our family doctor when Robert was born.)

Next [was] Mr. Burkey, whom I asked for some empty bottles he was burying. I took them home and after washing them made money to the extent of 1c each by selling them to the doctor.

Next to the saddler shop lived K—, a son of the hotel man at Mohrsville, and married to a daughter of Benjamin L—, the Centerport hotel-keeper. K— was definitely a rummy and his wife did most of the millinery work in town. It was here that some of the kids urinated into his empty whiskey bottles in his cellar. On the street on which we lived was a country school-teacher, Mr. Rischel, who must have been very conscientious or not overly bright for he would put in much of the summer months preparing for the next school term.

Another was the saddler who put leather covers on our balls of string or twine. It was in his shop that a swing hung from the ceiling and on which Katharine Loose sang with gusto the famous "Ba Ba Black Sheep" as she was swinging back and forth.

The Mrs. W— next door did our family washing occasionally. I recall her standing in our back yard, just pulling her dress forward a little and letting nature do its duty—not bothering to go to [the] privy nearby as others

did on such occasions. [I] saw her oldest son make lead bullets before starting for Montana where he expected to make his future home.

There were no first generation foreigners, no Jews, no Catholics. There was a fair division of Reformed, Lutheran, and Evangelical. "Pennsylvania Dutch" was used generally at church services—no English. Occasionally high German.

[I] saw our blacksmith make nails for special purposes.

The wagon-maker had a good voice and would lead in singing at Sunday School. Teeth were neglected, so were usually bad. If they caused trouble the family doctor would pull them. They went to Reading for false ones. We got only weekly papers—the *Reading Eagle* and the "Adler," a German Reading paper.

The Riegel Family

I was told, and have reason to believe it true, that we moved from Bernville to a farmhouse near Centerport when I was about 3 months old.

The double house my father built for \$1300.00 was completed long before the fall of 1876, since I do not remember having lived any other place.

With the exception of one room used for [a] bedroom, all of one side of building and part of [the] cellar were used as a cigar factory. Three second-floor rooms and attic were fitted for bed-rooms—two to each room. On the first floor was [the] kitchen with hard coal range, a sitting room with "parlor stove"—isinglass in the door—and the parlor which was hardly ever used. In the basement a water-tight box filled with the necessary amounts of water was sunk in the soil and served as a "refrigerator" in the summer. There was no bathroom—in fact none in town—so we got along with a wood wash tub when bath was necessary. In summer time when running barefoot we had to use a pan or wooden bucket every night to clean up before going to bed. Since we had no running water we had no present-day style of sink. We had to pump the water, kept the kettle with spout on [the] stove continually, hot and ready for use at all times. Of course the coffee-pot was always on back of [the] stove also, with grounds and coffee left over from [the] previous meal. New ground coffee was added as needed but [the] pot was not emptied until coffee grounds occupied too large a part of the pot.

We always had one or more cigar-makers living with us, so had quite a family. Ours was the largest family in town. I don't recall any that had more than 3 children. We had three rather heavy meals every day. Breakfast included such items as fried sausage, ham and eggs, bacon, fried mush, scrapple or "pot wurst," besides fried potatoes, bread, and coffee. No cereals, fruit or milk as now. Salt mackerel was used frequently on a Sunday morning as were also pancakes topped with New Orleans molasses.

The noon meal (Dinner) was usually a boiled affair such as pot pie, "*snitz and nep*," sauerkraut, beans, turnips, cabbage (each with meat of course), oyster, potato and noodle soup.

Home-raised corn, "garden salad"—loose leaf lettuce—dandelion, onions, radishes, tomatoes, and peppers were used in summer only. There was always home-baked pie at noon including such as rhubarb and green tomato in summer besides cherry, raspberry, blackberry and huckleberry in season. Cake was used more on holidays and for special company and on Sundays as were also waffles.

Supper was largely a meal of leftovers from noon meal.

Watermelons, lemons, and coconuts were about the only fruits brought into town. A butcher would make his round

of town at least once a week which kept us in fresh meat all through the year and at the proper season some one would come with fish—porgies and shad were the most popular.

"Funnel" cake was a favorite with everybody. It was a soft sweetened dough left run through a funnel into the boiling fat in circular shape. The apple pudding was equally soft but not as sweet and was put into a bag before boiling it in water. When done it was served from a large platter, [with] milk and sugar added by each to suit their taste.

Coffee was usually so dirty that it had to be carefully inspected by mother before she would grind it. Anything might be found—even mice turd.

Butter too was uncertain in quality as it was often too stale before it was traded in at the store and because they and we did not have refrigerators. It was because of [the] uncertain quality of butter that I discontinued using it while still very young.

Father did the carving of meat at the table and insisted that we take at least a small amount of fat with it. Walter seemed the one most opposed to eating any fat and claimed that it tickled his nose.

Each one would help himself as soon as he was able to do so, which may be one reason for developing such long arms. We had contests as to which one could eat the greater number of apple dumplings, of pancakes or ears of corn, and left the table feeling stuffed. Should any of the boys be late for meals he would get what was left—never would anything be held back for a late-comer.

Mother was a very good cook but so indifferent as to time the meals were often late, some eatables not baked or boiled long enough and coffee not ready until meal was about finished.

Tea was mostly the "Blue Mountain" kind which was really very good. Chocolate was chipped from an oblong square weighing about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.—"Bakers" brand I think. [We] had ice cream occasionally (home-made) but it was a nuisance to go for the ice and the cream, so [we] had it very seldom.

"Snitz" were dried sweet apples—sometimes peeled, sometimes not. They were usually threaded in about 18-inch length and hung on the attic to dry for later use. Nobody had screen doors or windows so flies had a grand time every summer. Mother waved a chaser—[a] long stick with strips of paper—all the time we were at a meal but even so it was nothing uncommon to see flies suddenly scalded in your cup of coffee or in a bowl of soup. They were in and on everything so whenever possible rooms were darkened so as to tempt them to go outside. At night we went after them in force and cleared the walls and ceiling as well as possible before going to bed.

Father was a busy man but always calm and not in a rush at any time. His first interest was the cigar business. He got tobacco ready for the workers, did the packing of cigars and as often as suitable made a trip to Schuylkill County where he made most of his sales. He took care of the shipping and kept the books and all correspondence.

On the outside, he was clerk at vendues (sales), did all the land surveying in that section, was justice of the peace and executor of several estates. He made no claim as a politician so when he was asked to run for state legislature he made it definite that he would accept the office if elected but would not do any campaigning. He held the office for two terms—1879 and 1881—getting \$10.00 a day for the number of days they were in session and a free pass on the P & R railroad. This was considered a big income in those

days. He was the man who got for Centerport the status of borough shortly before moving to Reading.

Mother, with 8 children and usually several boarders, also had her hands full. She was easy-going, kind and sociable. She would help liberally any beggar or tramp that came along and was always able to find something she could buy from a peddler of Yankee notions or from one coming with a wagon-load of tinwear. She was interested in everything and would not rush a conversation to conclusion even though it might cause a meal to be late.

Jim, the oldest brother, was of the retiring type. He was my most frequent companion going to the country school. I recall him throwing a sharp stone at Walter with such force that the stone cut through [the] brim of Walter's hat and the skin on his forehead; also that he attended the summer school on [the] second floor of [the] saddler shop with eight or ten others for which the teacher was paid (as I recall it) about 5c per day, netting him not more than \$2.50 a week. Jim also spent one winter with Uncle David Eyrich in Chester County, going to school there so as to be more fluent with English. On his return he often mentioned the monotony of the meals there.

Walter I remember primarily for the scheme of hiding all the heavy logs behind the old wagons and sleds in Dan Kline's yard instead of cutting them, for pulling a snake out of the stone foundation of a bridge with a sharp-pointed metal at [the] end of a stick and then beating it to death; and [once] because of speeding around the corner too rapidly when bringing [the] horse and buggy from our stable, was thrown out but he held to [the] reins and found himself still driving, although he was under the buggy until the horse stopped at the house.

Will was a rather skinny and backward kid interested primarily in hunting and fishing. One time we were after bull frogs. He caught one and tied it to a fence-post with a piece of string. After looking for more and returned the frog had slipped out of its shackle and disappeared. On another occasion he caught an unusually large fish for so small a stream, got so excited that he did not even take it off the hook but dragged it to the place where Jim was attending the summer school and urged Jim to go along back with him and catch some more.

"Reddy" Adams, one of the cigar makers, always pretended that Will was his pet and encouraged him to do many things out of the ordinary; one was to hold me tight and tell Will to hit me. You can easily imagine what happened. Did I get mad?! I would squirm and kick so that it was impossible for Will to get anywhere near me. Will was not considered a safe risk to send to the store for groceries because of his inclination to fall or drop things. Once I recall him returning from the store with an armful of groceries and very proud there was no accident. Just as he was approaching the back porch and mother coming toward him he said "*Do Kum Ich*" (Here I come), he tripped and everything fell to the ground! He tried to do some carpenter work and make things to play with but had little success. His most valiant effort was in trying to make a bicycle. He got as far as making a crude small wheel and used cord string for spokes which was far from making a bicycle.

I suppose it only natural that I should remember more about myself than about the rest of the family. When I was about 4 I was very sick; had [a] wet hot cloth on my chest and [an] ice pack on my head—part of time unconscious. I ended with at least a dozen boils on my chest. As compensation for the pain in squeezing and cleaning

the boils I got some pennies. When able to get up I drew some pictures and painted them with water colors. Was praised but— I recall how they looked. [I] suspected then that they were kidding me and know now that they were for I never had any talent or ability in that direction.

I was always on the go. In winter it was sledding with home made blockies sliding over snow or ice without skates and wearing out shoes very quickly. In summer I was usually along the creek looking for frogs, fishing or after cherries, berries, wintergreen—anything to satisfy my curiosity, even looking for and finding Indian arrow heads just below the hotel. [Once I] found [a] turtle with date indicating it was rather old. There were quite a few water snakes around but [we] avoided them. [I] recall boys putting some small ones in the pocket of another as a joke and also into a drinking cup which [the] other was using.

Death of My Brothers

I must have been close to 5 years of age when my next younger brother died near the age of three. He was a bright and active child and as I recall, it was considered by the parents and others that he would turn out the most prominent of the Riegel family. Arrangements for the funeral were made immediately and notices sent to all of the relatives. Neighbor women started cooking and baking in preparation of the large amount of food necessary for such an occasion. Mother would come into the kitchen occasionally and tell the women to make more of this and that so that there would surely be enough for everybody.

Wax flowers were the kind used in those days for coffin decorations, at least so in the small towns and in [the] country through the winter season. They were furnished by the family itself and [I] recall father going to Reading to buy some. These flowers were frequently put into frames after the funeral and hung on the walls or put under a glass case for a table decoration.

Within three days the other young brother, aged only a few months, also died and both were buried in the same coffin. I was not well at the time and did not attend the funeral services held in the small church a short distance below town on the road leading to Mohrsville. Carriages were waiting at the railroad station for any who might come by train. Most of those attending the funeral services came to the house for the big dinner—which was the custom of the time—but when all was over there was so much left that the cigar-makers were called upon to help consume it for the next few days. They were also instructed to go into the cellar any time of day or night and help themselves to the row of pies that were waiting to be eaten.

Customs at the table at meal-times varied some, compared with the present as did also the type of food. In winter especially there was greater emphasis on pork and sauerkraut, sausage, scrapple, mush, and "snitz and nepp," while in summer there was more beef, chicken and smoked meats. Soups of all kinds were considered a main dish instead of just a first course as is the case now. A big bowlful was put in the center of the table and each one would help himself to the quantity he desired. Instead of individual salt and pepper shakers, a castor on the table provided you with these and also vinegar, catsup, horse-radish, mustard—depending on the size of the castor and the family's likes and dislikes. Butter was chipped off the pieces on the table with your own knife as wanted and not put on small individual butter plates or in small chunks at the edge of your plate. Early in life we learned to help ourselves and naturally took most of the things we liked best.

Brother Will could never understand why dessert had to be eaten last instead of the first item of a meal, since he liked it best, but parents being what they are, [they] usually have some rules of conduct and in his case they would not let him violate this rule. Silverware such as knives and forks were practically unknown except by the upper class and then for special occasions only. Metal that needed frequent scouring with wood ashes was what was used generally. Both knives and forks had either wooden or bone handles. Stainless steel came in much later.

Mother was in the habit of holding a loaf of bread tight against herself in the solar plexus section when cutting it in slices, and when grinding coffee held the grinder in the same location.

Youngest of Family

Before going any further with my own adventures and exploits will say that Mary was the next in line. I remember her best as having a wide sash around her waist with a big bow in the rear. She was primarily interested in sweets—would eat little of the main part of meal except puddings—cake—desserts. Mary did develop to the point of having [an] interest in "skipping rope" and playing "jacks" before moving to Reading.

Annie was about 1½ years of age when we moved to Reading so [I] have no report to make concerning her at this time.

Coming back to myself, [I] recall being late for meals but since mother always ate after the others had left the table I was fortunate to have a companion and likelihood of [a] more decent meal than otherwise.

I would toast bread on top of [a] stove lid, pop corn in [a] covered iron pan, fry any frog legs and fish after cleaning them and make myself "moshey." Moshey was brown sugar and molasses boiled in water to a certain consistency then poured into a greased pan to cool until it was at least stiff enough to dig out with a knife. Whenever I had them I would put some nut kernels into the pan before pouring in the boiled stuff. Was that good?!!

We lived so close to the center of town that I could hardly miss anything that happened—from organ-grinder with monkey to auctions, noisy drunks or fights. The Strausstown Band stopped there a number of times and made quite an impression—all dressed in uniforms and using a high built-up wagon for transportation similar to those used by circuses for their bands in parades.

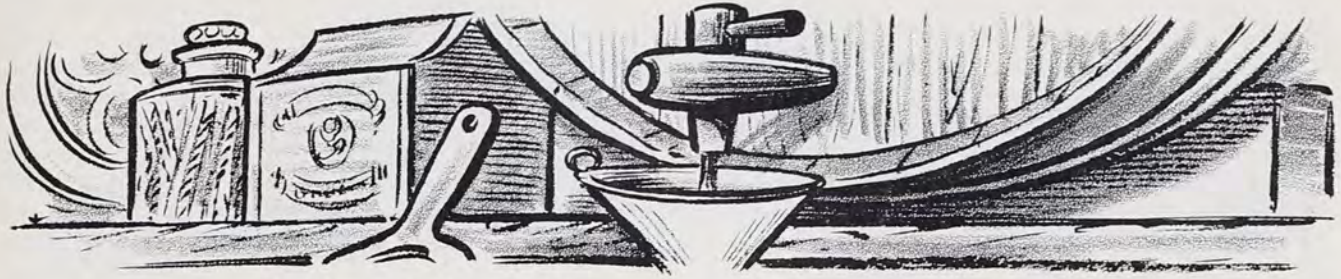
I had my disappointments and unpleasant experiences too. Was awakened one morning and told some one was downstairs waiting to see me. I got up and rushed down to find it was Dr. Loose with pincers to pull a tooth. At another time this same doctor asked me to go along to visit a patient. Soon after starting he pulled an apple out of his pocket and started eating it, saying it was the only one he had. I did not want to tell him so but felt that he might have cut off at least a part of it for my enjoyment.

We had quite a number of stereopticon views which were enjoyable and instructive.

Sulphur matches were in common use. They did not smell so good but were the only kind we could get.

The General Store

The "general" store was an interesting place for many reasons. First, of course, because it was the place to buy candy which, beside the few kinds I already mentioned also included horehound, cocoanut strip, licorice sticks and rock candy; this latter in whiskey was supposed to be a good cure for colds.



Vinegar, coal oil, and molasses were tapped from the original container.

It was here that the stage stopped several times a week, where mail was sorted on the floor, where farmers came to trade their butter and eggs for merchandise, and men gathered around the potbelly stove in the evening to talk over the news of the day and their affairs. Since "supper" was served early as compared to [our] present custom it was nothing unusual for one or more of those sitting around to have a hankering for something to eat and [they] would buy a hunk of cheese for perhaps 5 or 6¢, dip into an open barrel of crackers and take a few which was considered quite proper. [I] recall sugar turning so hard that I helped to grind some after water had been added after which it was soft and fresh looking. I *think* granulated sugar was being on the market before we left Centerport but do *remember* definitely that at first people thought it was not as sweet as the three other kinds that people were accustomed to—dark brown, light brown, and white. The price of soft sugar varied from about 6¢ per pound for the darkest to 8¢ for white; granulated was 12¢. I recall when I first saw it, but within a few years [it] was as cheap or cheaper than the others. Sugar, vinegar, coal oil, and molasses were all delivered in barrels or hogsheads to the store and all but the sugar were tapped from the original container into a jug or kettle as wanted by the customer. Sugar, coffee, dried beans, peas and similar articles were scooped from bins behind the counter and weighed at time of sale.

Most of the townspeople had a running account at the store and every item bought was recorded in a small account book which was always taken along when going to the store.

We supplied the store with most of the cigars they needed which helped to reduce our cash obligations. A 5¢ cigar was a luxury in those days, most sold at 2 or 3 for 5¢.

There were no glass or tin containers for such items as vinegar or molasses, so everybody brought their own jugs or kettles for these things when he bought some. Earthen crocks of all sizes were very much in use as were also some of better quality—"Stoneware" or "Iron stone."

There were no "bakery" goods aside from perhaps a few kinds of crackers of which, of course, "water crackers" were outstanding. Ice cream was home-made except in summer-time when the hotel man got a can of it every Saturday afternoon. Most of this was eaten by the men who came there Saturday evening. Little if any was taken home for the rest of the family.

An English-speaking boy was visiting some relatives in town one day with the reputation of being a tough guy. We kids were playing with him when the question of ability as fighter came up a number of times. The kids must have had a good opinion of me as a fighter for they repeatedly pushed us against each other to get the scrap started and

arrive at some kind of conclusion. I rolled him over in no time and that ended the uncertainty. I felt proud of the victory even though there were no prizes or medal of honor.

A magic lantern entertainment at the schoolhouse on the edge of town was quite interesting, but [I] remember only that it ended by telling the boys to close their eyes (which they did not) and showing the girls a beautiful rose, then telling the girls to close their eyes and showing the boys a wheel within a wheel running in opposite directions.

Cigar-makers teasing me was a daily happening—pleasant for them but not for me. An example—saying repeatedly that I kissed the little girl next door through the garden fence. Wouldn't that rile anybody at that age—perhaps 5 or 6?

Customs of the 'Eighties

Customs vary from one section of the country to another as do they from one era to another. In the early '80's at Centerport we still had to keep the kitchen stove going day and night to prepare meals and avoid building up a new fire every time it was needed. There was no electricity, no gas, no running water, no bath-room or sewers. We had to pump the water and carry it into the kitchen in a bucket. We used a large iron kettle to heat it for family washing. For boiled meals a smaller one was used and for occasional use, one with a spout for easy pouring. These were all rather heavy—of iron—as were also frying pans and flat-irons. Coffee pots were of lighter material as were also pans for baking.

It seems there was a sudden boom of factory-made articles about that time and [I] remember in particular that tinware was not at all dependable. It would rust easily, bend, and come apart at the seams.

Cutlery was made of steel and had to be polished frequently; they used wood ashes or sand soap for this job usually. Silverware was still something for the future as was also the four-pronged fork.

A castor was usually the centerpiece of all dining tables. It contained bottles of salt, pepper, vinegar and in some families horseradish, catsup or mustard, depending on their likes and dislikes, and size of castor. This piece of tableware avoided the need of individual pieces scattered all over the table as is the custom now.

Dishes were largely of the "stone-ware" variety (I am not sure of the name) which were rather large and heavy.

Big iron kettles were had by quite a few—the kind that was used outdoors at time of butchering for boiling fat to make lard, to boil cider when making applebutter and in making soap. Homemade soap had a brownish tint and was used for all cleaning purposes except for taking baths or washing your face. "Ivory" soap and "Sapolio" were the



Bathing was a "once-a-week" chore for most.

most advertised soaps at that time. The former (Ivory) was then 99 44/100% pure and has made no improvement since.

Shaving was a "once-a-week" chore for most as was also the bath in a wooden tub.

Sewing strips of cloth from end to end for making rag carpets was possibly the best excuse for women to gather and exchange the news and scandals of the day.

I saw rag carpet woven and tallow candles made but not in our family. I saw thrashing by flails and was awakened one morning to see Halley's Comet (somewhere about 1881).

[I] was very much impressed with an experience we had drowning kittens in the nearby stream. It seems the string around the neck of the kitten broke as I threw it into the water with [a] heavy stone attached to the other end. She managed to crawl out of the creek—scared and bewildered—climbed up my front as though pleading for protection. What we did with her later I do not know but if she was drowned [I] am sure that I did not do it!

People doing any dairy business had "spring"-houses where they kept the milk in earthen crocks. [I] recall one woman pushing the cream with her fingers to the edge of the crock before taking it off with a spoon. [I] suppose others did it the same way. Each family with cows made their own butter and what was left over was sold. [I] saw only one separator and suppose it was the only one in that section.

The Town Character

I think it proper to give publicity to the town's outstanding character, Dan K—. He was one of a family of respectable and well-to-do farmers. One brother owned the first farm on [the] road to Mohrsville and two others the first and second farms in the direction of Bernville. Dan did some business buying and slaughtering calves and sending them to Reading, but was so crude and cruel in his method that some farmers would not sell their calves to him.

He and his wife lived in a shed near the town's school-house. This shed had a floor on one side which meant one room; on the other side was kept our horse. The wife was quite respectable in appearance and seemingly did her best under the circumstances.

They had two children, the first one dying in infancy. She took this dead child to Reading to have its picture taken and when leaving the train had the conductor hold it for a minute and cautioned him not to waken it—to prevent him knowing it was dead.

While Dan himself was very dirty in his habits, he must have had some knowledge of germs and went to extremes in some of his demands. His wife had to wear a cloth over her mouth when cooking or baking and was not allowed to eat with him for fear of her breath contaminating the

food. When taking a drink of water at our pump the cigar-makers would cough and spit so loud that he could hear it. He looked irritated, threw the water away, and pumped another dipper full. If they continued he would not drink at all.

One evening, when in conference with my father regarding some papers, country boys on their way home threw stones at the windows of his home which caused his wife to yell for help. Father and he heard her calling for help and Dan (a very heavy man) waddled to her assistance as fast as he could, calling "*Ich Kum—Ich Kum*" (I'm coming). Lots of fun for the country boys? During the winter months when his kitchen stove had on full draft and made [a] sound by wood and coal burning he insisted these sounds were made by the ghost of his father "*Stuffel*" (Christopher).

After a few years in the shed he built a home at the upper end of town. In the yard was a collection of old wagons and sleds. One of these vehicles was taken to a small bridge below town and thrown over the side into Irish Creek. Another one was pulled on top of a shed near the hotel. He kept a bony old horse in a small stable in his back yard. [I] recall Dan giving this horse watermelon rind and other things usually given to hogs and not to horses. Another horse he had in [a] nearby stable was killed one day while he was away. It had been locked in but the killers managed to break in. Boys one time took a wagon-load of rotten potatoes from his place but got only as far as the back alley as one of them had taken off a rear hub cap and pulled at [the] wheel just as it turned the corner so that the whole load landed in the mud.

My most pleasant contact with that family was the fact that I acted as "baby sitter" for the second child a number of times and was generously rewarded. Mrs. K— would make some "*Drechter Kucha*" (Funnel cakes) for me. They tasted like what is known in this section as "*Fasnachts*"—not much different than the well known doughnut. I appreciated them very much.

This is the same Dan who found a dead man along the highway a short distance below Mohrsville and at [the] inquest insisted that he was *insulted* to find him. He may have meant he was surprised but insisted on [the] word "insulted."

Early "Travels"

My first "long distance" trip was to Reading. While the court house, the view at 6th and Penn and the slanting stone railroad bridge near the outer depot made some impression on me, the outstanding events were these. Father was consulting with a lawyer on North 6th Street and I watched the street cars passing by. They were small but pulling them up grade by one and occasionally two horses was quite a job and they were beaten frequently. The

other was an introduction to that famous Reading product—beer. Father took me into one of those basement saloons of which there were several then and ordered a schooner of beer. After taking a few swallows of it he gave me a taste of it, which, as I recall it, did not taste so good. Basement saloons were just a few steps below the sidewalk level.

The next long distance trip was to Harrisburg where I saw the old capitol building surrounded by a picket fence made of old army muskets about one foot apart. Father took me to the highest balcony in the rotunda. I watched the people on the first floor walking back and forth and suddenly got the inspiration to spit and see how long it would take to reach its destination. No sooner had I done so when a man came walking along—I missed him by perhaps a foot. He heard the sound of its landing and looked up but we hustled off to a nearby room and stayed for a time before going downstairs.

Here is where I got my first view of what impressed me as extreme government extravagance. Just imagine, running water in the men's toilet and piles of tissue paper—each piece twisted in the middle! How different from the privies of Centerport where there was no heating, no running water, no tissue paper—only corn-cobs and sometimes old newspapers. I remember one room having lots of flags on display; no doubt used in certain places and some captured from Rebs.

On [a] trip to Philadelphia a little later I was very much impressed by the bateaus and other small craft along the Schuylkill River. Then, more so by the sailboats at the wharves on the Delaware. Many of these boats seemingly were used to bring oysters up from Chesapeake Bay. Father was interested in buying a bushel of them for some holiday in the near future. He was given a few on the half shell and so was I. I was under the impression that raw oysters had to be swallowed whole but these were so large I had to chew mine first. After father had paid for a bushel and given directions as to whom and place they should be sent, he noticed men painting [the] address on a bag, but these oysters never reached us. He made inquiry at the freight station a number of times but no luck. No oysters for that holiday. And was I surprised at the number of telegraph poles I saw—one after another all the way to Philadelphia!

One time I was taken to Reading by the local storekeeper with a load of potatoes which he sold from house to house. We started at the end of Moss Street and were sold out long before we reached Penn. My job was to hold the horses' reins while he was looking for customers. A woman started talking to me but I would not answer. Of course I was rather young and she spoke a different language. The company houses at Leesport looked as uninviting then as they do now.

After buying a few things at wholesale we returned to the good old town—tired but happy—a rather long day for we had started before daybreak.

I must add this: [I] was very much surprised on my first or second trip to Reading that we had a light rainfall. I thought there never was any rain in cities.

Church Customs and Picnics

The Bellemans Church, about a mile south of Centerport and the "Michels" (St. Michaels) [church] nearly two miles north of town, had far bigger memberships than the Evangelical only two blocks away on the Mohrsville road, but because of its convenience [it] attracted the larger part of the town's population at its services. Preaching at

this nearby church was not a weekly custom nor was there a regular preacher. Services were held at intervals of 2 or 3 weeks and then only in the forenoon except perhaps at Christmas or at a revival meeting. Sermons were in German but often such poor German that it would be more accurate to say "Pennsylvania Dutch." Prayer meetings were held occasionally on Sunday afternoon. The leader would read one line of a hymn and the audience would sing it, then the next line until it was finished. A tuning fork was the nearest to a musical instrument used at all the services. Men sat on one side of [the] aisle and women on the other. [I] recall a sign on the wall, "Don't eat peanuts." Evidently there had been [a] disturbance previously and this was a gentle reminder. [I] remember that at a prayer meeting in a private home one attendant seemed to think that there was not enough life or activity; at least he started stamping his feet on the floor and clapping his hands, then nudged his wife sitting next to him; she followed suit, then did the same to the two daughters, and as you may imagine a fine time was had by all.

I had the pleasure of attending a Dunkards meeting in a barn not far from our country schoolhouse. First of all they went through the ceremony of washing each other's feet in wooden buckets and butter tubs. This was followed by a big meal from a large table in the center of the barn floor. I don't recall just what they had but think it was primarily boiled beef, gravy and bread—far different from the variety served at the Waldorf or even Moore's Diner. There were no knives, forks or spoons as I recall it and each one would dip into the large dishes with a piece of bread and scoop out the thing he wanted. I suppose their hands were clean before starting the meal and [they] had to do a lot of licking afterwards or use some water.

The bell in the tower of St. Michaels could easily be heard at Centerport on a clear day. Whenever a death occurred in that vicinity it would toll the number of years of the deceased. Since nearly everyone knew who was seriously sick and [the] approximate age, it was usually easy to determine who had passed away.

Sunday School picnics were always enjoyable. Usually some one would make a short address and the pupils would get a glass of lemonade free; then there would be kissing games. On one occasion they wanted to fly a balloon by filling it with hot air. A fire was built and the proper balloon held over it but before it was filled with hot air it caught fire—there was no balloon ascension. At one of the picnics there was a brass band.

The refreshment stand was to me the most interesting thing at the picnic. A nickel was usually the limit of cash I had to spend, and in order to make this go as far as possible, I would circle the refreshment stand, look at item after item before making my final decision. Anything costing 5¢ or more was *out*. Peanuts and a large variety of candy could be bought for a penny so that I had quite a satisfactory variety by the time I had used up all of my allowance.

Samplers were quite a fad. They proved women's ability with the use of needles. A girl's fatness was an asset rather than a liability—or perhaps it was her inability to run very fast that enabled the men to catch them easily. Stripes on stockings were around the leg instead of up and down. The latter way might have made them appear more slim. Sunday Schools were uncertain and irregular, sometimes held at [a] schoolhouse, sometimes at church but always before Christmas and picnics.

Collecting Sponges

Regardless of the season of the year we boys seemed more interested in, at or on the Irish Creek than any other outdoor activities. One day, whether it was early spring or late fall, I don't remember, but know that the weather was cold; the stream was full and rushing faster than usual. A number of us kids including my brother Will were walking along its bank when one noticed some foam in an eddy at the foot of a tree on the other side. One of them mentioned the possibility of getting the foam, to dry it and make sponges that could be used at school.

I was never backward in taking chances and trying out new suggestions, so, thought I, this is something to go after. Just beyond a log crossed the creek—what luck! I was ahead, crossed the stream and down the other side. Misjudging the accumulation of leaves and driftwood for solid bank I stepped on it and down I went. I grabbed a hold of the exposed roots of the tree and climbed out of the water. Soaked and chilly, at once I discontinued my exploration for the collection of material that would be used in making sponges.

To top this unpleasant experience came the thought of what father or mother might say or do when I got home. What could I do but go there! For a short time I took refuge in the privy at the end of the lot and Will went into the house. He must have had a worried or excited look for mother almost immediately asked him where I was. He told her and also the fact that I was soaking wet. I recall how excitedly my father rushed out to get me, how I was given a hot bath and put to bed. There were no ill effects—unless you might say it was another reason for disliking water.

Entertainment

Every decade brings new theories, new inventions and changes in customs and styles. The late '70's and '80's were no exception and because of father's interest in politics and business and the cigar-makers in sports, music and drama, I had advantages far superior to others of my age living in small towns and was duly impressed.

I listened to discussion about Tilden, Grant, Garfield, and high tariffs; recall the sadness caused by the killing of Garfield and details of Custer's fight with Sitting Bull. John L. was a hero to all the cigar-makers as was also Buffalo Bill, both of whom I saw later at Reading. Annie Oakley I saw with Buffalo Bill in [the] second year of Buffalo Bill's show from [the] hillside above [the] Fair Grounds—now [the] city park—where the show was held.

Tom Thumb, the James Boys, and Barnum and Bailey were also subjects much talked about. It was through Reddy Adams, who formerly travelled with a circus, that we kept up with the popular songs of the day. Selling name cards by the kids was an ambition rather than a successful endeavor. All of them had addresses of firms who would send free samples, nearly all of which had some kind of flowers or bouquets as a background. These cards were priced at so much per dozen, and since hardly any one bought more than a dozen there surely could have been little profit to the printer who gave the free samples, set up the type, did the printing, allowed commission to the "agents" and paid postage for their delivery.

April 1st was Moving Day. Just why quite a number of people would move from one house to another when prices and accommodations were practically the same is hard to explain but it was the custom I suppose and there were always a few who would do so. I recall two movings in

particular. The one included a small tray of name cards. I am sure I spent more time looking at them than in carrying small pieces of furniture from one house to the other.

The other moving day had a heavy snow fall the previous night and early morning but was followed by very warm weather and the snow soon melted. I might add that in moving, no trucks were used. Everything was carried from one house to the other.

[I] recall at least one calithumpian band. The large bass fiddle was an open tobacco case over which was pulled back and forth a long plank. Some job to operate and some noise!

Near the town's school was a patch of rocks and heavy bushes in the corner of a field and was designated as an Indian burial ground. I think it would be hard to prove that this was a fact. I would rather believe that it was neglected because of its lack of value.

I don't recall that any one was interested in flowers. There were no front yards and only a few side yards. The spaces back of the houses were used for gardens and privy and for drying wash. At the extreme end of the yard there might be a small shed, or chicken house or pig pen and space for pigs to develop. Sunflowers, lilacs, daisies, and hily of the valley—all more or less wild—were the only flowers I recall seeing.

A child's tricycle, brought from the freight house at Mohrsville, passed through Centerport on its way to Sharlottesville. Those who saw it thought the purchase was rather extravagant, for money spent on children's toys was usually very limited.

Trips to the Farm

When clerk at a sale my father made on opening bid on a small farm on the Northkill Creek about midway between Bernville and Sharlottesville. He had no idea of buying it but there being no other bidder it was his. It was beautifully located with [a] fine view of the Blue Mountains nearby. It had a small frame house and barn and included a small apple orchard. The nearest neighbors were the parents of Dr. Loose and the family which did his farm work and the plowing that he wanted done.

I recall the trips we made with horse and spring wagon, the stories of holdups years ago along that route. [I] saw the man who was accidentally shot with a gun whose ramrod had not been put in the right place. The ramrod entered his skull, was pulled out and he narrowly escaped death.

[I] passed the home of a deaf boy who later came to Reading and for many years was the driver of a coal truck. [I] knew the Civil War veteran who had a hand shot off but by the use of a metal hook attachment could continue his work as a well-digger almost as good as ever. [I] saw his boys riding a bicycle at one of the cross roads, just continuing in a circle and looking proud and happy for they had built it themselves—of course, wooden spokes, etc. Metal parts were made at the blacksmith shop. Also passed the home of Mr. Dietrich, a retired farmer who with his sons opened a store on Penn Street below 4th for the sale of carpets, oilcloth, window shades, etc.

On one of our trips to the farm our horse stumbled and fell just as we were going down a hill. Father was excited, all got off the wagon and started unhitching while I sat on the horse's head to prevent his getting up. This was rather exciting for me—not at all pleasant—but I did what was required and soon the wagon was pushed back and the horse allowed to get up. He shook himself but



We would pick stones out of plowed fields and put them along fences.

there was no harm to horse or wagon.

We would pick stones out of plowed fields and put them along stone fences, plant seed potatoes and put a little fertilizer near each one, later we would do some cultivating and sprinkle paris green on the plants and when ripe, had them plowed up and picked them. I don't remember much of any other crops but have the feeling that all our activities were very interesting.

Marshall Ney—an intimate friend of Napoleon Bonaparte—reported shot and killed in France was actually unharmed and with the help of associates managed to escape to this country. It was claimed that he lived only a short distance north of our farm! Later he went to one of the southern states where he died.* An afterthought: The man who did our plowing was the most cruel, and profane tobacco-chewing individual I ever saw. His nine-year-old son did a regular man's job every day. [I] saw the boy taking off the heavy harness of their working horses which is quite a job even for a full-grown man. As you might guess, the wife was a very nice and quiet woman but there seemed to be a look of sadness in her eyes. No wonder!

Forgotten Customs

Some of the customs of the early '80's are now to most people "past history" or entirely unknown or forgotten. Take for example the cornucopia bag—it may be hard to believe but there was still such an extreme prejudice against the present day paper bags (pronounced "tut" in Pennsylvania Dutch) that most of the original makers of them went bankrupt.

Women always carried shoe-buttoners as did also some men. The younger women in particular carried with them a powder puff and a bottle of perfume—the latter of the 10 or 15¢ variety.

Men to a great extent used tobacco. Since chewing the stuff interfered least with the work they were doing, it was only natural for most of them to carry a plug or some twist in the hip pocket. When going to a vendue, fair or other gathering for men it was not surprising to note that many also carried a flask of whiskey. Most men carried their money in strong cloth bags with a draw-string at the top. [I] am not sure but think that most of them were originally used as shot bags.

The S-shaped hook is an other item that is seen no more except in some butcher shops. They use the ones with a sharp point at one end. There was also the one that was

* For a similar story, see W. A. Sadtler, *Under Two Captains: A Romance of History* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, ©1902), dealing with the life of Colonel I. J. Lehmanowsky, who served under Napoleon and after a stay in Pennsylvania became a Lutheran minister in the Midwest. An addendum deals with the Marshall Ney story.—EDITOR.

dull at both ends and could be hung on a nail, or rod, or any kind of protruding piece of wood.

Hanging scales—the long-armed swinging type—were in common use by butchers and farmers. Another kind with a ring at top with which to attach it to a permanent hook was more generally used by hucksters and in homes. Fly traps were a must at stores in particular. After flies got into one of these contraptions there was no way for them to escape. When the trap was full the flies were drowned (I suppose), emptied, and ready for the next crop. Sticky tape was hung from the ceilings of public places and sticky sheets of paper also helped to hold down the population of that pest.

Because of brakes being on [the] rear of heavy wagons it was the custom of [the] driver or his companion to walk at the side or rear of the vehicle. This was to guard against injury to horses in case of a down grade in the road being too steep for the hitched horses to control.

The only "Salt River" parade I remember consisted of men wearing capes and carrying lit oil cans at the end of [a] stick flung over their shoulders. I remember my brother Walter wearing one of these capes on a rainy day going to school.

We made whistles out of twigs of the willow and perhaps out of one or two other kinds of wood, just so it was possible to loosen the bark from the wood.

As stated before, toys were scarce but [I] recall on one 4th of July a number of us boys having small toy pistols and paper caps. We were lined up on a bench in front of the general store and starting with the youngest we "fired our guns." Regular fire-crackers were also used to some extent but rather sparingly—only one at a time instead of whole packs as was done later. This is a part of the life in the days of bandanna handkerchiefs, of key-winding watches (mostly silver), and of rather heavy chains with ornaments dangling from them.

Odd Happenings

[I] recall "Reddy" Adams trying his hand at baking pretzels. You can well imagine our interest in his undertaking including my mother but the result was far from satisfactory. [I] am not sure whether the dough was too soft, or not of the proper materials, but do know that they did not retain their shape—just spread out in the pan in which they were baked. They were "pretzels" just the same and we ate them.

Trade dollars, 2 and 3¢ pieces, eagle pennies, silver 5¢ and I think 3¢ pieces were in wide circulation, and enough of the ½¢, large 1¢ and \$1 and \$2½ in gold to make a collection without too much trouble. I even had a 20¢ silver piece and a "not one cent." "Trade Dollars" were worth as low as 80¢ and were all called in somewhere about 1886.

Medicine at [the] store consisted primarily of ipecac, paregoric, castor oil, linament, peppermint, horehound. At home most people had roots of various kinds in bottles of whiskey or other alcoholic.

Key-winding watches, mostly of silver, were practically the only kind used. Most wearers had rather heavy chains—some of silver, some gold—to which was attached a rather large fob or the key with which to wind the watch.

Coal cars were all of the wooden bin variety and much smaller than the ones in use now. [I] think they were of two sizes only—some 8 tons and some 16. They were joined together by a three-link chain. Bumpers varied in height which was the cause of many brakemen getting killed or injured when coupling. While in the legislature father had a trip with the other members to Norfolk, Virginia, going by some kind of government boat from Philadelphia. They must have had a rather rough voyage for he mentioned hearing the soldiers on the roof above him being blown or forced, because of roughness of [the] sea, from one side of [the] boat to the other. He was in the hall where Patrick Henry made his famous "Give me liberty or give me death." He brought home an article of some kind made from wood previously a part of that hall.

[I] recall him getting lots of books from Harrisburg published by the state. They were largely statistics, and not of any special interest to most people, so I was one of the boys to make a distribution all over town just to get rid of them.

[I] mentioned previously about an insurance company in which father was an official. Well, shortly before they "folded up" he had the other officers at our home for a big dinner and meeting. For some reason the impression around town spread to the effect that this was a rather highbrow exclusive group so that a form of jealousy was shown by a few. To appease the objectors and set things straight again mother invited all the women in town near her age to have a party—dinner and all. They all had a good time and we heard no more along the line of jealousy. In explanation of the failure of the Mutual Insurance Company [I] need only say that some one or several in the company were in the habit of insuring only old men and women—such as were expected to die soon—paying their assessments and being the beneficiary.

The Old School House

It may seem strange that the children of Centerport should be sent to a township school a mile away when there was a good schoolhouse right in town but that is the way it was in this case. It seems there were more children in the vicinity of the old schoolhouse in the country than in town, so for the sake of economy and the convenience of the larger number, we were the ones who had to go by way of a lane, past a farm house and barn, [and] cross a small stream, climb a fence, cross several fields and through some woodland before reaching our destination. The schoolhouse was located on a cutoff from the Mohrsville road and was about halfway to West Shoemakersville from that point. On one side of it was a private home and next to that a Dunkards meetinghouse with a shed to accommodate the horses of members who came to attend services. The schoolhouse was built of stone. Beside the front door there were three windows on each side. There were 3 or 4 high desks and benches on each side of the aisle, each accommodating three of the older pupils or four of the younger.

The potbelly stove was in the middle of the room. The teacher was also the janitor and had to start the fire each

morning as only wood was used for heating. Entering the building there were shelves fastened to the walls on each side on which were placed lunch baskets, hats and coats. On one side was a bucket for drinking water with a dipper used by all. At the other end was a blackboard the entire width of the building, a map of the U. S. rolled up usually to the top edge of the blackboard, a good sized globe, and a desk and chair for the teacher. This end of the room had a platform of perhaps 6 or 8 inches elevation and on it stood one class after another at recitation. Teachers were always men. Girls sat on one side of [the] room and the boys on the other. Drinking water was gotten from a spring about a block away, in the woods back of the school. Everybody used slates on which to do their writing and figure out questions in arithmetic. Paper for compositions was brought by the teacher in roll form and was cut by him into sizes he thought sufficient for the occasion. School term was 6 months, daily sessions from 8 to 4, with an hour off [at] midday for lunch and outdoor exercise. Some of the older pupils worked in late fall and early spring, so had less than 6 months.

Our books were all English though no one spoke the language. We got to understand English because of this and had to answer in English the questions at the bottom of the page at the end of each particular subject—a matter of one word answers or exact wording as contained in the text of the subject involved. Friday was the day for singing and for writing of compositions. Those too young to write could go up front and recite a jingle or poem. Here occurred an event that left its impression for the rest of my life. It was my turn to go to the platform to recite a short Pennsylvania Dutch jingle. I trotted up and to the amazement of the teacher recited what, liberally interpreted into English, would be:

*The girls with fat cheeks
Have hearts like cobblestones
The girls with fat legs
You'd better leave alone.*

I made my bow and started for my desk but the teacher stopped me and with one hand on my shoulder said, "Eddie, you musn't say such things again." I was so shocked and hurt by this sudden and unexpected criticism that I never afterwards felt at ease to stand before a group to address them—in fact it was the primary reason for discontinuation of school in the middle of Class B High School knowing that in that year each student was supposed to make at least one address facing the whole school body. It seems unbelievable that such an unimportant incident could influence a person's life.

Because of the small number of pupils in our school and the extreme difference in age there was never much interest in any particular games during the noon hour. There was some ball playing, some tag and skipping rope, but to a greater extent there was running through the woodland and listening to the older boys for items of news and announcement of public sales in the neighborhood.

Most of the pupils were what we now consider first and second grade; another group was between 11 and 14 years, and a few boys from 18 to 20 whose books included advanced arithmetic, world history, grammar, etc.

Our lunches, as you might expect, consisted primarily of sandwiches, pie, and occasionally an apple. To have anything green was impossible and anything carried in jars would have been rather inconvenient for us four brothers.

At public sales in the country a big dinner was served to all who attended before the auctioneer got on the job.

On such a day we carried no lunch, missed the afternoon session at school and enjoyed the big affair which usually included "pitching ball" by the young men attending and a chance to buy oysters—raw or soup—peanuts and candy from a huckster who was always sure to be there with his stand.

Pupils were advanced from one level to another without examinations and at the end of the term there was no commencement as now; instead, some of the older ones brought baskets, brooms and brushes and gave the old schoolhouse its annual cleaning.

School directors were supposed to visit each school at least once each term. I recall teacher giving books to each one of them so that they could follow the questions and answers of the class then in front. [I] noticed the teacher turning at least one of the books held upside down by a director. Make your own deduction.

One of the older boys who might be called a moron spoke little and did not attend any of the classes but seemed very much interested in all that was going on. He kept on looking through his books and listened. How much he benefited I don't know.

One of the girls was crippled because of extreme rheumatic trouble. She would come to school on horseback and the horse would return by himself. One day a stranger must have seen the horse and thought he was doing the proper thing by tying him to the fence along the highway. He was wrong. The owner of the horse soon located him when he did not come back as usual.

One day there was a fight by the teacher and one of the older boys. They were rolling on the floor and the teacher won. I suspect the boy could have been the victor for he was taller and I think the stronger but did not do his best since it would have been in poor taste to get the best over a nice little teacher. I was never inclined to do much in the way of studying or reading of books but from the beginning of my school days I would keep my eyes and ears open and by the end of the term I had collected perhaps as much information as any of the others of my age. After a year or two at school I knew the names of all the presidents, of all the states, the capitals, Spanish and other discoverers, the outstanding facts of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution of the United States.

Our writing was exclusively Spencerian and was developed by the use of a "copybook" with a line in that style at [the] top of each page. We were supposed to show improvement as we went from page to page.

The woodland back of the school was cut down the year before moving to Reading and the schoolhouse itself is a part of a very beautiful country home now.

Outstanding Incidents

Among the most outstanding incidents in my "life at Centerport" were the two that happened at the same small creek we crossed on our way to school. It seems that on this particular morning I tried to skate over the ice instead of walking on the plank at the edge of the fence. No doubt the cattle had been watered there the night before or very early that morning; at least the ice was rough and I fell, cutting my left eyebrow. Jim was with me and seeing the flow of blood, took out his silk handkerchief, which he prized highly and wrapped it around my head and took me home. They went for Dr. Loose immediately. He cleaned the injured spot and pasted it together with sticky tape. Perhaps a few stitches would have been better and would have avoided the visible scar for the rest of my life.

On another cold morning I did the same thing, but this time the ice was too thin and I broke through. [I] remember well how I grabbed a floating book and some papers and how my clothes were frozen stiff within a few minutes after I got out of the water. Again it was Jim who was with me. Home we went as fast as possible. I was given a hot bath and put to bed and recall no bad effect unless you would call it bad having a greater dislike for water.

I doubt if the historian of the future will make note of the activities of the kids with whom I associated but to me it is interesting to note what they did later in life. One of my teachers became rather prominent in Berks County politics and another in [the] manufacturing of hosiery. Of the boys one later had a grocery store at Second and Washington Streets in Reading. His father was the only whiskey drinker in town. His mother was a daughter of our hotel-keeper and his grandfather the hotel-keeper at Mohrsville so it was not surprising that his father drank. The shoemaker's son had a shoe store in Schuylkill County after leaving Centerport.

The boy who had the fight with teacher later had a local express business in Reading. One of the saddler's sons became a teacher and the other a foreman at [the] Berkshire Hosiery mills.

Of the farmer's boys, one was at head of [the] parcel post department and another at [the] head of [the] money order department at Reading Post Office until their age limit.

The grocer's son became manager of [a] building construction firm who built more homes in the 15th ward than any other person or firm and built our home at 1518 Hampden Blvd. The boy who slapped Will on [the] fingers and injured one severely never got beyond learning to be a cigar-maker and ending with a job as caretaker of a small social club. Several farm boys continued as farmers.

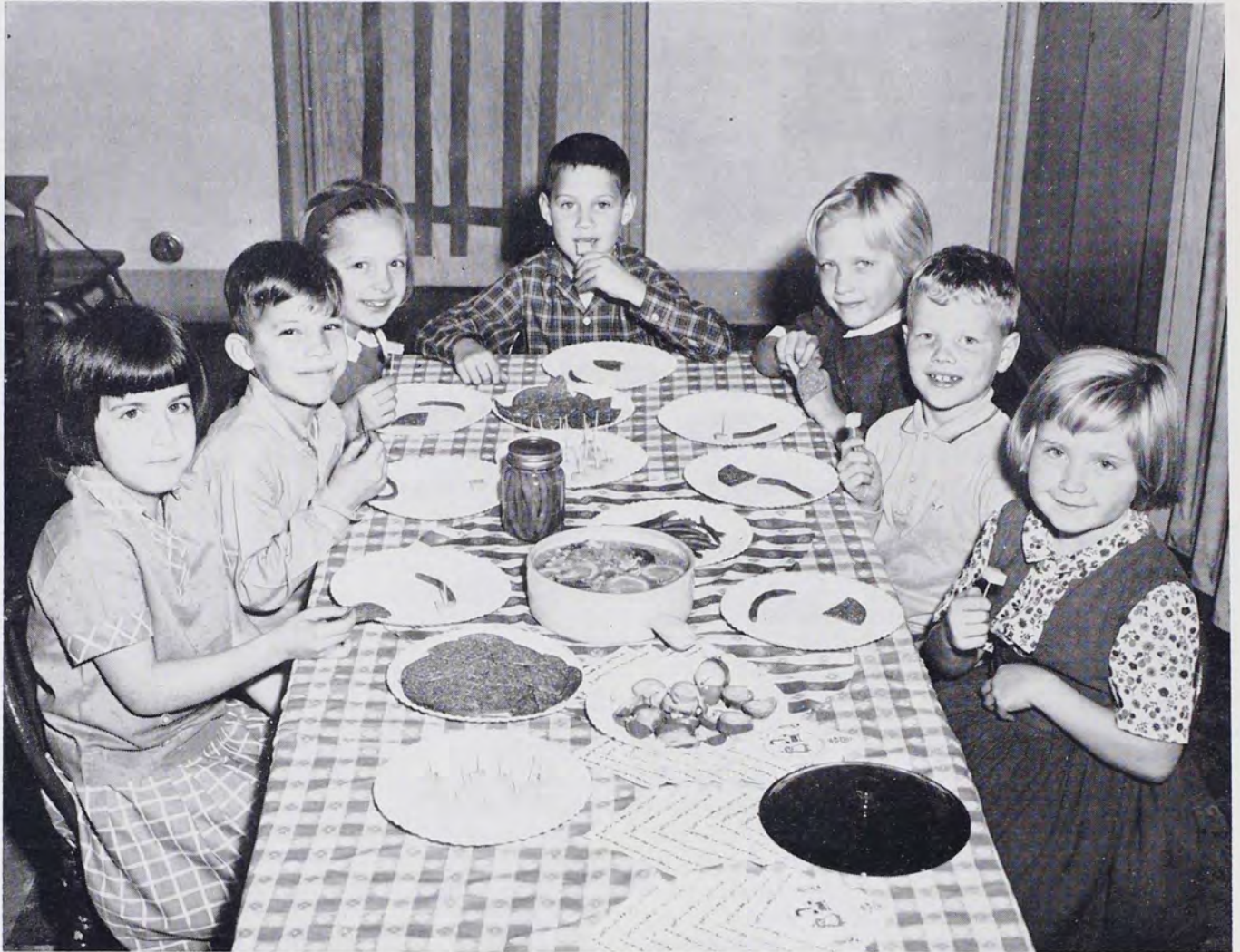
Centerport was not much of a "drinking town." No doubt the hotel man, who was a big and heavy man, drank as much or more some days than all his customers combined.

Beer was usually "bottled" and never on ice so [I] assume that it was not as tempting as it would have been if tapped from a keg or if kept on ice. On a very hot day one might see Dan Spatz stop in for a glass of the stuff, or Christopher Winters who lived some distance north of town. The latter was very old and looked exhausted; he had long white hair and beard and was a perfect picture of Father Time except for his size—somewhat shorter and heavier.

So ends my story of an interesting time in a small Pennsylvania Dutch town.

P.S. I had a very uncomfortable feeling when I broke a small pane of glass at the schoolhouse. Father had to furnish another which set him back financially to the extent of 10 or 12¢ including putty.

I still love dear old Centerport
Where we lived years ago,
Where life is much the same each day,
And each their neighbors know.
Where children can play outdoor games
And oldsters sit and rest;
Where life is not just one grand rush—
Relaxing seems the best.
Some day I'll sell my city home
And holdings that don't pay
I'll go back to dear Centerport
And there I'll always stay.



Second graders in Ohio's Gates Mills School taste the "seven sweets and sour" of their Amish neighbors.

OHIO SCHOOL CHILDREN

Study the Pennsylvania Dutch

By **JERRIE GRESSLE**

"It was wonderful nice," was the consensus of opinion of twenty-eight second graders in Gates Mills School when they had tasted the "seven sweets and sour" and thus concluded their study of their Amish neighbors.

When the Social Studies Curriculum suggested learning about a community unlike the one in which the class lived, it seemed an easy step to exploring the habits of the Plain People who lived about fifteen miles east of the home village.

Most of the seven-year-old students had seen the black buggies and the broad-brimmed hats of these Amish neighbors but pulling the cloak of mystery from around them brought pleasure in pursuit of knowledge. Later, horizons broadened to include the study of the Pennsylvania Dutch.

Children entered the classroom through a blue cardboard gate and "hex signs" made on paper plates brought color and meaning to bulletin boards. There were high hopes that the same signs might keep away evil things like low grades.

It was fun to do arithmetic games such as the ones that asked how many jars of applebutter Katie Zook sold on

two days at market or how many quarts of blueberries Jacob picked in three hours.

Flash cards with "Dutch" words and expressions lined the chalk tray and no motivation was needed to coax an interpreter into action.

The library provided the "book" work and knowledge. The beautifully illustrated pages inspired more than one doodler to at least change his style to hearts and flowers.

Parents cooperated by taking Sunday field trips through the cheese factory and collecting souvenir items. Admiration for Pennsylvania folk art grew and this summer at least six families plan trips to the area where it thrives.

Even the local grocer got into the act by contributing Lebanon bologna and cheese. Mothers added the rest to ham hocks in gelatin and shoofly pie.

Best of all perhaps—is the new knowledge that we now have, not only neighbors, but friends over the hills to the east.

