



Fall 1959

## Pennsylvania Folklife Vol. 10, No. 2

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### Recommended Citation

Robacker, Earl F.; Bayard, Samuel P.; Yoder, Don; Funk, Ralph S.; Jack, Phil R.; Bayer, Russell S.; and Boyer, Walter E., "Pennsylvania Folklife Vol. 10, No. 2" (1959). *Pennsylvania Folklife Magazine*. 6.  
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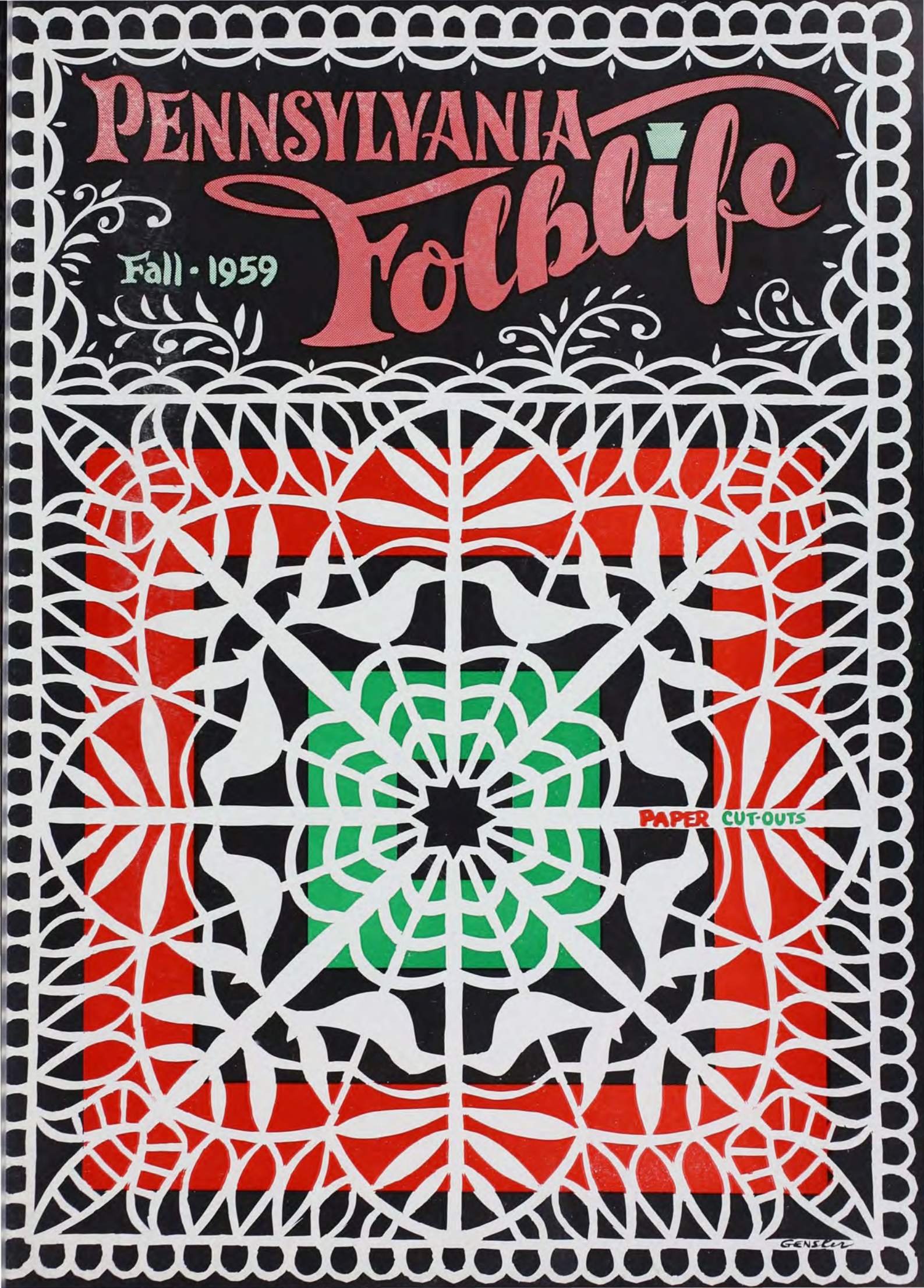
PENNSYLVANIA

Folklife

Fall - 1959

PAPER CUT-OUTS

GENSLER





*Early rural Pennsylvania buildings were overwhelmingly of log construction. Today few evidences of the eighteenth century log culture survive. Here is a photograph, taken some thirty years ago, of a small log farmstead near Fleetwood, Berks County.*

# PENNSYLVANIA Folklife

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## SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

\$5.00 a year in the United States and Canada. Elsewhere fifty cents additional for postage. Single copies \$1.00.

## MSS AND PHOTOGRAPHS:

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PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE, Fall 1959, Vol. 10, No. 2, published semi-annually by the Pennsylvania Folklife Society, Inc., 8 West King St., Lancaster, Pa. Executive and editorial office 218 W. Main St., Kutztown, Pa. Contents Copyrighted.

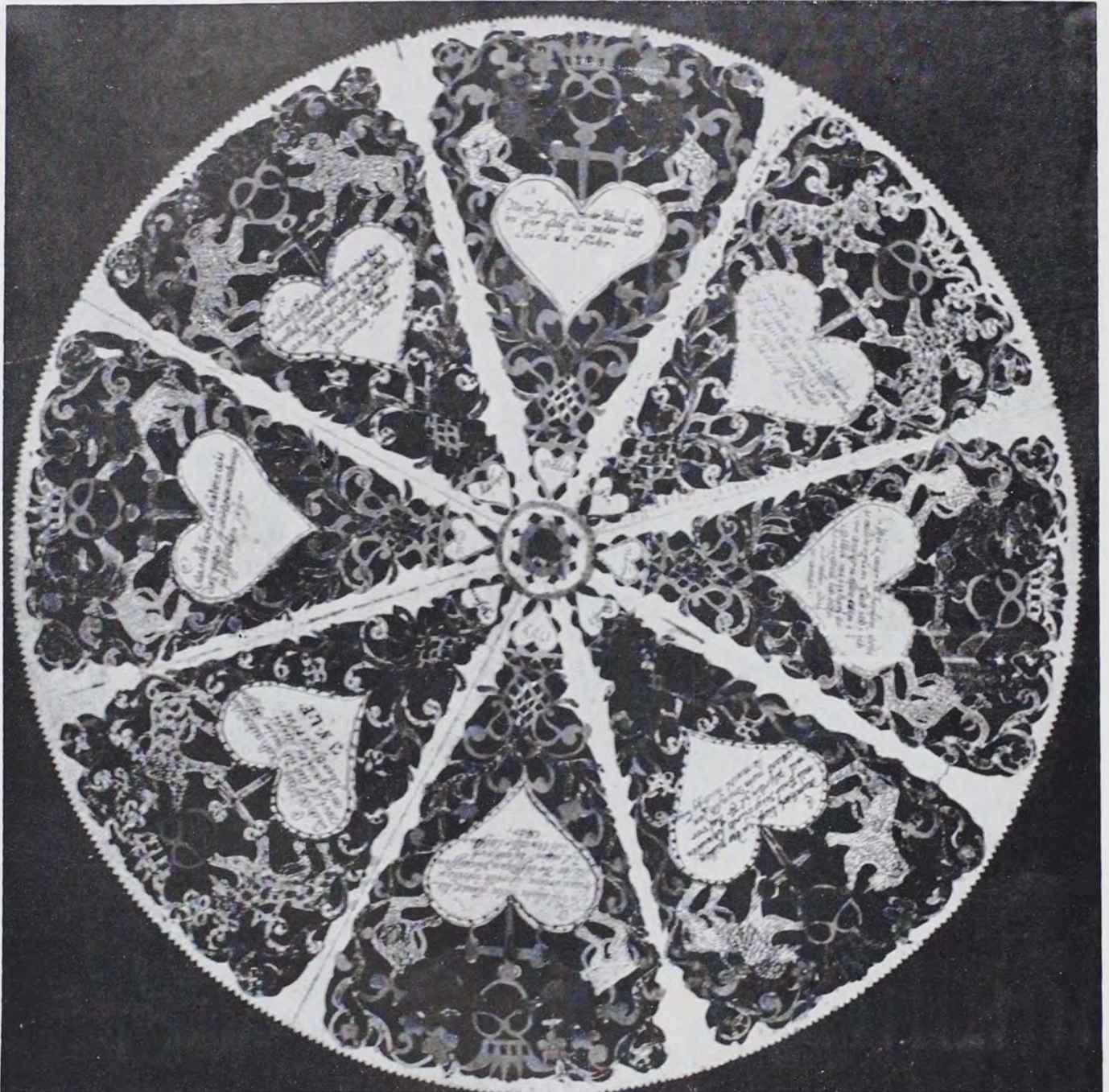
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# Cutting-Up

All articles shown are  
from the Robacker Collection



*Cut-paper artistry at its most elaborate point. This Pennsylvania Dutch valentine, dated 1783, has been colored after the manner of fractur painting.*

# for Fancy

By EARL F. ROBACKER



*A much-handled valentine heart.*



*Tamar Penn's valentine was folded vertically in the cutting, with subsequent attention to the details of initials and human figures.*

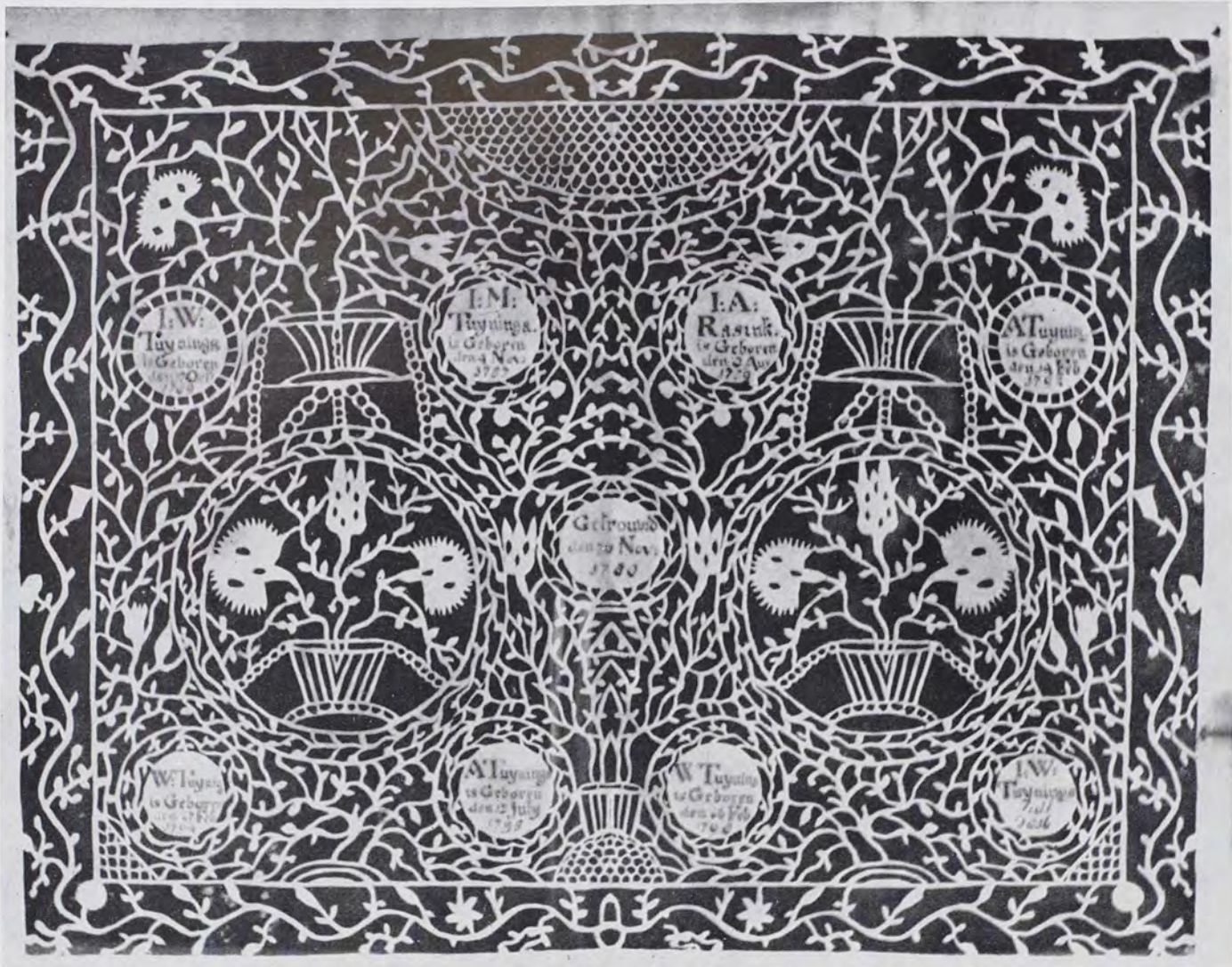
There has never been a time, apparently, when householders did not put forth an effort to take a step beyond the utilitarian by adding a touch of the beautiful. In fact, it has been said that one of the basic urges of all mankind is an urge toward the creation of beauty. That standards of beauty differ, according to man's place in the developing pattern of world culture and according to his own artistic development, is of course to be expected.

It might seem that, in the myriad forms in which the artistic urge finds expression, mere paper-cutting would assume a very minor place. If the term "mere" is applied, the condition is undoubtedly true; however, there are ways of cutting paper which can and do turn what might be a casual, offhand gesture into a work of art. The Pennsyl-

vania Dutch country has no monopoly on such art—but it produced a considerable variety of exceedingly competent forms, and produced them very early.

It is well to bear in mind at the outset that paper, which we now use so prodigally, was once an expensive commodity. One did not have it about him at all times; he went out and bought it for a specific purpose, after taking thought about the matter. Its use, then, was a considered thing; if paper was chosen for a job at hand, it was chosen over cloth or tin or wood or some other medium which might conceivably have been used.

Cut-paper artistry can be very simple—so ordinary, in fact, that it hardly merits a second glance. A housewife in the Dutch country a generation or more ago, having butter



*Register of the Tuynings family—a Pennsylvania Dutch record for a family with an English name.*

to sell, often placed it in a stone crock, tying a piece of clean white paper over the top, notching or serrating the edge "for fancy." The kitchen cupboard shelves of this same housewife would often be lined with paper, the overhang of which would be fancifully scalloped with the scissors. True, the paper might be only newspaper, but the urge toward prettying-up had found expression. Phebe Earle Gibbons, writing in the early 1870's in "Pennsylvania Dutch," noted that one housewife would not subscribe to a certain newspaper because its size was not right for her pantry shelves!

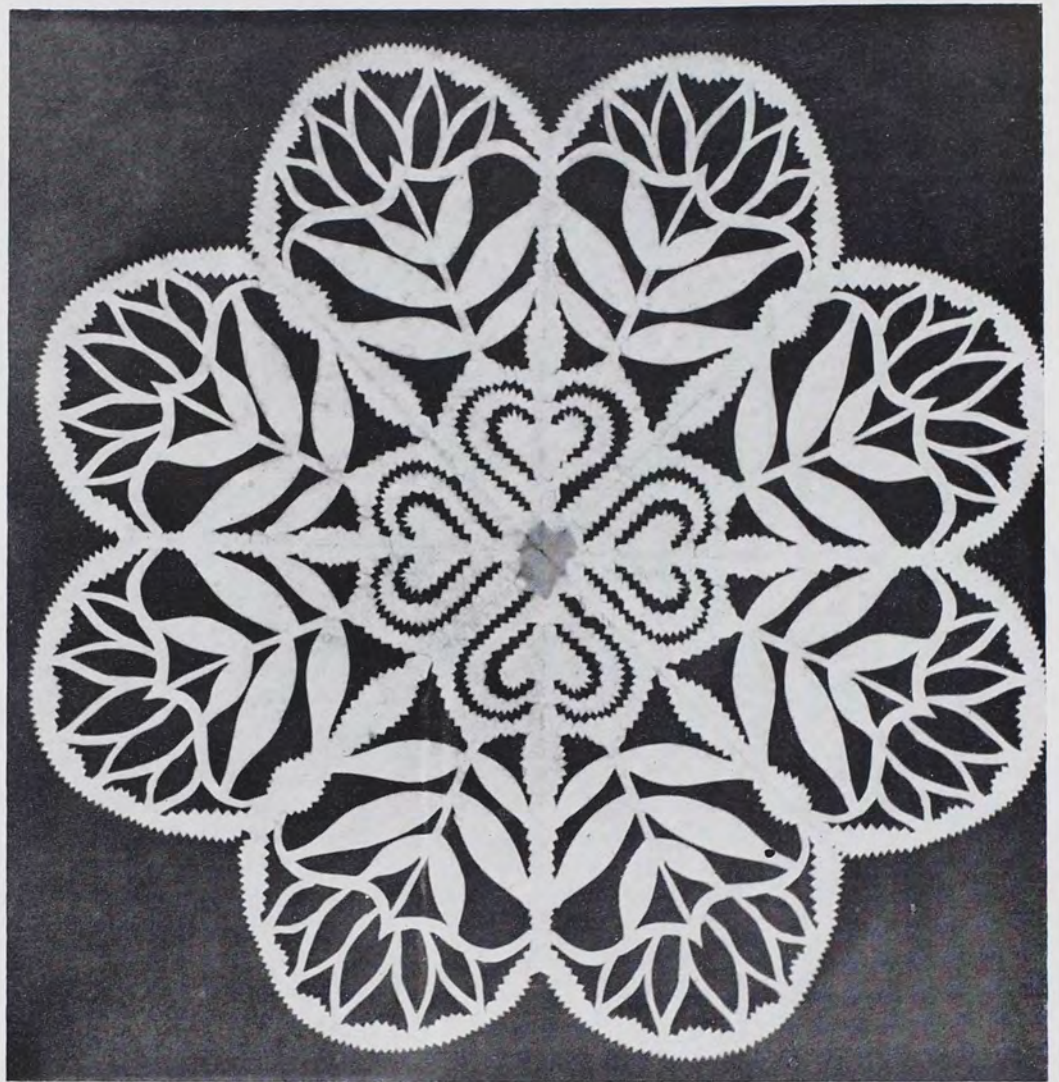
Another simple use of cut paper was to create artificial flowers and attach them to plants slow to blossom in winter. Only a year or two ago a visitor to a certain Pennsylvania Dutch home marveled at the profusion of orange-colored

geranium blooms on the plants in the window—only to discover that the flowers were paper and were of an orange hue because orange crepe paper was what the woman of the house happened to have at hand.

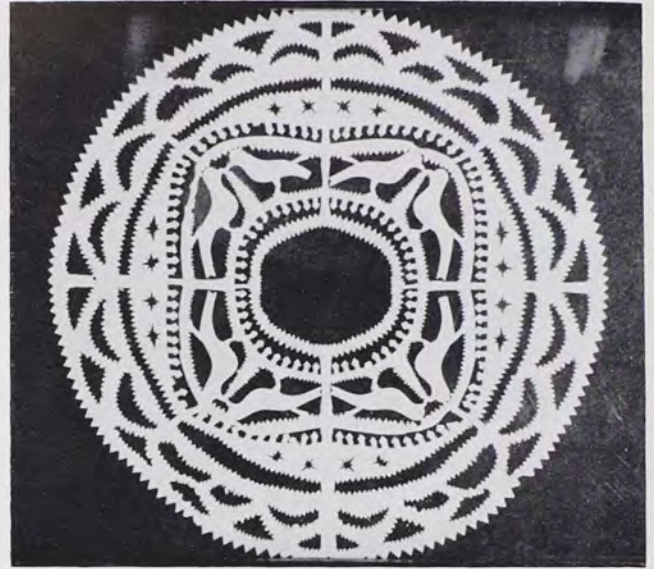
If such uses of paper are to be considered as art, one must admit that it is art in a rather elementary stage. The pleated paper used as wings for eggshell "birds" at Easter time would probably rate a step higher, as would the cut and folded three-dimensional paper stars used as Christmas-tree decorations. Diamond-shaped bits of colored paper, rolled over a toothpick, pasted, and then strung on varying lengths of twine to create an airy portière called for more patience than skill in the making. Paper "brushes" or whisks made of many thicknesses of cut newspaper may be useful in shooing flies, but the artistic quality of the



*Heart-and-tulip cut-out  
probably intended as a  
valentine.*



*Birth certificate of  
Maria Grams, in cut  
paper but with the  
applied coloring of  
fractur-schriften.*



*Most appealing among cut-outs are those which utilize birds in the design.*

*Framed silhouette portrait dated 1840, with elaborate heart at the top and tulips as a major element of the over-all design.*

product is completely lacking.

Paper cutting reached real artistry in the execution of family documents. Fractur was the usual medium among the Pennsylvania Dutch for such records as birth and baptism, marriage, house blessings—and for religious precepts and the master-handwriting sheets called *Vorschriften*. Now and then, however, either because no fractur artist was at hand or because someone wished to try his own skill or because someone yearned to be different, such records were executed in part or in toto in an elaborate cut-paper presentation of fancy scrolls or arabesques, frequently involving birds, tulips and other flowers, and an intricate tracery of leaves.

Sheets to be used for cutting were sometimes folded into halves or quarters, oftener into eighths. Then, with very sharp shears, the artist did his cutting, usually freehand, but in some cases presumably with simple guide lines. It took a good eye—to say nothing of a good pair of scissors—to cut the paper so carefully that some of the details are hardly wider than a hair. The Tuynings family register, illustrated on these pages, is a good example of this kind of work. For best effect, such articles are mounted against a black fabric and framed.

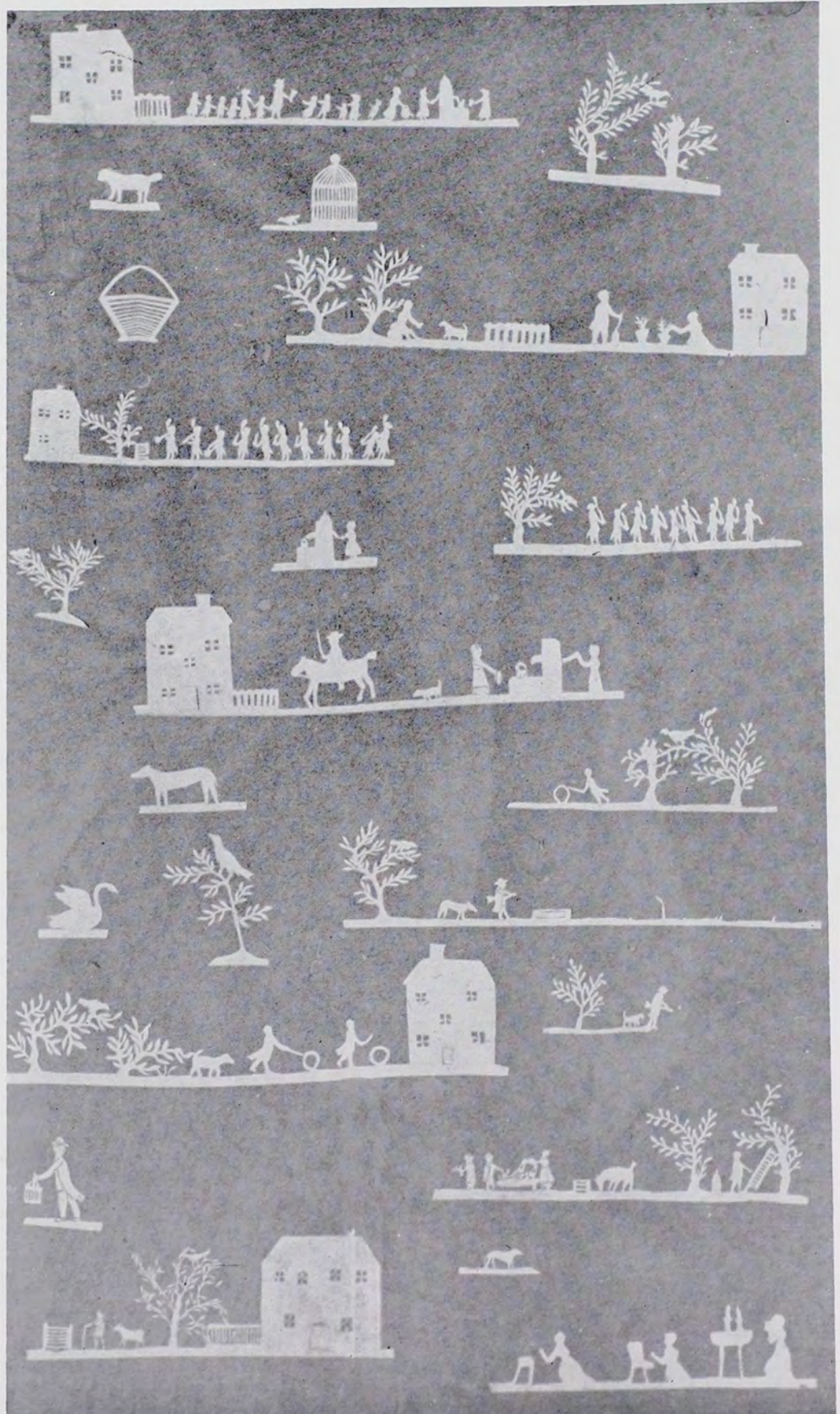
Another phase of paper cutting is found in silhouette portraiture, practiced generally throughout the young Republic in the late 1700's and early 1800's. Silhouette cutting is an art in itself, calling for a keen eye and

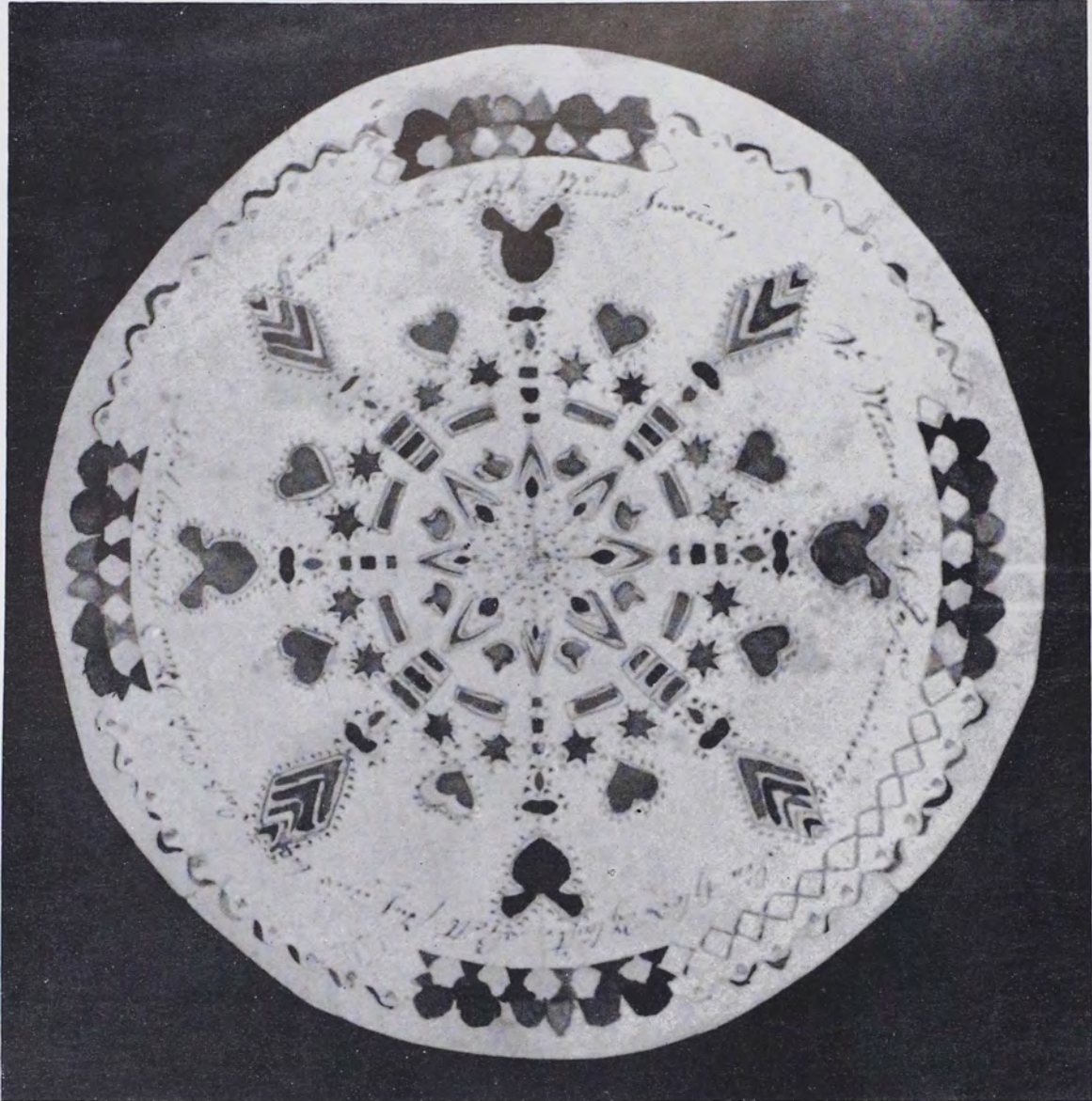
almost fantastically close powers of observation. A stray lock of hair, the rake of a neckpiece, the bridge of a nose—and the artist has caught the likeness of his subject with amazing fidelity. Few except the wealthy could afford to have likenesses done in oil in those days; photography had not yet been invented; almost everyone was interested in having an artistic representation of himself; and almost everyone could afford the small sums demanded by the professional silhouette cutter. Such conditions probably explain the comparatively large numbers of silhouettes in existence today.

One Master Hanks, a youthful prodigy as well known outside the Dutch country as in it, advertised in the *Reading Chronicle of the Times* for May 26, 1829, that he would cut correct likenesses in a few seconds, "without drawing or machine." The machine to which he referred was the pantograph, which less accomplished practitioners used to reduce the shadow cast by the subject, under a strong light, to whatever size might be desired.

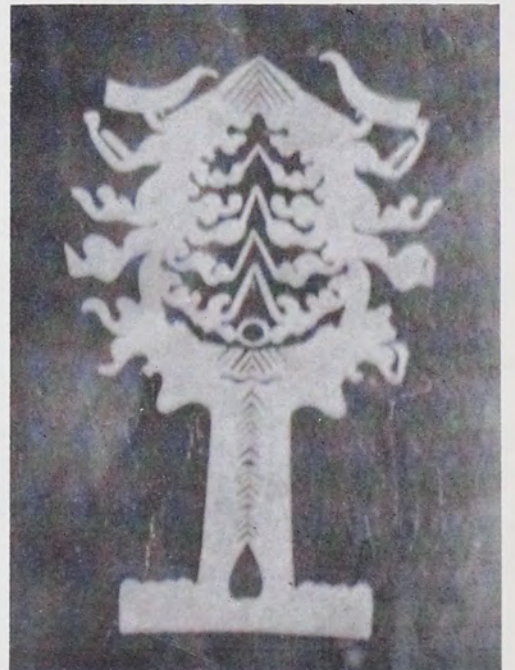
Like most of his kind, Master Hanks was an itinerant who set up a gallery of cuttings in the towns and villages he visited, charging admission for the exhibition. The price was sometimes rather steep—but for 50 cents Master Hanks also included the price of cutting a likeness for each visitor. Added importance may have been given by the title he used for his art: Papyrotomia! Other well-known professional silhouettists included John Vogler, William Henry

*A probable Eighteenth-Century representation of a day's activities in the life of a child, beginning with the ringing of the school bell and ending with evening prayer. Here, the white sections have been cut separately and mounted on a light blue background.*

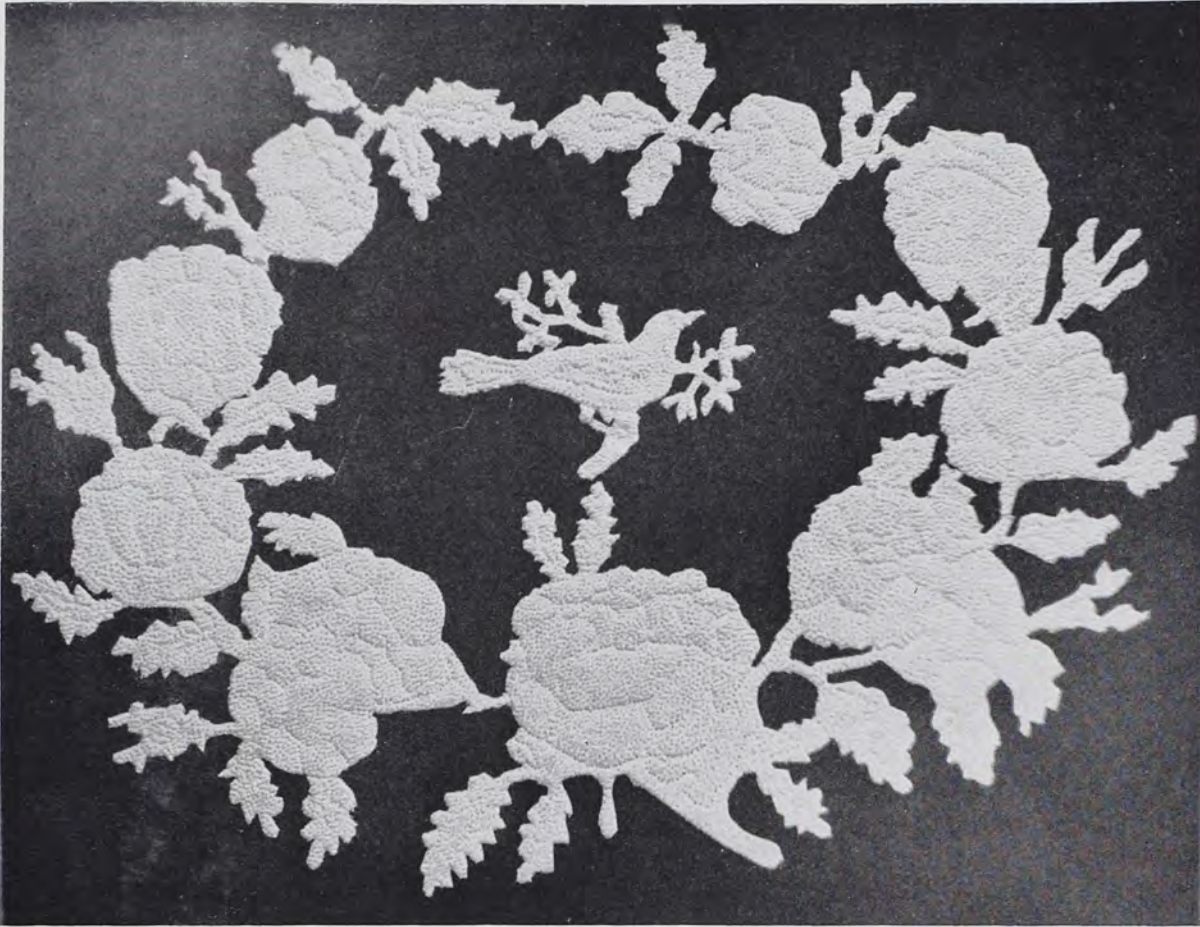




*A "double" fractur piece — a cut-out superimposed on an uncut sheet which carries the color-decoration. The circular inscription, however, is written upon the upper sheet.*



*Five-inch tree with birds.*



*Pin-prick decoration — an art in itself. Scissors were apparently not used in creating this garland*

Brown (who worked so quickly that the expression "do it up brown" is said to have been created in his honor) and Seymour Lindsay. Greatest of them all was undoubtedly Charles Willson Peale of the Peale family of artists of Philadelphia. Many persons today still treasure silhouettes with the imprint of "Peale" or "Peale's Museum" in repoussé.

Once the silhouettist had cut likenesses for the prospects in any given locality he was out of business unless he could extend his field—and thus many of the attractive representations of trees, animals, birds, human figures, and pastoral scenes came into being. These scenes frequently come to light between the pages of old family Bibles, where presumably they were placed for safe-keeping—and forgotten when the Bible changed hands.

We have a record that Seymour Lindsay, mentioned above, charged 25 cents for cutting a tree in full leaf, and 50 cents for two trees cut from one sheet of paper! The professionals soon had their imitators, and in the mid-1800's it was as fashionable to be clever with the scissors as it was to be adept at painting on velvet or on glass.

For all the popularity of silhouette portraiture and its allied territories, it is in the field of valentines that cut-paper artistry reaches its greatest peak of excellence. Long before there was a popular vogue for valentines, Dutch-

country artists were creating elaborately cut and fancifully colored love greetings. A combination of techniques—elaborate cutting, applied color, fractur-type pen-hatchings, and inscriptions suited in proportion to the space they occupied—makes such pieces as desired today as they were a century and a half ago.

Valentine-making became a genteel pastime for young ladies at select schools in Victorian times—the exchange of the tokens taking place only among the young ladies, we are told. There is a record showing that in 1853 one Eliza Geisinger, a student at the Moravian Female Seminary at Bethlehem, received an eight-heart cut-out valentine from her friend Diana Markle. Most amateurs, like Diana, folded their paper to create multiple patterns; professionals had no need of such short-cuts.

The "laciness" of valentines and other cut-paper work was echoed in other forms of laciness during the Nineteenth Century—in the patterns of pressed glass; in the fancy ironwork of fences, gates, grilles, and garden furniture; in the jigsaw scrolls and affectations of Victorian architecture and Victorian furniture. No claim is made that any one set the vogue for any other; rather, all are evidence of an urge toward beauty—a misguided urge in some cases and an urge motivated by good taste in others.

The movement which made a thing of beauty of cut

paper in times past has by no means spent all its force: Victorian lacy valentines achieved enormous popularity lasting almost up to World War I, and, following only a short period of eclipse, seem once more to be coming into prominence. These machine-made products, of course, for all their delicate loveliness, have no more charm for the folk-art researcher than do their more practical cousins, the candy-box frill and the cut-paper doily.

One cut-paper artist, not a Pennsylvanian, was so remarkable a character that no article on cut paper would be complete without mentioning her. This person was Maria ("Miss M.A.") Honeywell, a New Englander born without hands but endowed with a high artistic sense. She learned young to use her toes as other persons use their fingers, and performed the seemingly impossible task of executing elaborate paper cut-outs with her feet. Unlike most other artists, she used colored as well as white papers

—and to cap the ultimate in improbability *signed* her work by holding a pen in her teeth. One of her most amazing pieces of work is a tiny cut-out with a center portion about the size of a dime—on which is copied, in flawless calligraphy, the entire Lord's Prayer. One needs a magnifying glass to appreciate the exquisite quality of the work. Miss Honeywell worked between 1800 and 1810.

Collectors of the unusual would do well to search through the pages of old books of large size, and through collections of old family papers for pieces of cut-paper artistry—now. A great many of the best known pieces of this work, especially valentines, passed into the hands of a large greeting card company only a few years ago, and since the company has made a practice of putting them on display across the nation, one can only applaud. But for those who still own family pieces—why not keep them in the family? Intimate and personal, they merit respect.

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*A creation of the most gifted of all the cut-paper artists—Miss M. A. Honeywell, who, born without hands, used her feet to operate the scissors. Miss Honeywell was one of the few artists to use colored papers in her work. Note that the paper was not folded; each of the eight panels were cut separately.*



# English-Language Folk Culture in Pennsylvania

By SAMUEL P. BAYARD

A field collector of thirty years' experience, looking at the present state of work with English-language folk culture in Pennsylvania, sees it as badly handicapped (in a way that it has long been) by a number of conditions from which it quite possibly may never be free.

Pennsylvania, like other states and regions, has had a folklore society; but it had also the great misfortune of having this society dominated for many years by a person unable and unwilling to distinguish between folklore, history and romantic fiction. This condition had the long-run effects of misleading some of the public, alienating others, hampering normal collection and study of the material, and completely destroying the ethnological value of anything published. On the whole, the damage wrought by this state of affairs was enormous, and is probably irreparable.

Coming out of this era, the Pennsylvania Folklore Society reorganized, and, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, is trying to enlarge its membership and increase the number of its branches. Another organization, the Pennsylvania Folklife Society, has also been formed. What may be expected from these organizations' activities is yet uncertain; I shall revert to this matter presently. Meanwhile, the association of historians and historical societies with folkloristic endeavors in Pennsylvania is noteworthy; it has not proved an unmixed blessing, inasmuch as certain widespread misconceptions would seem to have been fostered by it, and these certainly have long needed to be cleared up in the public mind. They are in part due to the general unawareness on the part of historians of the content and nature of folklore materials, and the fact that historians in general are not used to working with "live documents" (i.e. living informants), or to the special circumstances and implications of this sort of work. However, these misconceptions have taken quite a hold, and affected the attitudes of some folklore workers as well as of the general public.

One of these ideas, seemingly, is that folklore is especially of local growth, inspired or caused by local occurrences that professional historians regard as important or decisive. The actual facts are, first, that our folklore is mostly of European importation, and cannot be understood without reference to European backgrounds; second, that what the historian considers important is usually disregarded and forgotten by bearers of a folk tradition, while legends tend to cluster thickly around happenings that, historically speaking, are quite obscure; third, that the folk culture of a state or region in North America is not necessarily unique or peculiar to its territory. Folklorists in general are aware of these basic facts, but a good many Pennsylvanians interested in folklore do not seem to be.

Another apparently history-oriented notion is that folklore must be especially sought for among certain specialized and "picturesque" groups, such as lumbermen, railroaders, canallers, miners, etc. Undoubtedly it may be found—or rather, might have been found—among such groups; but

the group that is the mainstay of English-tongue folklore-preservation in Pennsylvania—namely, the agricultural population—has been badly neglected. Yet it is among these farming groups that the oldest, most enduring, and most enlightening popular lore normally persists. This piece of common knowledge to folklorists throughout the western world has never been emphasized by any "official historian" publicizer of folklore in Pennsylvania.

On the other hand, the historical emphasis upon divisions of Pennsylvania settlers by nationality (accompanied by the formation of national societies, to emphasize the "contributions" of each nationality) has resulted in a certain number of popular errors about folklore, which no "official" source has ever, to my knowledge, tried to correct. Chief among these is the idea that the folklore of Pennsylvania has been "made" and largely preserved by two groups: the Pennsylvania Germans and the so-called Scotch-Irish. Actually, the folklore of the Scotch-Irish is almost completely unknown, both here and in the Ulster Homeland, for the simple reason that it has never been gathered or even surveyed in any strongly Scotch-Irish settlement of Pennsylvania, and its formal study in Northern Ireland is quite recent (e.g. the journal *Ulster Folklife* began to appear in 1955). What one can surmise about Scotch-Irish lore today has to be inferred from the internal evidence of scattering collectanea made in sections that seem not to be mainly Scotch-Irish in blood, and that were not necessarily dominated by Scotch-Irish culture. And these inferences are not likely to be very accurate, since the folklore and folklife of most British-culture rural areas of Pennsylvania remain as unknown generally as those of the Scotch-Irish, and for the same reason: those areas have had almost no folklore collectors at work in them at any time.

Emphasis by a historian on the "three civilizations" of early Pennsylvania (English, Scotch-Irish and German) is not going to be helpful to a real folklorist, since the latter will be aware not only that British folklore has been freely interchanged and diffused throughout the various nationalities of the British Isles, but that folklore in Europe generally shows strong similarities over vast expanses and across national lines; and that consequently, the only way even partially to distinguish the English-language folklore presumably belonging to different British nationalities here would be through a minute examination of the details of a tremendous mass of collectanea, accompanied by comparisons with material recovered in the Old World. That mass of collected material, we, of course, do not have, and from the looks of everything, we shall never have. The Welsh and English folklore in Pennsylvania remains as uncollected and unknown, by and large, as the North Irish. And now that fusion, dispersal, the arrival and mingling of peoples from many parts of Europe, and the replacement (in western Pennsylvania, for instance) of old farming families by migrants from other parts of the country and the world, have all been going on for some time, it is evident that an

A drawing of a Pennsylvania corn crib executed c. 1822 by Charles Alexander Leseur.



Courtesy: American Philosophical Society

attempt to discover or determine the British-culture folk life of any Pennsylvania region faces extraordinary difficulties. These processes—all of moving *away* from folk-culture antecedents—have affected the Scotch-Irish as powerfully as any group.

The unfortunate past history of folklore “movements” in Pennsylvania, plus a seeming inclination among history-minded people toward demonstrating that the culture and society of Pennsylvania are unique and distinctive, has led in the past to a search for the picturesque in folklore. This sort of thing is an aid to lively writing, with one fatal defect: it can’t be depended upon as an accurate depiction of part of the cultural life of our people. In any case, what a folklore investigator is concerned with in the traditions of a region is not the distinctive and unique—which would emerge of itself in the course of any worthwhile investigation—but the characteristic and revealing. However, in the almost complete absence of detailed and comprehensive folklore collecting work everywhere in British-culture regions of Pennsylvania, it is probably useless to labor this point. One need hardly add that under such conditions any real insight into British-German folklore and folk-cultural relations in this commonwealth is extremely difficult to gain, if not impossible.

When I say the “almost complete absence” of real folklore field work in the English-language parts of Pennsylvania, I mean exactly that. In all the British-culture areas, the very core of folklore is really unknown: i.e. the beliefs in the supernatural and spirit world, and any customary activities and ceremonies associated with these beliefs. Then there are few stories recorded—stories, that is, of the sort that crop up in all normal folklores, e.g. fairy tales, local legends, and illustrative and didactic tales. As to proverbs, almost nothing has been collected in “British Pennsylvania.” The folksong record is woefully incomplete, with coverage of any sort only in one tiny area, and scattering collection elsewhere—not enough to reveal much about dominating tastes, traditions, repertoires, movements, tendencies, or anything else. In the area of religious folksong—traditional hymns and spirituals—nothing much is known. Riddles, dances, games, and traditional seasonal usages have never been comprehensively recorded. And to complete the picture, we live in times when all folklore is rapidly dying out,

while almost no collectors are appearing to rescue what is left. These are matters to which I shall return shortly.

The “organized” or “official” folklore activity that has thus far gone on in Pennsylvania has been—in the eyes of a field collector up against the real problems of gathering material—marked at every time by prematureness and what is usually called “rushing into print.” The succession of folk festivals to which the public has been treated in the past quarter of a century strikes one as a tremendous waste of time, while these have apparently also failed of their stated purpose of arousing interest in folklore. In some southern region, where a lively tradition, with many exponents, was still in existence, such a feat could be taken in stride. In a territory like Pennsylvania, with dying traditions retained by a fast-diminishing minority, where desperate efforts must be made to find a few genuine traditional performers (of folksongs, for instance), and all sorts of publicity effects resorted to in order to hold the attention of an uninformed public, such a gesture seems futile to a degree.

Folklore publication in Pennsylvania bears the same mark of prematureness. If there is really an archive or backlog of genuine traditional material anywhere within reach of the Folklore Society, the *Keystone Folklore Quarterly* shows no evidence of it, being in most ways one of the most naive folklore publications in existence. Books written in a genuine effort to illustrate regional folklore, and arouse interest in it, are—because of the paucity of material—forced to include “filler” of the most miscellaneous kind: historical sketches, accounts of organizational activities, descriptions of the vicissitudes of some calling or other, etc. When I was working on a chapter for Korson’s *Pennsylvania Songs and Legends*, I received some desperate letters from other collaborators who had been assigned such topics as “canallers,” “railroaders,” and the like, and were unable to find any folklore concerning their subjects—understandably, since almost none appears to have been collected. Lacking the very material they were supposed to be writing about, they naturally eked out their chapters with all manner of information, a great deal of it quite irrelevant to the traditions they were supposedly discussing. This sort of thing—writing before there was something to write about, and attempting a synthesis long before the folklore materials for it were available—may be inevitable,



in view of the situation; but it is none the less lamentable. On the other hand, studies in local traditions and regional folklore phenomena, which would be really informative and worthwhile for genuine knowledge of our peoples' traditions, are inhibited because of the lack, already adverted to, of real field collectors.

Why are there so few who really collect folklore in Pennsylvania? Simply because no institution ever took a genuinely scholarly interest in the matter, and because in the past no folklore society worthy of the name has existed. Our few younger-generation collectors are self-trained for their tasks, and their courage and dedication must be applauded. The actual condition of our people's folk traditions is known to this scattering of real field workers, to whom it seems appalling enough; elsewhere it does not awaken a ripple of intelligent interest or attention. Historians in universities are ordinarily precluded by the very nature of their work from taking an interest in it; sociologists might be expected to, but don't, concern themselves with it; only in "humanities" departments can one occasionally find an interest that exceeds a distant academic attitude. Pennsylvania is very museum-conscious, and has many repositories where the inanimate artifacts of a culture can be assembled. To the "animate" products—the traditions that motivate and guide the making and use of these artifacts—very few give a thought.

Thus, wherever the folklore collector is situated, he inevitably comes to realize that he is strictly on his own: he must do what he can *himself*, for to wait or depend on anything else is to lean on a broken reed. The reorganized Pennsylvania Folklore Society, with an avowed aim of collecting and studying the folklore of this commonwealth, is now occupied in trying to expand, as already mentioned. What will come of this effort is unknown; but to a collector it is obvious that if no other competent collectors are thereby produced, the effort will have been a waste of time. If the society continues to be a group desiring only to be diverted by talks and performances, it will actually be worse than useless, as its predecessor was. If, however, it makes more people aware that they are in a position where they have to do something in the field to justify the existence of the group, it may result in the real recovery of some folklore material—a consummation devoutly to be wished. In any case, it is certainly time when members of a folklore society should learn that in Pennsylvania no one can any longer help, teach or direct them in their quest for folklore. That, they must do for themselves.

A disquieting note in the society's campaign is the old slogan, promulgated anew by the Historical and Museum Commission, that since Pennsylvania is so diverse ethnically, it probably has the richest folk heritage of any state in the Union. This statement sounds good; it is "safe," for as it stands, it is incapable either of proof or disproof. But I have heard it and similar dicta tossed about during the last twenty-five years *in place of* any real comprehension of the state of affairs; in place of intelligent planning or actual knowledge of the subject; and above all, in place of genuine folklore fieldwork. It is a sickening reminder of a past in which the bodies most loudly concerned with folklore activity in Pennsylvania encouraged everything under the sun except the one and only activity that was lacking, and was ever really needed: the field collection of folklore in this commonwealth. It is long past the time for the Pennsylvania Folklore Society to abandon this irresponsible

and tiresome cant, and begin to confront the actual conditions it is faced with.

What are these conditions? Whereas twenty-five years ago, and before, an impressive mass of material could be gathered at very moderate cost, we find today that after much travel, much exertion, and many disappointments, a fragmentary little is recovered, with expenses that strain the collector's resources. We now live in times when the last vestiges of certain types of folklore have vanished from conservative areas where they were plentiful (though dying out) thirty years ago; when the informants found one year may be expected to be dead or disabled the next; and when each new field trip may consequently be a leap in the dark. The sign of the time is that the informants who die off leave no successors who know the kind of thing they did; if their material is unrecorded at their deaths, it is gone for good. This condition has been intensifying with accelerating velocity in Pennsylvania within the past quarter of a century.

If one ventures to call these facts to the attention of those who constantly broadcast about our rich folklore heritage, he is likely to be told that "there is a lot of stuff out there yet." To which the only appropriate rejoinder would seem to be "If you really know where and what this material is, for heaven's sake go out and get it—or else direct somebody to it at once." Actually, the organization of folklore societies in Pennsylvania should put these groups in a "put up or shut up" position: if they don't rescue what they declare to be available for the gathering, they will at least (one hopes) have to quit talking about our rich heritage. And the facts just cited, if not clear to fervid orators about rich heritages, etc., are unmistakably well known to the scattering of field workers, who are in no danger of being caught with chaff. These field workers, in turn, are also well known—in just one way: they are the objects of solicitation by people who want to put on a show, and do a smart publicity job, and get credit for great work in Pennsylvania folklore.

There is just one Pennsylvania folklorist who can truly be called "great": that is the Reverend Thomas R. Brendle, of Egypt, Lehigh County. His work is now done. It remains to be finally evaluated; but one can certainly say that it is irreplaceable, and today would be non-reproducible. The lesson of his life has not been absorbed by lovers of the sounding phrase about Pennsylvania's folklore. But year after year, and bit by bit, from his parishioners and remoter contacts, he unobtrusively gathered up the priceless hoard of traditions of all kinds—the materials for a real insight into the mental and spiritual life of a rural culture, and the only thing of its kind that we have for any Pennsylvania region. Certainly there is nothing remotely resembling it from English-speaking parts of the commonwealth.

Today such collecting would, I believe, be impossible, even if all barriers of ignorance and indifference were down, and our few dedicated young field collectors were able really to devote their time to this work. As a result of the empty gesturing of the past—instead of real, serious attention to what was needed—we have in Pennsylvania today no public comprehension of the nature or culture-historical values of folklore; no societies equipped to make the latter known; no collectors in anything like the numbers or with the competence needed; no money to pay collectors for their work; and no time to amend past mistakes.

# The Bench Versus The Catechism:

## *Revivalism and Pennsylvania's Lutheran and Reformed Churches*

By DON YODER

When Methodism invaded German-speaking Pennsylvania, shortly before 1800, the colonial religious pattern of "Church People" and "Plain People," planted by emigration, was breaking up. In the social upheaval of the Revolution, Pennsylvania, like the other young states, faced westward and its people began moving into the unsettled frontier. The old order was changing.

A study of the post-revolutionary period in the life of the Dutch Country as seen in the contemporary literature makes it clear that Pennsylvania's established churches, like those of the nation, were standing in the need of prayer. Penn's Holy Experiment had gone through the same stages of disintegration as the Puritan Commonwealth. The war years had left in their wake a moral and spiritual letdown. From a liberty-drunk France had come Deistic currents which exhilarated even backwoods Pennsylvanians. The Deist or "freethinker" on the Susquehanna Frontier, with his anticlerical and rationalist attack on established religion, is frequently encountered as one reads one's way into the past.<sup>1</sup>

The picture was naturally not entirely black, not completely a "prelude to revivalism." There were many devoted shepherds and many contented flocks in the old Lutheran and Reformed "union churches" of the Dutch Country, but the German churches were entering rough waters. It was the revivalist attack on their existence that awakened them out of their old-world complacency and—through a long chain of events leading via Mercersburg—has led them to take their present more active part in American church life.

This invasion of the Dutch Pennsylvania by the revivalist forces stirred up, as it did in other parts of the country, the recurring conflict between the "established church" view of church membership, where one is born into the church and nourished through Word and Sacraments—and on the other hand the "societal" or pietistic approach, which demands conversion experience and personal piety, a walk upon the narrow way. Discipline, in Pennsylvania as in

the pietist controversies in Germany, made the difference.

Not only did Pennsylvanians differ over conceptions of the church and of church membership, they were confronted with a choice between two ways of life, two paths to salvation. The revolutionary generation had largely succumbed to secularist standards of living, and the churches had followed suit. Freedom-loving revolutionary patriots resented restrictions on their personal liberty. Church members as well as the dying but still vocal Deists objected to the soul-probing traveling Methodists subjected them to. Lutheran and Reformed church people "speak against prayer meetings," as a Lutheran leader expressed it in 1813, "but they tolerate Drinking Parties, Husking-Matches, Play-Parties and Comedies." And he lamented the fact that when a "true shepherd" of souls begins to use disciplinary methods to purify his church membership, his ministerial brethren take him for a "pious fanatic."<sup>2</sup>

It was no wonder that the Methodist Bishop Asbury looked upon Pennsylvania of all states as "the most wealthy, and the most careless about God" and hoped "God will shake the State and the Churches." In July, 1807, he passed through Eastern Pennsylvania on his way to the trans-Allegheny West. These are his comments on the "established" churches of the Dutch Country.

Through Adamstown, where we breakfasted, we came on over rocks and hills to New-Holland: here, as at Reading, there are fine new churches for the German Lutherans and the German Calvinists: these are the citadels of formality—fortifications erected against the apostolic itinerancy of a more evangelical ministry. Ah! Philadelphia, and ye, her dependencies, the villages of the State of Pennsylvania, when will prejudice, formality, and bigotry, cease to deform your religious profession, and the ostentatious display of the lesser morals give place to evangelical piety.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We need an adequate study of Deism in post-revolutionary Pennsylvania apart from Philadelphia, which is covered in G. Adolph Koch, *Republican Religion* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933).

<sup>2</sup> "Gestalt des Reichs Gottes unter den Deutschen in Amerika," *Evangelisches Magazin*, III, (Philadelphia, 1813-1814), 68, 137. This valuable article is usually ascribed to Dr. J. G. Schmucker, 1771-1854.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of Francis Asbury*, old edition, III, 122, 263.

The Methodist circuit-rider William Colbert speaks of the area between the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers as "abounding with villages infamously impenetrable by us, I expect thro the influence of prejudiced Dutch Priests and almost every species of wickedness."<sup>4</sup>

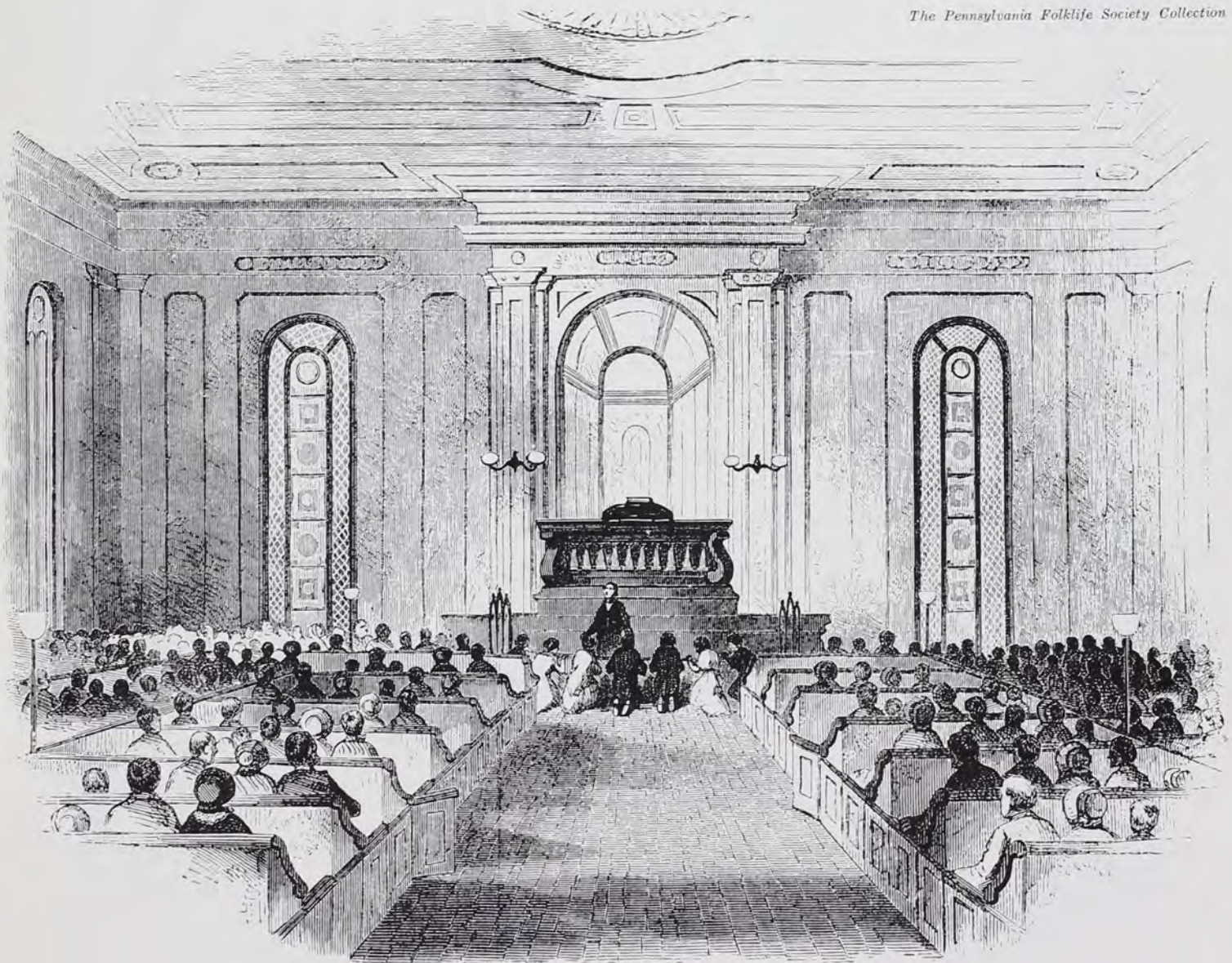
Faced with these aggressive troublers of Israel, who accused them of laxity in preaching the gospel as well as a lower standard of morality, the Lutherans and the Reformed were genuinely perplexed. The loss of members through westward migration as well as through the more aggressive evangelism of the revivalist groups had them worried. The unfavorable comparisons of revivalist morality with their own brought them face to face with the problem of the future of their work. The situation posed for these Lutheran and Reformed people several questions,

the first being this—Shall we adopt revivalist methods, or shall we attempt to maintain our own ground using our traditional catechetical system? Thrown into the picture to complicate matters was the always emotional language question—How shall we engineer the delicate transition from the German to the English language?

Recurring complaints over the loss of anglicized members to the English-speaking churches fill Lutheran and Reformed missionary reports of the first decade of the 19th century. Thousands of members were lost to both churches in the transition to the English language. The *Missionary Journal* of John George Butler, commissioned in 1805 by the Luther-

<sup>4</sup>William Colbert, "A Letter to Bishop Asbury," *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, May 12, 1949. The date of the letter is 1810.

The Pennsylvania Folklife Society Collection



An engraving from a Confirmation Certificate printed in Philadelphia by Henry B. Ashmead about 1860.

an Ministerium of Pennsylvania to make a missionary journey through the German settlements of Tennessee, records what happened in many communities: "These Germans who live here, have mostly confounded the German language with the English, and several, because of the lack of a preacher, have connected with the Methodists." Again, writing of the Holston Country: ". . . because of a lack of German preachers and schools, many Germans are lost. Ah, what a pity it is, that the reverend ministerium did not send out travelling-preachers earlier!" And again near Knoxville there are "quite a number of Germans," some of whom, however, "because of a lack of a German pastor have joined the Methodists," but he added optimistically, "will come back again as soon as German preachers come."<sup>6</sup>

#### *The Threefold Reaction to the Revivalist Question*

The reaction of the "established" churches to the revivalists and their message came in several channels. First, to shield their people from the new doctrines of the circuit-riders, many churches closed their doors against them. The same level of reaction against the invaders involved a press campaign, mostly anonymous, to flood Eastern Pennsylvania with slanderous German broadsides and anti-Methodistica. Secondly, certain wings of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, convinced that revivalism was the only salvation for their weakened congregations, adopted the revivalist techniques themselves, and soon were shouting, in a somewhat restrained manner, along with the bush-meeting people. When these brethren had exhausted the possibilities of revivalism within a churchly setting, the third reaction appeared, as strong wings of both churches swung back to confessional and liturgical emphases, and the day of revivalism within the Church groups was over.

Individual Lutheran and Reformed Churches soon barred Methodist circuit-riders from their pulpits. The constitution of the Jacob's Church in Northumberland County (1807) expressly states that its pulpit was open to "all evangelical ministers, except those calling themselves New Born or Methodists."<sup>7</sup> The Rules of the Jordan Lutheran Church in Lehigh County as late as 1871 made it even plainer—"No preacher shall have the right of entering our church's pulpit, who has the name of Methodist or Vagrant."<sup>8</sup>

It is difficult for us to realize today, when the United Brethren, Evangelical, and other churches that came out of the revivalist movements, are so completely accepted, that they were once, as one of my Slatedale spiritual singers told me, "actually persecuted" by the other churches of the Dutch Country. Sermons were interrupted, bush-meetings disturbed by rowdies who too often were described as *Kirchenleute*—"Church People."<sup>9</sup> Whole areas of the Dutch Country—especially the richer farming valleys where the Lutheran and Reformed had a traditional foothold—were

noted for their hostility to "the sects." The very name "Methodist" and its Dutch form "Maddodiss"—meaning not Methodist but Evangelical—had a tinge of derision until after the Civil War and was often accompanied, like the word "Yankee" in the South, with an inseparable prefix, in this case "Shouting." Through the bush-meeting songs run the words "*Verachtung, Hohn, und Spott*" which warned the bush-meeting Christian not to mind the scoffing of his neighbors. "Verily they have their reward," seems to be the idea of the songs. And, a favorite song assures us, the bush-meeting people would be rewarded too:

*Ihr Gottes=Kinder, freuet euch!  
Hier seyd ihr wohl verlacht:  
Dort werden wir im Himmelreich  
Geziert in Seiden=Pracht.*

The German terms of opprobrium for the revivalist sects exceeded anything that they were called in English. The most common of these was *Schtravvler* (*Strabler*) which can be translated "foot-stamper" although it will not be found in any standard German Dictionary.<sup>9</sup> *Schwärmer* (fanatic) was popular, and the cruder epithets *Kopfhänger* (head-hanger) and *Knie-Rutscher* (knee-slider), both from their frequent seasons of prayer, were spoken by Lutheran and Reformed mouths in the same way that "Holy Roller" is today in this year of grace.<sup>10</sup> One of the ironies of American religious history is the complete reversal of attitude toward these groups and their contribution to American history. Even the Lutherans, once the scornful opponents of the "circuit-riders," have appropriated the whole circuit-rider tradition and in their popular writings speak of the "Lutheran circuit-riders" of the frontier period.

#### *The Anti-Methodist Crusade of the German Press*

From the German presses of Eastern Pennsylvania issued tract after tract filled with anti-Methodist diatribe, aimed at keeping members of the "established" churches from succumbing to the revivalists' wiles. One of the most popular of these anti-Methodist tracts, with contents alternating between satire and libel, was the *Briefwechsel die Methodisten Betreffend*, which went through at least four German editions.<sup>11</sup> In this curious little work, "A.Z." writes in a letter to his friend, "N.N.," that he is profoundly concerned

<sup>6</sup> [Solomon], Neitz, *Das Leben und Wirken des seligen Johannes Seybert, Ersten Bischofs der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1862), pp. 231, 255-7. Neitz describes a meeting where the rowdies roared all night in the woods around the tents.

<sup>9</sup> For the origin of this term, see the 8-page German tract, *Ein kurtzer Bericht, woher an einigen Orten im Land der Name STRABLER entstanden* (n.p., n.d.), unique copy in Unger-Bassler Collection, Franklin and Marshall College. This German tract, published circa 1800, was written by a schoolmaster formerly at Germantown, and describes revivalism among the Germans in Virginia and Pennsylvania, among those called *Strabler* or *Knie-Rutscher*.

<sup>10</sup> The earliest use of the term I have discovered is in Billmeyer's Almanac, *Der Hoch-Deutsche Americanische Calender, Auf das Jahr 1790* (Germantown, 1789). A two-page article entitled "Eine nöthige Apologie für die so genannten Knie-rutscher," defends the native Pennsylvania revivalist pietism. They are already, says the author, in all corners of Pennsylvania. Their preachers are "different" from the other ministers, the implication being that they do not drink or play cards.

<sup>11</sup> *Ein paar Worte Ueber die Methodisten. In einem Briefwechsel zwischen zwey Freunden. Zweite Auflage* (Reading: Gedruckt für die Käufer, im Jahr 1818). This little tract was reprinted several times, including a fourth and enlarged edition at Bath, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, "auf Ersuchen gedruckt von Samuel Siegfried," 1839.

<sup>6</sup> "A Lutheran Minister Rides the Tennessee Frontier: The Ministerial Diary of John George Butler—1805," *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, April 1, 1952.

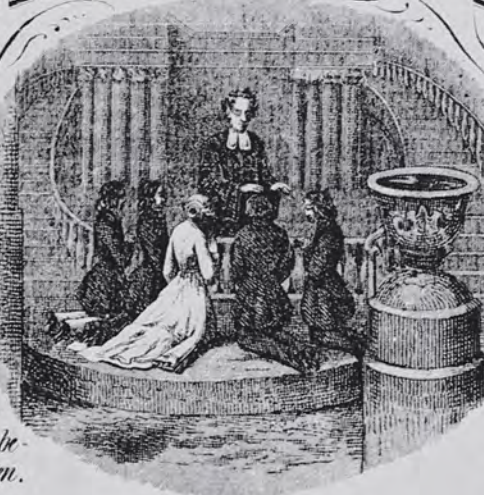
<sup>7</sup> *Register of St. Jacob's Lutheran and Reformed Union Church, Upper Mahanoy Township, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, I (1804-1870)*, typescript in Historical Society of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

<sup>8</sup> *Regeln der Deutschen Lutherischen Jordan Kirche in Süd-Wheithall, Lecha County* (Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1871): "Kein Prediger soll das Recht haben in unserer Kirche die Kanzel zu betreten, welcher den Namen eines Methodisten oder Landläufers hat."

# CONFIRMATIONS-SCHEIN

*Jesaja 41,10* — Es sollen wohl Berge weichen und Hügel hinfallen; aber meine Gnade soll nicht von dir weichen, und der Bund meines Friedens soll nicht hinfallen, spricht der Herr, dein Erbarmer.

*Matthäi 11,28* — Kommet her zu mir alle, die ihr mühselig und beladen seid, ich will euch erquicken.



*5. Mose 29,9* — So haltet nun die Worte dieses Bundes und thut darnach, auf dass ihr weislich handeln möget in allem euren Thun.

*Marci 8,34* — Wer mir will nachfolgen, der verleugne sich selbst, und nehme sein Kreuz auf sich und folge mir nach.

## Confirmation.

*Ich entsage, Satan, dir  
Dir, o Welt, und dir, o Sünde,  
Ich entsag euch, weicht von mir;  
Dem erlosten Gottesknecht!  
Eure Lust ist Schmach und Pein!  
Gott, nur Gott will ich mich weihn!*

*Wachen will ich Stehn um Kraft,  
Dass ich stets auf seinem Wege  
Heilig und gewissenhaft  
Und im Glauben wandeln möge  
Er wird mir die Kraft verleihn,  
Treu bis in den Tod zu sein.*

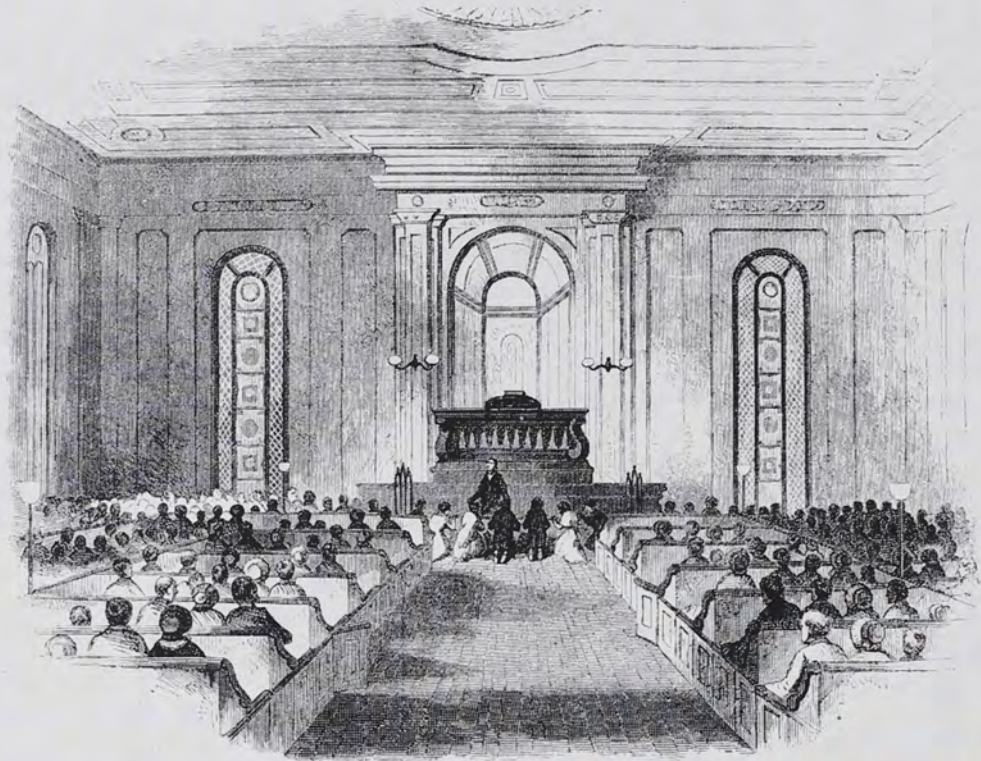
Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, dass Eli Schupp nachdem er in den Grundlehren und Pflichten der christlichen Religion gehörig unterrichtet, durch die Confirmation in die volle Gemeinschaft der **EVANGELISCH-LUTHERISCHEN KIRCHE** aufgenommen worden ist, den achtzehnten März im Jahre unseres Herrn Ein Tausend Acht Hundert und vier und fünfzig

Sei getreu bis in den Tod, so will ich dir die Krone des Lebens geben.

om. 2, 10.

(D. Sell,

Pastor der Lutherischen Kirche zu Berrysburg, Dav. Co. Penna.



## Confirmation Certificate.

I do hereby certify that *Frances Griffiths* was  
received by Confirmation as a Member of the *Orange Lutheran*  
*Church*, this *20<sup>th</sup>* day of *April* in the Year of our Lord, *1861*

Witness my hand,

*William C. Slichter Pastor*  
*Orange Lutheran Church, Hopewell*

HENRY B. ASHCAD, PRINTER.

GEORGE ST. AN. ELEVENTH, PHILADA.

An interesting source of early engravings in Pennsylvania are the Confirmation Certificates printed for the Lutheran and Reformed denominations.

over the growth of the Methodists, who have invaded his neighborhood. Already many people are flocking to their services. "Even my wife has been quite taken in by them, as also my parents-in-law, and for some time they've been working on me, too." And he is toying with the idea of joining them, for after all, they may be right in their doctrine and practice. But when he considers "their loveless judging, slanders and condemning, their loud shouts, their clapping of hands, stamping of feet, and falling exercises, their camp meetings and the like"—all of which appear to him very "peculiar and unchristian"—he doesn't know which way to turn.

In his reply his friend hits the "noise-making" of these Methodists with all the blows he can aim from scripture.<sup>22</sup> "Is the good Lord asleep, that they must wake him up," these modern *Baalspaffen*? And drawing on German proverbial lore he makes it clear that empty barrels make the most noise. Their "Big Meetings" or Camp Meetings do more harm than good. What else could happen with both sexes spending three or four days together in the woods, day and night? "To be sure, there is singing and praying, and God's Word is heard—but they dance and spring and shout and heat up their blood as much as or more than at any wild dance at a tavern." Satan is plainly among them! "In short, these camp meetings seem more like a fair than an assembly for the worship of God, and can be tolerated by no Christian-minded man!" His final libel is his slur implying that the circuit-riders were in the movement simply for the money: ". . . their circuit-riders," he says with a sneer, "don't live on wind either, or even on mush and milk."

Evidently the labored biblical arguments of Brother N.N. won over his hesitating friend, for in Letter III the latter writes back that all is well again at home. He no longer feels drawn to join the "heretics." "My wife again goes with me to my church, reads her Bible and Arndt's *True Christianity* again, doesn't run around so much any more [i.e., to camp-meetings], treats her family better [i.e., by being less censorious], shows her love toward me again, and I am able to work again with the greatest of delight."

In their fear of these new prophets of enthusiasm, the Lutheran and Reformed apologists circulated a doggerel rhyme beginning:

Erstaunlich gross ist America,  
Bevölkert all zugleich  
Mit einer wilden Nation,  
O Gott, in deinem Reich.  
Die Methodisten in dem Land',  
Sie führen Lehr, das ist ein' Schand':  
Das sehn wir all zugleich.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The biblical defense of revivalism was almost as elaborate—and as sophistical—as that for Negro slavery in the sermons and tracts of pro-slavery preachers of the South. John F. Weishampel, next to Weinbrenner the most important leader in the Churches of God, in a tract written in defense of "new measures," traces revivals through Otterbein, Whitefield, Wesley, Luther, to St. Paul himself, and the "altar exercises" (new measures) of the "present age" to the mosaic laws of priestly sacrifice. But he wisely concluded that "the exact measures used in the ancient revival meetings" are unknown; hence "we may adopt such as are best adapted to our times" (*Revival Measures*, Baltimore, 1859).

<sup>23</sup> *Eine Untersuchung der Religion, in Ansehung der mannigfaltigen Beschaffenheiten, besonders aber EIN VERSUCH, den Betrug der Methodisten zu entdecken: Wenn es des Herrn Wille ist.* Von J-h-s E-. (N.p.: Gedruckt für den Liebhaber, 1810); at least one other edition appeared.

The Methodists answered with a broadside of 26 verses beginning:

Kommt sieht und hört die Methodist'n  
Im Wald und in der Wilderniss,  
Sie nehmen ihre Hüt' und Zelt  
Und Zieh'n damit aufs freie Feld.

Sie kommen aus der Näh' und Fern',  
Das ist ihn'n Lust, sie thun es gern:  
Sie sind geharnisch't allzugleich,  
Zu kämpfen für das Himmelreich.<sup>24</sup>

The more reasonable Lutherans and Reformed stressed not the noise of the Methodists but the cultural losses their people will suffer if they join an "English" Church:

Your English-raised children lose forever all the edification, which they could have had in the German church-services—the beautiful German prayers—the splendid catechisations—the many devotional hymns and church-songs, with which our forefathers comforted themselves in the face of need and death, and for which the English language is far too poor for them ever to be rightly translated; all the profound devotional books, which they can now no longer read in their mother-tongue; the German earnestness of the church service, which—say what you will—is yet to be found in no English Church in such biblical purity, and so equally removed from all emotional fanaticism and the ice-cold currents of a bare rationalism, as in a well-ordered German church.<sup>25</sup>

The picture is overdrawn but understandable. The emotional ties to the German language handicapped several generations of Lutherans in this country, draining off some of their best membership into other groups.

#### *The Church People Try On Revivalism*

The most interesting reaction of Pennsylvania's German "Church People" to American revivalism was their adoption of it, with varying degrees of success and permanency, throughout the 19th century.<sup>26</sup> By 1805 the Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania halfheartedly adopted the "traveling preacher" plan, whereby stationed ministers could in the summer months become *Reiseprediger* to visit neglected areas. The Reformed Synod followed suit. But since most Lutheran and Reformed ministers preferred the stationed ministry to circuit-riding, the plan was never much of a success.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> [Broadside] *Ein Methodisten Lied. Melodie: HErr JEsu CHrist Dich zu uns wend'.*

<sup>25</sup> "Zuruf an die Deutschen in Nord Amerika." *Evangelisches Magazin*, III (Philadelphia, 1813-1814); usually attributed to Dr. J. G. Schmucker, 1771-1854.

<sup>26</sup> The best parallel example is what happened when revivalism confronted American Presbyterianism, a story that has been told in complete detail in William Warren Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier*, Volume II: *The Presbyterians* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936).

<sup>27</sup> The historian of the Pittsburgh Lutheran Synod was aware of the difference in practice between the "traveling preachers" of the Methodist groups and the "traveling preachers" of the Lutheran synods. "In many cases this meant that the [Lutheran] preachers 'traveled' into a community and then 'traveled' out of it. This only gave the people a taste of the gospel and prepared the way for many bitter disappointments" (*History of the Pittsburgh Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 1904, p. 75).

It was especially in the more socially heterogeneous communities that revival techniques took over in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. In North Carolina the Lutherans and Reformed even had camp-meetings.<sup>18</sup> Central Pennsylvania, that great mingling ground of the Scotch-Irish and the Pennsylvania Dutch, where German-speaking settlers came more constantly into contact with the English culture of the other settlers of Pennsylvania, opened its doors to new ideas and new movements earlier than did Eastern Pennsylvania where the German tinge was deeper. This became evident, for example, in the Lutheran Church in the nineteenth century. Central Pennsylvania, drawing upon the inspiration of Samuel Simon Schmucker, developed an Americanized semi-Methodistic form of Lutheranism. Eastern Pennsylvania, still German in tongue and with an increasing number of conservative emigrant pastors, swung back toward confessional Lutheranism and the liturgical movement.

Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799–1873) was the great 19th century “Americanizer” of Pennsylvania’s Lutherans. Bringing to his ministry the widest educational and practical background of any Lutheran leader of the century, educated at Presbyterian Princeton, serving pastorates in the South, familiar with the needs of the western frontier, Schmucker helped to organize and hold together Lutheranism’s first national organization, the General Synod. His creative work was done while President of Gettysburg Seminary, which he founded in 1825. To Americanize his church, Schmucker urged (1) the use of the English language—“the faith of the fathers in the language of the children,” as one of his more conservative successors put it, and (2) the revivalist system. Schmucker’s cooperation with the Anglo-American churches, his interest in Christian unity, and his place as a father of the Evangelical Alliance and the Federal Council of Churches came out of his desire for Christian cooperation in evangelism.<sup>19</sup>

The Schmucker party in the church were referred to as “American Lutherans,” “New Lutherans,” “New Measure Lutherans,” or “English Lutherans.”<sup>20</sup> The accounts of Lutheran “revivals” from the pages of Benjamin Kurtz’s *Lutheran Observer* read like columns of the *Evangelical Messenger* or the *Religious Telescope*. Kurtz was the most outspoken defender of revivalism among the Church People. An example of the penetration of revivalist evangelism in the Lutheran Church in the 19th century is his apologetic volume, *Why are you a Lutheran?* “Lutherans have,” he tells us, “a variety of prudential regulations, adapted to the advancement of piety, from which they derive great spiritual benefits.” Among these are (1) the “practical

conference”—meetings of laymen, fortnightly or weekly, for testimony, prayer, hymn-singing and exhortation, and (2) “special conferences”—meetings “of several ministers of two or three or four days’ duration, for their mutual edification by religious conversation, and the conversion of sinners and strengthening of believers by close practical preaching.” Through Kurtz’s paraphrases relatively keen observers will recognize in (1) the Methodist “class meetings,” and in (2) the “quarterly meeting” or “protracted meeting.”<sup>21</sup>

Parts of the Reformed Church likewise adopted revival techniques. Lebanon Classis of the German Reformed Church reported in 1845: “. . . while the most congregations have been upheld and quickened by the cool morning dew of the Lord, individual congregations of two brethren were visited by an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>22</sup> To illustrate the penetration of “new measures” into the church groups, Carl Whitmer’s experience in rural Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, in 1875:

We did things just a ‘wee bit’ Methodistically because we had no better way; but I am sure if we could have continued our services a week or two longer we would have had a large number to add. The weather was very favorable. Sleighing right good. I caught cold being in different beds every night . . . Some people came every day five miles in their old sleds. Small children made a good part of the audience. The people live in very old style. Wood fires; tallow candles; log houses; plain dressing; simplicity of manners; smoked sausages; babes at church; up jumps a member and pokes the fire while I am preaching.<sup>23</sup>

Through the “New Measures Controversy,” which we will discuss in the next section, the Lutheran and Reformed Churches were able to steady themselves and swing back to more conservative and churchly methods. There were many Lutherans, and Reformed, who in their 19th century ministry went through the stages of active support of revivalism to anti-revivalism. William A. Passavant (1821–1894), the great home missionary leader of conservative Lutheranism, founder of the Lutheran deaconess and hospital movement in this country, was a student at Gettysburg in the 1840’s. In his letters home he has nothing but words of praise for the college revivals. In the journals of his early ministry he reports the use of the altar-call, at meetings “protracted” after midnight, accompanied with shouting, prayer, singing, and exhorting going on at the same time, and even staid Lutherans “falling as dead” under conviction of sin. By 1856 he began to feel that the revival system, like the one-crop system of Southern farming,

<sup>18</sup>James I. Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the U. S. in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1911), p. 140.

<sup>19</sup>For a recent estimate of Schmucker’s importance in American church history, with bibliographical notes, see Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement* (London: S. P. C. K., 1954), pp. 241–245.

<sup>20</sup>The *Lutherische Kirchenzeitung und allgemeines Schulblatt* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) for December 25, 1844, referred to the “New Lutherans” as “ein Mischmasch von reformirter Lehre und methodistischer Praxis.” A “farmer” remarks, in the article, “Alte und neue Lutheraner”: “I think as much of the New Lutherans as of the Old Methodists” (*Ibid.*, January 11, 1844). The “New Lutherans,” in addition to preferring Methodist revivalism to the older catechetical method, preferred the English to the German language. This has led, especially in Central Pennsylvania, to the curious term which one occasionally sees on church billboards, “English Lutheran Church.”

<sup>21</sup>[Benjamin]. Kurtz, *Why Are You a Lutheran? or A Series of Dissertations, Explanatory of the Doctrines, Government, Discipline, Liturgical Economy, Distinctive Traits, &c. of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (Baltimore, 1853), Chapter X, pp. 150–157. While the practical conferences have not been established by “any specific synodical legislation,” they “are not of recent origin.” He traces them back through Pietism, to the great “protracted meeting” under King Hezekiah in II Chronicles 30: 1–26. For the Lutheran term “protracted conferences,” see Weiser, *The Mourner’s Bench* (1844), p. 28.

<sup>22</sup>Thomas S. Stein, *Centennial History of Lebanon Classis of the Reformed Church in the U. S.* (Lebanon, Pennsylvania, [1920]), pp. 116–117.

<sup>23</sup>T. Carl Whitmer, *Life of Rev. A. Carl Whitmer—A Lover of Man* (Philadelphia, 1923), p. 166.



# Confirmationsschein.

Und nun, Kindlein, bleibet bei ihm, auf daß wenn er geoffenbaret wird, daß wir Freudigkeit haben, und nicht zu Schanden werden vor ihm in seiner Zukunft. — 1 Joh. 2, 28.

Denn so man von Herzen glaubt, so wird man gerecht; und so man mit dem Munde bekennet, so wird man selig. — Römer 10, 10. — Marc 8, 34.

Darum, wer mich bekennet vor den Menschen, den will ich bekennen vor meinem himmlischen Vater. Wer mich aber verleugnet vor den Menschen, den will ich auch verleugnen vor meinem himmlischen Vater. — Matt. 10, 32, 33.



Sei getreu bis an den Tod, so will ich dir die Krone des Lebens geben. — Offenb. 2, 10.

Was hüffe es dem Menschen, wenn er die ganze Welt erbenne, und nähme an seiner Seele Schaden? Oder was kann der Mensch geben, damit er seine Seele löse? — Marc 8, 36, 37.

Wer sich aber mein und meiner Worte schämet unter diesem ehebrecherischen und sundigen Geschlecht; der wird sich auch des Menschen Sohn schämen, wenn er kommen wird in der Herrlichkeit seines Vaters, mit den heiligen Engeln. — Marc 8, 38.

## Confirmation.

Erbarmer, segne das Versprechen,  
Das wir im Glauben dir gethan.  
Hilf, daß wir's niemals, niemals brechen,  
Dein Geist führ' uns auf ebner Bahn.  
Gott unsers Heils, nur du allein  
Sollst uns in Allem — Alles sein!

Laß mich dein sein und bleiben,  
Du treuer Gott und Herr,  
Von dir laß mich nichts trennen,  
Halt mich bei reiner Lehr.  
Herr, laß mich ja nicht wanken,  
Gib mir Beständigkeit,  
Dafür will ich dir danken  
In aller Ewigkeit!

Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, daß *Carolina Wagner*,  
nachdem *sie* in den Grundlehren und Pflichten der christlichen Religion  
gehörig unterrichtet und der Aufnahme in die Kirche Christi würdig befunden  
wurde, durch die **Confirmation** in die volle Gemeinschaft der

## Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche

aufgenommen worden ist, den *17. Tag Mai* im Jahr unsers  
Herrn Ein Tausend Acht Hundert und *ein u. Sechszig 1871.*

*Elias S. Henry*

Pastor der **Ev.-Luth. Salerus Kirche in Washington** *Sp.*  
*Sch. Co. Pa.*

Sei gesinnt wie Jesus Christus auch war; folge seinem Beispiele, und es wird dein Glück im  
Leben und dein Trost im Sterben sein.

Verkauft bei E. Newton & Co., 151 W. Pratt Straße, Baltimore.

A German-language Confirmation Certificate printed for the Lutheran denomination  
in Baltimore, Maryland.

"exhausts the soil of the Church." He was still "as much the friend of genuine revivals as I ever was, and even at this very time there is a delightful religious interest in my church at Rochester, but for the bench-work and religious clap-trap with which Kurtz's system is connected, I have nothing but distrust and execration."<sup>24</sup>

#### *The "Anxious Bench" Controversy*

The early attacks on the bush-meeting evangelism of the Second Awakening had been largely anonymous and unorganized. It was with the coming of Finney and "New Measures" to the Dutch Country in the 1830's that the Church People began a concerted, headon attack on revivalism. By 1830 the original *Schtravvler* element had been drained off into the new sects, and now the churches again found revivalism within their gates.<sup>25</sup>

Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), next after Whitefield in the long line of individual evangelists who have attempted to awaken all of America—a line stretching down into the 20th century to Billy Sunday and Billy Graham—was a Presbyterian, although Methodist in his theology. He represented a type of revivalism distinct on the one hand from the frontier bush-meeting type—hence its renewed appeal to Pennsylvania's church people—and on the other the more restrained revival—conscious evangelism of the American Home Missionary Society and its Presbyterian and Congregational supporters. Finney popularized, while not originating, the famous "anxious bench," where sinners, awakened in his meetings, were called to the front of the church to be prayed over and for. Finney's meetings were accompanied by "cottage prayer meetings" held during the revival, featured women praying in public, and were advertised with somewhat garish methods which have been a part of the independent evangelist's technique ever since. All of these were lumped together in the popular mind as "New Measures."<sup>26</sup>

The term "anxious bench" is a contribution, a temporary one, of American revivalism to the Christian vocabulary. Despite its echoing of the Biblical "mercy seat" which appears in many revivalist hymns, the term "anxious bench" was opposed by the Methodists, who preferred the older usage "mourners' bench." In the German tracts and periodical literature of the nineteenth century the terms *Angstbank*, *Bussbank*, and *Sünderbank* were used, and a French traveler, Chevalier, who describes camp-meetings in Central Pennsylvania in 1835, calls the institution the *banc de l'anxiété*.<sup>26</sup> Actually the "bench" was a series of pews in the front of the church where "inquirers" or "mourners" knelt to pray and to be prayed over. In some churches the chancel rail was, and is, used for the same purpose.

The Anxious Bench controversy which spread throughout the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the 1840's was opened in 1844 with the publication of Dr. John Williamson Nevin's tract, *The Anxious Bench—A Tract for the Times*.<sup>27</sup> Attempting to find middle ground, Professor Nevin (1803-1887), professor at the Reformed seminary at Mercersburg,

distinguished between genuine and spurious revivals. Under spurious revivals he included the anxious bench system, with its "solemn tricks for the sake of effect, decision displays at the bidding of the preacher, genuflections and prostrations in the aisle or around the altar, noise and disorder, extravagance and rant, mechanical conversions, justification by feeling rather than by faith, and encouragement of all kinds of fanatical impressions." He made it clear that he was not attacking the Sunday-Schools, prayer-meetings, protracted meetings, missionary work—which some frightened conservatives included under the term "New Measures." This was especially important in the German sections, where conservative Lutherans and Reformed feared that with the introduction even of such innocent and now generally accepted church methods as Sunday-Schools, their congregations would be swamped in a flood of fanaticism.

Nevin's arguments are buttressed emotionally by his own aristocratic distaste for the "coarseness" of revivalist evangelism. The pulpit is transformed into a stage, where the speaker transfers his feelings to his audience. He objected to the "anecdotes and stories" that were so "plentifully retailed" in evangelistic pulpits, "often in low, familiar, flippant style." "Coarse personalities, and harsh denunciations, and changes rung rudely on terms the most sacred and things the most solemn, all betray the wrong spirit that prevails." In its more advanced stages the system shows its true character. "Noise and confusion unite to overwhelm every right sentiment in the soul. Decency and order are given to the winds." It is interesting that he uses as "one striking illustration of the coarseness of this spirit" the disposition revivalism has shown, "in all ages, to set aside the rule, which forbids women to speak publicly in religious assemblies." Against this sacrilege of the pulpit Nevin uses the same conservative arguments that cropped up in the debates on the subject in a recent Northern Presbyterian General Assembly.

But the coarseness and shallowness of the Anxious Bench "experience" were not Nevin's only charges against the system. It was wrong, he was convinced, in the light of Church History. "Error and heresy are involved in the system itself." It had too narrow a view of the nature of sin, it confused the agitations of the flesh for the movings of the spirit, and involved the error that conversion is to be considered the product of the sinner's own will. "A low Pelagianizing theory of religion runs through it from beginning to end." Localizing his charge of heresy to the American scene, he wrote, "Finneyism is only Taylorism reduced to practice, the speculative heresy of New-Haven actualized in common life."<sup>28</sup>

Most fundamental, most searching among Nevin's criticisms of revivalism was his charge that it neglects to realize the true nature of the Church. Even at this date Nevin had made his own the high ecclesiology that was to become the Keystone of the Mercersburg Theology. The Church is not a bare abstraction, not the sum total of individual

<sup>24</sup>G. H. Gerberding, *Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant*, D.D. (Greenville, Pennsylvania: 1906), pp. 53, 83, 338 ff.

<sup>25</sup>For the Finneyan type of revivalism as distinct from the "frontier" type, see William Warren Sweet, *Revivalism in America—Its Origin, Growth and Decline* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945).

<sup>26</sup>Michael Chevalier, *Lettres sur l'Amérique du Nord*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1837), II, Ch. XXVI.

<sup>27</sup>The *Anxious Bench* was soon translated into German and published as *Die Angstbank. Eine Abhandlung für unsere Zeit*. As late as 1892 an English edition appeared at Reading, Pennsylvania, as aggressive revivalist sects continued to "invade" Lutheran and Reformed parishes. For Nevin, see the biography by Theodore Appel, *The Life and Work of John Williamson Nevin, D.D., LL.D.* (Philadelphia, 1889), especially Chapter XVIII.

<sup>28</sup>For the theology named Taylorism, see Sidney Earle Mead, *Nathaniel William Taylor, 1786-1858* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942).

parts. It is a living organism, "springing perpetually from the same ground, and identical with itself at every point." The members do not impart life to their mother the Church—the Church imparts life to them. Individual Christianity is always the product of the Church, not vice versa. Before Bushnell, Nevin laid the foundation for the Christian Education movement of the post-Civil War days, in counting it "not only possibly but altogether natural, that children growing up in the bosom of the Church, under the faithful application of the means of grace, should be quickened into spiritual life in a comparatively quiet way, and spring up numerous, 'as willows by the water-courses,' to adorn the Christian profession, without being able at all to trace the process by which the glorious change has been effected." This was the "Christian nurture" idea three years before Horace Bushnell expressed it in his better-known work of the same name.<sup>29</sup>

In his concluding chapter, Professor Nevin presents the German Churches with a choice—the Bench or the Catechism. "Each system, as such, has its own life and soul, in virtue of which it cannot coalesce with the other." Be wary, he calls, of attempts to combine the two. "The Bench is against the Catechism, and the Catechism against the Bench." Do not be afraid, he points out, to use along with the basic catechism, word and sacraments, the social prayer-meetings, the missionary and benevolent organizations of the Church, the family altar. Even protracted meetings may be necessary. It is an abuse of terms to include these "evangelical interests" as part of the Anxious Bench system—they rightfully belong under the catechetical approach.

As an example of the type of minister he covets for his Reformed Zion, he points to the Puritan saint Richard Baxter (1615–1691) of Kidderminster. Such a minister will not only be zealous in preaching the word and administering the sacraments. He will be found visiting families, "mingling with the poor, in their humble dwellings," consoling, in all things aiding individual Christians and congregations to grow "with regular and symmetrical growth." To such a ministry revivals may come, but they are the exception. As in nature, so in the Church, "the common and the constant are of vastly more account, than the special and transient." The System of the Catechism takes "more account of rills, and the perpetually flowing breezes of heaven, than of mountain torrents, waterspouts and storms."

Nevin was immediately challenged by several opponents, all less worthy than he intellectually. The controversy produced the usual crop of pamphlets pro and con, was spread through the pages of all the church journals, and even invaded the weekly newspapers of Dutch Pennsylvania.<sup>30</sup> But the future of the German Churches was with Nevin. While he underestimated the spiritual contribution of the revivalists to the religion of hill-country Pennsylvanians, a sociological distinction which is clearer from our vantage point, he stood on solid ground. He had sounded the warning that called his Lutheran and Reformed brethren back from their flirtation with revivalism. His were the criticisms which enabled them to steady themselves and move into the 20th century and take their places among the other American Churches not as inferior stepchildren but as equals.

<sup>29</sup> Horace Bushnell (1802–1876) one of the 19th century fathers of American Liberal Protestant theology, helped in the same way as Nevin to steady the Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches against extreme revivalism, through the publication of his tract, *Christian Nurture* (1846).

Within the German Reformed Church, the struggle over new measures continued as Nevin and his colleague, Philip Schaff (1819–1893) developed what has become known in American Church History as the "Mercersburg Movement" in theology.<sup>31</sup> In the little mountain town of Mercersburg, in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, these two professors, both of them invited into the service of the church from without—in a kind of prophetic foreshadowing of their adopted church's 20th century interest in the ecumenical movement, created for the German Churches of Pennsylvania a theology which was to enable them to steady themselves on the rough waves of revivalism and steer for the farther but safer haven of churchliness.

Central in all their thinking was their high Christology. Where Puritanism had emphasized God the Father with his stern demands, his predestination, and his ironclad Plan of Salvation, and revivalism had directed men's attention to God the Holy Spirit, the Mercersburg men centered their attention upon God the Son. Christ was not just the instrument of God's salvation, He was salvation. As in the Eastern Church, the doctrine of the Incarnation was all-important. Through the Incarnation human nature, fallen since Eden, was restored to God through union with Christ the Son.

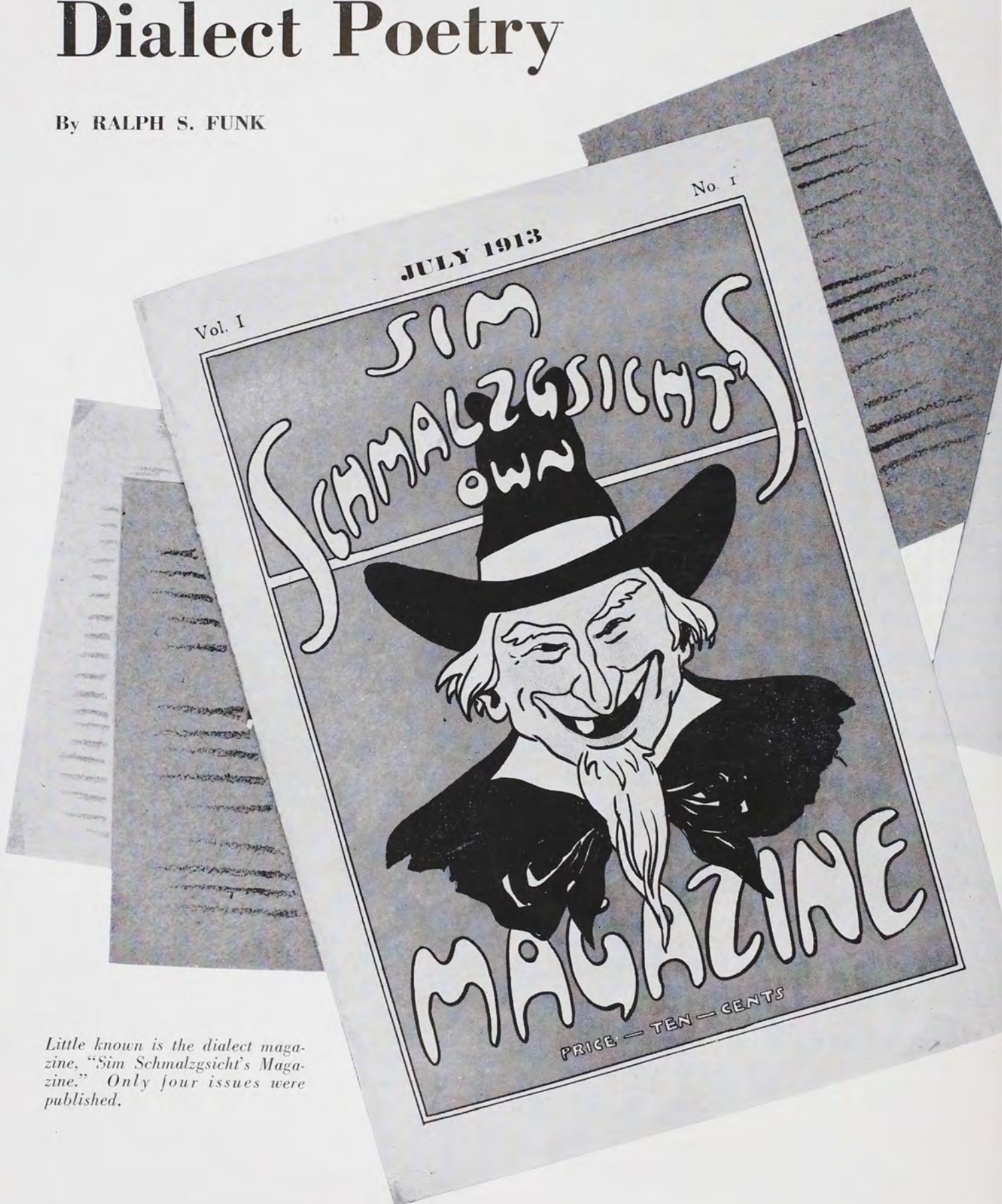
With their heightened Christology came the full rationale for their heightened ecclesiology. To the Mercersburg men the Church was more than the body of the faithful, as it was to the Bush-Meeting People and Pietists and Methodists of all generations. It was more than an organization for fellowship. It was the Body of Christ, "the organic continuation of the divine-human life of Christ in time for the salvation of men."

<sup>30</sup> *Strictures on the Mourners' and Anxious Bench. By Mr. John Denig: Being an Examination and Refutation of the Doctrines of Professor Nevin, of Marshall College, As Contained in the Pamphlet Entitled "The Anxious Bench." In which the author of this work in his Strictures undertakes to show—1st. That the Mourners' Bench is not detrimental to true piety. 2d. That there is Scripture authority for women praying in public. 3d. That the Professor has written on a subject he did not understand* (Chambersburg, 1843), pp. 1, 5, 9, 39, 55. Denig is principally known as the editor of the *Autobiography of Samuel Huber* (Chambersburg, 1858), United Brethren preacher. The back page of the 1843 pamphlet includes Denig's "PROSPECTUS For publishing by subscription, a work upon various religious subjects; in which will be noticed a further account of the MOURNERS' and ANXIOUS BENCH. Professor Nevins' views upon a COMMITTAL; HYPOCRITES, and other subjects, further examined. Also, STRICTURES, upon revivals of Religion.—Errors set forth.—Young Converts.—Feeling in religion.—Causes of Backsliding.—Family Prayer. QUACKERY: Reading sermons in pulpits—Clerical Quacks—Broad Hints. DIALOGUE Upon various Religious Subjects; in which Methodists, United Brethren in Christ—and other religious sects, are particularly noticed. A SHOT AT POPERY." The style is to be "plain & comprehensive," and the work will contain about 200 pages. Unfortunately this rural masterpiece did not make its way into print. Reuben Weiser, D.D., while pastor of the Lutheran Church at Bedford, wrote a pamphlet in defense of revivalism entitled *The Mourners' Bench, or an Humble Attempt to Vindicate New Measures* (n.p., [1844]); he had also published an *Essay on Revivals* (1840), but later in life Weiser swung to conservative Lutheranism.

<sup>31</sup> For the Mercersburg Theology and its significance for the Ecumenical Movement, see the brief treatment and bibliography in Rouse and Neill, *op. cit.*, 246–247. Recent dissertations have been done on phases of the movement by Luther J. Binkley of Franklin and Marshall College and Howard J. B. Ziegler of Lehigh University. Professor James Hastings Nichols of the University of Chicago is at present engaged in a major treatment of "Mercersburg" and its relation to other American theological movements.

# Collecting and Indexing Dialect Poetry

By RALPH S. FUNK



*Little known is the dialect magazine, "Sim Schmalzgsicht's Magazine." Only four issues were published.*



*Book collectors find the little volumes of Pennsylvania Dutch dialect poetry choice items.*

It seems a curious fact that more writers have aspired to writing verse than prose. So it was in early Greek and Latin literature, in the Germanic and in English, and so it has also been in our Pennsylvania German literature. We are no exception—we, too, had to experiment with riming and found it quite intriguing.

It was during this small beginning that about 1935 we had the pleasure and good fortune of becoming acquainted with the late Dr. Harry Hess Reichard, then Professor of German at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, who, sensing our interest in dialect poetry, presented to us a copy of his pioneering work "Pennsylvania German Writings and their Writers," prepared at the instance of the Pennsylvania

German Society, and published by it about 1918. This book contained an index of poetry numbering slightly over 600 titles.

Harking back to our earlier years, when Rev. Astor C. Wuchter, then our pastor, used to delight in reading excerpts from his creations at parties and other gatherings, we became desirous of collecting his writings, and, since Dr. Reichard's index also included other sources, we came to the conclusion that with this index as a beginning we might probably be able to find additional material, and that collecting might be just as engrossing as riming in our mediocre way, and perhaps more so.

This, then, was the beginning of the project to which we set ourself, namely, to collect as much of the poetry of our dialect singers as time, availability of sources and the condition of our exchequer might permit.

It is with some pride, therefore, that we say that we believe our collection of dialect poetry is probably the largest ever brought together by any one person up to this time, not because of any outstanding accomplishment on our part, but because of the co-operation of the many fine people of Pennsylvania German origin—and others—whom we have learned to know, and the friendships and associations we have been privileged to enjoy during the past number of years and which, we trust, will continue into the future.

We have no ulterior or selfish motive in pursuing our project—and it has become just that. Our primary aim, now that the collection has attained a considerable volume, is the preservation of this branch of our dialect literature in permanent form, its assembly into one easily accessible scope and completely indexed.

Not too lightly to be considered is the fact that it developed into a most interesting and delightful "Zeitvertreib"—a pastime to which one could turn to quiet frayed nerves after the daily joust with the work-a-day world.

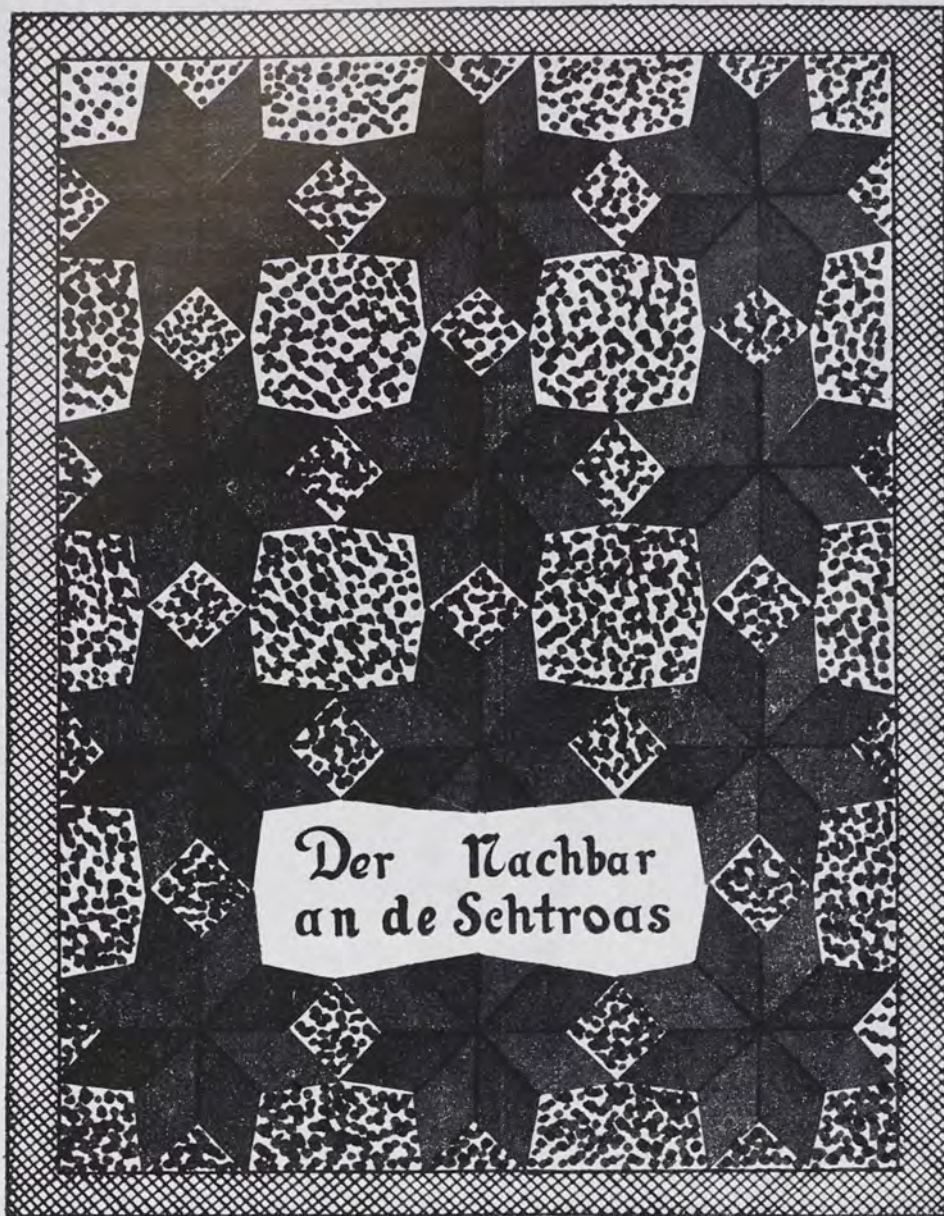
Our collection now includes 3,100 separate and distinct titles, of which all but about 140 were produced by 233 known writers. Of this number, John Birmelin easily heads the list with about 450 titles; your author has 300; Louisa Weitzel has 176; Harvey Miller, better known as "Solly Hulsbuck," 159, and Henry Fischer 120. Those other writers in the over 50 class include Lloyd Moll, Rev. A. C. Wuchter, Frank Oberholtzer, Elfrieda Weaver, Charles C. Ziegler, Rev. Horace Romig, Rev. Chas. A. Butz, Rev. William Erb and Dr. Arthur D. Graeff.

Percentage-wise, only 6% wrote over 50 selections; 4% from 26 to 50; 11% from 10 to 25, and the balance or 79% wrote less than 10. The 140 selections noted earlier, carry only pen names, or no signature at all. Thus far we have been unable to establish the real identity of the writers, so, for the time being, they must be classed as anonymous. Please remember this data refers only to our collection.

And speaking of pen names, listen to these: Betsy Besemstiel, Joe Shindlecker, Johnny Blitzfonger, Sam Dunnerkeil, Sam Soveromble, Jim Hoyshreck, Sammy Wonsepeter—to name just a few.

Although our collection is sizeable, there is still much material extant of which we have some knowledge, both in manuscript and newspapers not thus far examined. These items might number 400 to 500 selections.

There have been times in the past when source leads were so numerous that we despaired of covering more than a small percentage. This applies even now.



*The cover of a collection of Pennsylvania Dutch dialect poetry by Ben Sauder of Ontario, Canada.*

We would estimate that if it were possible to gather together all the poetry that has been written over the past 100 years, the number might aggregate 7,000 to 8,000 selections, probably more. So it can be easily seen that we have really only scratched the surface. All in all, it seems rather remarkable that such a comparatively small folk group should have produced such a large volume of poetry.

As to the material collected—we find all kinds. Most of it is good, some is bad and some indifferent. In some the meter is almost entirely disregarded, and there are many cases where the rime leaves something to be desired, but good or bad, the writer was moved to express him- or herself, and some of the most obscure writers have said some very nice things. We heartily agree with Dr. Reichard that even if some poetry is not so good, it still adds to the picture of our Folklife, Folkthinking and Folkfeeling.

In the matter of form, we find practically everything that

can be found in English, including songs, parodies, allegories, ballads—even sonnets.

Some of the more facile writers used a very pure dialect style, while others inserted many English words, either through lack of vocabulary, or because it was easier than taking a little time to find the proper dialect words to express their thought. On occasion one finds High German words where apparently there was no good dialect equivalent in the writer's vocabulary.

We found some translations in our searches, the majority from the High German. Translations from English, while there are some good ones in existence, generally are not very successful, since there are so many words and expressions for which there are no dialect equivalents. We have tried it a number of times and in only two or three cases have we felt that we had captured the thought.

Poetry in the abstract and love poetry are rather scarce. Our people were too practical to indulge in day dreams

and the dialect does not seem to lend itself readily to this type of expression, except only by a master craftsman.

A large part of the dialect poetry treats of parents and relatives, the home and farm and activities therein and thereabouts, school, church, seasons, holidays church and secular, nature and her creatures, familiar places, character sketches, some political, etc., all subjects well known and close to the heart of the writer and understandable by the readers for whom they were written.

And where do we find this material?

A lot of it is hidden away in newspapers and other publications, most of which have long since suspended publication, printed in localities like Easton, Allentown, Reading, Lebanon, Lancaster, York and many other towns in their surrounding areas.

Not all newspaper files are complete, however. Some have been destroyed by accidental fires, others by reason of a lack of storage space, and a few may have been placed into depositories of some sort and their location forgotten.

There are a few exceptions where columns are currently being published which frequently include poetry. Among the more important of these are the "Pennsylvania Deutsch Eck" edited by Dr. Preston A. Barba in the Allentown Morning Call; "Scholla" edited by Dr. Arthur D. Graeff in the Reading Times, and a column edited by Dr. Pierce E. Swope in the Lebanon News.

As examples of newspaper sources, in checking the "Reader Adler" from 1860 to 1913 when publication was suspended, we added about 85 selections to our collection and found about the same number of which we already had copies gleaned from other sources. The "Republikaner von Berks" added about 35, and as far as we have gone the "Kutztown Journal" has added about 20.

Some of the material is published in books and pamphlets, many of which are out of print and have become collectors' items, as for instance Harbaugh's "Harfe" published 1870; Fischer's "Marik Haus mittes in der Stadt" published 1879; Rauch's "Pennsylvania Dutch Handbook" published 1879; Wollenweber's "Gemälde aus dem Pennsylvanischen Volksleben" published 1869, Ziegler's "Drauss un Deheem" published 1891, and Solly Hulsbuck's books published in 1906, 1907, 1911 and "Gshbos und Arnsht," 1939, a collection of a large part of his poetry and some prose. Copies of this latter, we believe, are still available. Some publications, even as late as 1930, are on the scarce list, presumably because they were small editions. Altogether there are about 100 book and pamphlet imprints and about 40 part dialect and part English.

Some were copied from broadsides—printed on single sheets or folders by the author for private distribution. There is no way of knowing how much of this material is around, but it is found mostly in private, college and historical society libraries.

Some were copied from manuscripts, never printed and probably never will be. The preservation of the material in this category presents a serious problem. To date the manuscripts of several writers have been acquired by or presented to several college libraries, where they will receive proper protection, but in so many cases, when the writer passes on, it becomes lost or is destroyed because it probably has no meaning to the family.

This applies particularly in these later years, since there is a good possibility that the children do not speak the dialect, much less read it, therefore, without checking into

its probable value, it is consigned to the waste basket.

For those who can read the dialect and would like to see a representative cross-section of Pennsylvania German poetry, we would refer them to Dr. Reichard's anthology titled "Pennsylvania German Verse," published by the Pennsylvania German Society in 1940 as Volume 48 of its proceedings.

Our own procedure in collecting this material is very simple. If the selection appears in a book or pamphlet that is for sale, we try to purchase it. If in a newspaper or periodical that can be clipped, we maintain scrapbooks. If both of these procedures are impossible, we get permission to make copies in longhand and then type them on standard sheets paged for a book, and when we have accumulated about 200 pages, we have them bound in permanent book form in cloth.

The important step after that is indexing. For this we had two sets of 3 x 5 form cards printed. On the first set is noted the author's name, title of the poem, first line, source, and where it may be found in our collection. On the second set, the first line takes precedence.

In addition, we maintain three sets of pocket loose-leaf indices: the first a listing of poems by author; the second an alphabetical listing of titles, and the third is a more or less complete first line index. These are for use in the field in emergency.

Normally we page through a newspaper file and make a list of selections found, the title, first line, author and date of issue. Then at home we check this data against our card index. If we have the selection, proper notation is made on the cards as to source and the item is crossed off the list. Later we go back and copy those items remaining open on the list.

The first lines index is of considerable importance to us, as it provides a quick check on field listings we have made. It is also of great importance to the publisher, if and when available, inasmuch as items in verse are frequently sent him by persons who perhaps memorized them many years before or perhaps found them as an old clipping, and forgot, either intentionally or otherwise, to credit the author. This can sometimes lead to embarrassing situations.

On the whole, our project is very simple. Either you have it or don't have it, in which latter case you go out and try to find it. Many hours are represented and many car miles. Many surprises are developed and some disappointments, but it has been and continues to be a very pleasant hobby, with no prospect of any material financial return. The end result thus far, however, is most gratifying. Needless to say, the observations here made were gleaned from our experiences along the way.

And now, in credit to our poets and writers, we should like to echo Dr. Reichard when he observed—"To create a dialect literature in a country where the kindred language is used, is something; but to have created a Pennsylvania German dialect literature, when the language of their schools, increasingly of their churches, and altogether of their national life, is English, was an achievement."

This then, in brief, is the story of our ramblings in the field of dialect poetry, not as a literary scholar, but as an engineer. We gathered much—there is still much to be gathered. We learned something—there is still much to learn. As we traversed this field, we found a few weeds, but we also found many, many more of the beautiful things that add the color to our dialect literature.

## FOREWORD

In the following material I have attempted to sketch an outline of the folk amusements in western Pennsylvania during the period from 1775 until 1914. It should be made clear that this is not intended to be definitive. I would like to survey the folk amusements and their range of type, but not particularly to make any essay at indicating their depth of variation within each form. Obviously, there existed a far greater variation than I have shown here.

Material was chosen by reliance on these two criteria: (1) any activity which gave pleasure, and (2) any activity which was not literary in nature. Again, some amusements herein considered are confusingly close to being literary, or can be found in conjunction with institutions, etc., which were predominantly non-folk, e.g., the schools. However, it was felt that a broad handling, in the early stages of such work, would be more rewarding than a strict approach.

The paper has been divided into the following parts: (1) family amusements of the rural farm home; (2) amusements in the home in which the public, i.e., non-family members, participated; (3) amusements in the community at large; and (4) amusements unlocated as to place and often undefined as to participants. There are other classificatory possibilities, but this one has merit in that it is rather loose and serves as a vehicle for a description of the amusements. Unfortunately, it does not serve well as an analytic tool for a study of subordinate and distinctive parts, a task which is going to require the construction of some sort of motif (basic element) scheme.

In an earlier issue of *Pennsylvania Folklife*,<sup>1</sup> I indicated some of the amusements of the rural farm home. Briefly, they consisted in part of the practices of riddling, and playing games such as cards, dominoes, crokinole, and checkers. At times the members of the family ate nuts and popcorn, or roasted apples and onions. At other times secular or religious songs were sung. Musical instruments provided amusements for some families. Both the last-named usages were part of the traditional musical pattern which existed in the state at various times. The activities in the home of the holidays of Christmas, New Year's, Easter, and Thanksgiving were important elements in home and family amusements. The Belznickle Man, Santa Claus, gifts, etc., made up well-known parts of the Christmas practices in various places and times. Apparently there were instances when some of the practices usually associated with Christmas—the receiving of gifts by children, for example—were found in conjunction with New Year's Eve and Day. Dyeing and eating eggs at Easter were also known, as was the big meal on Thanksgiving. Too much might easily be made of the celebration of Christmas at home, particularly among the religious groups in western Pennsylvania during much of the period under discussion. One man, probably a strict Presbyterian, noted in his diary for December 25 only that he had hauled four loads of rails that day.<sup>2</sup> The family reunion, although found outside the home for the most part, was not a public affair in the usual sense of the word. It is most easily treated therefore as a home amusement. These, then, in an attenuated form, were the amusements of the home.

1. "Amusements in Rural Homes around the Big and Little Mahoning Creeks, 1870-1912." *Pennsylvania Folklife*, IX (Spring, 1958), 46-49.

2. N. S. Cowley, "Life in Northwestern Pennsylvania," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, XXIV, 98.

# Folk

By PHIL STACK

## FAMILY-PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS

Amusements in the home with neighbors and friends participating was another phase of traditional amusements in western Pennsylvania during the period from the Revolutionary War to the First World War. Attended by a fairly large number of people, the frolic, or bee as it was sometimes called, was of course associated with the economy and social life of the frontier in which simultaneous work and play existed. One author used a ratio to express the value of the frolic as a social event. He claimed that the logging bee was to the generation of settlers what the fox hunt and volunteer parade were to the following generation.

The frolic held in the production of flax and its products illustrates the work-and-play theme. Each step could and did have its frolic. W. J. McKnight, an historian of Jefferson County, mentioned a "pulling frolic" held by the young people.<sup>3</sup> The threshing, rotting, and drying of flax were apparently done in this case by the family, as were the "scutching," or the separation of the fibers, and the "haekling," or the combing of the fibers. The fulling, or "kicking," frolic was quite exuberant, and from present-day standards, spectacular. The purpose was to shrink the cloth after it had been spun. The following is a description of a fulling frolic which took place in Jefferson County about 1830. The girls, who had quilted in the afternoon, were joined by the young men in the evening. After a boiler of hot, soapy water had been prepared, a web of cloth was placed in the middle of the floor, and the participants took seats in a circle of chairs which had been placed around the edge of the room. The hot water was poured on the web, and then the cloth was kicked around the room from person to person. Water was said to have splashed to the ceiling.<sup>4</sup> In Clarion County, blankets were fulling by hanging them wet over a rack and then kicking them from both sides.<sup>5</sup>

The list of other frolics is extensive. Cabin raisings, house raisings, barn raisings, and church raisings dealt with structures. Log rollings, log burnings, rail maulings (splittings), stump pullings, stone haulings, mowings, and grubblings helped to do field work. Sheep shearings and manure haulings were other forms of farm labor performed by frolics. The arrival of sixty-five men and twelve oxen marked the beginning of a frolic in Warren County in

3. W. J. McKnight, *History of Jefferson County*, 154.

4. *Ibid.*, 442.

5. A. J. Davis, *History of Clarion County*, 86.



# Amusements

## *in Western Pennsylvania*



May, 1865.<sup>6</sup> An illuminating statement as to the nature of the frolic can be seen in the report taken from an 1896 newspaper that Carn Neal had "entertained a number of the men by giving them a stone hauling . . . ." The famous corn husking is mentioned in a letter by one Sally Hastings written on October 26, 1800, and reading in part as follows:

Last night was a jovial one. The landlady had collected a number of persons to husk corn; and, when their business was finished, they devoted the night to Dancing, Singing, and other Exercises, the name of which my ear did not communicate; though in regard to their nature, it was very officious. Unfortunately the Room immediately under my Bedchamber was the scene of this Bacchanal; and I frankly confess that I wished them either less happy or that their happiness consisted in Enjoyments similar to mine.<sup>7</sup>

By the decade 1870-1880, it is probable that most of the farm-work frolics had passed out of existence, although newspaper remarks (some of which were complaints) can be found concerning them as late as 1900. In 1895 one complainer was as unhappy about the loss of the pumpkin pie and the other good things to eat as he was about the cessation of the huskings.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the farm work and building frolics, several household work bees were used, in which women were the usual participants. Quiltings, carpet rag sewings, apple parings (cuttings, snitzings), apple butter boilings, and peach parings were some of these. In nearly every case, a dinner was held at the same time. Dances, too, were held after many of the frolics. At times, as in Washington

6. Arch Bristow, *Old Time Tales of Warren County*, 139.

7. *Punxsutawney, Pa., News*, July 29, 1896.

8. J. W. Harpster, (ed.), *Pen Pictures of Early Western Pennsylvania*, 239.

9. *News*, October 30, 1895.



County about 1850, the women quilted in the house while the men worked at some other activity outside.<sup>10</sup>

Closely allied with the frolic in many ways was the party or the purely social event. Some of these events were held as ends in themselves, e.g., the taffy pull, while others were celebrations of special days, periods, or occasions. Most of the parties among the rural people were held in homes. The famous play party was especially popular among the younger people, while the dance was more often an adult recreation. For the most part, the usual play party games listed by folk music collectors were used during the period. The same can be said about the dances, although one note might be added. R. C. Brown, an historian of Butler County, mentioned that he had learned to dance to the music of "Arthur McKinney's 'single fiddle.'" He meant that the dancers did not have a caller, but had previously learned the sequence of steps.<sup>11</sup> Practically every informant who talked about dancing to me claimed that calling was not as important in the period between 1875 and 1914 as it is today in square dancing. Callers, when they did perform, did not sing their instructions; they just announced the next step. It is quite possible that the prevalence of the barn dance has been overemphasized; probably, most of the dances were held in or around homes during this period. Not all dances were planned affairs, some being spontaneous. When Timothy Flint was in Pittsburgh in 1824, he noticed that the boats had "one or more fiddles scraping continually . . . , to which you often see the boatmen dancing."<sup>12</sup>

At some parties, singing was part of the program, both secular and sacred songs being used. Hymns were often used to close the program. Music was introduced in ways other than singing, for a martial band was reported to have played at an anniversary party, while organists and violinists performed at other times. A modern touch, a gramophone, was also mentioned.

Various events frequently served as party occasions, notably birthdays. Often these parties were surprise affairs, and they could be elaborate in detail:

#### A SURPRISE PARTY

On the 10th inst., the people of Marchand and community met at the above named place, formed into line, headed by the Marchand Cornet Band. Procession moved north quietly, then west till they came to the Peffer and Moot corners when the signal for music was given to send the surprise ahead. At the door of J. W. Pfeifer the procession halted while the band took their march around the house with prolonged music. Rev. Miller brought up the rear, and on account of surprise on the part of Mr. Pfeifer and the excited condition of the multitude he was obliged to act as hostler, and found a very convenient place for his horse on the barn floor. We were all pleased to see the extensive table arranged under the beautiful shade trees spread with all that could be relished this side of the line of temperance while delicious fruit hung overhead. There were about 70 persons present who showed their goodwill and respect to Mr. Pfeifer and family in the valuable presents and handsome purse of silver in which the band played a practical part. The dinner, music and speeches by various persons were appreciated by all; neither were we a set of parasites to feast on the goodness of others. If you do not wish to be taken by surprise, then look a little out.

Reporter<sup>13</sup>

Curiously enough, about 1909-1912, there were birthday "post card showers," at which the guest who was being honored was given a post card or cards by the others in attendance.<sup>14</sup> House-warmings and anniversaries were other occasions for parties. Receptions and farewells were others, particularly so when ministers came and went. Parts of wedding celebrations, other than the ceremony itself, can be classified as folk amusements. Doddridge, in his *Notes*, details (1) a race by the young men for a bottle of whiskey, (2) a wedding feast just after the ceremony, (3) the dancing that took place, (4) the tricks that were played by the high-spirited young men, including putting to bed

10. J. W. Dinsmore, *The Scotch-Irish in America*, 187.

11. G. W. Brown, *Old Times in Oildom*, 47-48.

12. James Flint, *Letters from America*, 17. In Reuben G. Thwaites, (ed.), *Early Western Travels in America*, IX.

13. Punxsutawney, Pa., *Valley News*, August 17, 1887.

14. Cj., Brookville, Pa., *Republican*, December 8, 1910.

the newly-married couple, and (5) the toasts which were made.<sup>15</sup> He also mentions the infare and another race for the bottle along with more dancing, all of these coming at a somewhat later date.<sup>16</sup> There is a good possibility that the infare existed in other forms in other parts of western Pennsylvania at a later time. In central western Pennsylvania, it was said to be a dinner held at the home of the groom. The same informant said that the reception was always held at the home of the bride.<sup>17</sup>

The "serenade" of the newly-married couple at their home was a great event associated with the weddings. Sometimes the serenaders played respectable music, but more often the noise was of the tin bucket-cow bell variety. The following newspaper account of a serenade well illustrates the usual characteristics of such an occasion:

On last Thursday, Lee Whitesell of Grange, was married to Miss Mabel George of Lindsey. The wedding was at the home of David R. Whitesell. Invitations were extended to most all the neighbors and a number of friends from a distance. The dinner was equal to the best that was ever served in the land. Two turkeys and a number of chickens met their death on account of the occasion, and when dinner was over there was nothing left of the fowl except the bones. In the evening the newly married couple were honored with a serenade by the Grange calithumpian band, which ground out music that seemed to be boiled down and jambed into a conglomerated discord. The leading instrument was a circular saw borrowed from Alpheus Anthony's saw mill near by, and the accompaniments were sleigh bells and cow bells, dishpans and buckets, plowshares and crosscut saws, fog horns and conche shells and resined boxes. The band was encouraged by Apache screams and yells and the firing of old flint lock muskets, shotguns and anvils. The first accident happened when David Smith got too near one of his companions who was playing a fine solo by clapping two boards together, in one of which there was a nail that struck Smith in the hand, then in the excitement the musical director hit his finger with a hammer, and by this time the band became as much confused as the music. Then the bride and groom appeared at the door and all made a rush to wish them joy and happiness.<sup>18</sup>

"Slouches" (lamp globes filled with powder and wrapped with rope), dynamite, drums, wash boilers, "lung power," and "horse fiddles" were also evident in these celebrations. The horse fiddle was played by drawing a board across a box with resined edges. All this noise was supposed to be followed by the appearance of the bride and groom and a treat for the serenaders. Usually the treat took the form of a party or dance.

The "donation," or party held in honor of and for the maintenance of a minister, was held in a home, usually the parsonage. One Reverend Miller, in Jefferson County, was

given two donations during the winter 1890-1891, at which times he was given money in the amounts of twelve dollars and twenty-four dollars. The following description of a donation for a minister in Jefferson County in 1893 shows the procedure commonly followed:

On Saturday, February 25, about 2 P.M., four sled loads of passengers left our village for Valier, with provisions to be eaten at Rev. E. H. Slaughenhaupt's residence. All went merry to the jingle of the bells and the laughter of the ladies. The meeting was an entire surprise to the Reverend and wife, but soon the ladies of Hopewell took possession of the kitchen and dining-room and a bountiful supper was furnished of which about 40 people partook, and then when evening came most of the party went to Sutter's Hall, where Rev. John Frampton preached to a full house, after which the party returned home well pleased with their pleasure trip, leaving a donation for Rev. Slaughenhaupt and wife, including flour and potatoes and some money . . . .<sup>19</sup>

The pound party was similar to the donation except that each party-goer took one pound of food or some staple.

Many of the parties and other amusements which constituted an important part of the folk amusements featured refreshments that were outstanding by modern standards, both from the point of view of the amount and kinds of food served and the number of people who partook. At a barn raising in Warren County in the summer of 1850, five turkeys, pork, wild honey, white flour bread, brown molasses cookies, stack pies, dried apple pies, pies of dried blackberries, dried pumpkin, mince meat, and meat made with brandy, and tarts of strawberries, and tarts of red raspberries made up the menu.<sup>20</sup> The ladies at another barn raising, this time in Clarion County, served bacon, dodgers (corn cakes), maple molasses, and gingerbread.<sup>21</sup>

## COMMUNITY AMUSEMENTS

Many of the customary amusements of the period from 1775 to 1914 were on a community basis; that is, they were open to all the people, and they were centered not in the home but in or around some local institution.

The county courts provided some amusement for the people. It was said by a presiding judge of Warren County that many of the men became "gentlemanly gay" before the first day of court was over, for it was a day that was more of a jubilee than it was a serious attempt at serving justice.<sup>22</sup> According to the *Brookville Republican* of September 11, 1895, nearly every borough and hamlet in the county was represented at court by attorneys, litigants, or spectators.

As unlikely as it may seem to some people of the present day, hangings presented occasions for amusement of the people. On the first day of November, 1822, there occurred at Meadville a first-class hanging with David Lamphier, a murderer, in the leading role.

The hour of the execution was set for 2 P.M. The hanging was to be carried out on a scaffold erected a mile from the jail. The Meadville Light Artillery and the

15. Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1783, Inclusive, Together with a View of the State of Society and Manners of First Settlers of the Western Country*, 152-157.

16. *Ibid.*, 157.

17. M. J. Watkins, Timblin, Pa., July 21, 1950. Referred to the period of the 1890's.

18. *News*, December 28, 1904.

19. *Ibid.*, March 1, 1893.

20. Bristow, *Old Time Tales*, 201-210.

21. Davis, *Clarion County*, 85.

22. J. S. Schenck, *History of Warren County*, 143.

county militia had paraded in front of the jail at noon, and then formed in front of the door. Lamphier was removed from his cell and taken in charge by the military groups.

The procession to the gallows was large: first the sheriff, followed by the coroner, the lawyers of the county, and the county officers, all on horseback. Next came two wagons, one for the coffin and the other to carry the condemned man in case he collapsed. Then came the people, estimated at some 4,000. The crowd listened to a fifty-minute sermon and a ten-minute prayer. Finally the trap was sprung.<sup>23</sup> David Lamphier had provided a long entertainment for a lot of people.

In Westmoreland County, on April 20, 1830, there occurred a hanging which was said to have attracted seven or eight thousand people.<sup>24</sup>

Happier means were also used to bring the people together. Periodically, the militia men of the county drilled and these "partallion" (battalion) days were great events in the lives of the children and their parents. There were musicians in each unit, such as the West Finley Rifles who had fifers and drummers beating out quick tunes like "Rory O'Moore," "The Devil's Dream," "The Campbells Are Coming," "Yankee Doodle," "St. Patrick's Day," and "The Girl I Left Behind Me."<sup>25</sup> While the militia drilled, there was a continual hubbub around them. Whiskey was cheap and plentiful. The number of fights often determined the success of the day; if they were large and numerous, the day was a good one.<sup>26</sup> "Devil John" Thompson of Indiana managed to keep the people at the militia reviews in Brookville terror-stricken, for he was a good fighter who loved to cause an uproar.<sup>27</sup> The little boys zipped around the field, played their games, wrestled, fought, wheedled money to buy gingerbread, and had a wonderful time.<sup>28</sup> The Civil War and its changes sounded the death knell of the muster day.

Holidays were the time of several community-wide amusements. Some holidays, particularly Christmas in the later nineteenth century, and the Fourth of July, were marked by fairly elaborate affairs.

One of the most interesting traditional customs concerning Christmas was the barring out of the schoolmaster. All the accounts seem essentially the same: the scholars would not permit the teacher to enter the school unless he promised to give them a treat and a holiday. The older pupils had planned their strategy about a week before,<sup>29</sup> for if the teacher were able to win his way in, the tables would be turned drastically. The treat usually consisted of apples, ginger cakes, nuts, and candy.<sup>30</sup> It was startling to find that one master gave out the contents of a gallon jug of whiskey for a treat.<sup>31</sup>

More than once the master turned the tables on the students, and effectively squeaked them. The retaliation of the master came in the form of barring the students in, or in forcing a passage through the clapboard roof.<sup>32</sup> It was said that floggings were administered when the teacher confronted the students,<sup>33</sup> although it is probable that this was merely ritualistic. In general, the informants with whom I talked about this practice said that barring out was not done in their times, but that it was well known to them by way of their fathers. If such is the case, barring out the master must have begun to decline around the time of and shortly after the Civil War. The usual remarks made by informants were to the effect that teachers gave their charges candy without fanfare.

One newspaper noted in 1912 that Santa Claus appeared at the conclusion of a school entertainment in northern Indiana County and distributed candy to the children.<sup>34</sup> This seems to be very close to present-day practices.

Churches and Sunday schools devoted much attention to non-religious celebrations of Christmas. In one church, the question of what to do for the young people was important enough to be brought upon the floor of a congregational meeting for discussion.<sup>35</sup> Another church, about 1880, had a decorated tree expressly for the children, who often had none in their homes.<sup>36</sup> Candy was sometimes presented to the children in Sunday School on the Sunday before Christmas.

On the other hand, Sunday schools more often gave Christmas entertainments, the treat and tree becoming subsidiary parts of the larger presentation. These "entertainments" (the term often given to the program) were advertised in the newspapers. The programs delivered at these entertainments seemed to be either cantatas, in which case the folk element was materially reduced, or it was of the recitation-oration-song type. However, one cantata was described as having fairies, brownies, Uncle Sam, professors, money-lovers, Santa Claus, grandmothers, and drummers in it, which would suggest the possibility that the presentation was not a cantata in the strict sense of the word.<sup>37</sup> "A Christmas Tree," an alternate term for a holiday program, was sometimes held on or about New Year's Day. This was known to have been done specifically in 1907 and 1911.<sup>38</sup>

The Fourth of July celebrations were largely patriotic, although one Francis Baxter in 1844 remarked that the people had had a squirrel hunt on the Fourth, which was followed by a "drunken barbecue."<sup>39</sup> Much more often, "spread eagle speeches" and merrymaking of various types were the rule. In the Indiana County and Jefferson County areas, speakers usually addressed the crowds attending the picnics, a distinguishing feature. It would seem that just one speaker was not deemed sufficient; no reports from the areas were found wherein the singular was used. Four or five talks were the order of the day.

23. Russell J. Ferguson, "A Cultural Oasis in Northwestern Pennsylvania," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, XIX, 271-272.

24. George D. Albert, *History of the County of Westmoreland, Pennsylvania*, 317.

25. George W. F. Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, 156-157.

26. McKnight, *Jefferson County*, 522.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. Alfred Creigh, *History of Washington County from Its First Settlement to the Present Time*, 53. For additional material on Christmas, see Alfred L. Shoemaker, *Christmas in Pennsylvania*.

30. *Ibid.*, McKnight, *Jefferson County*, 551; John S. Van Voorhis, *The Old and New Monongahela*, 53.

31. Creigh, *Washington County*, 53.

32. Van Voorhis, *Monongahela*, 19, 53.

33. McKnight, *Jefferson County*, 551.

34. *News*, December 18, 1912.

35. Punxsutawney, Pa., Minutes of Congregational Meetings, First Baptist Church, December 10, 1877.

36. Mrs. Bernice McCormick, East Mahoning Township, Indiana County, Pa., August 29, 1950. The church in question was in Smicksburg, Pa.

37. *News*, December 13, 1899.

38. Punxsutawney, Pa., *Spirit*, December 31, 1907, January 7, 1911.

39. Francis Baxter, "Rafting on the Allegheny and Ohio," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LI, 76.



In the same areas, it was the Sunday schools, for the most part, which sponsored the picnics. Indeed, the Fourth seems to have been a great day for the children of the churches. There were games and sports, including "drop the handkerchief," egg races, sack races, 100-yard dashes, horse races, and baseball games.<sup>40</sup> In 1871 in Punxsutawney, which was a small, agricultural village at the time, the Silver Cornet Band led the procession to the picnic, with the Odd Fellows marching as a body.<sup>41</sup> A picnic at Worthville, in Jefferson County in 1913, included a "fantastic" parade.<sup>42</sup> At times, such groups as the Knights of Pythias and the American Mechanics sponsored Fourth of July picnics.

Aside from these picnics, the Fourth was celebrated with sham battles, fireworks, balloon ascensions, and ox roasts. A sham battle held in Smicksburg, Indiana County, in 1886 had 100 infantry and 40 cavalry on each side. A man named Henry Lewis was injured mortally when a cannon blew up during the proceedings. Needless to say, sham battles were not encouraged after this episode.<sup>43</sup> Fireworks were held in the evening. In 1911 Covode, in the same county, had fireworks and a balloon ascension, while an ox roast was planned for Worthville, Jefferson County, in 1905.<sup>44</sup>

After the Civil War, Decoration Day assumed major proportions as a time of amusements. In addition to the processions to the cemeteries, the decoration of the graves, and the speeches, there were baseball games, socials, and festivals. Usually the socials and festivals were held at night, as when the Covode young people went to Rochester Mills for the services and then stayed for the social that night.<sup>45</sup>

Several other holidays were celebrated publicly, but not to the extent that Christmas, the Fourth of July, and Decoration Day were honored. A May pole was raised in Washington in 1798, but was taken down by the authori-

ties who feared that the French flag on its top would cause some to mistake it for a liberty pole.<sup>46</sup> The boat-building industry on the Monongahela River gave birth to the custom of christening ships in western Pennsylvania. The public was invited, and a large container of eggnog was placed near the boat for its pleasure. Later a keg of ale was sometimes substituted. The day remained a festive one until the decline of the industry and the rise of the temperance movement combined to hasten the event's demise.<sup>47</sup>

An act of the Pennsylvania legislature gave rise to a celebration in Erie that was not paralleled by any other town. In 1841, the General Assembly passed an act declaring that no cranberries were to be picked on the peninsula of Presque Isle between the first of July and the first Tuesday of October. The people of Erie gathered on the latter day for a large picnic, the picking of the cranberries beginning the next day in earnest.<sup>48</sup>

There were also several minor public holidays. The days before elections, and political rallies in general, were celebrated. Besides speeches and parades, huge dinners were prepared. Judging from newspaper accounts, political gatherings were welcome affairs. "Shooting in the New Year" was prevalent in Westmoreland County, as it was elsewhere.<sup>49</sup> Ordinarily, nothing elaborate was planned for Thanksgiving, except for the usual religious services. A big dinner for the family and visiting seemed to be the standard way of observing the day. Once in a while, suppers were given by some group on Thanksgiving or Easter.<sup>50</sup>

April Fool and Halloween both got a fair amount of attention, especially from the younger people. The making of sawdust pies by a Perrysville, Jefferson County, girl was one of the stunts perpetrated on the unsuspecting on April 1.<sup>51</sup> McKnight cites an 1830 newspaper as to some

40. Cf., Punxsutawney, Pa., *Plaindealer*, July 14, 1870, June 22, 1871.

41. *Ibid.*, June 22, 1871.

42. *Spirit*, June 3, 1913.

43. *Valley News*, June 16, June 30, July 14, July 21, 1886.

44. *Republican*, June 8, 1905; *Spirit*, July 17, 1911.

45. *Spirit*, June 4, 1912.

46. Creigh, *Washington County*, 348.

47. Richard T. Wiley, *The Monongahela: The River and Its Region*, 136.

48. John Miller, *A Twentieth Century History of Erie County, Pennsylvania*, 223, 227.

49. Albert, *Westmoreland County*, 155 n.

50. Cf., Indiana, Pa., *Progress*, March 31, 1897; *News*, November 21, 1888.

51. *Republican*, November 19, 1902.

of the pranks by boys on Halloween: a yearling calf was put in a haymow; the front wheels were exchanged with the rear ones on the only wheeled vehicles in the neighborhood. The web was taken from a loom and stretched across the road; and a log was wedged against the doctor's door so tightly that he had to crawl through a window to answer a call.<sup>52</sup> Lincoln's birthday and Washington's birthday were apparently school holidays only, while St. Patrick's Day and St. John's Day were mentioned only casually, as was Groundhog Day.<sup>53</sup>

Picnics should be given a place as one of the important customary public amusements, especially after the Civil War. There does not appear to be much documentary evidence of them prior to the time of the war, although a thorough examination of newspapers might produce something in that direction. These picnics were planned affairs and were often quite sizeable. The "Goodville Picnic," held annually in West Mahoning Township, Indiana County, was said by 1900 and 1901 to have drawn from 3,000 to 10,000 people.<sup>54</sup> Even if due allowance is made for exaggeration, these numbers are impressive. There were church picnics, Sunday school picnics, W.C.T.U. picnics, farmers' picnics, and young people's picnics.

An occasion similar to the picnic was the outing. A group of people would gather and set out for some specified spot or activity. Sometimes fishing was the activity, and usually a picnic was part of the outing.<sup>55</sup> Going to the county fair was one of the favorite family outings.

There is good reason to believe that reunions (not of the family, but of some other group such as the G.A.R.), public sales (vendues), and harvest home celebrations were customary amusements also. For instance, picnics were held in conjunction with the reunions and the harvest homes.<sup>56</sup> The newspaper reports of the public sales emphasized clearly that more than selling and buying were involved; the jollity of the crier and the good humor of the crowd were stressed.<sup>57</sup> In addition to the religious services held in the church, harvest homes had ox roasts, addresses, brass and martial bands, baseball games, and fireworks—all earmarks of secular holidays and special occasions.<sup>58</sup>

County and township teachers' institutes, literary societies, and spelling bees occupied, perhaps, a twilight zone between literary amusements and traditional ones. Probably the best guide would be to judge each one by its associated activities. For instance, if the institute had a traditional entertainment separate from the technical sessions, it might be judged fairly to be folk-oriented, in part at least. The same can be said of the schools' visiting days, flag presentations, last days, and patrons' days, as well as the aforementioned spelling bees and literary societies. With respect to the literary societies, one practice should be noted, for it provided an entré for folk music. In some societies there existed a practice of creating satirical poems or songs about certain members. In part of Indiana County, these pieces were called "broadaxes,"



and they no doubt deserved their name.<sup>59</sup>

One last broad type of public amusement merits attention. The social, the festival, and the supper were closely related and were extremely popular, at least in the rural sections of Indiana and Jefferson Counties. Very often they were held on holidays, or in conjunction with special events, and they were usually sponsored by groups such as church bodies, ball teams, schools, etc. They were held in groves, schools, church grounds, halls—just about any place that seemed to be convenient. Apparently the festival was an occasion for the sale of some article or commodity, while the supper was just that. The social was often an auction of food which was taken to the scene by individuals. The famous "pie social" was probably best known in this respect. There were festivals which bore the following titles: ice cream, oyster, basket (possibly a basket of food), box, pantomime (?), and nightcap. Socials were listed as being pie, box, pumpkin pie, ice cream, necktie, carpet rag, valentine, egg, Saratoga chip, strawberry, oyster, foot, pink, post card match, seven cent, porch, and masquerade. Obviously, it is impossible to make a distinction between all the socials and festivals; it is more likely that the terms were often interchanged. There were ice cream suppers, oyster suppers, chicken suppers, chicken and corn suppers, corn suppers, mush suppers, sweet potato suppers, and ox roasts.

52. McKnight, *Jefferson County*, 494.

53. *Cf.*, *Plainsdealer*, June 23, 1870, March 16, 1871.

54. *News*, August 15, 1900, August 14, 1901.

55. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1907.

56. *Cf.*, *Progress*, August 18, 1897.

57. *Cf.*, *News*, November 9, 1904.

58. *Cf.*, *Valley News*, July 28, 1886. For more material on the whole complex of harvest home celebrations, see Don Yoder, "Harvest Home," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, IX (Fall, 1959), 2-11.

59. Mrs. Lottie Beyer, West Mahoning Township, Indiana County, Pa., August 10, 1951.

## UNLOCATED FOLK AMUSEMENTS

There existed a whole body of folk amusements which can be best described, I suppose, as being unlocated as to place and usually undefinable as to numbers or type of people involved. Of course the limits to the above statement can be seen with respect to each of the amusements discussed below. From another viewpoint, this group of amusements can be treated from their adaptability, for they often served as subordinate parts of other amusements. Tale telling and music were two of these, being used whenever and wherever the occasion suited.

Travelers were entertained in the early days by tales and anecdotes. Fortescue Cuming put up one night at the home of a Mr. and Mrs. Potts, and after supper he was treated with "good songs and long stories" about the travels of Mr. Potts.<sup>60</sup> The sheriff of Westmoreland County similarly entertained John May at a tavern in that county on April 29, 1789.<sup>61</sup>

Joseph Doddridge states that tale-telling was "another source of amusement" for the young people of the frontier. At the same time, he gives a good description of the folk tale; that is, it was lengthy, embraced a considerable range of incident, was easily committed to memory because of its arrangement, and was "handed down from generation to generation, from time immemorial."<sup>62</sup> The subjects of the tales related by Doddridge are Jack and the Giant and "knight errantry." Jack was always successful in his attacks on the giant, while the knights aided maidens in distress and restored them to their true loves.<sup>63</sup>

In Frank Cowan's *Southwestern Pennsylvania in Song and Legend*, published in 1878, a tale is related which associated tragedy with a willow tree on the Salem road from Greensburg. The willow was supposed to have grown from a wand carried by a volunteer of the War of 1812, who was going to say goodbye to his sweetheart. As he was riding along, he spied the girl singing by a spring. In his hurry to stop and greet her, he dropped the wand. The soldier said goodbye, promising to return if he lived. The years passed; he did not return. The wand towered into a great willow, under which the bereaved girl was buried.<sup>64</sup>

Perhaps one example will suffice to illustrate a longer tale, an example that concerns another soldier, Sergeant Trotter, of Wayne's Legions. Suffice it to say for the background that Trotter was executed in November, 1792, for desertion. Two traditional accounts concern two aspects of the execution. The first deals with a weakness of Wayne's, and the second with the sufferings of Trotter's captors, who were cursed by the condemned man.

According to the first account, Trotter's home was near Wayne's camp. Since Trotter was Wayne's orderly, he was permitted to leave camp without permission when his duties were done. One day while Trotter was at home, Wayne became inebriated and called for his orderly. Highly incensed when told that Trotter was not in camp, Wayne ordered him shot for desertion. Trotter was duly arrested and taken back to camp, where he was shot when the guards

were unable to awaken Wayne from his drunken sleep. When "Mad Anthony" awoke the next morning, he asked for his orderly and was told that Trotter had been shot on his orders. Wayne was said to have cried, "Trotter shot by my orders? God in heaven, forgive me," and then to have swooned.<sup>65</sup>

The second account deals with Trotter's cursing of his three captors, Colonel Robert Hunter, Captain William Elliott, and John Horrell, just before he was shot. Trotter alluded to Psalm 109, and then he bestowed a specific curse on each of the three men. Cowan says that the "variations of the curse of Sergeant Trotter . . . would fill a volume." Hunter suffered the worst fate of the three; Cowan claims that he died of diabetes which would be in accordance with part of the curse on him; that is, he was to die of a thirst that he could never slake. Hunter always had a dog (a tormenting devil) at his heels, and this the people considered to be a partial fulfillment of Trotter's malediction.<sup>66</sup>

Tormenting devils were to be the lot of Horrell and Elliott. According to the tale, John Horrell, who resided in Loyalhanna Township, Westmoreland County, was thrown out of bed at midnight and held on his back on the floor. Meanwhile the devil looked at him over the headboard of the bed. He was killed by being thrown from his horse, which shied from the devil flying across the road in the form of a white goose and blowing sulphur fumes into the nostrils of his steed. Elliott, like Hunter, was tormented by Satan in the shape of a dog which would jump through the window, causing the man great anguish.<sup>67</sup> Nothing in the sources indicates the manner of Elliott's death.

The tales of Trotter and James Bird were very often confused, according to Cowan. This should cause no wonder, for the circumstances of the two incidents are remarkably similar. Both men were shot as examples for their fellows; tales are told of how they tried to return to their posts, but were shot anyway. Both Bird and Trotter seem to have awakened the sympathy of those who heard of their stories.

"Death is a melancholy call," as the ballad has it, but it must not be assumed that all tales and anecdotes were sad in nature. Many were distinctly humorous. These were usually told about some local character who achieved renown because of his eccentricities.

Archie Campbell of Reynoldsville would trade for anything so long as he thought he could swing some sort of profit on the deal. He did seem to have made a bad bargain when he swapped for a hardwood coffin. He was unable to get the thing off his hands, and word began to get around that Archie had finally been "taken." Archie was not one to let a thing like this deter him. He was determined to make some use of it and he did. "He was buried in it."<sup>68</sup>

Archie was determined always to win out. One Sunday in church the collection plate was passed and Mrs. Campbell had no money to put into it. Archie noted this, arose, went over to his wife and gave her a one-cent piece. Then he spoke to the usher who went to the altar, got the plate, and took it back to Mrs. Campbell. The world saw that Mrs. Mary Ann Campbell did not pass up the collection that day.<sup>69</sup>

60. Fortescue Cuming, *Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country in 1807-1808*, 100-101. In Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, IV.

61. John May, "Journal Relative to a Journey to the Ohio Country," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XLV, 118.

62. Doddridge, *Notes*, 177-178.

63. *Ibid.*

64. Page 251.

65. James Horner, "Reminiscences of Early Wilkinsburg," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, X, 184-186.

66. Cowan, *Southwestern Pennsylvania*, 111.

67. *Ibid.*

68. Ward Elliott, *History of Reynoldsville*, 94.

69. *Ibid.*, 93.

One story relates the perfect aplomb of Archie and Mary Ann. When Archie lay very ill and near death, two neighbors came in to pray for him. The pair were at the bedside offering their prayers when Mary Ann came into the room. She waved her arm and said, "Wait a minute, Mr. Prescott—say, Archie, did yez return Miles Huntingdon's cross-cut saw?"<sup>70</sup>

No better example could be given of Archie's legendary miserliness than the anecdote about the \$50 bill. It seems that Archie was dying and all his affairs were being settled in preparation for the event. It was discovered that a \$50 bill was missing. Archie stopped his death rattle until the money was located. "Then he passed quietly away."<sup>71</sup> These are the tales men told.

Music was one of the folk amusements used in any place at nearly any time. There is probably little use in detailing any of the songs; they have been well treated in S. P. Bayard's "The British Folk Tradition" in the volume *Pennsylvania Songs and Legends*, edited by George Korson. The fiddle music is treated also by Mr. Bayard in his *Hill Country Tunes*. There has been considerable emphasis put on the fiddle by many people as a dance instrument only. However, that should be revised, for fiddlers very often played at home for the amusement of themselves or their families. Jew's-harps, banjos, parlor organs, and, toward the latter part of the nineteenth century, pianos served also in this respect.

The martial bands, which were so common in western Pennsylvania during much of the nineteenth century, certainly made up an important part of the folk amusements. Evidently, though, these organizations did not usually play concerts in the common use of the term; all the references to them are in connection with other functions, e.g., picnics, Fourth of July celebrations, etc. Brass bands of various types were common also from mid-century, but they played, probably, more art tunes than folk tunes.

The various physical sports were defined usually as to place and participants, but not always insofar as time was concerned. Fighting as a sport did exist on the frontier. Wrestling is closely akin to fighting and was indulged in freely, even beyond the era of the frontier. Doddridge says the boys had, in this sport, a common amusement with the men, while McKnight mentions wrestling at both the Red Mill and Brookville in the early 1840's.<sup>72</sup> At Punxsutawney, the editor of the *Plaindealer* urged all to desist from this "dangerous amusement," for a man had dislocated his arm in two places while engaging in a bout.<sup>73</sup>

Two good wrestlers met at the barn raising of Darius Brown, in the summer of 1850, and had a good catch-as-catch-can match. Watson Holmes had come from Pine Grove to meet Leroy Bates, a powerful man who had wrestled on rafts going down the Allegheny. A ring was formed and the two began wrestling, the match to be decided on the best two out of three falls. After half an hour, Bates won the first two falls, thus ending the match. These men had pride in their ability, and Holmes refused to shake hands with the winner.<sup>74</sup> A defeat was not to be taken lightly, for it meant the loss of face.

About 1890-1900, in northern Indiana County, some forms of wrestling were "back hold," "side hold," and

"catch-as-catch-can." The first of these began with the wrestlers facing each other and grasping their opponents about the waist, while, in the second style, the two participants stood side by side, throwing one arm about the waist of the other contestant. The last method started off with the contestants standing toe to toe. When one wrestler had been knocked off his feet two out of three falls, the bout was over.<sup>75</sup> "Rooster fighting," another type of wrestling, was done in the following manner: two men squatted on the ground or barn floor, facing in opposite directions. A fork handle was then passed through their legs with each man grasping one end; then the struggle began to see which man could pull the handle free.<sup>76</sup>

Horse racing was known in western Pennsylvania and ran the gamut from well-organized affairs as in Pittsburgh in 1838, to the almost spontaneous rivalry of neighbors when they happened to meet. One has only to read the community columns of some of the newspapers to realize that a keen interest was held in the results of these by-road races.<sup>78</sup> Cock fighting was practiced, for an editor in Jefferson County complained about its reappearance in 1870.<sup>79</sup>

Sports of field and stream had their devotees as well. The ordinary small game hunting needs no explanation, but the large-scale or circular hunts are not too familiar today. Men were stationed at intervals around the circumference of a given area. The game was then driven toward the center. Davis claims that there was a wave of circular hunts from 1825 to 1830.<sup>80</sup> An alternate method for mass hunting was to set up two teams, each to be credited with points for game killed. One mass hunt in Butler County in 1866 was followed by an elaborate banquet which had an even more elaborate ritual.<sup>81</sup> Nothing like this was found in connection with fishing, which appears to have been mainly individual in nature. Fish were caught with rod and line, seines, gigs, and shooting.

Shooting at a mark or live target was an amusement practiced for many years, either by groups of men or individuals. True or not, one story which was told of a shooting match on the Sinnemahone is entertaining. The match was held on New Year's Day, 1874. Each contestant fired at a turkey at a distance of 200 yards. Needing only to draw blood to win a bird, all contestants had ten shots and missed with them all. Then, in the afternoon, the distance was reduced to fifty yards, and again all missed. Finally a knitting match was arranged between two women—the one knitting the most in a half hour to win the turkey. This too ended in disaster for one knitter was the regional midwife and was called away on a case before the match was over.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to the above sports, foot racing, jumping, kicking, swimming, hammer-throwing, and the tug-of-war were put into play. The foot races were often used as parts of the general program at reunions, or used as a sport just to pass the time.<sup>83</sup> Kicking was a pastime of the

75. K. E. Nolf, South Mahoning Township, Indiana County, September 19, 1950.

76. *Ibid.*

77. Hugh M. Brackenridge, *Recollections of Persons and Places in the West*, 62-63.

78. *Cf.*, *News*, October 24, 1894.

79. *Plaindealer*, June 16, 1870.

80. A. J. Davis, *History of Clarion County, Pennsylvania*, 85 n.

81. Brown, *Butler County*, 30.

82. George W. Huntley, *A Story of the Sinnemahone*, 302-304.

83. *Cf.*, *Republican*, February 19, 1902.

70. *Ibid.*, 94.

71. *Ibid.*, 95.

72. Doddridge, *Notes*, 176; McKnight, *Jefferson County*, 450, 523.

73. July 15, 1869.

74. Bristow, *Old Time Tales*, 208-209.



younger men, the highest heel mark on the wall determining the winner, while jumping, either from a running, standing, or hop-jump-step start, was another favorite.<sup>84</sup> "Square pulling" was another name for the tug-of-war which was only occasionally played.<sup>85</sup> Oddly enough, swimming was seldom mentioned; most notices came in complaints about someone doing it on Sunday.<sup>86</sup> A hammer for throwing was made by attaching a leather strap to the handle of any ordinary sledge. A circle was drawn on the ground, in which the thrower had to stay. A variation of this was to throw the hammer while standing on one foot.<sup>87</sup>

Children played many games, at school and at home. At Monongahela, children played "black man's base" and "three-cornered cat" at school. In the former game, sometimes known as "black man's tig," one individual took hold of a rope that had been tied to some fixed object and attempted to tag one of the other players. The tagged one then grasped his hand, and together they tried to catch the others.<sup>88</sup> Three-cornered cat was another tag game.

There were ball games which were played by children. "Town's ball," "paddle ball," "cat ball," and "corner ball" were mentioned by Van Voorhis.<sup>89</sup> "Overball" and "long-town ball" were played in Indiana and Jefferson Counties.<sup>90</sup> Baseball was popular throughout the period after the Civil War.

Stiltwalking, hoop and wagon tire rolling, roller skating, bicycle riding, swinging, and slinging were other pastimes enjoyed by the children. For the latter a stalk about four feet long was cut off at a joint, a notch then being made at the joint. A stone was placed in the notch, and the stalk was whipped forward. With such an outfit, the missile could be thrown a goodly distance with considerable force.<sup>91</sup>

Winter sports were enjoyed by young and old alike. Coasting, snowballing, and ice skating were mentioned as being favorite winter sports of the children; sleighing was more characteristic of older people. When George Brown was a boy around Centerville, Crawford County, the young men and women would climb into a sleigh filled with straw and ride merrily to a dance. The oxen would go at a snail's pace, but all the riders were light-hearted and gay.<sup>92</sup> While

84. Charles Smathers, Ringgold Township, Jefferson County, July 9, 1951; Bristow, *Old Time Tales*, 187-189.

85. K. E. Nolf, July 9, 1951.

86. Cf., *Plaindealer*, May 26, 1870.

87. K. E. Nolf, September 19, 1950.

88. Van Voorhis, *Monongahela*, 52.

89. *Ibid.*

90. Clyde Bell, East Mahoning Township, Indiana County, September 6, 1950; Charles Smathers, July 9, 1951.

91. K. E. Nolf, September 19, 1950.

92. Brown, *Old Times*, 46.

the affair mentioned above seems orderly enough, the sleigh ride described by William Faux appears to have been somewhat rowdy. Ten gentlemen went for a ride in the winter of 1824, one returning with a cracked skull. Apple-toddies were involved, which may have been a contributing factor.<sup>93</sup> Hay and straw rides, although not winter amusements, were similar in most respects to the sleigh rides.

Finally, there remain two folk amusements of the period 1775-1914 which might not appear important by modern standards. Visiting and loafing were these. Particularly in the winter, people thought that an evening's visit with its conversation, games, gingerbread, doughnuts, sweet cider, and hickory nuts was a fine way of relaxing.<sup>94</sup> One man told an historian of Erie County that an overnight stay was a necessity if the occasion were to be considered a true visit.<sup>95</sup> The people who put up with loafing directed some of the following remarks at it:

The new blacksmith shop has a heating stove for the loafers . . . .

Emory Bush is able to answer the roll call at our loafers' haven.

The Sons of Rest meet alternately at Holben and Storner's store and Abe Shaffer's barber shop.<sup>96</sup>

In conclusion, there are two quotations which perhaps illustrate well the differences between the amusements of a prior time and the present. The first, from the Punxsutawney Council Minutes of June, 1865, denotes an attitude which is probably largely absent from today's living:

Board met Present Were R. Rees, J. G. Graff and Wm. Bair and in consequence of the President looking at horses, and the Secretary being absent fishing—the three members took it upon themselves to adjourn.

The second quotation was perhaps a harbinger of things to come by way of radio and television:

Clara Croasmun, pianist and Messrs. Will Dormire and Wilbur Neal, violinists, furnished some music for [telephone party] line No. 4, on Monday evening.<sup>97</sup>

93. William Faux, *Memorable Days in America*, 20-21. In Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, XII.

94. Dinsmore, *Scotch-Irish*, 186-187; Daniel H. McKee, *The Old Mill on the Redstone*, 6.

95. Miller, *Erie County*, 96.

96. *News*, October 5, 1910, December 7, 1910; *Republican*, February 11, 1909.

97. *News*, February 26, 1908.

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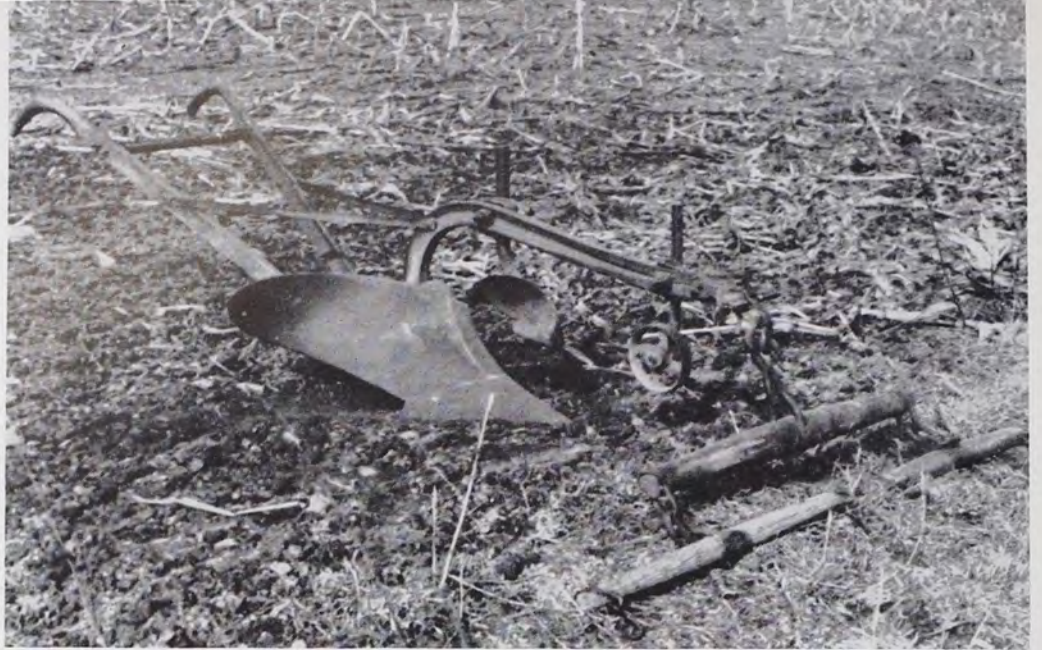
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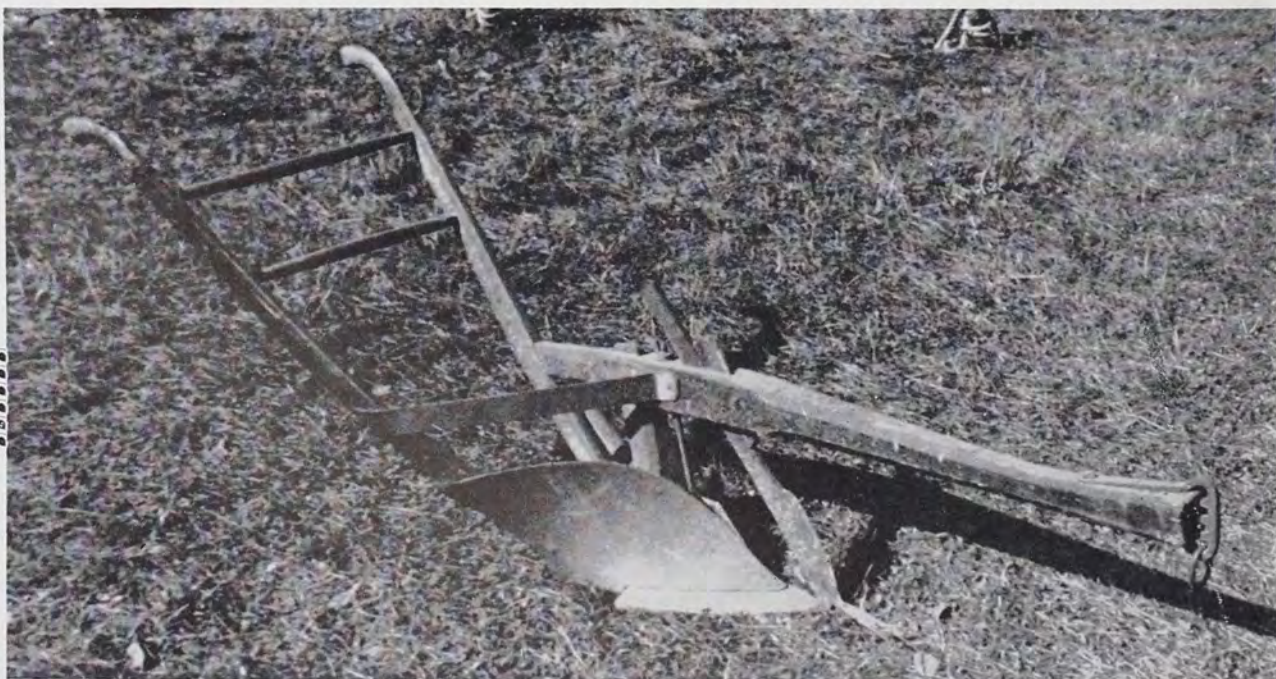
DR. DON YODER, Philadelphia—professor at the University of Pennsylvania; co-author of *Songs Along the Mahantongo*.

*Right-hand plow with colter, also doubletree and swingletree to hitch horses to plow.*



*Right-hand plow.  
Note clevis at  
front of beam.*

*Right-hand plow  
with "sech-eisa"  
instead of colter.*



# Of Plows and Ploughing

By **RUSSELL S. BAVER**

Just as the straw beehive has become a symbol of thrift and is used by numerous banks in their advertisements during National Thrift Week, so the plow is the one implement which, above all others, is symbolic of our pioneer vocation of agriculture. This spiral wedge is still unequalled for its particular purpose, which is the first step in tilling the soil.

A pick or a hoe dragged through the ground may have prompted the invention of the plow, as the early plow was no more than a hoe drawn through the ground. The essential feature of a plow is that it makes a continuous furrow, in contrast to digging or hoeing.

The very primitive plows were all constructed on the same principle. There was a stock, the point of which, lying nearly horizontal, did the actual breaking of the soil. The pull of the team was exerted through a beam or a pole, and some handle was necessary. The stock and pole were one piece of wood formed of a tree-branch and its junction with the trunk. In both ancient and medieval sources plowing is depicted as a job for two men, a plowman, who guides the plow, and a driver with a *renn-shteka* (ox-goad) in charge of the team. Guiding the plow and using the ox-goad at the same time must have been a very difficult undertaking.

Until about 1800 our fields were plowed by implements which were not far advanced from the crooked sticks which had been used for centuries. The wooden plow certainly was an improvement over the crooked sticks, but as far as doing a good job of plowing it left much to be desired. True, it was often pulled by a team of slow oxen, but, even at that slow pace, if the plow hit a fairly large stone, hardly anything but the beam of the plow remained intact. The parts of the plow were fastened together with wooden pins, and a strap of iron strengthened the back of the moldboard. A piece of iron was also used as the point or nose of the plow.

The patent for the first plow in America was granted in 1797. Two brothers Joseph and Robert Smith of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, are credited with having invented the first practical iron moldboard plow. The one brother was often irked at the way the moldboard failed to scour, especially if the soil was too damp. It also wore out too quickly to suit him. For many years it suffered from the prejudices of the farmers, who believed that cast iron poisoned the land, lowered its fertility, and promoted the growth of weeds. This type of plow finally was accepted and proved to be a great improvement over the old wooden models.

It is interesting to note that in eastern Pennsylvania, i.e., Berks, Lehigh, and Northampton Counties, the dialect term for "plow" is *blug* while in sections west of the Blue Mountain it is *bloog*.

Before proceeding any farther, I will describe the parts of the plow so that reference can be made to these terms. I shall also give the dialect terms. The following are the parts of a plow:

English term	Dialect term	Description
beam	der grendle	Part to which team is hitched and handles are attached at opposite end.
standard sheath frog	der baum der haults der shtrohl	Connects share and moldboard with beam.
plowshare	s blug-shore	Slices the earth at the bottom of the furrow.
moldboard	s wen-brett	Curved surface of plow to turn over the slice of earth.
mouldboard		
landside	die lond-side	Flat surface opposite the moldboard to help guide the plow. Faces the part of field that is not yet plowed and probably gets its name from this fact.
shin piece	s schneid-eisa	Attached to front of moldboard and above the share. Forms the edge of the "spiral wedge."
shin		
colter	der glae blug	Small plow that is fastened on beam in front of large plow.
jointer	der sech blug der jointer	
clevis	der glevis	Device at the front end of beam to which whippletree is attached.
wheel	s rawd	Small wheel to regulate depth of plow.
s raedl		

As the name "beam" suggests, this was made of wood until fairly recently when cast iron and still later steel were used. As long as it was constructed of wood, the beam furnished a comfortable seat for the plowman to take the weight off his feet while the team was given "time out" under the old apple tree. About mid-forenoon the farmer could be seen sitting on the beam enjoying a light lunch (*nine uhr shtick*) and cold water from the spring brought to the field by the young son or daughter.

When the tree was large enough to provide sufficient shade and when more than one man was plowing, this was the site of a "conference" every time the teams came around to this spot. Among the topics discussed were the condition of the soil for plowing, weather conditions, or the outlook for a good harvest. If only one man was doing the plowing, he would probably be using his pocket knife whittling on a twig which he had broken off the tree. If by chance he had found a turtle, he would undoubtedly be carving his initials and the year on the shell of the turtle. A plowman was always tempted to put in too much time under the old apple tree, and the result is expressed thus in the dialect: *Waar feel rookt, dar net feel blookt*. (He, who rests much, will not get much plowed.)

From what has been described you can readily see why the farmers preferred trees, usually fruit trees, scattered throughout the farm and not merely along the fence. Most of these trees have been removed by this time as the farmer, riding along on his tractor and seated under an umbrella, prefers fields that are entirely cleared.

The casual observer will hardly notice the frog at a plow, especially if viewing it when facing the moldboard. The frog or standard connects the "spiral wedge," consisting of the moldboard, share, and shin piece, with the beam. When thinking of the frog as the link or connector, the dialect term *haults* (neck) is very significant. When the English term "standard" is used, one cannot help but think of the dialect term *baum* as listed in the above table. Also, because the frog is so concealed and is not noticed by a casual observer, the dialect term *shtrohl* becomes very significant, as *shtrohl* is also the name for the triangular heart of the horse's hoof and can only be seen when the horse's foot is lifted. So you can readily see why, at least, three different dialect terms are given to this part of the plow.

The share slices the soil at the bottom of the furrow. It is the part that shows the wear mostly, barring unforeseen mishaps. What a blessing it was when someone finally made a "spiral wedge" with detachable parts. The shin piece and landside occasionally need to be replaced. The moldboard seldom needs to be replaced.

One of the uses of the worn out plowshare was as a weight to close the gate at the fence around the lawn. A small post was driven into the ground just inside the gate toward the hinge side. A chain was fastened to this post, inserted through a hole in the share where it had been bolted to the other parts of the plow, and hung to the gate. This may have been the first automatic door closer.

The curvature of the moldboard and its relation to the other parts made certain plows more favored among different farmers. Probably the most favored plow in eastern Pennsylvania was the Syracuse plow, so named because it was manufactured in Syracuse, New York. Some other plows were the Hamburg plow and the Munnsville plow. Hamburg, as most of you know, is a town in Berks County, Pennsylvania, while Munnsville is a small town about midway between Syracuse and Utica.

The colter plow is the small plow in front of the large plow and cuts the sod and stubble so that it is easily turned over and completely covered with soil. If sod or stubble are still visible on the plowed section of the field, an adjustment of the colter is necessary. On our newer gang plows this has been replaced by a disc. The plowshare does the horizontal cutting and the colter and the shin the vertical cutting, while the moldboard turns the slice to form the ridge and the furrow.

The clevis is attached to the fore-end of the beam and provides for both horizontal and vertical adjustments to control the width and depth of the furrow. The wheel also helps to control the depth of the furrow, as it can be raised and lowered. If the soil was of uniform consistency in the entire field, a wheel was not necessary. Another aid in controlling the depth was the length of the trace chains. These are the chains by means of which the horses are hitched to the plow. If the trace chains are shortened the pull of the horses will tend to raise the plow as it is pulled along, and vice versa if lengthened.

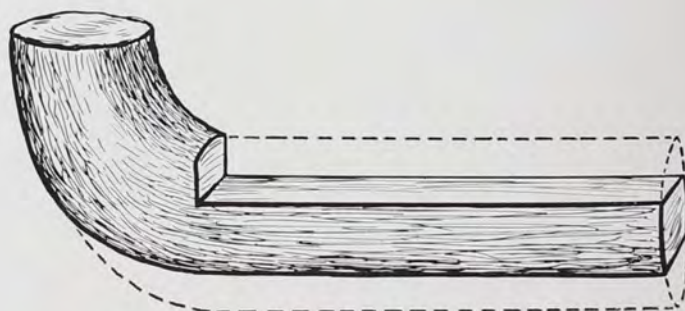
Because of the length of the beam and the fact that the handles of the plow extended beyond the beam and the



*Potato plow for plowing up potatoes.*

trace chains were usually hitched long, the horses were farther from the driver than with most of the other implements. Thus, the ordinary jackline was too short, and the farmer used a rope line about forty feet long called *die blugs line* (the plow line). As no jackline was used, the two horses were kept together by a short strap attached to the inside side of each bridle. This strap was known as *der tsomma-henker* or *der tsomma-henk rema*. No picture of a farmer taking his team to the field for plowing, riding the saddle horse, would be complete without the looped *blugs line* hanging from the hame of the horse.

Of course, the farmer would not be riding his horse on his first trip to the field for plowing. The horses would be hitched to the plow, dragging it to the field. On this occasion a unique, simple piece of equipment was used. It was the plow drag or *blugs shlaffe* (Fig. 1). This was made from a curved branch of a tree, the branch being about five inches in diameter. A two-foot section was sawed from this branch with the curve close to one end. The limb was trimmed as shown in the diagram and served as a drag or runner to transport the plow. Thus, his farmyard and lane would not be plowed up. After the moldboard and share were made of steel, the plow was turned completely on its

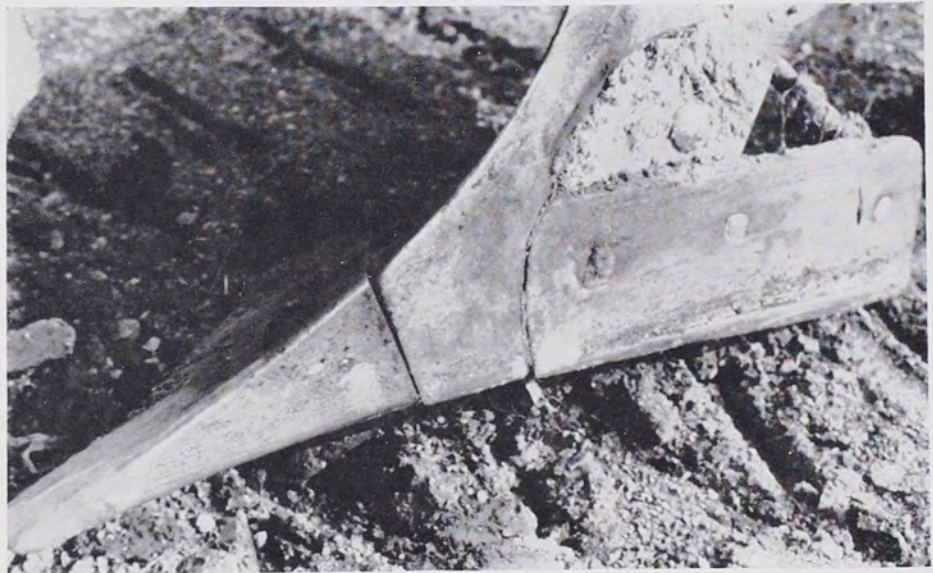


*Fig. 1—A plow drag of "blugs shlaffe."*



*A hillside  
plow.*

*Left to right:  
share, shin and  
landside of a plow.*



*Tumbling the hillside plow  
to change it from a right-  
hand to a left-hand plow, or  
vice versa. Note adjuster be-  
tween handles.*

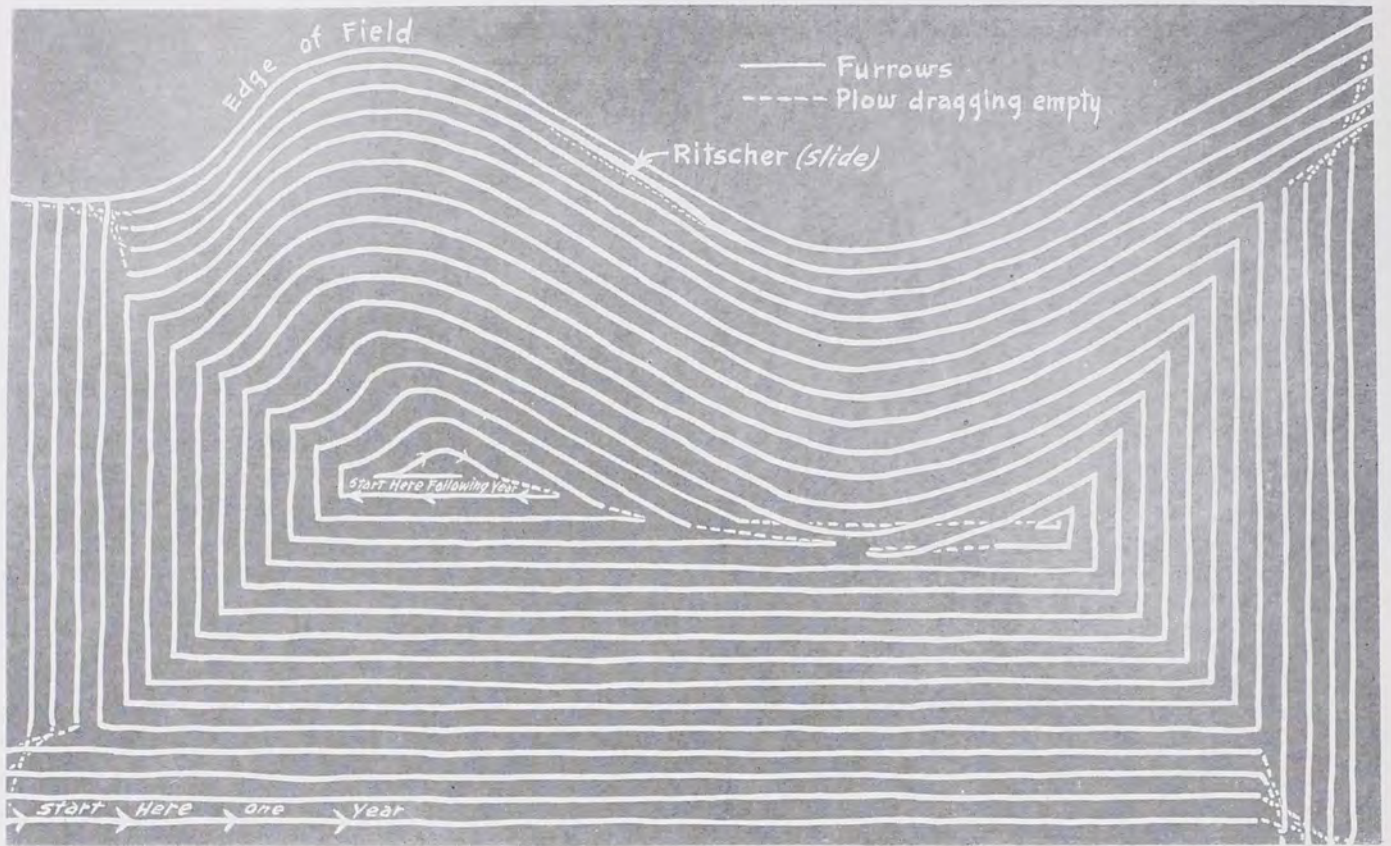


Fig. 2—Diagram of plowing an irregular field.

side and dragged to the field and no *blugs shlafe* was needed. However, when they were still made of cast-iron, you can imagine what would have happened if the plow had been handled in this manner.

So now we're off to the field. But where shall the farmer start to plow? Well, he remembers that the last time the field was plowed he started in the middle of the field and plowed toward the edges, so this time it will be plowed in the opposite manner. He will plow his first furrow along the edge of the field. He, therefore, pulls his plow by hand into a corner of the field and then says "Gid-dap" to his team. The ridge or slice of soil (*grode*) is turned toward the edge of the field and to the right of the plowman, if he is using a right-hand plow. He is, therefore, plowing around the field in a counter-clockwise manner. If, on the other hand, he were using a left-hand plow, he would travel around the field in a clockwise manner. At every corner the plow has to be pulled by hand into the corner of the field as there is not space enough for the team to pull the plow into the corner. This continues until there is an approximately twelve foot margin plowed around the field.

Most of the farmers in this area used right-hand plows. With such a plow the horse on the right (*der nava gaul* or *der gee gaul*) walked in the furrow and the horse that obeyed the command walked on the unplowed land. On the other hand, I spoke to one Berks countian who used the left-hand plow. Here the trained horse walked in the

furrow. This informant told me he used a jockey stick to keep the *nava gaul* in place and said: "*Des wawr dar en shay gablug.*" (This was nice plowing.)

From the accompanying illustration (Fig. 2) you can see that if the field is irregular, two opposite furrows will meet before the plowing is complete. These remaining patches are each completed separately, thus, leaving a double furrow or dead furrow (*ous-blugs farricht*) through the middle of the field.

When the field is due for plowing again, it is here where the farmer starts this time. He will determine the middle of the field by walking across the field, counting his steps, and then, walking back into the field again, count his steps until he is in the middle. (*Er muss es ob-schritta.*) In a type of field illustrated he would do this at three different places. Then the two small patches which he ended with on the previous plowing will be plowed first. When the two small patches (*aw-wenner*) meet at a point, he plows around the entire plowed area.

The previous plowing left a slight depression where the dead furrow was formed. This, of course, is also a reliable guide in determining the middle of the field. So you can see how well acquainted the farmer must be with each field. *Er muss sei feld grawd so gute bekondt sei os wie sei hussa-sock.* (He must be as well acquainted with his field as he is in his trouser pocket.)

If two men are available another method may be used.

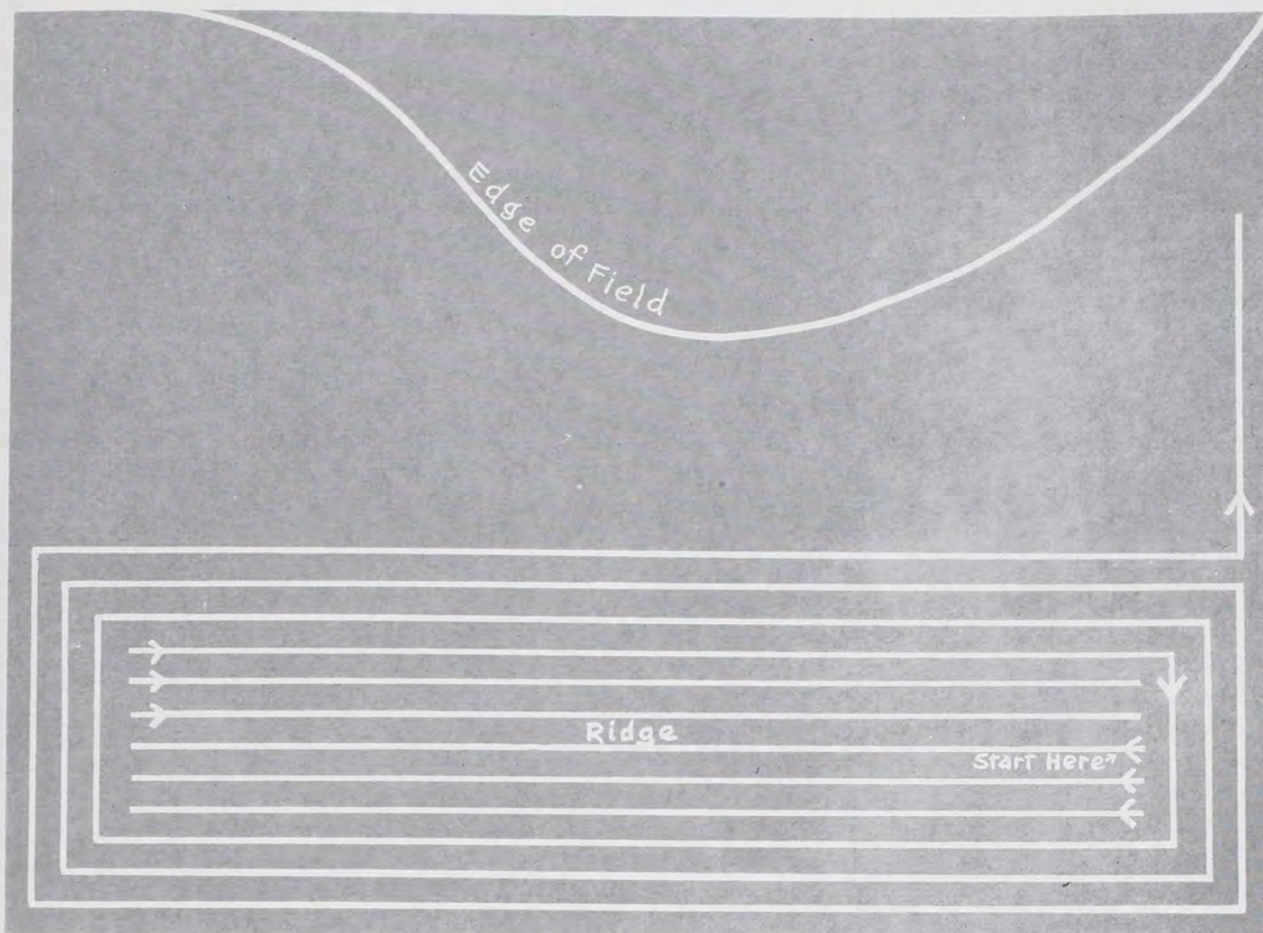


Fig. 3—Diagram of plowing one section or "land" of a field.

As previously mentioned, the plow-line is about forty feet long. The one end is tied to the horse's bridle and the one man walks along the edge of the field with the other end. The second man tilts the plow so it just scratches the soil and controls the horses so that the plowline is fairly taut. This way they proceed around the field. Having encircled the field once, the man with the line in his hand now follows the scratch made on the previous round. You can see how the middle of the field was thus found and how the *aw-wenner* were located.

When a farmer acquired a new farm, some of these methods had to be resorted to. However, when a farm was owned by the same family for many years, such information was passed along from generation to generation.

When a field is plowed in the manner just described a ridge will be formed in the middle of the field instead of an *ous-blugs farricht*. This ridge or back furrow is given the dialect term of *der grode*.

Another manner of plowing the same field was to plow one section or "land" (*shamel*) of the field first. To do this the farmer "stepped off" twelve to fifteen steps from the edge of the field (bottom of Fig. 3). A ridge or back furrow (*grode*) will be formed here. He will not start this ridge at the end of the field nor end it there. However, when the strip he has plowed is wide enough he will plow along the ends every time he makes a "round." He continues this until he has reached the edge of the field. Thus, he has

plowed a *shamel* that is twenty-four to thirty steps wide, depending on the original width. He then plows around the remainder of the field. If using a right-hand plow, he will be going counter-clockwise around the field, making left-hand turns. This remaining patch is, therefore, called a *haw lond*, as "haw" is the command given to the horses to turn to the left. When right turns are made, as in plowing the *shamel* mentioned above, it is called a *gee lond*, because "gee" is the command to the horses to turn to the right.

It was always a good omen if the horse walking in the furrow would manure into the furrow.

One of the disgusting things in plowing was the plowshare or moldboard not scouring, that is, if the soil clung to them. Numerous times the plow had to be pulled out of the soil and scraped with a stone. One way of preventing this was to clean the plow thoroughly at the end of the plowing season and then coat it with grease.

Some farmers believed that if the plowshare were greased with the fat in which the *fasnachts* were fried, the cutworms would not destroy the young corn plants. It was also held that fall plowing would destroy the cutworms, as the larvae would be more exposed to the cold weather and killed.

Oats grows better in slightly more solid soil, therefore the old corn field was also plowed in fall to seed into oats the following spring. Wheat, sown in fall, also necessitated fall plowing.

Numerous dialect terms are used to refer to plowing and to plowing done for different purposes. Among them are.

tsackera	scratch around	This term was often used mockingly to refer to plowing that was not sufficiently deep.
bluga		This is the common term for plowing.
rum-schoffa	work over	
rum-macha	make over	
rum-bluga	plow over	
unner-bluga	plow under	This term is commonly used in referring to plowing under grass or stubble. <i>Mer hen der wassum unner-gbluged.</i>
um-bluga	plow over	
ei-bluga	plow in	This term is used when plowing is done for seeding purposes, such as planting potatoes. <i>Mer hen de grumbere ei-gbluged.</i> It was also used to refer to plowing a manured field. <i>Mer hen der misht ei-gbluged.</i>
nei-bluga		
ous-bluga	plow out	This was used in referring to ground crops that were harvested by plowing them out, such as potatoes.
aus-farrichda		This refers to the use of a double plow for marking rows. It had a simple V-shaped share. In using this <i>aw-farrichder</i> the one share followed in the previously marked row and the second share marked a new row.
aw-farrichda		

In planting potatoes the cut potatoes were laid in the furrow. Two more furrows were then plowed and another row of potatoes was planted, thus planting in every second furrow. The potatoes were planted about five or six inches deep. The soil was not smoothed down until it was harrowed for cultivating.

In harvesting the potatoes, a special plow was used. This was the potato plow. This plow had metal rods extending in back of the share for about two feet. At the back end they were turned up a few inches. This prevented the soil from covering the potatoes again and facilitated picking them.

Another unique device was the plow that was used to "plow" the corn. When the young cornstalks were fairly small the farmer used the cultivator to loosen the soil. *Er hut es welshkorn gshaufelt.* However, the last "working" that the corn got was the plowing. Two hand-shaped shares were placed close to each other and formed approxi-

mately a 45° angle with the row of corn as they were pulled along with one share on each side of the row of corn plants. This formed a hill to support the corn stalk and covered the weeds.

While plowing the corn, the farmer sometimes hung a little cloth bag with a tiny hole cut into it on the hame of one of the horses. This little bag contained turnip seeds. Thus the seed was sown sparsely over a large area.

Another type of plow was the hillside plow (*barrick blug*). On this plow the moldboard could be turned on either side, thus making a right-hand or a left-hand plow, as desired. Another name for this *he-un-har blug* is a tumbler, as the moldboard tumbles from one side to the other when the latch is released.

With the hillside plow the farmer started plowing at the end of the field at the bottom of the side of a hill. At the other end of the field he turned his team and plowed in the opposite direction, the one horse walking in the furrow that had just been made. This was possible because, as just stated, the hillside plow could be used as a right-hand or as a left-hand plow. The slice of earth was, therefore, always turned down hill and not up, and this was the primary purpose of the plow.

The hillside plow had an adjuster arm (*richter*) extending from the clevis to the handles so that the proper width of the slice could be maintained when using it in both directions.

A later patent of a hillside plow was a riding plow (*sulky blug*) with two plows on it. While using the right-hand plow the other plow was raised above the level of the soil, and vice versa. Even the ordinary plow later had a seat for the plowman and was known as *der sulky blug* as compared to the old plow which was called *der lawf blug* (the walking plow). The smaller plow that was used with one horse was known as *der hond blug* (the hand plow).

*Tsu bluga iss tsu baeta.* (To plow is to pray.) Any farmer about to go to the field to plow, of course, had faith that "the earth would yield its increase."

Another expression that does not have too much meaning to it, but was probably used to mock the farmer who started plowing rather early in spring when the soil was still rather moist is: *Won mer der schnae warm ei-bluged iss er so gute ue kolic.* (If the snow is plowed under while it is warm, it is as good as lime.)

So now the field is plowed and

*The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.*



*Plowing with five teams of horses.*



# The NEW YEAR WISH of the Pennsylvania Dutch Broadside<sup>1</sup>

By WALTER E. BOYER

Folk celebrations that accompany the New Year are still a vital part of Pennsylvania German culture. Essentially these celebrations have been religious in nature. On the one hand, since the first day of the year comes in the midst of Twelvetide in our modern calendar, the festivities are coloured by the religious solemnity of Christmas and Epiphany. Yet, on the other hand, they retain elements of more ancient practices when the coming of the new year was welcomed in the spring. Thus it is not unaccountable if these celebrations have been boisterous in the midst of solemn blessings, or, to be more specific and to recognize the propensity of the folk-mind to see life in vivid contrasts, if the celebrants reverently sang during this season of the birth of the Christ Child and also jocularly wished that their friends might have a bastard child during the year.<sup>2</sup>

It is still customary in some Pennsylvania German communities for groups of men to go about the neighborhood during the midnight hours in order to shoot in the New Year and to extend religious blessings and oft-times rather ribald wishes to their friends. Whether these celebrations are sacred or secular, or a blending of the two, they are not complete unless they include these three essentials: gunpowder to be shot off in guns or on anvils in order to make as much noise as possible, a wisher to chant the blessing, and meat and drink that was to be supplied the celebrants by those who had been celebrated.

Out of such ritual evolved the Pennsylvania German broadside *Neujahrswunsch*. Of these there are three distinct groups: first, there are those broadsides that are identical with the folk blessings as we know them (these may represent the first attempt in Pennsylvania to record in print the oral traditions); second, there are those which were distributed by newspapers; and third, those broadsides that are entirely personal and were sent from friend to friend.

Folk customs are best seen in the first two groups. Even an attempt was made to suggest noise. On some of the earlier broadsides, wood-cuts of soldiers or civilians carrying guns were used evidently to illustrate the practice of shooting in the New Year. Since it was deemed imperative to visualize the audible, one can better appreciate the dynamic nature of the custom, a custom that persists to the present day in the rural areas.<sup>3</sup> Shooting has been a

practice that has persisted in spite of the fact that the Pennsylvania legislators as early as 1774 passed a law forbidding the discharging of guns in the New Year celebrations. This legislation may account for the apologetic warning that the celebrant gave to the host that if no objection was heard they would shoot in the New Year in his honor. And, I suppose, the celebrators felt that if they heard no objections they were not breaking the law or, at least, that they need not fear arrest. The following passage is typical of what was added to the traditional New Year Wish in order to accommodate itself to the letter of the law:

*Ich hoff' es wird euch nicht verdrissen,  
Wenn ich und meine Cameraden euch das Neujahr an-  
schiessen.  
Sollt's euch aber doch verdrissen, so sagt's eh' wir  
schiessen,  
Weil wir hoeren kein'n Verdruss, so thun wir einen  
Freundenschuss.<sup>4</sup>*

Keeping in mind the folk customs of shooting, singing, and eating, let us further note the characteristics of the New Year broadsides of the literary tradition. Attention will be directed to the presenter of the wish, to the content of the wish, and to some characteristics of the language that was used.

As noted above, the newspapers were the principal distributors of the New Year broadsides. In the early imprints it is stated in the heading that this is the New Year Wish of the paper carrier. This is a typical heading: *Neu Jahr-Wunsch/ Des Herumtraegers des Unabhaengigen/ Republikaners./ Zum /1sten Januar 1830. [Allentown]*. The relationship between the newsboy and his customer is stressed in Lancaster broadside title: *Neujahrswunsch/ Des Herumtraegers des/ Lancaster Adlers,/ An seine Kunden Bey dem Eintritt des Jahrs 1829*. So, too, the 1848 wish of the Reading *Liberaler Beobachter*. In 1837 the Allentown *Unabhaengiger Republikaner* dropped the word *Kunden* and now addressed the wish to *seine Freunde und Goenner*. Not to be outdone the *Wahrer Demokrat und Volks Advokat* of Reading in 1839 addressed the wish to *seine geneigten Goenner*, and it would seem that the personal touch of

village. Although a borough law forbids the discharging of guns within the town limits, evidently, since no arrests were made and no protest voiced, this pattern of activity was considered to be a supra-legal practice—a ritual of tradition.

4. *Neujahrswunsch*, 41 x 23 mm., n.d., Bassler Collection, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Penna.

"I hope that you shall not be vexed  
if my pals and I shoot in the year,  
yet if you'd be annoyed, do tell us ere we shoot,  
Since we hear no objection, we'll make our  
friendly 'toot'."

This broadside also includes a quatrain from the traditional song for the German *Drei-Koenigs Daag* and is also sung at folk gatherings throughout the year. This song motif of the golden table, the fish and wine shall be discussed in my projected study of the New Year Wish in both the oral and printed traditions for the Pennsylvania German Society.

1. This paper, appearing here in an expanded form, was read before the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, Boston, Mass., 1952, and at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, Elizabethtown, Penna., 1953.

2. Comparative practices in other cultures may be seen in the seasonal ritual drama from such diverse cultures as in the Mummer's Plays of England and the Raingod drama of the American Pueblo Indian. The attitudes of the anti-ritual but class-conscious English sects in Colonial Pennsylvania towards the Mummer's Plays are to be found in Alfred L. Shoemaker's, *Christmas in Pennsylvania*.

3. In Pillow, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, no one went about singing wishes at the coming of New Year, 1959; but three men—one at the east end of town, one at the west, and another in the center—shot in the New Year. Fifty-nine shots were fired in rotation, beginning at the east end. So the benevolent effects of shooting accrued to all the properties of the

modern advertizing of the business world was on its way.

But no matter whom the newsboy addressed—readers, customers, or patrons—his role remained the same: he sang the Wish and thus assumed the role of the celebrant of the folk ritual. In the earlier broadsides the newsboy made his hearers conscious of this relationship as may be seen, for example, in the first three stanzas of the *Northampton Correspondenten wish* of 1830:

*Ein neues Jahr ist eingetreten,  
mit schiessen, tanzen, singen, beten,  
wie's Jedem um das Herze war  
in seiner Nachbar'n bunte Schaar.*

*Man hoert jertz manchen Glueckwunsch bringen  
und jedes spricht von guten Dingen,  
als Ehr' Zufriedenheit und Geld,  
Gesundheit, Glueck in dieser Welt.*

*Der Zeitungtraeger nach der Sitte,  
kommt auch mit einer schoenen Bitte,  
ihn freundlich anzuhoeren heut.  
was er euch wuenscht zu dieser Zeit.*

Neither did the paper carrier fail to remind his customers that he was as worthy of a "hand-out" as were the celebrators of the folk practices. The *quête*, which appears in many folk practices as the vestigial remains of the offering to propitiate the wrath of the gods and to celebrate the vital blood relationship of friends, is in this instance merely a reminder that the newspaper's representative is also worthy of an offering. The last stanza of the broadside quoted directly above has this *quête*:

*Vergesst dabei doch nicht des Jungen  
der alle Woch euch bringt Zeitungen,  
und heut gern auf Eu'r Wohlsein traenk,  
wenn ihr ihm gabt ein klein Geschenk.*

A similar request is seen in the 1830 English wish of the *Easton Centinel*:

*Now, I want something, what I need not say  
news boys always expect on New Year's day  
A little Rhino to keep off hard times,  
For our past services and half gingling rhymes.<sup>5</sup>*

But nine years later, in Allentown, the *quête* was stated more specifically. The "Rhino" gave way to "a piece of silver."

*Ein Silberstueckchen hat den Klang,  
Der mir heut suesse toenet.  
Ein klein Geschenk ich auch nehm an,*

5. *Rhino* is a word of uncertain origin. Sir James A. H. Murray, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford, 1914), gives its meaning as being a piece of money and cites Shadwell as the earliest reference (1688) and Mayhew as the most recent (1851). There is no entry for *rhino* in Mitford M. Matthews, *A Dictionary of Americanisms*. I have been informed that in Reading, Penna., at the turn of the century, it was customary to give the newsboy a quarter for his wish.

6. *Neujahrs-Wunsch von dem Herumtraeger des Wahren Demokrats und Volks Advokats, an seine geneigten Goenner, beim Eintritt des Neuen Jahrs*. 44 x 28 mm., Allentown, Penna., 1839, Bassler Collection, Franklin and Marshall College.

"A piece of silver has the ring  
That is sweet to me today,  
A little gift I'll take indeed  
For it my heart does pray.  
Surely I shall be thankful  
And bring the paper, too;  
It may rain or it may snow,  
Gladly I'll come running through."

7. *Ein Neujahrs Wunsch*. (*Eine genaue Abschrift des Originals—Gedruckt fuer Daniel Heffendraer*. 35 x 22 mm., n.d.,

*Mein Herz darnach sich sehnet,  
Dazu will ich stets dankbar seyn,  
Und auch die Zeitung bringen;  
Es mag nun regnen oder schney'n,  
So werd' ich froehlich springen.<sup>6</sup>*

Some of the broadsides indicate the tune to which the wish was to be sung. One such tune, *Brueder thut euch wohl besinnen*, is taken from the hymnody of the Church and was a favorite. This is a marked difference from the New Year folk wish which probably was always chanted. The regularity of the metrics of the broadsides indicates that the broadsides were sung to more formal tunes.

Of course there are broadsides that include both chanted and sung portions. These wishes almost always begin with the traditional introduction that was chanted and then continue in a formal metrical pattern. Indeed there are some broadsides that utilized the folk practices and the church practices. These newspaper wishes begin with the folk introduction, continue with stanzas from the New Year hymns of the Church—rearranged at times in a bewildering maze—and conclude with a traditional formula. This composite nature is seen in a New Year Wish printed for Daniel Heffendraer. It appears that the introduction was chanted. Note that the wish is a blessing addressed to the head of the household, and then to his beloved housewife, sons and daughters, hired men and house maids, and all both great and small who may be at home with him, as well as all that may come and go at his house:

*Ich wuenscht euch und euren lieben Hausfrau,  
Soehne und Toechter, Knechte und Maegde, und  
alle wie ihr im Hause seid, Gross und Klein, und  
alle wie ihr zu eurem Hause aus und ein gehet, ein  
glueckselig neues Jahr, Friede, Freud und Ewigkeit,  
und auch die Ewige Seligkeit.<sup>7</sup>*

After this introduction the song makes use of the metrics of church hymns and the stanzas are made up of lines that have been taken from at least eight different hymns which may be found in *Ein Unpartheyisches Gesang-Buch*<sup>8</sup> and the *Kleine geistliche Harfe*,<sup>9</sup> as well as four stanzas of a New Year hymn by the German hymn writer Paul Gerhardt. At the end of twenty-three stanzas the broadside song concludes with the traditional close: *Nun will ich meinen Wunsch beschliessen, / Und euch das neue Jahr anschliessen.<sup>10</sup>*

Returning again to the Newspaper broadside, it next should be noted that as soon as a calendar for the year accompanied the broadside, the paper-carrier's role was either minimized or else eliminated and the role of the paper itself was emphasized. An example of this is the broadside

Schwenkfelder Library, Pennsburg, Penna. There is another copy in the Bassler Collection at Franklin and Marshall College.

8. *Ein Unpartheyisches Gesang-Buch . . . Lancaster, [Penna.], George und Peter Albrecht, 1808. #30, p. 24; #31, p. 25; #32, p. 25; #36, p. 29.*

9. *Die kleine geistliche Harfe der Kinder Zions . . . Germantown, [Penna.], Michael Billmeyer, 1803. #32, p. 24; #33, p. 22; #34, p. 23; #38, p. 26.*

10. "Now I'll bring my wish to an end

And shoot in the New Year for you, friend."

It is significant that in the welter of textual changes, the traditional ritual practice of shooting persists, even though the original purpose for doing so may be forgotten. To account for this persistency the intuitive kinship of wisher and the "other" must be taken into account. It is at this point where folkloristic studies are weakest. The methodology for the study of a folk text is not the same as that of, let us say, an Emerson essay. The former text is essentially communal, the latter cloisteral. The role of the wisher is a non-self-conscious one, that of the author self-conscious. It is deitic rather than demotic.

of the *Banner von Berks* of 1865, published in Reading, Pennsylvania. No mention is made of the *Herumtraeger* and his *Wunsch* but rather is this the *Neujahrs Gruss* of the *Banner von Berks*, and, as shall be pointed out later, the newspaper omitted the folk characteristics of blessing in order to editorialize upon the political, economic, and social conditions of the past year and to herald the lofty virtues of the paper itself.

This innovation was not only away from the nature of the folk customs but opened as well the way for the commercial New Year Greeting similar to the greeting cards that are now sent on holidays. Two excellent examples of this latter type were printed and sold by T. R. Weber at Hellertown, Pennsylvania. Both bear the simple title, *Neujahrs Wunsch*. Rather than being the song of a paper-carrier, the one is a poetic letter (at times printed as prose) for an amorous swain to send to his sweetheart, as may be seen in the couplet—

*Fahr hin du kleines Brieflein,  
Gruess nur dein Herz alliebste mein.*<sup>11</sup>

The salutation, *Herr Bruder*, and the earthy humor of the other Weber broadside suggests that it was sent by a man to his friend. All the sentiments and many of the phrases may still be heard where men gather in the Pennsylvania German community. Essentially it is a joking relationship that exists between two friends, and may be noted in the greetings that are given to one another when they meet. The subject matter is the reverse of the content of the traditional blessing as noted above. Whereas in the serious blessing the wish is for health to work and verility to father children, the joecular wish "kids" the person about his growing weakness which makes him a less effective provider for his family and voices the hope that he shall have annually a bastard child of uncertain paternity. Such a New Year Wish I have recorded and on the authority of the informant I say that it was a particular wish that was given from friend to friend.

Of course this part of the ritual of the folk practice of New Year wishing has, for the most part, been greatly neglected. It suggests to me that there existed at one time a meaningful pattern of blood-brother relationships, as interpreted by A. M. Hocart in *The Life-Giving Myth*.<sup>12</sup> This relationship may not only be seen in the joecular New Year wish but also in the baptismal ceremony, in communal work patterns, in hunting parties, and in the traditional card-playing practices in the small, rural taverns. Of course this cannot be readily observed unless one is willing to become part of the *Gestalt* and *Formgefuehl* of local customs and this, seemingly, investigators are unwilling to do or our learned institutions to encourage. It is easier to observe than deserve.

In any case it may be seen that in the broadside tradition of the New Year wish there was a steady withdrawal from the folk practices, and by the time the calendar broadside was introduced and the more commercial greetings sold, the role of the presenter or celebrant was either minimized or else eliminated and the quète was dropped.

Similar to the changing role of the presenter and the quète is the nature of the content of the Wish. The songs sung by the paper-carriers were primarily religious with a

minimum reference to political, economic and social matters. When his role was dropped and the editorial stage was reached, there was a minimum of religious content and a maximum amount of commentary on world, national, and local happenings of the past year to which an exhortative quatrain or two of nationalism would be attached. In short, the folk blessing had become "worldly."

Furthermore, as the ritual of New Year blessing became less meaningful and the spirit of the *Bund* was directed by institutions into their particular channels for their peculiar ends, then the consciousness of the other world, both holly and humorously, was replaced by the piety of newspapers politically attuned to this world and the self-consciousness of the greeting card, a consciousness that was ultimately to become sick. At this greeting card stage, the broadsides were composed in a manner that would reflect the disposition of the prospective buyer. Some were pious but not worshipful; some humorous, but the recipient was to be laughed at and not laughed with; and, of course, many were amorous with the romance that America seems so able to foster.

The New Year Wish of the carrier of the *Unabhaengiger Republikaner*<sup>13</sup> of 1830 is typical of the content of the less commercialized broadsides. This song consists of fourteen eight-line stanzas and was sung to the tune of *Brueder thut euch wohl besinnen*. The first six stanzas are definitely religious in nature and thus akin to the blessing of the oral tradition. God is accepted as the director and deliverer of the affairs of men. He has armed man against a thousand needs, against hunger, illness, misery, death. Yet if death has visited any family, he has done so according to the will and plan of God and is therefore a blessing. To compensate for this loss God has sent tender babies that *Mammi* may *schmatz* and *Daadi* may *boss*.<sup>14</sup> In addition, God shall not permit families to die out as is very evident when one sees the young couples hopping and skipping about hand in hand. He has also protected the nation, the larger family of man, and has blessed the citizens according to their needs and has kept them free from war.

The next seven stanzas (7-13) are a commentary in praise of the "hero of the common people," "the Hickory Father," "brave, old Andrew Jackson," who had been elected President of the United States in 1828 by a substantial majority. He is praised for having "belled-out" the "rubber-stampers" and the "lying squadrons" (these may have been similar to the truth squads of our modern era, I suspect). This newspaper declares that Jackson has shown his hand at the rudder and leads the land to prosperity, and furthermore, admonishes the people not to complain that he has assumed his authority so boldly and so bravely.

Mr. George Wolf, the newly elected governor of Pennsylvania and a Pennsylvania German, is also honored and respected for reasons similar to those ascribed to President

13. *Neu Jahrs-Wunsch/ Des Herumtraegers des Unabhaengigen/ Republikaners* Allentown, Penna./ *Zum /1sten Januar 1830*. 47 x 28.5 mm. The song consists of fourteen, eight-line stanzas arranged in two columns, which are separated by a decorative border. The stanzas are signed by "*Der Herumtraeger*." Heavy, decorative-type borders surround the stanzas on all but the lower side. The left and right side borders support an arch beneath which the title appears as well as a small woodcut of an Ionic temple enveloped by clouds. This broadside is in a private collection, as well as all others mentioned in this essay that have not been completely identified.

14. The influence of the Pennsylvania German dialect is seen both in the spelling and in the words *Mammi* . . . *schmatz*, *Daadi* . . . *boss*. But whether the kiss is given by father or mother, it is a very hearty one, a resounding one. No fear of sex scars here!

11. "Go forth you little note, so small,  
Greet only the heart I love best of all."

12. See A. M. Hocart, *The Life-Giving Myth*, N. Y., 1953, pp. 185-189.

Jackson. The people are assured that similar benefits shall accrue.

Then follows a castigation of the Anti-Masonic party. In Pennsylvania by 1829 this party has become a significant force in local and state elections. Capitalizing on the contemporary distaste and distrust of secret societies, particular efforts were made to keep Masons out of office. It is claimed that they are "allied with the Federal side and the same long hand" and that they are in opposition to the Jacksonian Republicans.

The New Year song in English of the *Lehigh Herald* newspaper of 1830 expresses its attitude towards the Anti-Masonic party in a macaronic manner and to the tune of Yankee Doodle:

For every man of sense will find  
that Masons are not wizzards  
that some are bright and some are blind  
some good men and some lizzards.

If old Wutz [sow] had but teats enough  
to give the Aunties suckle  
we'd hear no more of masons stuff  
but see them grin and chuckle.<sup>15</sup>

The opinion that the anti-Mason attitudes have their origin in the lust for the spoils of office is also evident in the *Unabhaengiger Republikaner's* broadside that we have been discussing. This is why, on the one hand, "Carl and James and Henrich must be chased from office by hair and body" and why on the other, Dan, Bill, Hans and Joekel think that Wolf must give them a job" and why, in addition, "Charles and Stoffel" are anxious to get into the court house. In this case the newspapers reflect a traditional attitude of the folk culture. Anyone who directly and diligently sought office was suspect of ulterior motives. A people that was closer to the choice by lot than to majority rule believed that the voice of the people had a better chance of being the voice of God if the candidate did not electioneer the populace or button-hole his friends.

Thus when the New Year broadside had reached the greeting and calendar stage, there was little that it held in common with the traditional blessing or wish. The oral tradition had given way to the read tradition, and the common experience had given way to the personal and profitable.

Finally, a word must be said concerning the language of the broadsides. Generally speaking it appears that they were written in Standard German. However when the rhym scheme is noted, it may be seen that the pronunciation of the Standard German was influenced by the various Middle and High German dialects that were spoken by the early settlers in Pennsylvania. This phenomenon may be readily heard when unlauded syllables are rhymed with unlauded ones as in *gruessen* and *ausgiessen*. In the dialect the vowel quality would follow that of the second word. This same practice to flatten the rounded sounds of Standard German is further seen in the rhyming of *Suender* with *Kinder*, *fuehrt* with *regiert*, or when *Heut* is rhymed with *Zeit*, *erfreu'n* with *klein*, *neu* with *vorbei*, *Freund* with *vereint*. These examples may be found in the New Year wishes whether they are of 1787 or of 1895. But, of course, the practice was not unusual since the German poets of the Romantic movement on the Continent were exercising a similar freedom.

15. Other than giving the English equivalent of *Wutz*, the quotation is given exactly as it appears in the broadside.

What is more characteristic of the American German broadside poetry is its growing macaronic nature. In these broadsides there is not only the presence of influences of the dialect but there is also the presence of English loan words accommodated to the German by way of pronunciation. This may be seen in the following couplet:

*Wo man es sonst bey Quart rief ein  
Kann's jetzt nur Peint und Tschillechen sein.*<sup>16</sup>

Not only did the Pennsylvania German accept the English nomenclature of political and social life but he delighted in English popular speech as well as may be seen in the quète of an 1840 broadside. In his anxiety for a hand-out the newsboy sings:

*Vergesst mich nicht in Eurer Freude,  
Denkt: "Money makes th' mare go," ihr Leute.*<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, some of the English broadsides that were issued in Pennsylvania make use of German loan words as in the *Wutz* of the Yankee Doodle ballad mentioned above. Furthermore, the newspaper writers did not think it amiss to make use of Latin words and phrases, to wit:

*Erbarm dich! O Magnificum  
schaff der Aemter, bald noch mehr  
sonst gehts ganz Sapienzium  
bald die krentz und bald die queer  
ein'gen geht der Kopf im Kreissel  
and're flechten Rosm'rein Straeussel  
noch Aemter her beim Flickerment  
die Freiheit sonsten geht zu End.*<sup>18</sup>

Thus it seems to me that these things are to be concluded from an inspection of the Pennsylvania German broadside *Neijahrswunsch*: that this type of broadside had its origin in folksong and folk custom and that in these broadsides the slow commercialization of folk life can be traced. In addition to these cardinal conclusions it should be further noted that since these broadsides were for the most part the products of the newspapers, they reflect in the majority of instances not only an editorial policy but that they are historical records of local events and customs, and, therefore, of inestimable value to folklorist and historian alike. Furthermore, since the publication of German New Year Wishes covers a span of more than a hundred years, the study of the language that was used affords one a more valid appreciation of the acculturational strength of the Pennsylvania German dialect, a fact that could be only suggested here.

Let the last word be from a New Year Wish broadside so that it may give us at least a faint echo of yester-years during the celebrations of New Year today. This is the last stanza of a wish from the folk world of men:

*Ei nun, ich faules Luder  
Vergesse mich hier gar,  
Drum guter Tag Herr Bruder  
Viel Glueck zum neuen Jahr!*<sup>19</sup>  
[Ah, yes, I'm a lazy stinker,  
I forget myself, I fear,  
Have a good day, my brother,  
Much luck throughout the year!]

16. Stz. 5, *Neujahrswunsch des Herumtraegers des Unabhaengigen Republikaners*.

17. Stz. 10, *Der Herumtraeger der Stimme des Volks*. 28.5 x 19.5 mm., Bassler Collection, Franklin and Marshall College.

18. Stz. 13 of the broadside identified in Note 13.

19. Stz. 15, *Neujahrswunsch*. Hellertown, Pa.—Printed and Sold by T. R. Weber.

# Neu-Jahrs-Wunsch

des Herumträgers des  
Unabhängigen Republikaners,  
An seine geehrten Kunden,  
Beim Eintritt des Jahrs 1833.

Hörst Du!—es tönt durch nächtlich's Grauen,  
Legt erst herab die Mitternacht!  
Ein neues Jahr sollst Du nun schauen;  
Das alte hat den Lauf vollbracht.  
Geöffnet sind Dir neue Pforten,  
Vor Dir liegt eine Lebensbahn;  
Doch Finsterniß an allen Orten:  
Wer ist's, der sie erhellen kann?

Noch kennst Du nicht die frohen Stunden,  
Noch siehst Du nicht die Leidensnacht;  
Dein forschend Auge bleibt gebunden;  
Du folgst der Zeit und ihrer Macht.  
Denn was Gott droben hat beschlossen,  
Auf Erden wird es nicht erkannt,  
Bis wir, als seines Rechts-Genossen,  
Betreten das ersuchte Land.

Auch unbekannt sind Dir die Herzen,  
Die sich dem Deinen werden nah'n;  
Die gleich den reinen Himmelskerzen  
Erleuchten werden Deine Bahn.—  
Doch werden die Dich dann noch lieben,  
Wenn sich dies Jahr zu Ende neigt,  
Die jetzt mit innig zarten Lieben  
Dir ihre Freundschaftshand gereicht?

Denn was wir heute herrlich preisen,  
Sehn morgen wir als nichtig an.  
Der Mensch, er wählt auf tausend Weisen;  
Oft irrt sein Fuß auf seiner Bahn.  
Wie von des Windes Macht getrieben,  
Fliehet bald hier, bald dorthin hin;  
Und ist ihm endlich nichts geblieben,  
Kehrt er zum Himmel seinen Sinn.

So grüßen wir denn nicht mit Freude  
Dich, ersten Tag im neuen Jahr;  
Mit Deinem nächtlich düstern Kleide

Umhüllst Du Freuden und Gefahr.  
In Deinem Schooß, im tiefsten Schlummer,  
Da ruht, was uns betrübt, beglückt.  
Ach! wer verschleucht den hangen Kummer,  
Wenn heut das Aug' ins Dunkle blickt.

Doch sieh!—wer steht dort an der Pforte  
Des neuen Jahrs, wer schloß sie auf?  
Wer spricht zu uns so süße Worte,  
Wer zeigt zum Himmel uns hinauf?  
Du bist es, Herr—ja, Deine Treue  
Bewies sich uns als felsenfest.  
Du sprichst, damit das Herz sich setze;  
"Ich bin's, der nimmer euch verläßt!"

"An meiner Hand darf Euch nicht grauen:  
"Ich selbst bereit' Euch einen Weg;  
"Es wandelt sich in Frühlingsauen,  
"Nacht Ihr Euch mir, der dunkle Steg.  
"Wollt froh ihr in die Zukunft blicken,  
"Verschmähet mich als Führer nicht;  
"Euch kann ich auch in Noth erquickern,  
"Drum hofft auf mich mit Zuversicht!"—

Ja, Herr! uns ist so bang' im Mute:  
Hier hast Du freudig unsre Hand.  
Schenk uns zum neuen Jahr das Gute,  
Das Deine Weisheit heilsam fand.  
Wie wird's so licht in unsern Herzen  
An deiner Hand; die dunkle Nacht  
Der Zukunft fliehet; in Glück und Schmerzgen  
Dein treues Auge stehend macht.

Die geehrten Patronen des Unabhängigen Republikaners  
sind noch immer freigebig gewesen—wenn sie jetzt noch in ihrer  
Freigebigkeit beharren, so haben sie den aufrichtigen Dank

des  
Trägers.

An example of a newspaper New Year Wish printed by the Allentown Republikaner. These broad-side wishes were distributed to customers by the newsboys who always expected a handout at this season of the year.

