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Spring
**PENNSYLVANIA
FOLKLIFE**
1996

**THE
SCHUYLKILL HERITAGE
CORRIDOR**

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SPRING 1996, VOL. 45, NO. 3

CONTENTS

- 98 **Folklife at the Margins: Cultural Conservation for the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor**
SUSAN L. F. ISAACS
- 114 **The Goschenhoppen Historians: Preserving and Celebrating Pennsylvania German Folk Culture**
DONALD F. ROAN
- 126 **The African American Festival of ODUNDE: Twenty Years on South Street**
DEBORA KODISH, LOIS FERNANDEZ, and
KAREN BUCHHOLZ
- 134 **Joanna Furnace, Then and Now**
SUZANNE FELLMAN JACOB and
RON SCHLEGEL
- 141 **Port Clinton: A Peek into the Past**
MINDY BRANDT

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(Inside front cover)

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Located on a tributary of the Schuylkill, RittenhouseTown- the site of the first paper mill in the American colonies- is just one of many historic places in the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor. As Susan L. F. Isaacs notes, "a heritage corridor is a region recognized for its historical value and cultural legacy. It is not a park in the conventional sense...According to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, a heritage park harnesses the past to the redevelopment of communities through opportunism, strategic planning, and interlinked actions through regional partnerships. Ultimately, the goal is to use good history to legitimize both heritage tourism and communities experiencing self doubt so that they may build a stronger future."



Route 54 Corridor
 ■ Anthracite Coal Landscape

MINERSVILLE
 ■ Historic District

POTTSVILLE
 ■ County Courthouse
 ■ Yuengling Mansion & Brewery
 ■ Historic District

PORT CLINTON
 ■ Historic District

HAMBURG
 ■ Historic District
 ■ Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad

LEESPORT
 ■ Lock House

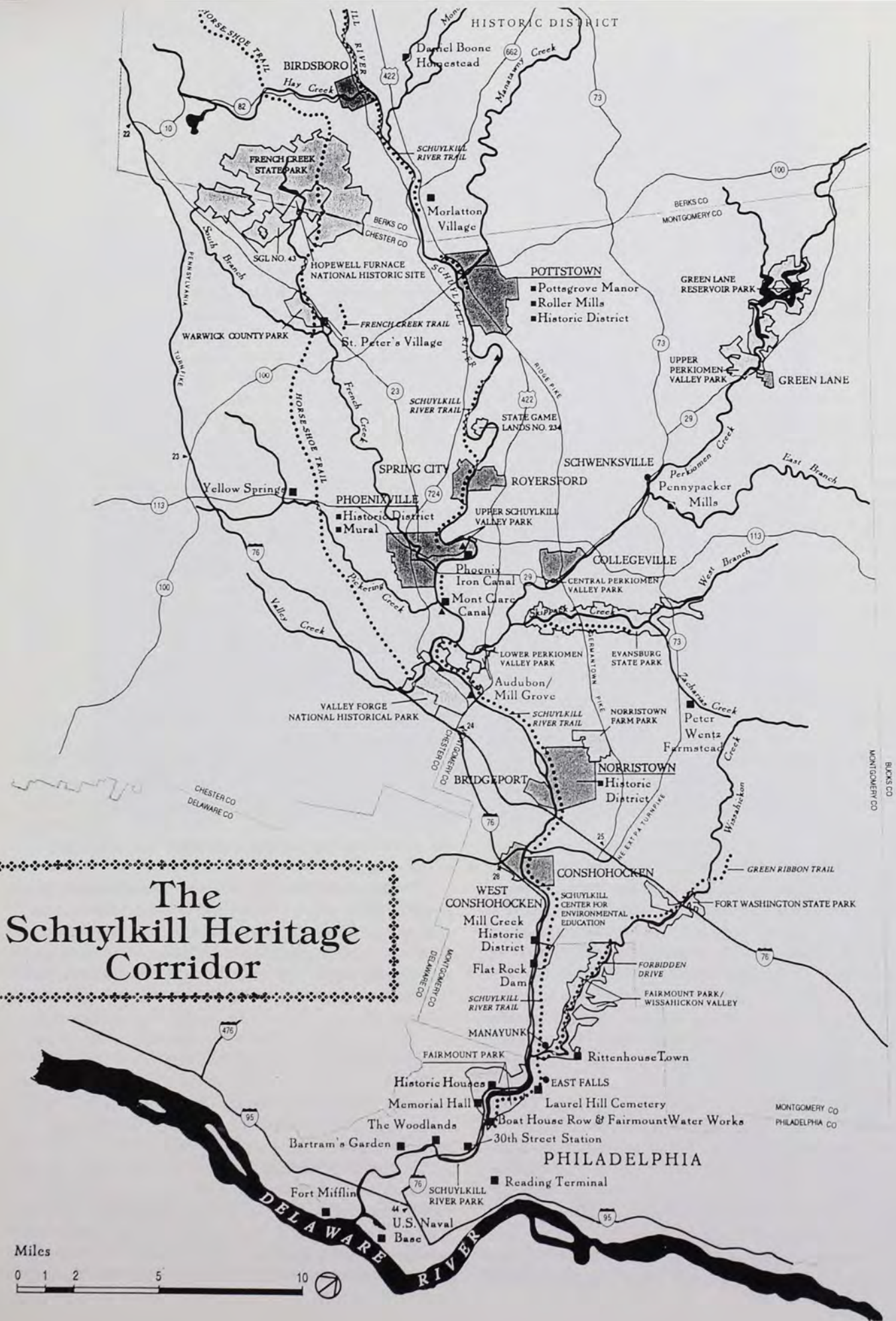
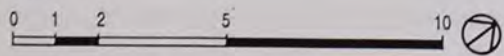
READING
 ■ Historical Society
 ■ Reading Public Museum
 ■ Skyline Drive & Pagoda
 ■ Reading Heritage Park
 ■ Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Artifacts
 ■ Historic Districts

BIRDSBORO
 ■ Daniel Boone Homestead

The Schuylkill Heritage Corridor

The Schuylkill Heritage Corridor

Miles



FOLKLIFE AT THE MARGINS: Cultural Conservation for the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor

by Susan L. F. Isaacs

A heritage corridor is a region recognized for its historical value and cultural legacy. It is not a park in the conventional sense of a publicly owned recreational space with clear boundaries. Heritage parks across the country are designed to address economic problems resulting from deindustrialization, and to some degree they are expected to ameliorate these problems through cultural tourism. Pennsylvania's Heritage Park plan is among the most comprehensive in the United States. According to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, a heritage park "harnesses the past to the redevelopment of communities through opportunism, strategic planning, and interlinked actions through regional partnerships. Ultimately, the goal is to use good history to legitimize both heritage tourism and communities experiencing self doubt so that they may build a stronger future."¹

Numerous state and community groups joined forces to create heritage parks across the country. In Pennsylvania, the Bureau for Historic Preservation began to examine industry-related historic forces during the late 1980s and 1990s.² The state's Heritage Parks Program was begun by an interagency task force interested in community rehabilitation. The Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs (DCA) sponsored studies of relevant urban redevelopment programs in historic districts, particularly those in Massachusetts and New York. This resulted in a decision to allow Pennsylvania communities to join in regional planning efforts emphasizing the significance of the state's past and the development of heritage and ecotourism opportunities through public-private partnerships.³ Pennsylvania's Heritage Park Program has five major goals: stimulate the economy; encourage cooperation among towns and counties; preserve historic sites and traditions; increase recreation; and develop educational programs.⁴ In addition to the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor (SHC), the Commonwealth recognizes five other heritage areas: the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor; the Lackawanna Heritage Valley; the Allegheny Ridge State Heritage Park; the National Road Heritage Park, and the Oil Region Heritage Park.

The Schuylkill Heritage Corridor is managed by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association (SRGA) in Wyomissing, Berks County. Creating a feasibility report was one of the requisite steps preceding state recognition of the park. The *Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor Feasibility Report*, completed in January 1992, alluded to folklife resources such as craftspersons, folk festivals, and regional traditions, but stated that, "The historic architecture and towns of the Schuylkill region are the strongest

heritage resources in the entire region."⁵ The feasibility report left the SRGA and its numerous partners still floundering to understand folklife, cultural conservation, and how they were relevant to industrial heritage. In addition, the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission (PHAC), one of SHC's public partners, felt the emphasis on architecture offered a highly limited perspective of heritage, particularly regarding folklife. Therefore, SRGA contracted with me to write a report on folklife resources in the five counties—Schuylkill, Berks, Montgomery, Chester, and Philadelphia—included in the proposed park. In consultation with SRGA and folklorists Amy Skillman, of the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission, and Diane Sidener Young of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, I developed a document that clarified the meaning folklife and cultural conservation. My report suggested how folklife and cultural conservation could be applied to long-term park planning and programming. The discussion of each county's cultural resources in this essay is based on that report.⁶

CULTURAL CONSERVATION

The place of cultural conservation in the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor should be to identify, acknowledge, and represent some of the people and traditions that have contributed to the rich fabric of American life and industry—from the earliest Native American inhabitants of the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor to immigrants from around the world who transplanted themselves and their cultures to this region.

The Schuylkill Heritage Corridor incorporates all five counties lining the 131 miles of the river, whose source is in Locust Mountain near Tuscarora, Schuylkill County. After coursing southeasterly through Berks, between Chester and Montgomery, and then through Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties, the Schuylkill empties into in the Delaware River in the extreme southeastern section of the city. The heritage corridor offers residents of this region a fresh opportunity to examine the interplay among human culture, industry, and natural resources. By conjoining industrial heritage and cultural conservation as they span urban and rural settings, the park has the potential to uniquely illustrate the interdependence of our world.

On one hand, heritage parks are mandated to focus on industrial heritage; on the other hand, they may also promote environmental awareness as a secondary goal. This perspective stems directly from understanding culture and ecology as linked systems. In the words of Library of Congress American Folklife Center director, Alan Jabbour,



C. Wahupa Scott, a Cherokee and a registered nurse, displays her own and other's handcrafts including leatherwork, dream catchers and rattles. The dance regalia she wears includes a buckskin dress decorated with cowrie shells and moccasins which she made. Native Americans live throughout the Schuylkill River Corridor. Philadelphia's United American Indians of Delaware Valley is the only Native American center in eastern Pennsylvania. A Pow

Wow brings together kindred spirits on a religious and social basis. This public event embodies the spirit of recently deceased Chief Leon Shenandoah, whose memory was honored at the 1996 Pow Wow. Said Shenandoah, "An Indian always welcomes everyone to his table; no one is turned away." (UAIDV twenty-second annual Pow Wow, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, August 4, 1996; photograph by Susan L.F. Isaacs.)

"Nature includes human nature A cultural system . . . can be compared with a complex, dynamic, permeable ecosystem in the natural realm. If we entertain such a view of culture, our view will affect the ways we go about protecting and promulgating it The conservation of nature cannot be considered apart from cultural considerations."⁷

Cultural conservation entered the vocabulary of planners in the early 1980s when the American Folklife Center (AFC) launched a six-month study of the New Jersey Pine Barrens.⁸ Although the AFC had conducted previous re-

gional surveys, the Pinelands Folklife Project – carried out in 1983 and 1984 – was the first such undertaking to incorporate cultural conservation as a major facet of research. A team of folklorists, assisted by an ethnobiologist, a cultural geographer, and other scholars surveyed the Pine Barrens to gain an understanding of its people and their relationship to the land. The Pinelands Folklife Project documented agriculture (including cranberry and blueberry propagation) and craft production (such as carving duck decoys, chairmaking, and glass blowing). The range of landscapes, including salt marshes, forests, and farmlands,

RittenhouseTown was the site of the first paper mill in the American colonies. Built in 1690 by Dutch/German immigrant William Rittenhouse, it served as a prominent paper-making center for over a century. It is a National Historic Landmark located on the Monoshone Creek, a Schuylkill River tributary, in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park. Left: This 1690 building, medieval in design, is the original Rittenhouse family homestead. It is the sole remaining structure from the original mill complex. Despite demure dimensions, the building has a 16' hearth, reported to be one of the largest in colonial Pennsylvania. Right: Built in 1707, this house has a 1713 Georgian addition. It is the birthplace of astronomer and mathematician David Rittenhouse, William Rittenhouse's great grandson. (Photograph by Susan L.F. Isaacs)



were all investigated from perspectives of people who live in the Pine Barrens. Documenting and interpreting their sense of place – culturally and ecologically – was a primary project goal.

In many cases, researchers found environmental and human resources one and the same. For example, they discovered that “woodsmanship, as essential to agriculture as hunting and gathering, is steeped in notions of resource stewardship. . . . A good woodsman knows how to care for the woodland . . . understand its ecological balance, and work together with it.”⁹ In other cases, environmentalists and local residents came into conflict, as the following example illustrates.

A salt-hay farmer hoped to develop a campsite on his land, although it was not zoned for commercial use. At a court hearing about the zoning, an environmentalist testified against the farmer, noting that seven endangered species of grasses grew on the site. The scientist described the grasses by their Latin names, which indicated to the farmer that the outsider was sorely lacking in local knowledge. As the farmer later explained to a folklorist, experiences of this type “destroy the credibility of environmentalists. They want to stop you just to be stopping you.”¹⁰ Had the scientist taken time to learn the grasses’ local names, the farmer would have found him more credible, and been less inclined to develop his campsite. Many professional folklorists define themselves as ethnographers, that is, social scientists whose research consists in part of interpreting and translating local knowledge to a broad audience. This example illustrates a case where a folklorist could have served as culture broker between the farmer and the ecologist.

The development of heritage parks requires seeking common ground within community, governmental, and

environmental goals. Cultural conservation implies that community desires and identities receive a strong voice in park development. Folklorist Mary Hufford, director of the Pinelands Folklife Project, demonstrates that folklife research can compliment the work of environmentalists and historians. Folklife should also mediate “what we might call the vernacular management and interpretation of resources – cultural as well as natural. What are the possible relationships between people and natural resources? How are these relationships formalized? How do ‘guardians of the landscape’ name, classify, and transform the land and its resources? How do they assemble their pasts and with what historical resources? How do their concepts align with those of formal history, ecology, and science? How do they interpret natural resources and, through various kinds of cultural and natural display, present themselves to outsiders and to each other?”¹¹

Folklife resources are extensions of historic, archaeological, and natural ones. The Pinelands Folklife Project demonstrated the interplay between a knowledge of regional folklife and familiarity with the environment. When planners and government agencies acknowledge the value of folklife, it generates potential solutions to many interpretive and managerial problems. Environmental stewardship and cultural conservation can become part of the overall enterprise of socionatural management.¹²

Conserving culture may be an elusive concept because some of what we intend to preserve is intangible. Examples include oral traditions and stories about a region, or a joke understood only by people who work in the same industry. In contrast, material culture such as houstypes, pottery, baskets, and foodways are fully tangible folklife. But like intangible resources, they must be interpreted with a broad understanding of their cultural contexts, or we lose



The Schuylkill flows into the Delaware River below Philadelphia. These Italian-Americans crewed on construction of the Ben Franklin Bridge, which spans the

Delaware from Philadelphia to Camden, New Jersey, c. 1922-1926. (Courtesy of Foglietta Family Collection, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies Library)

their meaning. The processes devoted to making these objects, as well as the beliefs behind them, reflect traditions that are crucial to understanding folklife through the eyes of tradition bearers. American folklife, as defined by the Library of Congress, "means the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in the United States: familial, ethnic, occupational, religious, regional. Expressive culture includes a wide range of creative and symbolic forms such as custom, belief, technical skill, language, literature, art, architecture, music, play, dance, drama, ritual, pageantry, and handicraft. Generally, these expressions are learned orally by imitation, or in performance, and are maintained or perpetuated without formal instruction or institutional direction."¹³

In each of the following examples illustrating folklife from the Schuylkill corridor there is the potential for creating an educational program. For instance, in Montgomery County a family greets new neighbors by bringing them a basket of homemade bread and a small dish of salt. This is merely a curious display of food and condiment unless we know that it is a traditional Ukrainian gift of welcome. In Philadelphia, a basket woven from recycled plastic strips may appear to be a mundane container unless we know the background of its Laotian maker. This craftsman, who collects the strips where he works in a local manufacturing plant, made bamboo baskets in his home country. His American made baskets reflect the old forms adapted to new materials. In Berks County, a terra cotta plate with a floral design appeals to a broad audience. But without knowing that the maker is a seventh-generation Pennsylvania German, we do not understand the vitality and endurance of the floral symbol or the redware pottery tradition. The plate refers back to a cultural system that survived the Atlantic crossing and 300 years of history in America.

In Schuylkill County Harry Thompson, a disabled miner, assembles polished pieces of coal into sculptures, and John Marshall is a silhouette artist whose intricate coal carvings include local scenes. An insightful interpretation of these men and their work will evolve from understanding the

culture of the Schuylkill County mining industry and its time honored history. In Chester County, rural iron forges and furnaces, such as those represented at Hopewell Village and Joanna Furnace, are products of the earliest industries of the American colonies. Many Schuylkill tributaries have the remains of iron and steel foundries along their banks. The manufacture of iron stove plates, often depicting Biblical or historical scenes, is one of Pennsylvania's earliest industries. Often thought of as unique to the American colonies, these artifacts may be related to tile stove plates that date to the mid-fourteenth century in Germany, Switzerland, and Central Europe. Knowing the history and cultural context of objects infuses them with meaning.

We cannot point to all of folklife as if it were a building or a river, but the people living in the building and working on the river transmit and carry folklife traditions throughout the course of their lives.

CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE FIVE COUNTIES

During 1985 and 1986 the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission carried out critical groundwork identifying ethnic organizations and traditional artists throughout the Commonwealth. PHAC conducted Traditional Arts Surveys (TAS) in every Pennsylvania county except Philadelphia and committed this information to a computer data base. The TAS was designed to investigate tangible folklife, specifically the material culture produced by Pennsylvania craftworkers. Names, addresses, counties of residence, ethnic backgrounds, occupations, specific craft works, dates of contact, and other information were recorded during the survey. Revised and edited TAS summaries form the core of this section's cultural context statements on Montgomery, Chester, Berks, and Schuylkill Counties.¹⁴

A second database consisting of Pennsylvania Ethnic Organizations lists thousands of ethnic churches and groups throughout the state. Organizations, contacts, their positions, addresses, and telephone numbers are provided. Organizations listed in Schuylkill, Berks, Montgomery, and Chester Counties include churches, synagogues, fraterni-



Leisure activities are rich with folklife traditions. These African American athletes played for Philadelphia's St. Peter

Claver's Church, c. 1910-1920. (Courtesy of St. Peter Claver's Roman Catholic Church Collection)

ties, musical groups, associations, federations, refugee organizations, libraries, historical societies, and governmental bodies. PHAC chose not to undertake research in Philadelphia to avoid duplicating the ongoing efforts of the Folklife Center at International House of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Folklife Project (PFP). In the same spirit, this essay introduces a historical-cultural context, but refers only to the major contemporary folklife resources. For further information, readers are encouraged to investigate *Philadelphia Folklife Resources: A Guide to Local Traditions*, which is an ambitious compendium published by PFP in 1991. Its thorough nature makes it the most accessible description of the city's cultural context. It represents the findings of surveys and field research among 1200 organizations throughout Philadelphia, including museums, arts agencies, libraries, archives, schools, religious organizations, voluntary associations, community groups, and individuals.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

History has made an indelible imprint on the Pennsylvania of today. As Edward Muller writes in the *Atlas of Pennsylvania*: "Despite their awesome scale and pervasive growth, twentieth century developments such as skyscrapers, regional shopping malls, superhighways, or gigantic strip mines do not completely obscure, though they often threaten, the urban rowhouses, central town squares, stone farmhouses, forebay barns, mining patches, and industrial mill towns that compose much of Pennsylvania's landscape and life. Nor has the homogenization that results from mass production, consumption, and communication fully obliterated the distinctive and historical regions of the Commonwealth. This diversity, so evident in the physical and cultural features of the landscape, also endures in the language, dietary habits, and special traditions of the people."¹⁵

Agricultural settlement created the basic fabric of the state. In the first century of European contact, Pennsylvanians explored and mapped the province. They battled and negotiated with Native Americans, created boundaries, and settled into agricultural life. The fertile lands of the southeastern counties were virtually unmatched by other colonies. In the nineteenth century, when transportation lines opened new markets, farmers in other parts of the state competed (albeit with difficulty) with southeastern Pennsylvania. By mid-century, agriculture was the prevalent way of life for the majority of the state's inhabitants. Farming continued to flourish well into the twentieth century.

Around 1800, the early phases of industrialization began to take hold. Iron deposits and forests rich with charcoal supplied the iron industry. Rising demands for home-heating fuel in New York and Philadelphia spurred the construction of the canals and railroads which transported coal, oil, and timber out of the regions passed over by earlier settlement. Pennsylvania became a leader in mining and drilling machinery. Manufacturing such as shipbuilding, textiles, and leather production – historically tied to the port of Philadelphia – also burgeoned.

From the beginning of the contact period, William Penn imagined a tolerant society that would embrace people of all religions. Quakers set the tone and the abundance of Pennsylvania did the rest to bring immigrants from numerous European cultures. It must nonetheless be noted that despite Penn's philosophy, European immigration came at the expense of the indigenous population. As in other colonies, Native American peoples and their cultures were marginalized to near extinction.

Pennsylvania had a striking blend of European peoples by the end of the 1700s. English and German speakers each represented about one-third of the population, with the latter slightly outnumbering the former. The Scots, Irish, and other northwestern Europeans comprised the final



These southern and eastern Europeans constructed a reservoir on the west branch of the Schuylkill in Forestville, Schuylkill

County, c. 1896-1897. (Courtesy of Crystal Water Company Photographs, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies Library)

third. At least a dozen religious sects were active in early Pennsylvania. Diverse cultural groups often lived in close proximity, participating peacefully in the daily life of the colony. William Penn carefully planned not only the port of Philadelphia, but interior county seats and market towns as well. By the late nineteenth century, metropolitan areas were burgeoning. Migration from farms and villages to towns was as active as European immigration. The spread of urban areas generated “a complex web of relationships that reduced traditional distinctions between city and country.”¹⁶

Nineteenth century turmoil in the United States disturbed Pennsylvania’s tranquility, but also expanded its pluralism. Initially, African Americans fled north to escape slavery; in the twentieth century, they migrated north for opportunities in the mines and mills. Religion, race, nationality, and class generated tensions and sometimes led to violence. However, the growing economy, a unionized labor force, and the flexible political system contributed to maintaining equilibrium.

Pennsylvania’s history and culture has always been closely connected to the outside world. The Commonwealth was settled by people of diverse origins; it consequently became an important source of settlers for western frontiers. “While the story of Pennsylvania focuses on the people and places within its boundaries, the unfolding of patterns and places has depended inextricably in relationships with the outside world.”¹⁷

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

William Penn envisioned a city of tolerance and harmony. His vision to allow each man a vote, to provide every prisoner the right to be heard, to give the accused a trial by jury, and to tax only by law constituted radical views in his day. Furthermore, Penn was colonial America’s

pioneering urban and regional planner, for Philadelphia was the first planned city in the colonies. Penn sought to create a “Greene Countrie Towne.” The site he selected overlooked the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, seventy miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean. He laid a grid for the city that included a park in each of the four quadrants, plus a central park that was later covered by city hall. Despite enormous changes throughout the city in the past three hundred years, all the other parks survived.

Philadelphia was ethnically diverse from the beginning. The first Europeans to settle in the area were Swedish colonists who arrived in 1638.¹⁸ The city’s geographic location halfway between the northern and southern colonies linked it through commerce and trade with many cultures, and made it a meeting place and a cultural crossroad. The diversity and intellectual stimulation attracted artists and artisans, intellectuals, and politicians. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Philadelphia was the second-largest English-speaking city in the world, outstripped only by London.

Philadelphia gave birth to the Declaration of Independence and subsequently, the Revolutionary War. The British occupied the city in 1777. After the war, the city became the capital of the independent colonies, a position it maintained until the government was moved to Washington about 1800. Eventually, however, Philadelphia was eclipsed by New York as an industrial and commercial center.

Philadelphia has changed dramatically throughout its history as the result of ongoing influxes of immigrant groups and migration within the United States itself. Industrialization and manufacturing have been central to the city’s economic health. Consequently, the exodus of manufacturing to the southern United States and abroad (starting in the 1960s), paired with downsizing during the



Many Schuylkill County coal miners originated from Eastern Europe. These workers in St. Clair included John Slopavsky (far right), born in Czechoslovakia (then Austro-Hungary)

in 1903. (Courtesy St. Clair, Pennsylvania, Collection, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies Library)

1980s and 1990s, have shaken the city's economy. Since the nineteenth century, the city has had a highly skilled work force, noted for the manufacturing of specialty products. Today, the city represents a complex mosaic of racial and ethnic groups including significant white, black, Hispanic, Asian and Indian populations. Italians make up the largest ethnic ancestry group, followed by Irish, Germans, Poles, and Ukrainians, in that order. The total population is 1,688,200.

Philadelphia is internationally renowned for a wealth of historical and cultural resources. Hundreds of libraries, museums and cultural organizations are devoted to the history of the region and/or single ethnic groups. Three institutions are devoted exclusively to folklore and folklife – The University of Pennsylvania Department of Folklore and Folklife, the Folklife Center of International House, and the Philadelphia Folklife Project. The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania are but two of the major libraries and archives with a wealth of cultural data in their holdings.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Like other southeastern Pennsylvania areas with hundreds of years of history, Montgomery County has invested a great deal in preserving and interpreting the past, especially its colonial and military history. Together, Montgomery and Bucks Counties are referred to as Valley Forge country. Valley Forge has its own historical society focusing on George Washington and the bitter winter of 1777-1778 that he spent there. Colonial reenactment groups perform

commemorative battles at various times during the year. Montgomery County has no shortage of craftworkers. Many are unaffiliated with local historical societies or churches. Among them are pewterers, straw hat weavers, and blacksmiths.

George Washington planned the battle of Germantown at the Peter Wentz Farmstead in Worcester. Now a living history museum, the farmstead presents a blend of German and English cultures present during the colonial period. Craftworkers demonstrate at several scheduled events there throughout the year, as well as at the Hecklerfest held at the restored Heckler Farm in Lower Salford Township. Many of the same artists and performers also participate in the Goschenhoppen Festival, presented annually by the Goschenhoppen Historians, who offer an exemplary prototype for public cultural presentations in a region with a wide variety of available historical data. (See related article in this issue.)

Montgomery County is undergoing many changes with increasing suburbanization reaching out from Philadelphia in all directions. The county is the center of the Franconia Mennonite Conference, and many of the farms being absorbed by suburbia are Mennonite. The Mennonite Heritage Center in Harleysville is a valuable local history resource. John Ruth, who taught English at a Mennonite college and returned to the region to conduct historical and ministerial work, is among the active local historians. His dual relationship with academia and the Mennonite ministry make him a valuable resource. He and his son Jay have written and produced videotaped local-history docu-



The Schuylkill River textile industry incorporated processes from manufacturing to fine tailoring. These Italian-Americans worked in the D'Alonzo clothing factory, c. 1911-1912. (Courtesy of Ricci Family Collection, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies Library)

mentaries which they funded through local businesses.

Pennsylvania German manuscript art, known as "fraktur," is traditionally used to keep historical records and to document ritual events in the lives of individual community members. This traditional art form is widely recognized as one of the hallmarks of Pennsylvania German creative expression, and is not limited to Mennonites. The area's best fraktur collection is held in the Schwenkfelder Library in Pennsburg; in addition, the Mennonite Heritage Center has a fraktur room. Roma Ruth (wife of the aforementioned John Ruth) is a fraktur artist whose research collection includes thousands of slides of manuscript art. Other noteworthy expressions of the Mennonite farming community include transportation crafts, such as buggies, and textile arts.

Montgomery County has several relatively unique religious institutions. The Schwenkfelders, for example, arrived in Philadelphia in 1734 from Silesia (now a part of Poland bordering on Germany) via Saxony and the Netherlands. All five of the Schwenkfelder churches in America are in the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor. Four are in Montgomery County and the fifth, a mission church, is in Philadelphia. The Schwenkfelder Museum and Library in Pennsburg houses important cultural artifacts and primary resource materials. The former museum includes a large herbarium and a collection of Indian and Pennsylvania German artifacts. The adjacent library holds an impressive Bible collection, early Schwenkfelder correspondence, genealogical and photographic records, deeds, wills, historic school books, and the aforementioned fraktur collection.

The Swedenborgians, located in Bryn Athyn, comprise 95% of that town's population. The Swedenborgian Cathedral, designed by Raymond Pitcairn and built in the first quarter of this century, is the community focal point.

All the wood, iron, stone, and glass work was crafted in shops built on the grounds. Albert Walter, a stone carver who worked on construction, travelled to Germany for several summers during the 1980s seeking master craftsmen in stone and glass. He hoped to initiate an apprentice program and continue working on the Cathedral. Thirty years of labor await the anticipated apprentices. The Cathedral is exquisitely crafted in every detail. Although woodcarvers are easy to find in this area, the medieval styles of stone cutting and glass work are practiced only in Germany. The Swedenborgians sponsor a November craft show in which most of the artists are members of their faith. Church members are particularly proud of their musical traditions which include their own melodies for psalms. They celebrate several seasonal rituals including special Christmas musical events, silent Christmas, and Easter tableaux.

Ukrainians do not rank among the largest ethnic groups in Montgomery County, but they do play a significant role in its culture. The Ukrainian Heritage Center of Manor Junior College is located in Jenkintown. The sisters of St. Basil, whose order is named for a Ukrainian saint, operate the college. The Heritage Center, under the direction of Christine Izak, evolved through a bicentennial-grant project. As in the Pennsylvania German community, embroidery is an important art form among Ukrainians. One example is the work of Stefania Shumska Meyer, who embroidered the vestments of the Metropolitan, who is the head of the United States Ukrainian church, located in Philadelphia. Other important craft genres in the Ukrainian community include but are not limited to icon painting, pysanky (egg decorating), wheat weaving, pottery, and many woodworking techniques such as marquetry, inlay, and relief.

Christine Izak explains that community members are



Philadelphia's Chinatown is home to many members of the Asian community. This gate at Tenth and Arch Streets welcomes both residents and visitors to the heart of the neighborhood where hundreds of businesses such as

restaurants, groceries, travel agencies, and importers, as well as community organizations serve the population. (Photograph by Susan L. F. Isaacs)

surrounded by Ukrainian art and artifacts, although most of their own craftsmen went unrecognized until recently, working at home in relative isolation. Many immigrant artists abandoned their craft practices when they came to this country. But in small locales, art unites families and communities, particularly on special occasions. For example, Ukrainians prepare special breads for weddings and holidays. Embroidered textiles are arrayed in the original contexts of their ritual settings. Today, embroidery motifs are applied to the decorative patterns on mass produced china and glassware. This new application of an established tradition is much discussed in the community. Overall, art and artists provide a sense of historical unity to members of the Ukrainian community.

Montgomery County flea markets are such popular regional events that they deserve mention here. Often incorporating live music, auctions, crafts displays, and a variety of cookbooks, they are folk events worthy of investigation. Markets date back to early colonial times and today they attract dedicated collectors in search of American artifacts. The Perkiomenville Auction and Flea

Market occurs on Mondays. It includes everything from furniture and collectibles to poultry and livestock. Zern's in Gilbertsville is open on Fridays and Saturdays, and the Montgomeryville flea market is open on Sundays. On intervening days, flea markets operate in nearby counties. Each market has its own atmosphere and regular customers including many sellers who make the rounds of various sales.

CHESTER COUNTY

Chester County and its neighbor, Delaware County (which is not in the Schuylkill corridor), comprised a single entity until 1796 when they divided into two jurisdictions. From a regional perspective they remained linked; from the viewpoint of area tourist bureaus, they form the Brandywine Valley Region. While 344,931 of the county's 376,396 residents are white, there are African American communities in West Chester, Downingtown, Coatesville, Phoenixville, and Kennett Square. Hispanic communities are located in Kennett Square, West Chester, Avon, and Oxford, while Laotian Hmong live in Coatesville and

Downingtown. Adding to the county's diversity are Appalachians from Tennessee and Kentucky living in Avon and Oxford.

Chester Countians have a highly developed interest in their history. The county boasts many local historians and has a number of living history museums. The latter are one source of the high interest in the region's colonial crafts. Museums rely upon a pool of area craftworkers to interpret colonial life to visitors. The museums also sponsor numerous craft fairs at which impressive numbers of craftworkers sell their wares. As interest spreads, more people begin taking classes or teaching themselves a chosen craft. Some of this interest began around the time of the Bicentennial, and most of the artistic and craft traditions in the county represent recent revivals.

A large complex of living history museums straddles the border of Chester and Delaware Counties in Chadds Ford in the heart of the Brandywine Valley. The Chadds Ford Historical Society (CFHS) operates the Barnes-Brinton House and the John Chadd House. The Society sponsors large craft exhibitions during Chadds Ford Days as well as frequent demonstrations of such colonial activities as weaving and baking in a beehive oven. The Brandywine River Museum at Chadds Ford sponsors a Pennsylvania Crafts Fair Day, among other events, and the Brandywine Battlefield State Park holds reenactments of colonial battles.

Historically, traditional artistic and craft activity in Chester County takes on two patterns. The first pattern links geography, occupation, and skills such as iron work and redware pottery. The second pattern links Chester County's relative affluence and the number of craftworkers imported to build items such as furniture for the wealthy. Furniture making is the most significant – and the only unbroken – craft tradition in the area. The cabinetwork and furniture of Chester County, originally Welsh and English, were later modified by Quaker style, emphasizing utility and plainness. The CCHS has examples of this furniture in its collections, and selected reproductions – some of which are made by Chester County artists – are sold in its shop.

The ceramic tradition is a major folk and industrial craft in Chester County. Phoenixville, in the northern part of the county, is particularly interesting. This small town supplied the clay for some of America's first ceramics manufacturers. Phoenixville clays provided materials for nineteenth-century yellow-ware potters. During the 1800s, the Etruscan majolica used for everyday dishes in most American homes was made in Phoenixville. Shortly before the Bicentennial, Chester County potter Dorothy Long began making traditionally styled redware reproductions for Valley Forge National Historic Park. Her husband, Alton Long, is descended from Southern stoneware potters, a fact the Longs discovered some years after Dorothy had entered the redware business. Throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s, she operated a studio and shop in Phoenixville, employing a number of potters to assist with production. Although Dorothy relocated her business to

a home studio in Wayne, a number of her former employees continue to create pottery in Phoenixville.

Metal work including tin, pewter, and iron is another prominent Chester County craft tradition. Iron work has been important since early settlement. Although styles and techniques have changed since the time of Samuel Nutt in the seventeenth century, iron has consistently constituted a major part of the county's craft traditions. Hopewell Furnace is one example of a living history museum on the site of an iron furnace. There are also many blacksmiths in the county, although they no longer service the farming community as they did prior to the 1900s. Most farms have become suburban developments. Weaving, quilting, and needlework are also important Chester County crafts. Many of the living history museums employ traditional weavers.

Farming has a rich tradition in Chester County, but it is rapidly becoming an aspect of memory rather than a contemporary experience. Although historically the county was rich in dairy farms, only two dairies remain today. There are still many farms along the western reaches of Chester County to the Lancaster County line. Most of them belong to Mennonites; a smaller number are Amish; none owned by the latter group extend further east than Honeybrook. Many of these farms, such as those along Route 340, maintain stands selling seasonal produce and regional foods such as shoofly and fruit pies, preserves, and homemade root beer.

BERKS COUNTY

Berks County was formed in 1752 from parts of Philadelphia, Chester, and Lancaster Counties. Reading, the county seat, was founded in 1748. Berks is among the largest counties in area in the state, and has a population of 336,523. Ethnically, half the population is at least partly of German descent, while those of English ancestry constitute the second largest ethnic group, followed by the Irish. Sizable numbers of Italians and Poles also live in the county, followed in descending order by Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans. In a popular sense, Berks Countians of German descent are generally considered Pennsylvania German (or Pennsylvania Dutch, an equivalent term); however, scholars feel that only the descendants of German speakers who arrived from German regions, or from Switzerland and other parts of central and eastern Europe before 1800 are Pennsylvania German. The wave of German immigrants after 1830 differed in geographic origin, religious mix, culture, and settlement patterns in the United States. For example, they tended to settle in urban areas rather than rural areas. Furthermore, the immigrants and descendants from the two waves never coalesced into a homogeneous group.

The distinction between the two groups of German immigrants can readily be seen in ethnic festivals. Pennsylvania German festivals are held in southeastern parts of the state in Kutztown, the Oley Valley, the Goschenhoppen region, and Schaefferstown. They emphasize

colonial crafts and costume, Pennsylvania German material culture, dialect, square dancing with fiddle music, and culinary specialties such as apple butter, chicken pot pie, funnel cake, shoofly pie, and condiments called "seven sweets and seven sour." ¹⁹ In contrast, the group representing descendants of the later wave of German speakers sponsors Bavarian and October fests which feature alpine costume, polka bands with accordions and horns, and German singing (as opposed to Pennsylvania Dutch dialect songs). Their foodways include sausage, sauerkraut, potato filling, and beer, some of which overlap with Pennsylvania German foods.

A majority of Berks County land use is devoted to agriculture, the county's major industry. Manufacturing and warehousing are important in the Reading vicinity and along highways radiating out of the city. The northern region is becoming more industrialized as manufacturing spreads along Interstate 78 from Allentown in Lehigh County.

Tourism is important to Reading and other selected parts of the county. There are numerous historic sites, such as the Daniel Boone Homestead in Birdsboro and Hopewell Village. Several folk and craft festivals are held in the County, many of which are sponsored by the Berks Chapter of the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen. These include shows at the fairgrounds, the Berkshire Mall, and the Berks Campus of Penn State University.

Berks County is rich in historical and craft traditions such as wagon making, fraktur, decorated furniture, gunsmithing, and pottery. Many of these crafts have been studied over the past century by individual scholars and members of the Pennsylvania German, Pennsylvania German Folklore, Pennsylvania Folklife, and the Pennsylvania Folklore Societies. The result is that most of the craft traditions in the county have been documented from their early origins in southeastern Pennsylvania through recent decades. In addition to having a well-documented craft tradition, Berks County offers large numbers of traditionally oriented craftspeople. Many of them belong to the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen. Founded in 1946, the Berks group constitutes one of the oldest and largest chapters in the state.

Many Berks County craftspeople are trying to preserve early techniques while adapting them to the contemporary market and consumers' personal tastes. These include hex sign painter Johnny Claypoole, fraktur artist Ruthanne Hartung, and pewterer Thomas Loose. Some craftspeople, such as potter Lester Breininger, aim for historical accuracy over accommodating to contemporary tastes; however, few artists create mere copies of originals. Artists' personal interpretations and customers' requirements play a role in design. A few people actively work at preserving or restoring earlier works. For example, Johnny Claypoole restores hex signs painted on barns and Petra Haas restores and adapts old houses for contemporary use.

Several craft forms retain ethnic or religious significance beyond being items sold in craft shows and tourist

markets. Ukrainian pysanky are reproduced in religious context. The fraktur revival of the last twenty years is due in part to Pennsylvania Germans commissioning artists to create specialized certificates for ritual occasions within their own families. Pennsylvania Dutch farmers continue to display hex signs bearing traditional geometrical designs. They choose either to restore old signs, paint new ones directly on barns, or purchase new signs painted on disks that are later affixed to a barn. Quilting and weaving are undergoing remarkable revival movements in Berks County. The Lenhartsville quilters are an active example. In addition to the many craftworkers mentioned here, there are numerous non-commercial craftspersons in Berks County, many of whom have ethnic ties.

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

The land comprising Schuylkill County was purchased from the Six Indian Nations in 1749. The county itself was created in 1811 from parts of Berks and Northampton Counties. Orwigsburg, the original county seat, was founded in 1796. Pottsville, the county seat since 1851, grew around the coal mines from 1800 onward.

The major ethnic groups in the county in descending order from largest to smallest are German, Irish, Polish, English, and Italian. There are also Netherlands Dutch, Ukrainian, and French. The southern part of the County was originally part of Berks and was originally settled by Pennsylvania Germans moving north from the latter. The northern half of Schuylkill County was originally settled by the Welsh who opened the mines. They were followed by Germans, Irish, Italians, and Eastern Europeans, in that order. Some of the oldest eastern European communities in the United States still exist in Schuylkill County. Shenandoah and McAdoo, for example, have the oldest and third-oldest Ukrainian Catholic congregations in the country. The County has been and continues to be multi-lingual. As many as twenty-six different languages were spoken in Shenandoah as recently as 1924.

Agriculture and coal mining are Schuylkill County's oldest industries. Farming remains important in the south, the southwest, and in many of the valleys scattered throughout the County. Necho Allen is said to have discovered coal in Schuylkill County around 1790, and the anthracite mines there were the first in the United States. Although the anthracite industry as a whole peaked in the first decades of this century, mining remains important to the economy and the culture. Anthracite mining continues to be one of the major industries. Schuylkill County's iron furnaces (the technological predecessors to the Bessemer process of steel production) depended on charcoal and anthracite.

Many Schuylkill County mines were permanently closed during the Depression, leading to changing careers and gender roles within families. During the 1930s, clothing factories, sweatshops, and cottage industries began to take the place of mining. These businesses employed women who consequently became the family breadwinners.

Occupational folklife (including the traditions, songs, beliefs, and narratives related to work) thereby underwent major changes.

Speaking of folklife, it should be noted that the oldest and largest folklife festival in Southeastern Pennsylvania, the original Kutztown Folk Festival, is now held at the Schuylkill County Fairgrounds. Throughout its nine days, the festival draws thousands of people daily from the region, the United States, and abroad.

Schuylkill County agricultural folklife is represented by a number of traditions. The county is renowned for its barns, many of which are decorated with hex signs. Other forms of vernacular architecture reflecting the county's history and culture include many post and beam, as well as log construction houses still in existence.

Journalist George Korson began collecting the County's mining songs in the 1920s. His four books on the coal industry document a significant chapter of Schuylkill County heritage, and are among the earliest publications on occupational folklife. Mining folklife is also reflected in the work of traditional artists identified during the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission's Traditional Arts Survey. Examples of contemporary material culture include the work of artists who assemble polished coal into sculptures, and a silhouette maker whose intricate coal carvings include local scenes.

Two broad categories of Schuylkill County crafts have been documented – those made for sale at area crafts shows and non-commercial handmade objects. Commercial craftworkers producing high quality work include a wheat weaver, paper cutters, and spinner-weavers. In general, however, non-commercial crafts produced in the context of home or church for personal or ritual use reflect a higher degree of traditionality and quality than objects made for sale. In McAdoo, for example, an ethnic revival is in evidence at St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic church. Members participate in traditional dance, the creation of pysanky (decorated eggs), and embroidery for their own ethnic pride and enjoyment. Lithuanians and Slovaks in McAdoo also make crafts for personal use. These craftworkers avoid the commercial market for two reasons. First, they anticipate that selling their work would require assembly-line production which they do not want to engage in. Second, because of the time and care devoted to their work, they cannot project receiving adequate prices to cover their time, labor, and materials.

CONCLUSION

Pennsylvania's Heritage Parks Program addresses central questions about the history, culture, and economy of the state. The program is marketed to potential public and private supporters as an economic boon, but to what degree can cultural tourism compensate for the loss of Pennsylvania's industrial base? This and other serious questions were raised in a 1995 issue of *Penndustry*, published by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museums

Commission: "If the Age of Industry in Pennsylvania is largely passed . . . important questions arise in the wake of the passing. What are we to make of the history of industry? What and how are state and local officials, businesses and private citizens going to cope with the ongoing devastations of deindustrialization? What political, social, and economic needs cut across the sweeping range of values and attitudes that exist in all of Pennsylvania's former blue collar towns, and how can the state and local communities meet those needs? . . . The Heritage Parks Program . . . will undoubtedly be a force for their resolution in the future."²⁰

Although the *Penndustry* article ends idealistically, current state politics raise critical concerns about the security of historical and cultural endeavors of every magnitude. Many of the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor's public partners were drastically reduced since the 1995 completion of the park's most recent major document, the Management Action Plan (MAP). Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge applied draconian measures to the state budget – cutting programs including health, education, welfare, and culture to the bone. These measures included eliminating the Department of Community Affairs which administered Heritage Park funding statewide. Ridge's action also eradicated the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission, including the state folklife program. Former state folklorist Amy Skillman is hopeful that PHAC work will continue on a contractual basis, but the future remains tenuous. Heritage Park funding is expected to remain stable or even increase, but exactly how it will be distributed is unknown as of this writing.²¹ Many of the proposals within the Management Action Plan may consequently require reassessment, including those for folklife.

What role will cultural conservation play in the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor? The Management Action Plan is an impressive document researched and written by the Philadelphia consultant team of Kise Franks and Straw. A "Folklife and Ethnic Resources Inventory" compiled by Kenneth A. Thigpen is appended to the MAP. The latter lists a myriad of folklife resources throughout the five counties of the Heritage Corridor.²²

The Management Action Plan achieved major improvements over the 1992 feasibility report. The Pennsylvania Planning Association recognized the MAP with the 1995 Outstanding Planning Award for Comprehensive Planning in a Large Jurisdiction. Be that as it may, the MAP contains two unfortunate shortfalls in reference to folklife. First, it fails to incorporate cultural conservation as an integral facet of the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor. The idea of culture as a living resource hovers tentatively at the edge of industrial history. Second, the roles of minority groups and women in industry are generally overlooked.

The MAP divides the corridor into four geographical areas organized around the themes of "anthracite, agriculture, industry, and the urban gateway. These are called 'reaches,' after the canal-era word. Each reach will have

its visitor center – Ashland, Reading, Phoenixville, and 30th Street Station – which will provide orientation and tour materials as well as visitor services and information about food and lodging.”²³ The MAP presents “Stories in Each Reach,” a heading which offers tempting promise for folklife. It implies subjects ripe for incorporating oral narratives reflecting folklore within the Heritage Corridor, but ultimately the verbal meaning of “story” is disappointingly subsumed below a chronicle about the physical remains of coal breakers, loading docks, iron furnaces, and botanical gardens featured on bicycle trails, walking tours, and local history museums. These are valuable sites and enterprises, but there is a paucity of evidence that historic folklife resources will be integrated into their interpretation, and even less indication that living resources will play any significant role in the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor.

The MAP provides a ten-year plan, dividing the decade from 1995 to 2005 into three phases: (1) 1995-1996, (2) 1997-1999, and (3) 2000-2005. Planners designed the corridor to operate with a skeleton staff focused on management, marketing, and development until Phase 3. This is particularly problematic for folklore and folklife because as a profession, it is widely appropriated and misinterpreted by the public, scholarly fields, and other occupations. It requires long periods of time to research and understand folklife. Those unfamiliar with the discipline carry a myriad of stereotypes that generally pigeon-hole folklore as removed from their own lives, and they imagine folklorists as performers – neither of which are accurate. MAP authors appear to recognize this problem, stating that, “Our goals are to document known and uncover potential folklife activities, to assess their possibilities for corridor tours and projects, and to help choose projects for early implementation that will include the folklife element.”²⁴ The words “early implementation” imply a need for folklife research beginning in Phase 1, but that is not within the MAP proposal.

A daunting percentage of Schuylkill Heritage Corridor funding system-wide is dependent on soft money, and the folklife plan provides a prime example. Of six major folklife projects proposed from 1995 to 2005, three rely entirely on the embattled National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and/or private foundation support from unidentified sources. Of the remaining three folklife projects, one depends on “Tourist and Convention Bureau Funding” and two rely on the now defunct Department of Community Affairs.

Compared to other education, arts, culture, and history funding, folklife in the United States is apocalyptically undersupported. The MAP total budget for system-wide folklife projects is \$316,000 and, on the surface, this sounds relatively generous. But this allocation is intended to stretch over a ten year period. It could very modestly support one folklorist, albeit without a budget. But instead the MAP proposes folklife projects without a professional folklorist to research and implement the following folklife

projects: a festival, event brochures, and permanent exhibits in Phase 1, and in Phase 2, a repetition of the Phase 1 events with the addition of an artists’ directory and a moveable exhibit. Phase 3 finally allocates funding for a folklore coordinator starting in the year 2000. How can a viable folklife initiative succeed without a professional folklife specialist from 1995-1999?

James Kise of Kise Franks and Straw Consultants explains this by observing that a great many SHC projects will be operated with volunteer services.²⁵ Of course volunteers may play vital roles in heritage parks, as they do in organizations such as schools and hospitals. Nevertheless, who would suggest that hospitals could operate without doctors? Similarly, parent-teacher organizations support schools through volunteerism, but educational systems cannot function without the knowledge of skilled teachers.

Schuylkill Heritage Corridor planners continue to misunderstand cultural conservation as an integral part of industrial heritage. In contrast to the \$316,000 folklife budget, education projects are budgeted at \$1,300,000 and include funding to train teachers, survey resources, and prepare guides. Thirteen tours are slated to receive \$1,180,000, of which \$260,000 is designated for research and writing. This is not to say that education or tour funding should be reduced, but rather that folklife should be seen as an exciting facet of these larger initiatives. Folklife expertise integrated within education projects and the proposed tours would enrich and enhance their human interest and popularity with the public.

Many of the historical resources in the reaches suggest built-in but conceptually undeveloped folklife components, such as the following tours: the Schuylkill County Council for the Arts Ethnic Heritage Tour; the proposed Anthracite Loop Driving Tour with an audio cassette incorporating period voices and songs, complimented by a brochure suggesting locales for regional foods like pierogies and kielbasa; Pennsylvania German barns included on a Tour of Berks Back Roads; the Hex Highway Tour; and the Miles of Mills Tour which promises to provide data on the immigrant labor pool. Other examples noted in the MAP that are rich in traditional culture include the new Mahanoy City Museum focusing on the region’s people; the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies computer program on identity; and the Berks County Heritage Center.

Folklife remains an awkward appendage to the MAP. For example, West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia is noted as offering a view of the riverside industrial town of Manayunk. Notes the MAP, “Some of the corridor’s most famous early-20th century citizens are buried here, often marked with elaborate monuments.”²⁶ Such an idea invites expansion into folklife. When gravemarkers are examined from a folklife perspective they reveal the symbols, values, religious heritage, and belief systems, as well as the ethnic basis of stone carving traditions of the past. A few paragraphs in the cemetery tour brochure about these

folklife traditions would meaningfully enliven the touristic experience.

Theoretical definitions of folklore, folklife, and cultural conservation rarely incorporate references to under-represented groups. Yet an integral facet of folklore concerns relatively unknown people, rather than prominent figures. This is because the essence of culture as a shared system of values, beliefs, and practices is rarely controlled by individuals or dictated by leaders at the top of the socio-economic ladder. The SHC needs to ask and answer questions about the past such as: What were the people doing, thinking, and saying? How were they living, cooking, praying? What were the roles of indigenous people, minority groups, and women as they were either included or excluded in the industrialization of this predominantly Euro-American region?

The world of working-class men has long been overlooked in historical representations of the past. A number of generous references throughout the MAP indicate that their perspectives, which have rightfully evolved into an

integral part of social history in the last quarter century, will be well-represented through references to European immigration. The MAP is inattentive to minority groups, an unfortunate oversight. The "Stories in Each Reach" lack references to African Americans and Asians. In addition, with the exception of comments on Conrad Weiser, a renowned Pennsylvania German interpreter of Indian languages, there are few references to Native Americans. Clearly, male industrial workers will constitute much of the story, but where will the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor examine women's lives?

Overlooking the contributions of minority groups and women to the Schuylkill's industrial heritage is historically inaccurate. In addition, funders today are anxious to support projects featuring traditionally under-represented groups. As ethnographers, as experts in the study of the culture of everyday people, folklorists are strategically positioned to bring these concerns to the forefront of the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor and enhance it both historically and financially.

ENDNOTES

¹ "Pennsylvania's Industrial Past and Heritage Parks: Using a Profound Past to Secure a Stronger Future," *Penndustry: Newsletter of the Industrial Survey of Pennsylvania*, 7:2 (Spring/Summer, 1995), 2.

² See Bruce Bomberger and Bill Sisson, *Made in Pennsylvania: An Overview of the Major Historical Industries of the Commonwealth* (Harrisburg, 1991).

³ *Penndustry*, 7:2, 1995, 7.

⁴ Kise Franks and Straw, *Management Action Plan. The Schuylkill Heritage Corridor. Unlocking the Secrets of America's Hidden River* (Phila., 1995), vii. ("Schuylkill" which "means 'hidden stream' was the name given to the river by the early Dutch explorers because they passed by its mouth at first without seeing it." From C. J. Puetz, *Pennsylvania County Maps and Recreation Guide* [Kaukauna, WI, n.d.], p. 110.)

⁵ Mary Means and Associates, *Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor Feasibility Report* (Alexandria, Va., 1992), 14.

⁶ Susan L. F. Isaacs, "Cultural Conservation for the Schuylkill River Heritage Park" (Phila., 1993).

⁷ Alan Jabbour in *Governor's Conference on Ethnicity. Proceedings*, ed. Shalom Staub (Harrisburg, 1990), pp. 21-22.

⁸ See Mary Hufford, *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage* (Urbana, Ill., 1994).

⁹ Mary Hufford in *The Conservation of Culture. Folklorists and the Public Sector*, ed. Burt Feintuch (Lexington, Ky., 1988), p. 224.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹² For a discussion of socionatural stewardship see Jonathan Berger and Walter Sinton, *Water, Earth, and Fire: Land Use and Environmental Planning in the New Jersey Pine Barrens* (Baltimore, 1985).

¹³ American Folklife Center brochure, June, 1980.

¹⁴ I am indebted to the work of two colleagues who conducted the surveys on behalf of PHAC. The original Berks and Schuylkill county summaries were written and researched by Thomas Graves. The original Chester and Montgomery county summaries were prepared by Malachi O'Connor.

¹⁵ Edward K. Muller, *A Concise Atlas of Philadelphia* (Phila., 1989), p. 73.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Philadelphia had 1,257 residents of Swedish descent as of the 1990 census.

¹⁹ Folklorists and food historians do not generally consider the seven sweets and seven sours reflective of authentic Pennsylvania German tradition.

²⁰ *Penndustry* 7:2, 1995, 7.

²¹ Telephone conversation with Allen Sachse, Pennsylvania Heritage Parks and Recreation Supervisor, July 15, 1996.

²² Kenneth A. Thigpen, "Folklife and Ethnic Resources Inventory," Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor Management Action Plan Task 1.B.

²³ Kise Franks and Straw, "Executive Summary. Management Action Plan. The Schuylkill Heritage Corridor" (March, 1995), pp. 8-9.

²⁴ MAP p. 20

²⁵ Telephone conversation with James Kise, July 15, 1996.

²⁶ MAP, p. 73

APPENDIX I

RACIAL GROUPS AND POPULATIONS IN THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR

Racial Groups	Philadelphia	Montgomery	Chester	Berks	Schuylkill
Total Population	1,688,200	678,111	376,396	336,523	152,585
White	848,586	620,087	344,931	314,561	150,987
Black	631,936	39,124	23,995	10,003	842
Indian and Eskimo	3,454	752	510	333	111
Asian and Pacific	43,522	15,995	4,070	2,746	496
Hispanic	89,193	8,357	8,565	17,174	677
Other	61,533	2,153	2,890	8,880	149

APPENDIX II

MAJOR ETHNIC ANCESTRY GROUPS IN THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER CORRIDOR (1980 Census)

	Dutch	English	German	Irish	Italian	Polish
Berks	5,767	14,457	109,019	6,456	10,634	10,271
Chester	1,989	32,150	29,612	20,612	15,726	4,888
Montgomery	4,046	35,804	45,590	45,590	47,499	20,087
Philadelphia*	2,149	45,326	122,522	122,522	132,630	46,878
Schuylkill	4,936	5,865	8,647	8,647	4,419	9,700

*Philadelphia also has a major Ukrainian population of 12,795.

THE GOSCHENHOPPEN HISTORIANS : Preserving and Celebrating Pennsylvania German Folk Culture

by Donald F. Roan



Annual Testimonial Dinner in 1987. L. to r.: Goschenhoppen Historians cofounders "Isaac" Clarence Kulp, recipient of

the 1987 Goschenhoppen Award of Merit, and Robert Bucher, presiding; and "Abe" Roan, program chairman.

By the late 1950s it was obvious that changes taking place in upper Montgomery County were destructive to the existing folk culture of the area, one of the oldest Pennsylvania German communities in continuous existence in the state. The use of the Pennsylvania German dialect was diminishing, family farms first settled in the 18th century were being broken up for building lots, and many important items of material culture were being sold at public auction and transported out of the area and sometimes out of the state.

Observing these changes and realizing that no organized effort was being made to preserve the dominant local culture, folklife scholars and friends Robert Bucher of Harleysville and "Isaac" Clarence Kulp of Vernfield decided in 1961 to start a society which would do just that. By early 1963 the two men had called together a group of interested people who met informally for two years before incorporating in 1965 as the Goschenhoppen Historians, an organization chartered to collect, preserve, and present to the public the folk culture and history of the Goschenhoppen folk region and surrounding areas of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

While the precise meaning and derivation of "Goschen-

hoppen"¹ have been lost, and while early 18th-century journals show various spellings (one, "Goshenhof," is a German placename), the name has long been associated with the area, and it was for that reason the new society's founders chose it. In fact, it appears in public records as early as May, 1728, when the inhabitants of Colebrookdale petitioned for relief against the Indians at Falkner's Swamp near "Coshahopin." Moreover, entries from the diaries of Goschenhoppen surveyor David Schultz from the 1730s through the 1780s make frequent reference to the region, while Colonial-era maps by Nicholas Scull identify it, and three churches founded in the 18th century are named for it.² Late in the 19th century a group of businessmen chartered the still extant Goschenhoppen Home Mutual Insurance Company, showing that they still identified with an early 18th century folk region. In addition to upper Montgomery County, that region includes parts of Bucks, Berks, and Lehigh Counties; it can be roughly identified as the valley of the Perkiomen Creek north of Schwenksville. The heights of land and the clefts in the hills where the major branches of the Perkiomen emerge from these hilly areas mark the folk boundaries.³

* * *



Farmer Joe Brooke and his team with a wagonload of rye destined for threshing and thatching at the Goschenhoppen

In the 1960s most preservation societies in the United States existed to protect and maintain historic buildings and paper items. The Goschenhoppen Historians, however, were committed to a European model of historical and folk cultural research which broadens the base of study to include languages and dialects, folk beliefs and folk practices, material culture, and geographic, historic, and religious influences. Utilizing these cross-cultural studies the full range of a culture—and the subtle relationships that make it function—can be better and more completely understood. Although it has gained acceptance in recent years, this European model was uncommon at the time, so the encouragement and guidance of two pioneers in such research, Dr. Don Yoder and Dr. Alfred Shoemaker (founders of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society and the Kutztown Folk Festival) was critical; both men were mentors of the founders and of several of the early members of the Goschenhoppen Historians.

The public supported the organization from the beginning. Residents of the area began to attend public meetings where historical and folk-cultural matters were topics for evening programs. Members of families whose roots dated back to the Colonial Era came out of interest and pride

Folk Festival. (Photograph by Robert Martin; all photographs courtesy of the Goschenhoppen Historians)

in the region, a knowledge of which had been passed on orally in families for generations. New residents who came out of curiosity or because of interest in a particular topic soon recognized the area as unique and the new organization as effective.⁴ Activity directed toward the preservation of local stone bridges threatened by “progress”; restoration advice by members knowledgeable about folk architecture given to area residents who were becoming aware of their unique Germanic old house (as well as house tours of significant examples of such houses in the area conducted between 1968 and 1975); and the acquisition of significant items at local auctions and from local antiques dealers all brought pride of membership in the organization.

THE FOLKLIFE MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

By the spring of 1964, the Goschenhoppen Folklife Museum and Library had been established on the second floor of the Nyce building in the village of Vernfield; to raise money for the acquisition program members sold a variety of beverages and baked goods at the Kutztown Folk Festival in the summer of that year.⁵ In 1971 the Historians bought Red Men’s Hall in Green Lane, Pennsylvania; it



Tape loom demonstration by Eleanore Biddle at the 1984 Festival.

had been the fraternal lodge of the Tohickon Tribe, Improved Order of Red Men. Built by them in 1907-08, the Hall is an outstanding example of late Victorian village lodge-hall architecture. At one time the first floor housed a grocery store and a bank, while a public meeting room on the second floor served as a place for town meetings and as a community center for graduation ceremonies from the Green Lane School; plays, minstrel shows, hoedowns, and dances sponsored by the Lodge were also held there. The inner sanctum was on the third floor of the building; the doors still have the speaking tubes used to transmit the Lodge passwords.

The Goschenhoppen Historians have transformed the third floor into a museum and library⁶ and redecorated the second floor meeting room in late-Victorian style, electrifying the original massive two-tiered kerosene chandeliers which were found under the stage. Until about 1983, half of the first floor housed the Green Lane post office and that space presently has another tenant; the other half houses the country store museum, established to exhibit post-1870 Industrial Age items. The stock from a defunct country store was bought and installed here, along with



Potter Fred Matlack at work on his kickwheel, constructed after the wheel owned by Berks County potter Johnny Glaes of Locust Corner, just a half mile from the northwestern border of the Goschenhoppen region. (Photo by E. Munro)

other items either donated or purchased—dedicated committee members even outbid representatives of Greenfield Village at a local auction to keep an important store account book in the area. The store's clutter evokes the most nostalgic comments from senior-citizen visitors who grew up in rural areas, while local school children on field trips recognize in the store's accounts the names of relatives who purchased penny candy.

The third floor folklife museum presents the Goschenhoppen area prior to 1870. Acquisitions are from the Goschenhoppen region or its immediate vicinity or are items identical to those used there. There are exhibits of agricultural tools and implements; an 18th-century weaver's shop; a turner's shop; a flax exhibit; and exhibits of decorative arts. Permanent exhibits illustrate local material culture, folk beliefs, and customs in a room-like setting; docents act as interpreters. Thus, the Germanic bedroom (*Kammer*) has a "soul window"⁷ built into the wall as this folk-architectural practice has been documented in and near the Goschenhoppen region. Unknown in the western part of the "Dutch" country, the A.P. cake, a breakfast cake similar to a very large and very thick sugar cookie, is one



In the Goschenhoppen Folklife Museum a c. 1865 parlor illustrates folk practices revealed by folklife interviews: Children played under the quilt in the frame, hence the toys;

a tall stool or plantstand beneath the quilt supported a lamp; cloth strips were cut and sewn to be sent to the carpet weaver.

of the features of the kitchen (*Küche*) exhibit.

One parlor (*Stube*) exhibit has a locally built home organ (c. 1850s), while another mid-19th century parlor has a local quilt (c. 1860) set up in a frame as if in the process of being quilted; on the floor beneath the quilt are two children's toys of the period and also a small, three-foot high table which the quilt's center rests upon and on which there is an oil lamp. There is documentation that children in the area frequently played under the quilt in a frame, and the advantages of a lamp for night quilting are obvious.

The Goschenhoppen Folklife Library is also found on the third floor of Red Men's Hall. Local English and German newspapers, account books, daybooks, tradesmen's records, records of a local mid-19th century insurance company, as well as books, magazines, and pamphlets on Pennsylvania German folk culture and local imprints in German and English fill the shelves of this small research library. And speaking of publications, the organization published eleven issues of *The Goschenhoppen Region*, a scholarly folklife journal, from 1968 through 1973. Topics covered ranged from articles about "Bees, Parties, and Frolics" to "Land Title Survey in Goschenhoppen," a summary of research.⁸

The founders of the Goschenhoppen Historians included in the organization's mission statement a clause mandating the presentation of the folk culture and history of Goschenhoppen and surrounding areas to the general public. This was to take place not only in a folk-festival setting, but in the more formal setting of a monthly meeting. Beginning in 1963, these meetings (now held at Red Men's Hall)⁹ have featured programs on Pennsylvania German folk culture, on the history of the area, and on topics of

interest to folklife students. Local scholars and researchers have been preferred, since from the beginning members of the group found that certain interpretations, statements, and conclusions by some so-called authorities seemed to bear little or no resemblance to local oral tradition or even to the findings of local researchers.

In 1964, for example, an "expert" gave a talk on the Lenape, the native American inhabitants of Goschenhoppen. During the course of the lecture a member who had conducted archaeological digs at known native-American sites kept shaking his head in amazement, while an aged local farmer commented quietly more than once that the speaker was a *Glutzkupp* (blockhead). During the question-and-answer period which followed (and in which the lecturer had difficulty giving direct answers to the amateur archaeologist and several others) the farmer, who lived only a mile away, hurried home, returning ten minutes later with a stone axe. Saying that he'd found it in his field, the farmer thrust the axe into the hands of the expert, who proceeded to date it; to give the clan identification of the maker; and to give the anthropological period name of the culture in which the maker worked; he finished by offering to buy it for fifty dollars. The farmer declined to sell, and as he walked to the refreshment table those within earshot who understood Pennsylvania German heard him say that he'd made the axe the previous year for his grandson's school project.

DOCUMENTING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Many of the Goschenhoppen Historians' activities in living history and museum exhibits and projects have been



Quilt documentation at New Goschenhoppen Reformed (U.C.C.) Church, East Greenville, Pa., in 1992. (Photo by Ellen Gehret)

tempered by the information gained in tape-recorded interviews with folk informants. Members of the last generation whose native language and culture was the traditional Pennsylvania German folk culture were available for interviews from the time of the organization's founding in the early 1960s until about 1980, and a core group of about eight members conducted interviews—some in the dialect and some in English—with them. Since the information gathered in this way has led to a better understanding of the culture and to the establishment of a program to preserve it, a significant part of the Historians' efforts have gone into this work which continues today. Local retirement communities and homes for the aged are now visited, and activities directors seem happy to convene a group of five or six residents around a table with refreshments and a tape recorder. These contemporary interviews are still productive, but the present generation is noticeably less able to recall the old folk beliefs and folk songs their parents knew twenty-five or thirty-five years ago. Transcribing the tapes is always a challenge, especially in an area where dialect usage is diminishing; volunteers capable of doing the work are scarce.¹⁰

Yet another of the organization's activities and perhaps one not envisioned by the founders was the sponsoring of a quilt-documentation project for Montgomery County and the Goschenhoppen folk region between 1990 and 1993. This was part of a nationwide effort to document traditional quilts as domestic folk art, but while other states used a whole-state approach to the task, Pennsylvania's diversity demanded that the work be done by region or county. In the Goschenhoppen area members of the public brought their pre-1950 quilts (and related items) to nine different

sites where more than thirty volunteers examined them and filled in a computer-compatible form with details of size, construction, fabric, and design, as well as a family profile of the maker. In addition to these public sessions there were nine private-site documentations; all told, 1,553 quilts and quilt-related items such as quilted pillow cases, petticoats, sunbonnets, and quilt patterns were documented. Taped interviews with traditional quilters and over 1800 colored transparencies and 1500 black-and-white photographs were also a part of the process.

As a result of the project, three quilt patterns localized within a twenty-mile radius of Goschenhoppen (and known of course to traditional quilters in the area) were formally identified. One, interestingly, is called "Perkiomen Valley," with the folk region identified as the upper Perkiomen Valley. Also interesting is a local folk practice of signing names on a "friendship" quilt, called a *Bettlemann Deppich* (beggar's quilt) because custom required the payment of a nickel or dime to the quilt maker by those who wished to have their names recorded. Some of these quilts date from the mid-19th century and have the names inscribed in Fraktur lettering; research allied with the documentation identified two scribes who were also makers of Fraktur certificates.

In June, 1993, a major quilt exhibit was held at Red Men's Hall in tribute to the makers of the quilts identified by the documentation project. Among the 187 items on display were the oldest dated Pennsylvania German quilt, made in 1804 by one Mary Steitz, and quilts with the newly documented local patterns—Perkiomen Valley, Rainbow, and Rising Sun. The Historians also published a book, *Lest I Shall Be Forgotten*, which summarized the results of the



The 1736 Henry Antes House, a National Historical Monument, after exterior restoration; some of the stone work still needs to have the remains of stucco removed. (February, 1996, photograph)

project; it has eighty-five color photographs and many anecdotes from the taped interviews. This was the second book on quilting published by them: *Juscht en Deppich (Just a Quilt)* appeared in 1983; it was compiled primarily from taped interviews with local traditional quilters and includes a glossary of dialect sewing terms as well.¹¹

THE HENRY ANTES HOUSE

A long-term preservation project which has occupied the Historians for many years and which has helped unite them involves the Henry Antes house in Frederick, upper Montgomery County. Oral tradition as well as many secondary sources indicates that the 1736 dwelling was General George Washington's headquarters during the Pottsgrove encampment of the Continental Army in the autumn of 1777. Through the 1960s the house was owned by The Girl Scouts of Philadelphia, Inc. (it was situated on their camp property). Then, with the encouragement of the Historians, it was purchased by the Antes Family Association which intended to restore it; they sold it to the Goschenhoppin Historians, in 1988.

After intense research and planning and great personal effort by Timothy Noble, chairman of the Antes House Restoration Committee, the Historians succeeded in having the United States Department of the Interior designate the house a National Historical Monument in recognition of its architecture and in acknowledgment of its being the home of a remarkable historic figure, Henry Antes. In 1993 a Historic House Museum Challenge Grant was awarded through the Pew Charitable Trust for exterior restoration work; a Keystone Grant from the state of Pennsylvania also helped make this first phase of the work a success.

Jack Hoy bases his Festival portrayal of "Penny Charlie" on an area tramp of the same name.



Blacksmith and farrier (he makes his living as the latter) Bill Lowery dresses a hammer at the 1987 Festival.

The second phase, interior restoration, is soon to begin. The founders of the Historians knew of the Antes House even before they started the organization, and when the project is finished more than thirty years of hoping, dreaming, planning, and researching (and even one false start) will provide the group with a living history facility where the traditional folklife of the region can be portrayed and taught to generations still to come.

THE GOSCHENHOPPEN FOLK FESTIVAL

Called by one visitor "the best-kept secret in the Dutch Country," the first annual Goschenhoppin Folk Festival was held in 1967 in the picnic grove of Old Goschenhoppin Union Church in the small town of Woxall with approximately thirty demonstrations of traditional Pennsylvania German activities. The second festival had demonstrations of forty different activities as well as a stage program and food preparation and sales. In 1969 the Festival was moved to New Goschenhoppin Park in East Greenville where it is still held the second Saturday and Sunday of every August.

The move was made because the East Greenville site had more parking space and room for expansion as well. This year's festival—the thirtieth—will attract perhaps 8500 people and will have about 1,000 volunteers providing services and demonstrating over 150 activities (ten of these



Festival committee members harvesting rye for Festival use in basket making, thatching, flail threshing, and machine threshing. "Abe" Roan is shown hand tying a sheaf with strands of straw; sheaves like this will be used in 18th-century

demonstrations. The binder is employed to make the sheaves used by the threshing-machine crew.

demonstrators took part in the first festival) portraying the folklife of Goschenhoppen. Certain demonstrations take place in an 18th-century setting with appropriate equipment and garb, while others are set in the 19th century, prior to 1890 when the effects of industrialization began to be felt in the region. With twenty-five workers (male and female, young and old) working two shifts covering twelve hours, it takes four full weekdays to haul, scrub, paint, repair, and erect the festival's structures, stored during the year in eight over-the-road trailers.

The Folk Festival has been described as "living history," which is exactly what its founders hoped it would be. As such, it covers the full range of life experiences, including religion, home life, folk customs, decorative arts, clothing, food, agriculture, trades, and folk medicine. Traditional activities demonstrated or portrayed are based on local application within the Goschenhoppen folk region. After the presence of a particular skill, craft, or activity has been established by historic documentation and by oral sources (information gathered from folklife informants), the festival committee seeks a demonstrator who is both skilled and capable of doing research to assist in localizing the demonstration he or she is being asked to set up. The success of the Festival has been due at least in part to the committee's willingness to work with demonstrators, guiding—and in many cases helping with—the necessary research, while at the same time sharing their own personal research and knowledge.

Speaking of research, during the first several festivals costumes were based on old photographs and drawings from the region. They were made from altered modern patterns or were purchased at stores in Lancaster County run by members of the Plain religious sects. Then Ellen



Sheepshearing by Festival chairman Phil Gehret.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ORGANIZATIONS

A

AARONSBURG HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION Plum St., Aaronsburg (814/349-8276) Hours: Wednesdays, 7-9pm; Saturdays, 1-4pm; or by appointment. Haines Township Fall Festival, Oct. 5, 6.

A F R O - A M E R I C A N HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL MUSEUM 701 Arch St., Philadelphia (215/574-0381) Exhibition: *Healing the Body and the Mind: The African American Sports Tradition in Philadelphia*, through Dec. 30, 1996. Museum open Tues-Sat., 10am-5pm, Sunday 12-6pm. Adults, \$4; students, children, senior citizens, handicapped persons, \$2.

AMERICAN CHRISTMAS MUSEUM Rt. 1 and Hickory Hill Rd., Chadds Ford (610/388-0600) Hours: Tues.-Sun., 9:30am-5:30pm. Adults \$5; children 6-13, \$2.50; under 6, free. Thomas Nast Display (re-creation of one of his 1880s book illustrations); Educational Exhibit - Origin of the Christmas tree and ornaments; Museum Christmas Shop (no admission fee) with special collectibles.

AMERICAN SWEDISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM 1900 Pattison Ave., Philadelphia (215/389-1776) Hours: Tues-Fri. 10am-4pm; Sat, Sun. 12-4pm. Adults \$5; seniors, students \$4; members, children under 11, free. Permanent exhibition: *New Sweden in America* tells the story of Swedish settlements in the Delaware Valley from 1638-1655 and the interaction between the settlers and the indigenous Lenape people. Special exhibition *Memories and Mementos: Voices of Our Swedish Past*, through Dec. 1. Lucia Julbord (traditional Swedish Christmas

smorgasbord) and Lucia Procession, Dec. 6, 6-10pm. Lucia Procession and Julmarknad (Christmas Market), Dec. 7, 12-4:30pm. Exhibition: *Maypoles, Crayfish and Lucia: Swedish Holidays and Traditions*, Dec. 20 and ongoing.

B

BRANDYWINE RIVER MUSEUM Rt. 1, Chadds Ford (610/388-2700) Museum open daily, 9:30am-4:30pm; adults \$5; senior citizens and students \$2.50; under six free. Fall Harvest Market, Museum courtyard. Weekends only Sept. 7-Nov. 3, 9:30am-4:30pm. *A Brandywine Christmas*, Nov. 29-Jan. 5, 1997. Christmas Shops, Nov. 29-Dec. 30, Museum Courtyard, weekends only Nov. 29-Dec. 30, 9:30am-4:30pm; daily Dec. 26-30. Annual Critter Sale, Dec. 7, 9:30am-4:30pm; Dec. 8, 9:30am-2pm; Museum lecture room.

BUCKS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MERCER MUSEUM 84 South Pine St., Doylestown (215/345-0210) Museum admission adults \$5; senior citizens \$4.50; Youth (6-17) \$1.50; under 6 and members, free. Special Exhibit through May 31, 1997: *Time Was...Tall Case Clocks From the Mercer Collection*. Included with Museum admission. Early American Craft Demonstrations: *Beer Brewing*, Sept. 28, ongoing, 2-4pm; *Flax to Linen*, Oct. 26, ongoing, 2-4pm; *Shoemaking*, Nov. 30, ongoing, 2-4pm.

C

THE CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART 4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh (412/622-3328) Museum hours: Tues-Sat. 10am-5pm; Sun. 1-5pm. Admission: adults \$5; seniors \$4; children 3-18 and students with ID \$3; under 3 free. Exhibitions:

America In Print: 1860-1945, through Nov. 3, 1996.; *Pittsburgh Revealed: Photographs Since 1850*, Nov. 8-Jan. 25, 1997; first full-scale study of photography in Western Pennsylvania features 450 vintage images by more than 150 photographers.

CHADDS FORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY Box 27, Chadds Ford (610/388-7376) John Chads House, Barns-Brinton house, and the Barn open weekends, 12-6pm, May 4 through Sept. 29. Guided tours of the 18th-century restorations; domestic arts demonstrations; new Historical Society video *Sharing the Spirit in the Barn*. Special display in the Museum Room. A Is For Apples Weekend, Oct. 12, 13, 12-5pm; 18th century apple cookery and related crafts at the Barns-Brinton House. The Great Pumpkin Show, Oct. 25, 26, 5-10pm; candlelit carved pumpkins. Candlelight Christmas in Chadds Ford, Dec. 7, 2-7pm; 11th annual tour of private homes and historic sites.

C H E S T E R C O U N T Y HISTORICAL SOCIETY 225 N. High St., West Chester (610/692-4800) Unless otherwise indicated, all exhibitions and programs are held at the Society's History Center complex at the corner of High and Chestnut Streets; museum hours are Mon-Sat., 9:30am-4:30pm; library hours are the same except on Wednesdays when the library is open from 1-8pm. Admission: adults \$5; senior citizens \$4; children 6-17, \$2.50; under 5 free. Exhibits: *Treasures Revealed*, a glimpse into the breadth of artifacts amassed by the Society in more than a century of collecting; through Nov. 9. *Recording the Past: The Drawings of Henry T. MacNeill*, artist MacNeill (1890-1970) recorded dozens of the most important architectural landmarks of

the Chester County region; through Jan. 25, 1997. *The Artist's Eye: Chester County People and Places*; draws from the Society's collection of paintings and sculpture to continue the visual exploration of the region drawn by Henry MacNeill; through March 29, 1997.

E

ECKLEY MINERS' VILLAGE R.D. 2, Weatherly (717/636-2070) A museum devoted to the everyday life of anthracite miners and their families. Open Mon-Sat. 9am-5pm; Sunday 12-5pm. Adults \$3.50; senior citizens \$2.50; ages 6-17, \$1.50; additional admission fee for special programs. Halloween Lecture, Oct. 27; Charles J. Adams of Reading, Pa., will give a talk on his work collecting ghost stories of the region. Children's Christmas in Eckley, Dec. 7, 8; children will learn what children of the Anthracite Region did to prepare for Christmas; admission fee; reservations required.

EPHRATA CLOISTER 632 W. Main St., Ephrata (717/733-4811) Apple Dumpling Festival, Oct. 12, 10am until sold out; Cloister grounds. William Penn Heritage Day, Oct. 20, 12-5pm; Cloister Chorus will perform at 2, 3, 4pm. Christmas at the Cloister, Dec. 9, 10, 6:30, 7:45, 9pm at the Meetinghouse; scripture reading and Christmas Music by the Cloister chorus; free, but tickets required. Christmas Candlelight Tours, Dec. 26-29, 6:30-9pm on the half hour from the Visitor Center.

F

FRIENDSHIP HILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE State Rt. 166, Point Marion (412/725-9190) Country estate of Albert Gallatin; the park and Gallatin House open daily from 8:30am-5pm. *Festi Fall '96*, Sept. 29, 11am-5pm; day-long celebration of the life and times of Albert Gallatin and the culture of

the Allegheny Plateau. *The Legends of Friendship Hill*, Oct. 26; walking tours beginning in main parking lot starting at 7, 8, 9pm. *Albert Gallatin & the War of 1812*, Dec. 22, 2pm; a talk which will present the causes, campaigns and conclusion of the second American War of Independence.

H

HAY CREEK VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION Box 36, Geigertown (717/336-2337) Hay Creek Apple Festival, Oct. 12, 7am-3pm; authentic early American apple foods—main courses, delicacies, desserts, apple butter—as well as antiques, crafts, scarecrow building, pumpkin painting, early American games.

HERSHEY MUSEUM 170 W. Hersheypark Dr., Hershey (717/534-3439) Exhibition: *Chocolatetown Special*, Nov. 8-Jan. 5; miniature train layout showcasing Hershey, Pa., as it appeared in the 1820s. Includes 3 operating trains and 3 operating trolleys; free with Museum admission. Lecture: *Pennsylvania German Traditional Redware*, by traditional craftsman Lester Breininger; Oct 13, 2pm, free with museum admission. Lecture: *The Lenape (Delaware): How They Lived and Where They've Gone*, by Dr. Marshall Becker, professor of anthropology, Oct. 21, 1pm; free with museum admission. *Christkindlmarkt*, Dec. 6-8, 10am-5pm; traditional Pennsylvania German craft vendors, crafts demonstrations, German foods and entertainment. On Dec. 7, come meet Belsnickle — the Pennsylvania German Traditional Bringer of Gifts; free with museum admission.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA 1300 Locust St., Philadelphia (215/732-6200) Ongoing exhibition: *Finding Philadelphia's Past: Visions and Revisions*. Open Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays

10am-5pm; Wednesdays 1-9pm. Adults \$2.50; seniors and ages 6-18, \$1.50; under 6 free. Admission to museum and historical research center is \$5 for adults, \$2 for students, with valid I.D. Discover Who Lived in Your Philadelphia House in 1880; Dec. 7, 12-3pm; Use the handwritten 1880 census, the first to request more comprehensive information about residents, to see if you can find out who lived in your Philadelphia house in 1880; Historical Society staff will help with your investigations.

HOPEWELL FURNACE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE 2 Mark Bird Lane, Elverson (610/582-8773) Open daily 9am-5pm, except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day; age 17 and over, \$2; under 17, free. *They Were What They Ate*, demonstration program focusing on women's roles in the community through a look at food production, harvest activities, and cooking in the 1830s; Oct. 26, 10am-4pm; admission fee. *Iron Plantation Christmas*, re-creates a typical 1830s Christmas, including a visit from the Belsnickel; traditional music and refreshments at Bethesda Church; Dec. 8, 10am-4pm; no admission charge.

J

JAPANESE HOUSE AND GARDEN West Fairmount Park, Philadelphia (215/878-5097) Scroll Airing and Closing Tea Ceremonies, Oct. 26, 2pm; features display of important paintings and other art objects; adults \$7, children \$5.

K

KUTZTOWN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY Normal Ave. & Whiteoak St., Kutztown (215/683-3936) 14th Annual Holiday Festival; selected arts and crafts show and sale; Kris Kringle Cafe, door prizes, and entertainment. Nov. 9, 10, 10am-5pm.

L

LANDIS VALLEY MUSEUM Rt. 272/Oregon Pike, Lancaster (717/569-0401) Largest Pennsylvania Dutch Museum; admission charge; museum shop. Harvest Days, Oct. 12, 11am-5pm; Oct. 13, 12-5pm. Harvest activities, traditional crafts, apple-butter making, walnut hulling and more; food, excellent museum store; admission fee. Pumpkin Patch Weekend, Oct. 26, 11am-5pm; Oct. 26, 12-5pm. Horse-drawn rides to the pumpkin patch, pumpkin decorating, scarecrow stuffing, music, storytelling; admission fee.

LENNI LENAPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM OF INDIAN CULTURE R.D. 2, Fish Hatchery Rd., Allentown (215/797-2121) Open year-round, Tues.-Sun. except major holidays. General visitors 12-3pm; groups 10am-4pm with some evening hours. Call for appointment. To interpret the importance of corn the Society presents three annual festivals: Spring Corn Festival, 1st Sunday in May; Roasting Ears of Corn Food Fest, 2nd Sunday in August; Time of Thanksgiving, 2nd Sunday in October. Public invited; bring your own seating; museum not open during events.

M

MEADOWCROFT MUSEUM OF RURAL LIFE (A site of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania) 401 Meadowcroft Rd., Avella (412/587-3412) Harvest Festival, Oct. 19, 12-5pm; Oct. 20, 1-6pm. A celebration of our rural past, with apple butter making, cider pressing, corn husk dolls, traditional music, and horse-drawn rides.

P

PENNYPACKER MILLS 5 Haldman Rd., Schwenksville (610/287-9349) All Hallow's Eve Festival for Children, Oct. 19, 1-4pm. Fall activities for children 10 and under. No fee. Illuminated Victorian Christmas Open House,

Dec. 14, 3-9pm; holiday festivities abound! No fee; donations accepted.

PETER WENTZ FARMSTEAD Shearer Road, Worcester (610/584-5104) *Laerenswaert* "worth learning," Oct. 5, 10am-4pm. Visitors will be able to discover some of the 18th century arts and crafts of the Pennsylvania Germans through hands-on demonstrations conducted by crafts people in period attire; no admission charge.

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART 26th St. and Benj. Franklin Parkway (215/684-7860) Exhibitions: *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy, 1770-1870*, Nov. 3-Jan. 5, 1997; presents the achievements of two generations of the noted Philadelphia Peale family of artists and naturalists who between them created portraits of over 2,000 citizens of the young republic, and whose work illustrates life during the first century of this nation's independence. *The Cadwalader Family*, Nov. 3-Feb. 2, 1997; paintings and decorative arts relating to four generations of the Cadwalader family of Philadelphia presents portraits by Peale, Gilbert Stuart, and Thomas Sully, as well as 18th and 19th century silver, furniture, and other decorative art objects.

POLISH AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER 308 Walnut St., Philadelphia (215/922-1700) Museum exhibits: Displays on Polish history and culture; paintings of *Great Men and Women of Poland*; pictorial display of *Poland at Arms—World War II* photographs, 1939-1944. Mon-Sat. 10am-4pm; closed holidays; free admission. Pulaski Parade, Oct. 6, 1:30pm, begins at 20th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway; honors General Casimir Pulaski, Father of the American Calvary.

POTTSGROVE MANOR W. King St. and Rt. 100, Pottstown (610/326-4014) Tues-Sat., 10am-4pm; Sun. 1-4pm; closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New

Year's Day. Candlelight Tour, Dec. 15, 1-7pm; living history holiday open house; admission free.

Q

QUAKERTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY Main & W. Broad Sts., Quakertown (215/536-3298) Christmas Bazaar, Nov. 11, 12; craftspersons and bake sale; no admission charge.

S

THE SCHUYLKILL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 8480 Hagy's Mill Rd., Philadelphia (215/482-7300) Open Mon-Sat., 8:30am-5pm; Sun. 1-5pm; adults \$5, children 2-11 \$3. Admission fee allows access to hiking trails and the Discovery Room, a hands-on exhibit area for children. Fallfest, Oct. 6, 11am-4:30pm. Hayrides, live music, clowns, fun food, moon bounce ride, arts and crafts, face & pumpkin painting, and more; fee per carload to be announced.

W

WASHINGTON CROSSING HISTORIC PARK Washington Crossing (215/493-4076) Open Tues-Sat 9am-5pm; Sun. 12-5pm; closed certain holidays; admission charge. Heritage Day, Oct. 20; encampment, house tours, open-hearth cooking. Bucks County Handweavers Show & Sale; visitors center, Nov. 22-24. Candlelight Christmas Tour, Nov. 30; tree lighting, caroling, and a candlelight tour of the Village. Christmas Day Crossing Reenactment, Dec. 25; formation of colonial soldiers and officers before embarking across the Delaware.

WHARTON ESHERICK MUSEUM Paoli (610/644-5822) Adults \$6; children under 12, \$3. Exhibition: *Treasured Treves*, through Dec. 31; features unique jewelry boxes selected from the Museum's third annual woodworking competition.

INDEX

Belsnickle

Hershey Museum
Hopewell Furnace National
Historic Site

Christmas

American Christmas Museum
American Swedish Historical
Museum
Brandywine River Museum
Chadds Ford Historical Society
Eckley Miners' Village
Ephrata Cloister
Hershey Museum
Hopewell Furnace National
Historic Site
Kutztown Area Historical
Society
Pennypacker Mills
Quakertown Historical Society
Washington Crossing Historic
Park

Craft Demonstrations

Bucks County Historical
Society, Mercer Museum
Chadds Ford Historical Society
Hershey Museum
Quakertown Historical Society
Washington Crossing Historical
Park

Demonstrations

Hopewell Furnace National
Historic Site
Meadowcroft Museum of Rural
Life
Peter Wentz Farmstead

Displays

Japanese House and Garden

Exhibits

Afro-American Historical and
Cultural Museum
American Christmas Museum

American Swedish Historical
Museum
Bucks County Historical
Society, Mercer Museum
Chadds Ford Historical Society
Chester County Historical
Society
Hershey Museum
Historical Society of
Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Polish American Cultural Center
The Carnegie Museum of Art
The Schuylkill Center for
Environmental Studies
Wharton Esherick Museum

Festivals

Aaronsburg Historical Museum
Association
Ephrata Cloister
Friendship Hill National
Historic Site
Lenni Lenape Historical Society
and Museum of Indian
Culture
Pennypacker Mills

Food

American Swedish Historical
Museum
Hay Creek Valley Historical
Association
Quakertown Historical Society

Ghost Stories

Eckley Miners' Village

Halloween

Eckley Miners' Village

Harvest Activities

Landis Valley Museum

Hayrides

The Schuylkill Center for
Environmental Studies

Kris Kringle

Kutztown Area Historical
Society

Lectures

Hershey Museum

Music

Ephrata Cloister
Hopewell Furnace National
Historic Site
Meadowcroft Museum of Rural
Life
The Schuylkill Center for
Environmental Studies

Open House

Pottsgrove Manor

Parade

Polish American Cultural Center

Pumpkin Carving & Decorating

Chadds Ford Historical Society
Hay Creek Valley Historical
Association
Landis Valley Museum
The Schuylkill Center for
Environmental Studies

Reenactment

Washington Crossing Historic
Park

Tea Ceremony

Japanese House and Garden

Tours

Chadds Ford Historical Society
Ephrata Cloister
Friendship Hill National
Historic Site



Father-and-son demonstrators John and Jeremy Horn shave hickory poles to make brooms at the 1986 Festival.

Gehret, a leading member of the Goschenhoppen Historians, began doing research on the kinds of clothing worn by early Pennsylvanians in rural parts of the state. She searched original sources and records, the Smithsonian Collection, private collections, and the records of county historical societies and the state museum. Her research, published in *Rural Pennsylvania Clothing*,¹² led to the accurate costuming of Folk Festival participants. Once she identified the appropriate garb many members began to make their own. Summer clothing is used for both 18th- and 19th-century demonstrations for obvious reasons. There are about 875 costumed participants, and about 150 of them are supplied with clothing from the costume bank established by the festival committee. Those who supply the traditional food or services are not costumed, although one might suggest (tongue in cheek) that it would be clever to dress members of the local ambulance crew in broadfall trousers and 19th-century dresses and sunbonnets rather than coveralls.

As the Festival does attempt to present the full range of life experiences, all ages participate. Babies and toddlers appear in appropriate costume including, in a 19th-century demonstration, several male toddlers in "boys' dresses." Several great-grandparents participate but due to age or infirmity are limited to rocking chairs where they whittle or pare vegetables at cooking demonstrations. Many demonstrations employ mother-daughter or father-son combinations or even three generations of one family; indeed, a family that participated in the first festival expects to have four generations taking part this year. The interplay between these youngest-to-oldest costumed family members gives the demonstrations an authentic air, as does the



The late Homer Kriebel, the basket maker of the Butter Valley, working on his Schnitzlebank at the 1978 festival. A practicing craftsman, he wore his everyday clothes, not the reproduction garb worn by demonstrators of re-created crafts and trades. (Photo by E. Munro)



*Celine Hoy making a coiled rye-straw basket.
(Photo by Town and Country News)*



Betty Gamon uses a course comb and a tow wheel to demonstrate the preparation of tow at the Festival.

interplay between “apprentice” and “master craftsman.”

This apprentice-master craftsman relationship is the result of a program in which young people from local schools work side by side (in costume) with highly skilled demonstrators; many come back year after year—some all during their secondary-school years—and develop a personal relationship with their “masters.”¹³ Some even reapprentice themselves if they develop another interest, while several, now adults, have stepped into leadership roles and are themselves heading demonstrations as master craftsmen at the Festival. Many of these young people are not of Pennsylvania German stock and it would seem that their response to learning the heritage of the Goschenhoppen folk region is a testimony to the folklife approach employed by the Historians and to the spirit of pride, self-discipline, and personal responsibility they see in the organization’s workers and adult leaders.¹⁴

Visitors to the festival notice and frequently comment on the large number of actively participating young people, and make other, telling, comments as well; comments that speak indirectly to the Festival’s emphasis on authenticity.¹⁵ Every year, for example, several visitors will complain that there are no souvenirs available for sale. Obviously they missed the souvenir supplier—the pack peddler who sells penknives, jew’s harps, fabric, pins, pocket watches, combs, and simple toys. Yet another visitor could not find a hot dog or hamburger on the grounds “to get a decent lunch,” as only traditional Pennsylvania German

foods typical of Goschenhoppen (no saffron in the potpie, please) are served. The same authentic local folk beliefs and practices portrayed in the demonstrations are also seen in the more formal stage presentations held in the Park’s turn-of-the-century wooden band shell. On-stage interviews with folklife informants (often festival participants) take place there, and it is there that speakers on topics such as folk medicine and folk garb present their research and knowledge to the public. Here too can be heard folk songs and monologues related to the festival theme, which this year is “Die Maad un Da Knecht” (“The Hired Girl and the Hired Man”). It will permit us to feature the young people who are the future of Goschenhoppen.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

In 1982 the Goschenhoppen Historians were granted a unique honor—an invitation from the German-American Tricentennial Commission to represent the Pennsylvania Germans in Philadelphia during October for celebrations commemorating three hundred years of German settlement in Pennsylvania. For one week a rented van followed by a caravan of cars and trucks traveled from Green Lane to Penn’s Landing where the celebration took place. There, on the banks of the Delaware River, they set up a mini-folk festival and with thirty-five costumed participants ranging from toddlers to senior citizens told the story of the first wave of Germanic immigrants to Penn’s Colony



Students from surrounding schools volunteer as Festival apprentices; here one of them is shown dipping candles. (Photo by Bob Esposito)

to the public, to visitors and officials from Germany, to diplomats, and to officials from the state and city. The dialect was spoken by senior interpreters and the demonstrators processed flax, spun wool and linen thread, prepared folk medicine, scratch-decorated Easter eggs in the old manner, quilted a petticoat, squared logs, made a basket, and frequently dressed (and undressed) a Germanic bed—an activity which brought interesting comments from the German visitors. The public was also introduced to the folk beliefs and stories associated with these customs, practices, skills, and activities. While the members of the Goschenhoppen “family” who participated in these Penn’s



Sadie Kriebel, wife of Homer Kriebel, milks the Festival cow in 1978. She has participated at all the Festivals thus far, and at home on her farm she helped with the milking until she was eighty-five.

Landing activities enjoyed themselves as much or more than did visitors to the celebration, for me perhaps the highlight of more than thirty years with the Historians was a magical night in 1984, when my years of folk culture research and preservation efforts in Pennsylvania were cross-pollinated by a group trying to preserve their own folk culture, which at that time was behind the Iron Curtain. That cultural preservation group was the Sudmährischen Sing-und-Spielschar Stuttgart—the South Moravian Folk Singers and Folk Players from Stuttgart. The Historians were one of nine organizations to host this troupe of fifty singers, dancers, and musicians from West Germany as they toured the Eastern United States performing South Moravian folk music and dances.

Their program, originally scheduled for Red Men’s Hall, was moved to New Goschenhoppen Park because of the Hall’s small stage and long flight of steps to the second floor and because more people could be accommodated out-of-doors. The crowd warmed to the performers since their South German speech could be understood by many in attendance and they were performing tunes familiar to their South German speech could be understood by many in attendance and they were performing tunes familiar to many in the older, dialect-speaking audience. The Park’s turn-of-the-century wooden band shell rang with music on that delightful June night as the spirit of the audience was reflected in the exuberance of the troupe. The atmosphere that evening caused one young singer to remark to me afterward in halting English: “This is our best performance in America. This old wood ‘theater’ vibrates with our music and your audience almost seems to understand us. [Little did she realize the extent of that understanding.] . . . Thank you for inviting us to perform.”



Open-hearth cooking class at the home of a home-skills committee member. Preserving the skill is the primary goal of such classes, enabling participants to demonstrate at the Festival is the practical result.

SPECIAL PEOPLE

Organizations often prosper due to the work of special people,¹⁶ and Ellen Jensen Gehret (1939-1993) and her husband, Philip, played an important role in the Goschenhoppen Historians. Under their dedicated leadership the organization and the folk festival grew from local works to nationally recognized entities. Ellen Gehret, whose role in Festival costuming has already been explained, had the ability to address the organization's academic and physical needs and she usually proceeded to do so. Together the Gehrets spearheaded the moving of the Museum from Vernfield to Green Lane where Phil, a master craftsman as well as a jack of all trades, supervised the construction of the exhibit areas. It was the Gehrets' abilities coupled with curator Alan Keyser's detailed knowledge of Pennsylvania German folk culture which brought into being an institution which evokes praise from all who visit. But perhaps the Gehrets' most significant legacy to the Historians involves the Folk Festival, which they co-chaired from the late 1960s until her death in 1993. At the urging and with the support of other leading members, in the mid-1980s the Gehrets established a departmental approach to

festival leadership in which committee chairpersons take charge of the organization and the implementation of their own part of the Festival. Thus the Festival continues despite Ellen Gehret's death and Philip Gehret's move from the Goschenhoppen area.¹⁷

* * *

After observing their annual Folk Festival for many years, a long-time friend of the Goschenhoppen Historians described them as a group of people characterized by pride, self-discipline, and personal integrity. Now the watchwords of the Historians, these are the qualities that have enabled them, in only thirty-five years, to reach heights seldom achieved by a local historical society; qualities upon which this educational and preservationist organization has been built and upon which it flourishes—fulfilling the dreams of the two men who founded it and who expect to participate in the 30th Annual Goschenhoppen Folk Festival in August, 1996.

ENDNOTES

¹Pronounced "Gush'n hup'n"—the "u" is pronounced as the "u" in "cup."

²Old Goschenhoppen Lutheran Church, Old Goschenhoppen United Church of Christ (Reformed), and New Goschenhoppen United Church of Christ (Reformed) were organized about 1730.

³The name has often become lost throughout history in local names, but knowledge of the area soon reveals its original name. There exists near Green Lane, Pennsylvania, a Hoppenville Pike, a local road going to Hoppenville, at one time Goschenhoppenville. Also, the state highway department historical marker in Bally, Berks County, states that the village in the western part of the folk region "was once called Goschenhoppenn."

⁴Members, leaders, and even members of the board of directors were not necessarily from old families or even local people. They were more regional in the beginning years. Contemporary leaders and board members come from a wide area of Eastern Pennsylvania with members drawn from throughout the nation.

⁵One of the very first museum acquisitions was a double sampler, and the story of its purchase illustrates the community's early support of the Historians. They had been given the 1754 Frey log house by a local builder. On the way home after a Saturday of dismantling, several of the group stopped at an auction to "Wunnerfitz." Just as the group of five arrived in the backyard, the auctioneer held up a spectacular piece of cross-stitched needlework with both Mennonite and Schwenkfelder motifs. The group pooled the money it had available, won the bidding, and received a long round of applause when they announced that the purchaser was the Goschenhoppenn Historians for their new folklife museum. The piece has since been recognized by scholars in print as a folk culturally significant piece.

⁶Both are open Sunday afternoons, 1:30-4 p.m., April through October or by appointment.

⁷Opened only to allow the soul of a dying person to leave the house.

⁸Clarence Kulp was the first editor and he was followed by Arthur Lawton and the late Beaveau Borie. Most issues are still available through the Historians.

⁹Monthly meetings are on the third Thursday of the month at 8 p.m., September through May, with an annual on-site meeting in June. Sample topics for 1995-96 included a locally produced video on the one-room school, a slide program on covered bridges of Eastern Pennsylvania, and clockmakers of Montgomery County. Meetings are announced in local newspapers and the public is welcome. Popular programs in the past have been on Pennsylvania German occult beliefs, local quilting attitudes and traditions, locally printed broadsides, and the importance of the broadside as a means of communicating. Scholars with reputations and degrees, folk informants, and local researchers have graced the podium over the years.

Red Men's Hall also lends itself to shows and exhibits. During the third weekend in January in 1983, 150 items associated with quilts and quilting were assembled. Solely from the Goschenhoppenn region, the exhibit was set up to present an overview of quilting in the region. The large meeting hall with its massive kerosene chandeliers and the Folklife museum were turned into galleries. That show resulted from the research on quilting traditions by Ellen Gehret and Nancy Roan. The oral interviews of quilters they talked to resulted in the publication *Just a Quilt*.

The meeting hall with its stage and wing rooms rang with a dialect play in 1985. Dialect members of the Huff's Church Players, and several community recruits put on a newly discovered dialect play, *Da Un G'shicht Menscha Fonger (The Notorious Detective)*, by the Reverend Franklin Sliker of Lehigh County. Two performances regaled more than 375 people.

Again in March 1992, an evening of dialect plays by Clarence Iobst, *Schtarr Kepp (Stubbornheads)* and *Da Census Enumerator*, set to play form by Paul R. Wieand were performed at the hall by members of the Huff's Church Players. A full house enjoyed themselves attending these two classics. Hopefully more plays will follow, as the board is currently exploring the possibility of producing further dialect plays. As dialect speaking diminishes, a shortage of actors and skilled directors remains a serious problem. Also, dialect speaking seniors who usually attend these plays find it difficult to ascend the grand stairway to the second floor meeting hall.

The year 1989 saw the creation of the Hometown Exhibit featuring historic linen clothing, coverlets, textiles, flax processing and weaving by William Leinbach, who wove a tablecloth during the weekend exhibit on the museum's eighteenth-century loom. This mid-January show was a continuation of the 1988 festival theme.

The most recent public event at Red Men's Hall was a new venture for a historical society entitled "Goschenhoppenn: Through the Artist's Eye." Paintings, sketches, lithographs, artists' prints, and models by local artists as well as works by Walter E. Baum, Hattie Brunner, and folk artist "Issac" Kulp were part of the exhibit. All were scenes of Gos-

chenhoppenn or immediate surrounding areas showing covered bridges, farmsteads, scenic views, and local customs and folk practices. All were juried for location and historic or folk cultural significance. The reception by local residents was phenomenal with requests still coming to the Historians for the next "art show."

¹⁰Perhaps with the newest voice-activated computer technology coming on the market, this resource will be available to scholars. Speaking of the dialect, by the 1960s no young people in Goschenhoppenn knew it; it was the native tongue only of the over-forty generation. Late in the decade the Historians began conducting classes by dialect speakers periodically; they continue today. In the 1980s, a rebirth of interest in the area in dialect speaking saw the East Greenville Groundhog Lodge and the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania as well as local night schools following the Historians' early lead. Sadly, all of these efforts can never bring back the dialect and the oral culture associated with it.

¹¹Copies of both are available from the Goschenhoppenn Historians at P. O. Box 476, Green Lane, PA 18054. Nancy and Donald Roan, *Lest I Shall Be Forgotten* (\$15.00 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling and 6% sales tax for Pennsylvania residents); Ellen J. Gehret and Nancy Roan, *Juscht en Deppich* (\$5.00 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling and 6% sales tax for Pennsylvania residents).

¹²Ellen J. Gehret, *Rural Pennsylvania Clothing* (Liberty Cap Books: York, Pa., 1976); the book is still in print.

¹³One faithful member goes to area secondary schools to recruit; in 1995 there were over two hundred costumed young people working in the skilled trade, home skill, pastime, and other demonstrations. From 1976 to 1995 close to two thousand young people from the local schools have participated as learning "apprentices," working side by side with master craftsmen.

¹⁴I am still awed when I realize that the idealism, knowledge, and hard work of the leadership is so quickly perceived, accepted, and acted upon to further the organization's mission. The vast army of willing workers seems to have caught those aspects of pride, self-discipline, and personal responsibility evoked by an almost mystical combination of persons and ideas. These active workers, helpers, planners, and board members have become a sort of extended family. Moreover, a second, younger generation, in some cases the children of original members and leaders, have assumed leadership roles and they have attracted their generation of volunteers.

¹⁵A reputation for presenting an accurate portrayal of Pennsylvania German folk culture brought a wonderful dividend in 1995 when the Paul R. Wieand Volksleit, the premier troupe of Pennsylvania German folk players, graced the Festival. They present dialect folk pageants which portray a series of folk customs and practices such as a wedding day's activities complete with a calathumpian band, Christmas customs, or an orchard picnic which includes real picnic foods and appropriate games (played on stage). Although the group is from the Lehigh Valley, their customs are quite similar to those of Goschenhoppenn; they assist greatly in the cultural picture presented to the public.

¹⁶Since the inception of the organization there have been efforts to recognize persons who contribute greatly to the preservation of the Pennsylvania German folk culture. Recognition takes place at the annual testimonial banquet for members and friends. As with most Dutchmen, when a group assembles, they eat. An original Fraktur-style certificate, the Goschenhoppenn Historians Folklife Award of Merit, is presented to the recipient along with public testimony concerning his work. There have been more than forty people favored. Honorees run the gamut from academics such as Dr. Don Yoder, Professor C. Richard Beam and posthumously, Dr. Alfred Shoemaker, to dialect writers such as Clarence Reitauer, *Da Schtiwvelknecht*, and Fred Stauffer of Oley. Folklife informants whose knowledge of the culture guided the organization's efforts have been honored; examples are Harry F. Stauffer of Farmersville, Lancaster County, and Sadie and Homer Kriebel, the basket maker of the Butter Valley. Preservationists Jeannette Lasansky and Robert C. Bucher, the founder of the Historians have also been given the award. Numerous local researchers and preservationists who usually go unnoticed in their communities are sought, for these are the unsung heroes of scholarship for whom the award was really created. And, speaking of awards, the Historians have received national recognition for their preservation efforts, having been given the George Washington Medal of Freedom in 1969 and 1970 by the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.

¹⁷Philip Gehret continues his active role in the organization and is currently chairman of the board of directors.

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL OF ODUNDE: Twenty Years on South Street

by Debora Kodish, Lois Fernandez, and Karen Buchholz

"ODUNDE" is a twenty-year-old African American Philadelphia street festival as well as the name of a grassroots educational and cultural organization in the city. The group takes its name from "odunde," a Yoruba (West African) holiday greeting loosely translated locally as "Happy New Year." For more than five years, the ODUNDE organization and the Philadelphia Folklore Project have been engaged in ongoing collaborative efforts to document African American folk arts and institutions in South Philadelphia.¹ We began working together for two reasons. First, we were aware that annually the ODUNDE festival faced opposition from some who would like to see it moved. It was our hope that our research could begin to clarify reasons for ODUNDE's rootedness, for the depth of claims upon and feelings for the neighborhood that many African Americans have, and for the significance of the ODUNDE festival for our community overall. Secondly, we undertook folklife documentation projects to fill some of the gaps in the published and public record of African American peoples' lives and experiences in this South Philadelphia neighborhood from 1945 to the present. Folklore—the word on the streets, what people say, passed-on words—contradicts many common assumptions about the social history and artistic traditions of South Philadelphia. We believe that it is critical that we record the perspectives and wisdom of the activists and artists who have in different ways fought to preserve and sustain African American culture in the face of enormous obstacles and often at great cost.

Overall, scholarly works on Philadelphia African American history and culture have tended primarily to concentrate on the 17th to the 19th centuries, on the accomplishments of prominent people and organizations, or on macro-level approaches. W.E.B. DuBois observed in 1890 that the largely African American seventh ward boasted more than social institutions (including "mother" churches, mutual aid organizations, secret societies, and social and labor organizations), but little attention has been paid to grassroots culture-making institutions which have historically provided people in the African American community with vital and viable alternatives to mainstream organizations and political processes. The ODUNDE festival is an important example of such a grassroots institution. It has been in the vanguard of African American cultural developments, but from the beginning ODUNDE founders were deeply aware of the many antecedents to their festival, and one goal of our work has begun to explore the meanings of some of these precedents.

ODUNDE has held tight to a venerable ground—to South Street, anchored in DuBois' Seventh Ward. In our interviews, some excerpts of which follow, people also remind us that Philadelphia's South Street's foremost "renaissance" can be dated not (as is often done) to the 1960s, but a good thirty to forty years before the immigration of largely white artists, to the days when African American clubs and dance halls supported a thriving cultural scene. It is often noted that Philadelphia was home to many nationally known artists and performers, including Marian Anderson, Ethel Waters, Dizzy Gillespie, Pearl Bailey, Reverend Tindley, Jessie and Arthur Fauset, Judith Jamison and others. Peoples' recollections remind us of the legacies of other artists, sometimes less well-known outside the community. These are individuals who, conscious of the limits that commercial or elite arts often impose, purposefully chose to work in vernacular or roots traditions, or to explore ways to combine political activism and cultural integrity, along the way widening the possibilities for the larger community. The following three essays provide different vantage points on the ways in which a grassroots festival has endured, and why that endurance has such powerful meaning.²

TESTIMONIES: COMING UP IN AFRICAN AMERICAN SOUTH PHILADELPHIA

To me, South Philadelphia was beautiful. That's why I've worked so hard. I'm trying to get that closeness and that care—because people really cared about people then. You know, and people did things collectively. You see, I grew up with a value that was taught to me by my father . . . he was from North Carolina, and you can't say that a hard time makes people cruel and hateful. It made him very sensitive and affectionate. Like my brother said, my mother and father did social work when people didn't know what social work was. O.K., my mother did day work. She used to bring food home and give it to people. When people gave her clothing, she'd give it to people. That same company over there at 12th and Washington Avenue—Ruggieri—is the same company that sold coal at fifty cents a bushel. And my father used to buy bushels of coal and take it across the tracks to people that had children that didn't have no coal. OK? So that's why I say, when they talk about poor—I mean, look, we always had something to share. And we grew up with that value. And when I was growing up, we played around in Annin Street. And



The procession to the bridge; carrying the stool. (All photographs by Thomas B. Morton)

somebody'd say "Come on in here and wash your hands," and they'd give you some lemonade and cookies and put you back out on the street.—Mamie Nichols

* * *

House rent parties. Do I know about them. Well girl, you cooked. Friday nights and Saturday nights. And they had a red light in the living room and you danced close. This was before the jitterbug. And people lived for house rent parties. That was the big thing. You got dressed to go to them. Some people met their husbands and wives at house rent parties. South Philadelphia was famous for them. In fact, my sister helped raise my two children on house rent parties. And in those parties, you could go into another room and play craps or cards. And the house lady

or man would cut the game. That means they would get a certain percentage of the winnings. And honey, they would fry chicken and collard greens and corn on the cob. Just good dinners. People would even come to house rent parties and order food and take it home. That's the truth. And you cooked. And people would pay \$2.00 to get in and you'd get your money from the pitchers of whisky that you'd sell, even if it was white whisky, that's the illegal kind.

And after the two nights, you'd have your rent. The next week it was your electric and your gas. The following week it was the coal for the furnace and of course food on the table.

And I can go back even before there was electric. For years, they'd come to our house. Every Friday and every

Saturday. Year in and year out.—Isabelle Fambro

* * *

When I came up, you had dancers on certain corners who were always dancing. They'd be out there all day long if the weather was good. Especially dancers, because this is what they did. They would meet on certain corners with what they knew how to do and see what another dancer was doing and they'd try to communicate like that. And it was almost like getting to know them—but through their dancing. And you have to know that in certain parts of the city they didn't allow street performers. Walnut, Locust, especially Chestnut, they wouldn't allow street performers. Merchants would be complaining. But now you can go anywhere.—LaVaughn Robinson

* * *

Now there was a parade on Halloween and people used to congregate by Pep's and the Showboat to watch. South Street would be filled with people. All the way down South Street from 3rd or so to 18th, gays were filling the streets, really dressed. It was like the mummies. We called it "prancing." They would promenade up the street. And people watching were dressed in finery, too. People walked along playing the blues, everything was blues then. You could hear saxophones all night. It was mostly gay men and people had on some fine clothes. You know gay and straight came together more than black and white in those days. But performers saw things differently anyhow.—Isabelle Fambro

* * *

It was a rare thing to see whites on South Street from 1925 on. And South Street was the street. South Street was our Lenox Avenue. "On South Street"—that song went right around the country. But things changed in the 1960s. Once things are gone, they're gone. And there were so many clubs. There was a big dance hall on Broad Street—the Strand Ballroom. Hurricane Hazel blew it away. Claudette's—it used to be called Skip's Lounge, right near the Royal Theater. Then there was the Harlem Club. There was Hotel Horseshoe where "Mom" Heavilow used to feed the musicians when they came into town. And there were so many others. And Billie Holiday was right there at 15th and Bainbridge, at the Emerson. And at Broad and Lombard, at the Drummers' Club, underneath the Horseshoe all the name jazz bands, the big stars used to come. At Pep's, I went to see Aretha Franklin. Lionel Hampton played at the Budweiser's at 16th and South. There was all the music and art you could want and the biggest of stars. Ethel Waters played White's Wonder Inn at 18th and Federal. It's still right there. I played there, too. We all played there.—Isabelle Fambro

* * *

Now there was a woman, Mrs. Heavilow, and she had a beautiful home, because you see, black entertainers couldn't go to hotels. And in that house I used to look down on Duke Ellington, and Jimmy Lunsford, the Nicho-

las Brothers and Count Basie—I used to look down on their heads and on beautiful chorus girls, too. And my mother used to go down there and help her prepare their supper after the shows. And Ms. Heavilow's grandson Leroy and I had to stay upstairs. We weren't allowed down—we had to stay upstairs and look through the heat register.

Now, from my understanding from growing up, and just from hearsay stories, passed-on stories, Mrs. Heavilow owned a lot of property and she didn't know the system and from the talk, the city sent her crazy by taking all that property from her. Because she owned a lot of property up on Montrose Street where they built the projects. Well, then people didn't know. And she had a beautiful home there on 12th Street, in the 700 block. The level of sophistication now is greater. The Graduate Hospital was going to move out to West Philadelphia and Mr. Moore, Susan Pettaway, Mrs. Bowden, Margaret Robinson who's deceased and Mr. Washington who is deceased, they went up there meeting after meeting after meeting after meeting. But early history was we begged for them to stay here and look where they are now: Graduate Place. And how many poor black persons can afford those apartments and town houses today? If people were afforded the same opportunities, a number of people would have been able to stay on South Street and keep their businesses and homes. All this fighting that we do, we still end up with nothing. There needs to be a change.—Mamie Nichols

LOIS FERNANDEZ DISCUSSES ORIGINS: WHY WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED

In about 1963, I met some Yorubas at the Christian Street YMCA. They were giving a program and the first time I saw them there—African people dressed in African traditional clothes—it moved me. It opened my eyes. We ended up establishing a relationship with them. In the months that followed, we went to their Temple at 116th Street in New York City, where the group was located. We joined them in going to the river in Harlem. It was the first time that I had participated in such a ceremony.

In the summer of 1966, my sister Sylvia Green, my cousin Gerri Fernandez, my friend Ruth Arthur and I opened the Uhuru Hut at 500 South 23rd Street. The Hut was an African Boutique offering African clothes, jewelry and fine arts, and it was one of the first shops of its kind in the country. We were all in our late 20s and early 30s, and the shop was the coming together of our ideas that because of peoples' rising consciousness, there was a place for such a boutique. We felt sure that it could appeal to masses of people. All of us had our roots in South Philadelphia. Ruth grew up in the immediate area. And so we found a place and opened it.

Ruth Arthur was one of the primary dressmakers for the shop, and one day she and I were walking by the triangle where 23rd St., South St. and Gray's Ferry converged. We began to imagine the possibilities of the place,



Batá battery with Greg "Peachy" Jarmin chanting in center, Baba Crowder to right.

saying to each other, "What a place to have something." We talked about what it would be like to have some kind of gathering there, for people in the neighborhood. We didn't know what at that time, what shape it might take, or what it would be. We just thought it ought to be. So that was the first time.

I went to Oshugbo, Nigeria, in 1972, and met Twin Seven Seven, a renowned Nigerian artist and he told me of the annual festival that they had there in honor of Oshun, the goddess of the river, and he took me to the river. My mind went back to the Yorubas in New York and to what Ruth and I had talked about, and I realized, "Well, we have a river. We're between two rivers. That's what we could do."

Three years later, opportunity presented itself. I saw this flyer in my office (I was working for the Department of Public Welfare) and I read this flyer about the "Philadelphia Renaissance," where the city was encouraging groups to do projects which linked city beautification to celebration of the spring. I thought, "Why can't we do an African American event? Why can't we go to the river?"

Well, there was so much apprehension. People said it would never work. They said, "Who's going to allow you?" People thought we were never going to cross that South Street bridge. People said, "They're not going to shut down traffic and let you go across that bridge, not for Black folks. They're not going to let you throw fruits off the bridge." In addition, there was a great deal of apprehension that such an event would not be able to take place because

of the prevalence of various gangs in the area. At that time, we were still in the middle of gang war. Our mission was to convince community folks that we could have a cultural event that would bring our people together based on culture alone, and that could be healing, rewarding and long-lasting in the midst of this despair. We never thought of this as a one-shot deal. And I was a gang worker at the time. I knew the rhythm of the gangs. I knew we could do it. Afterwards, people said, "I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't been there." And that was such a dream, such a thing. It was such a good feeling—and such a feeling of oneness.

But anyhow, we did it. And once the festival took place, it was beautiful and peaceful and the feedback from the community was tremendous.

That first ODUNDE (we called it the Oshun festival then) was small. We used the store, Uhuru Hut, then at 2214 South Street, as a sponsor. Even a week ago, a neighbor said to me, "It was so small that first year, it was just us, just the neighbors and the next year, it exploded, and it has been exploding ever since." And that was such a wonderful compliment, it just seemed to me.

We had our girls. Women were involved from SWCCCC, Southwest Center City Citizen's Council. We involved everybody. That morning everybody came to my house to get dressed, to give the kids a sense of belonging. We gave them culture. My sister xeroxed the song "Odunde," and as we left the house we were singing. Arthur Hall was with us and his group. The officiating priest at the first



The Ishangi family Egungun clears the space during the ODUNDE procession.

ODUNDE was Obailumi Ogunseye—one of the very Yoruba who we had met at the Christian Street Y back in 1963 and then my brother-in-law. My sister, Omowunmi, was also central to the procession to the river which became the focal point of the event. Our kids from the neighborhood were part of the program for the day: doing karate, drills, dance and other of our own folk arts. Anyway, it grew. And one of the mothers wrote a letter about ODUNDE recently to the editor of the *Daily News*, saying “Now we bring our kids . . . leave it where it is.”

When ODUNDE started, the area was predominately African American—from Lombard and certainly south of South Street—and it had been a middle-class/working-class African American area for roughly the previous two generations. At one time in the 1970s, John Coates of the South Central Neighborhood Action Committee was able to boast that the area was 80% African American homeowner occupied.

But by the late 1970s and early 1980s, things had changed. Major struggles over land and property—part of larger struggles regarding political control and power over what was becoming an increasingly valuable neighborhood close to Center City—also had an enormous impact on the shape, direction, and future of the community. The Cross-town Expressway (intended to link Interstates 76 and 95) was initially planned to cut through the area, and while the Expressway was ultimately defeated by a coalition of citizens, it still resulted in the massive destruction of a viable business corridor on South Street, as storeowners sold out or left. The fate of South Street west of Broad was taken out of the hands of the neighborhood people and small family-business owners and effectively left to a new group of people: developers, speculators, the ever-expanding Graduate Hospital, and individual property-owners—largely newcomers, white, and gentry. Urban renewal money (called black removal money on the streets)

made it possible for speculators to buy up large clusters of housing stock. Few sources of funds were available to help long-time residents. At that time, local activists clearly saw the writing on the wall: these wholesale changes were effectively undermining the African American community's ability to sustain itself. Added to this, older people were dying, and their children, able to live outside predominately African American neighborhoods because of the hard-won civil rights, housing and employment battles, often chose to move away.

Against the backdrop of these large-scale political and social changes—and exactly during the times that they happening—ODUNDE counterposed a grassroots, fundamentally local, and African-centered perspective. While not explicitly political, ODUNDE quickly became an important vehicle for a sense of community: people came, they came in greater and greater numbers, they brought their families, they made it their own. Combining the features of a block party with scheduled performances and organized vendors, the festival simply “felt right.”

For nearly ten years, the festival grew to near-universal acclaim. The absence of problems—the festival has never had any major disruptions or incidents—has been remarkable. Community members continue to turn out, and ODUNDE's popular African marketplace and day-long performances annually draw people from around the city and the wider region. From the start, the crowd has been diverse and peaceful: people wore “city garb and the colorful fabrics of Africa” according to the *Bulletin* in 1975. But by 1984, festival founders experienced the first organized opposition when a handful of residents from the 2300 block of Naudain Street presented a petition stating that the ODUNDE festival should be moved. Opposition has continued to escalate since that time, with committee persons, city officials, departments of licensing and inspection and a host of others annually raising the same issues, year after year.

Objections have been that this “type” of festival should not occur in a residential neighborhood, that the festival is (in various ways) “dirty,” and that it has “outgrown” its location, drawing too many people. But double standards abound both in evaluating the so-called problems with ODUNDE and in measuring its strengths. Some of the same complaints have been made about other Philadelphia parades without anyone suggesting that they move. The huge numbers of people who come to ODUNDE (and spend money) are somehow not counted as providing economic benefit to the city. The inconvenience of some neighbors one day a year seems a small price to pay for maintaining what is now the oldest continuously running African American community festival in this city, in an historically significant African American neighborhood. ODUNDE comes out of a tradition of African American culture-making, but it fused elements of vernacular festivity, thereby contributing to the vanguard of a cultural movement. Mixing the idea of a block party with perfor-

mances and organized vendors, ODUNDE inspired imitations in Delaware and elsewhere; people began using and then building on the ODUNDE pattern. A new market, with its own seasons, that pumps money into the African American community, is emerging, and ODUNDE continues to play a pivotal role. People need to understand all of this.

This essay opened with an origin narrative: an account of the founding of ODUNDE, including a description of the vision which inspired the festival and the values that orient it, with comments on some of the obstacles overcome in bringing ODUNDE forward. The obstacles continue to arise and this account is written in the belief that they will continue to be overcome. For the story of ODUNDE is part of a larger struggle for cultural resistance and survival that is in many ways the narrative of our time.

**KAREN BUCHHOLZ ON
“THE RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE”: AFRICAN
AMERICAN USES OF PUBLIC SPACE**

For ten of the last eighteen years, the organizers of the ODUNDE festival have resisted attempts to move ODUNDE out of its neighborhood of origin, away from an historically significant African American neighborhood, and off the South Street Bridge where offerings are made to Oshun. Exclusions, harassment and inattention to African American public gatherings during the last fifty years suggest historical reference points for the controversy over the site for the ODUNDE festival.

The South Street area in Philadelphia represents one of the oldest free African American communities in the nation, dating to the 17th century. This neighborhood was already home to the city's established black elite when the great migration of rural southern blacks doubled the city's black population between 1900 and 1920. The main African American settlement still ran along South Street, extending northward to Spruce Street and westward from 7th Street to the Schuylkill River. “South Street belonged to blacks, from 22nd to 10th Street,” said one-time South Philadelphia resident Isabelle Fambro and her comments are echoed by many others. For generations, this neighborhood has held central importance in the history of African Americans in Philadelphia, and people emphasize their freedom to gather, move, and mingle within this space. “The neighborhood is an extended family,” commented Lois Fernandez. Similarly, others remarked on the importance of the street to community cohesiveness: “The street is like our meeting hall. When we can't go in the street, we can't function.”

Though it claimed other titles, Philadelphia in the 1940s and 1950s was still “a city of segregated neighborhoods.” How the city has officially and unofficially dealt with different African American parades and public celebrations should be considered in this context. Access to streets, stores, public parks, and public swimming pools was severely restricted by Jim Crow. People describe recurring physical violence and intimidation both in neighboring white com-



Returning from the river, Babatunde Olatunji pours libations on the steps to the stage.

munities and on some occasions when they marched in parades. Many commented that “the Pocket” at 26th and South was “full of racism today as it was in its past,” “You don’t go there.” Similarly, Market Street was out of bounds. “Well it was set aside for the white folks, that’s all,” said Elizabeth Ransom, “you know, just like they’re taking over South Street now . . . Say from Lombard Street on back was ours [then].” African American public events sometimes put participants at risk, and certainly were little understood by the white community. Parade marchers recall being stoned by white youth, or pelted with garbage.

Only the most elite, prestigious and powerful African American groups—among them the Elks Club and the

House of Prayer—regularly organized parades on Broad Street. The Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World, a fraternal order made up largely of black middle-class and professional men, established a Philadelphia chapter in 1903, and by the 1940s, the Elks building at 16th and Fitzwater Streets, the O.V. Catto Lodge, actively hosted a wide range of social events. An important force in the community, the Elks occasionally hosted the national convention in August, with a massive parade representing not just Elks but a spectrum of African American occupational and social groups. The *Bulletin* reported in 1931 that in their brilliant-colored uniforms and purple fezzes, and the white, purple, and blue silk of the

women's auxiliaries, "the Elks resembled a huge purple-blue streak winding through the city" to those looking down from the office buildings. Other Elks lodges around the city organized smaller neighborhood parades which loom large in peoples' memories.

The Elks' largest showing, a war bond rally in 1945, brought together sixty-five lodges and thirty-nine marching bands. In addition, marching contingents of African American State Guardsmen, soldiers and sailors, police and other workers created an impressive black presence on Broad Street. According to the *Bulletin*, a record 200,000 spectators lined the parade route along Broad from Carpenter in South Philadelphia all the way north to Columbia Avenue. A short trip on Broad from Bainbridge to Walnut was part of the usual route of the United House of Prayer. The "Daddy Grace" parades (as these were popularly called) ended by marching through the elite African American neighborhood along Christian Street, west of Broad.

Besides these few parades, as Isabelle Fambro points out, effectively "no blacks were on Broad Street." The O.V. Catto brass band, the only African American group that has marched for sixty-five years on Broad Street as part of the Mummies parade had to share the street with white marchers who wore deeply offensive blackface or dressed in costumes depicting racist stereotypes. (Blackface was finally banned in 1964, because of legal action brought by African American community members.) And people recall that African American spectators watched the Mummies' parade on Broad Street at their peril. Lois Fernandez recalled that "If we were watching the parade, at different times the Mummies in blackface would march up to us and make racist remarks and provoke fights with us." Overall, black presences on Broad Street were discouraged, or carried mixed messages, to say the least.

Civic authorities assigned to provide services to African American public events in black neighborhoods often had little understanding of the traditions they witnessed. People recall numerous incidents of disrespect. The United House of Prayer at Sixteenth and Fitzwater held mass baptisms outside its church. Elizabeth Ransom recalled her discomfort: "They would take that big hose and . . . he (Daddy Grace) would be up there on that thing. The ladies would have on their white dresses, and you know, when all that water hit them. . . you could see everything, and the white firemen would be laughing. They got their kicks out of it." Looking back, Clara Bryant said, "We didn't have a decent place to baptize."

South Philadelphians recall literally hundreds of African American parades and public gatherings operating without official sanction. Pender McCall remembers that small parades—local drum and bugle corps, like the Lincoln Post at 19th and Federal, and drill teams from Baltimore and Washington, D.C.—marched almost weekly in South Philadelphia. Outdoor events in local neighborhoods presumably took place without street permits. At any rate, Fambro remembers, "the police didn't bother us." Katrina Hazzard-

Gordon argues in her book *Jookin'* that urban jook joints were better able to nurture and support African American cultural and artistic forms precisely because they operated outside official notice. What was true of the jooks was probably true of a wide variety of outdoor cultural events.

For nearly a century now, the city's tendency has been to uproot neighborhood cultural events, and to encourage their removal to wider, bigger, and allegedly more congenial public spaces near the center of town. But African American parades and processions historically have provided ways to define (and sometimes test and redefine) community boundaries. People in West Philadelphia tell stories of the few times that the Elks Parade, originating on the North Side of Market Street, home of the Moon gang, marched south into Barbary Coast gang territory, leaving streetcorner fights in its wake. In parts of the city, including South Philadelphia, some parish churches still continue the tradition of religious saints' day processions through the streets, in which parishioners carry sacred statues (or Maypoles as Lois Fernandez recalls of St. Mary's Episcopal in the 1950s), marking the geographic limits of the parish in the process.

ODUNDE's resolute commitment to staying in its original site is a reminder, as are the examples above, that neighborhoods are not interchangeable. Community-rooted festivals bring people and their dollars to neighborhoods. In contrast, parades that march down the central spaces of the city—the Parkway, Broad Street, Chestnut Street—draw crowds, media attention, and dollars to the city's political, bureaucratic, and financial centers of power. While it may be easier for the city to serve and manage such events and to promote them to tourists, this represents yet another strategy of disinvestment in neighborhoods.

ODUNDE is heir to a long and vital tradition of deeply African American festival gatherings. It brings a remarkably diverse range of people together, in a space that is historically African American and to which many have roots. But is also heir to a complex and problematic history in which African American community gatherings have been discouraged in the more public and central of the city's spaces, and in which (officially and unofficially, legally and illegally) African American uses of public space and access to services within spaces, have been restricted. Over time, the South Street area has become, as Lois Fernandez says, "our Mecca, our hub." Against this background, campaigns to move ODUNDE from South Street cannot be tolerated.

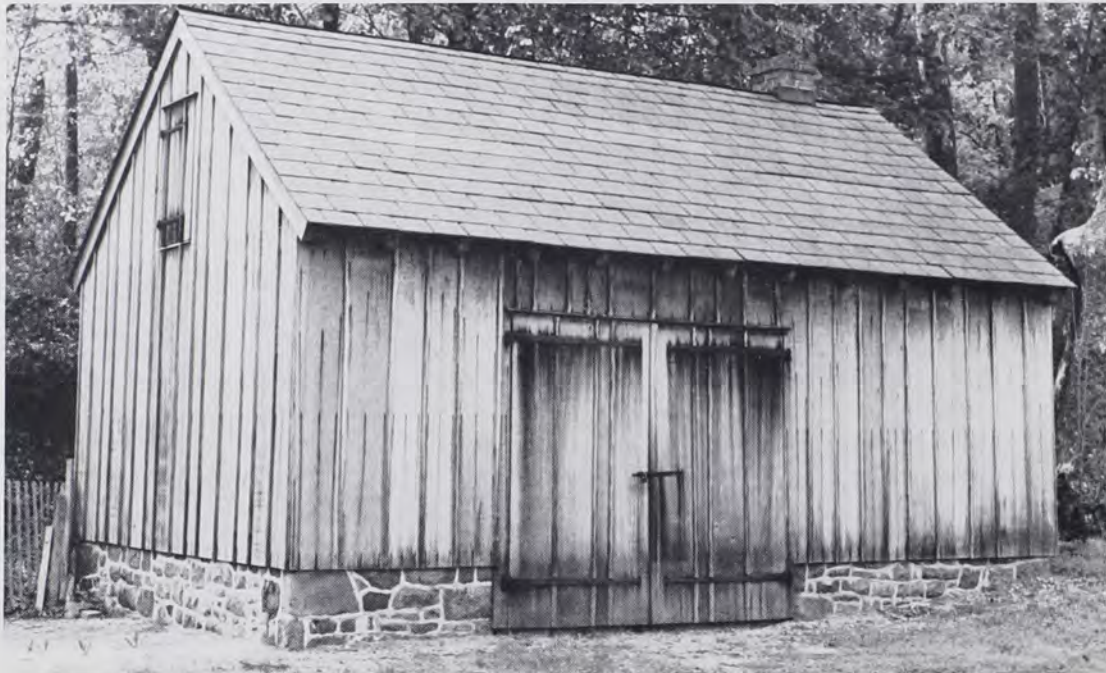
ENDNOTES

¹These essays were excerpted from the Philadelphia Folklore Project's *Works in Progress* 6:2 (1993), a special issue on ODUNDE edited by Debora Kodish. For information, call or write the Philadelphia Folklore Project, 1304 Wharton St., Philadelphia, PA 19147 (215)468-7871. Research on African American festival gatherings was supported by grants from the Samuel Fels Fund and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Thanks to Karen Buchholz, Nomalanga Dalili, Stephanie Felix, Lois Fernandez, and Debora Kodish for research. For more information about ODUNDE, call (215) 732-8508.

²Debora Kodish and Lois Fernandez

JOANNA FURNACE, THEN AND NOW

by Suzanne Fellman Jacob and Ron Schlegel



The completely reconstructed blacksmith shop at Joanna Furnace, home of the resident Hay Creek Valley blacksmith during the Association's festivals. The original structure was built in the 1830s; by 1980 nothing remained but partial foundation ruins.

"To 18th- and 19th-century Americans, truncated pyramids of stone were a familiar feature of the eastern landscape. These blast furnaces, twenty-five to thirty-five feet high, were always located at the base of a natural or constructed 'furnace bank' to allow charging of the furnace from the top. Across an elevated walkway, fillers rolled carts and barrows of iron ore, charcoal, and limestone from storage areas on the furnace bank. Every furnace was flanked with a large wooden water wheel turning in a pit. The wheel drove a pair of bellows, furnishing the air blast necessary to intensify the heat to smelting temperature. A system of counterweights returned the bellows to their original position. By the late 18th century, bellows were rapidly being replaced by 'blowing tubs,' two large cylindrical casks in which air was alternately compressed by pistons driven by the wheel. This provided a more uniform blast than the bellows. In front of the furnace was the cast arch, where the molten iron was periodically tapped. The iron was run into ladles and then poured into flasks to produce finished products. Pig iron was made by running molten iron into troughs dug in the sand floor of the cast house."¹

THE HISTORY OF OWNERSHIP AT JOANNA FURNACE

With its many streams and forests and its abundant supplies of iron ore and limestone, Pennsylvania was the largest manufacturer of iron in Colonial America. Thomas Rutter built Colebrookdale, the first blast furnace in Pennsylvania, in 1720. Soon the southeastern region of the Colony, particularly the valley of the Schuylkill River, was dotted with furnaces and forges, with many men owning or having a financial interest in more than one of these businesses. Joanna Furnace, established in 1791, was initially funded by Thomas May, Thomas Rutter (grandson of the founder of Colebrookdale), Thomas Bull, and Samuel Potts; each already had investments in the industry. It was named for Joanna Holland Potts, Samuel Potts' wife.²

Thomas May died in 1792, Rutter and Potts in 1795. This left Col. Thomas Bull of Chester County with primary responsibility for the operation of the Furnace. He had a one-third interest in the business and worked with the heirs of Potts and Rutter. It was during his tenure, in the years between 1809 and 1814, that Joanna Furnace produced munitions for the government. Two-, four-, six-, and twelve-ounce grapeshot and six- and twenty-four-pound cannonballs were made and hauled to the Philadelphia Naval Yard and Arsenal.



The 1792 store/office after partial restoration in the late 1980s.

Thomas Bull's daughter Elizabeth married one John Smith, and by 1811 he was an owner along with Bull and Robert May—Thomas May's son. John Smith's son (and Thomas Bull's grandson), Thomas Bull Smith, ran the Furnace but died in 1825 at a young age. In 1828 Joanna Furnace was rented to the owners (Buckley and Brooke) of nearby Hopewell Furnace for one year.

John Smith's daughter (Thomas Bull's granddaughter) married William Darling, and in 1833 he had the principal financial interest in Joanna Furnace. Later he owned it jointly with Levi Bull Smith (brother of Thomas Bull Smith) who married one of William Darling's relatives, Emily Badger. The firm was known as "Darling and Smith" throughout the 1840s and well into the 1850s. In 1858 William Darling left the partnership and Levi Bull Smith carried on as "Levi B. Smith & Co." (1858); "Joanna Co." (1859); and "Smith & Sons" (1870s).

In 1878 Levi Bull Smith's son, L. Heber Smith, became the owner of Joanna Furnace; he was married to Jane Ella Grubb, daughter of Clement Grubb, owner of Cornwall Furnace, established by Peter Grubb in Lebanon County in 1742.³ L. Heber Smith died in 1898 (the last year the Furnace operated), and although the Smith family continued to own the property, the industrial part of the site was allowed to deteriorate. In 1945 the entire property was sold to Mr. and Mrs. William Phelps, distant relatives of the Smith family, who used the mule stable on the site as a pocketbook factory in the late 1940s.⁴ In 1951 Phelps sold the property to the Bethlehem Steel Corporation for their Grace Mine operation. In 1979, with Grace Mine closing their operation, Bethlehem Mines Corporation, a division of the steel company, deeded the industrial portion of the Joanna Furnace property and some land (about twenty-five acres in all) to the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association.

THE IRON-MAKING PROCESS

The early blast furnaces used to smelt iron from its ore

shared a basic design. Thick outer stone walls and an inner lining of firebrick or sandstone withstood the extreme temperatures. From a narrow opening at the top, the inner walls sloped outward to the widest point—the "bosh"—about two-thirds down. There they sloped inward to support alternate layers of charcoal, iron ore, and limestone. At the bottom the shaft narrowed to a small chamber called the crucible. A copper "tuyere" directed air from the blast machinery into this part of the furnace. At temperatures of 2,600° to 3,000° F, the iron oxide in iron ore was "reduced" when its oxygen combined with the ascending carbon monoxide gas from the charcoal to produce iron and carbon dioxide. During this process, the iron absorbed carbon, which lowered its melting temperature and gave to charcoal cast iron its characteristic gray color. Limestone acted as a flux, combining with impurities in the ore to form slag.⁵

Situated about eight or nine miles from the Schuylkill River on one of its tributaries, Hay Creek, Joanna Furnace is close to Morgantown in the extreme southern corner of Berks County. Always a one-stack charcoal-fueled iron furnace, the three ingredients needed to operate it were all found nearby. Iron ore came from the Warwick surface deposits located along present day Route 23 and the Jones Mine (also local), used by Hopewell Furnace as well by Joanna. Limestone, too, was readily available in the Welsh Mountains southwest of Joanna. While limekilns were necessary to reduce the quarried rocks to a size usable by

Three examples of ten plate stoves manufactured at Joanna Furnace until the late 1830s. These stoves are among the many artifacts on display at the Hay Creek Valley Fall Festival.



farmers and householders, furnaces could use large pieces; they were hauled to Joanna in huge wagons pulled by four- and six-mule teams. The region had vast woodlands (often fought over by various furnace owners) and woodcutters felled the trees and cut the timber into four-foot lengths. These pieces were stacked on end around a central wooden "chimney," covered with dirt, and set on fire in the center; the actual burn took ten to fourteen days. The resulting charcoal was brought out of the forest in wagons.

The charcoal, iron ore, and limestone were loaded onto carts and dumped into the top of the furnace which was tapped twice daily. The slag was drawn off first; lighter than the iron, it floated on top of it and so was tapped from a hole above the opening where the iron came out. The molten metal not used for casting finished products ran into channels dug and raked into a bed of sand on the floor of the cast house. The troughs which ran off the main channel resembled piglets nursing at a sow, and so the bars produced by them were called "pig" iron. Their size made them convenient to transport to market.

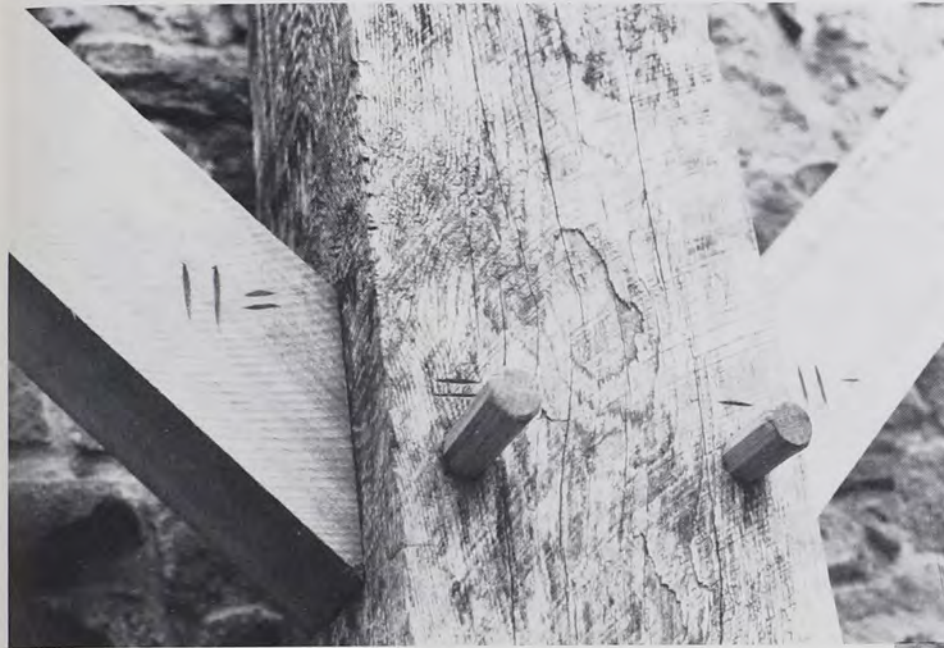
Air for Joanna Furnace was supplied by water power until 1857, when the waterwheel was dismantled and steam power was installed by Kirk, Hiester and Hawman; it was a cold-blast operation well into the 1800s. But a method of preheating air ("hot blast") was patented in Scotland in 1829; it produced more iron with less fuel, and hot-blast furnaces which used anthracite coal were built in Eastern Pennsylvania.⁶ Joanna, however, was always a charcoal-fueled furnace, although it appears from an 1838 newspaper advertisement that at that time there was some preheating of the air before it was blown into the furnace. Currently, ongoing research seems to indicate that there was a configuration in place for some time which allowed the furnace to operate as either cold or hot blast. (There may have been a connection between this initial hot-blast experiment at Joanna and the hot-blast patent issued to one Joseph Jones in 1838. Codorus Furnace in York County

has a Jones patent; it took heated air from the top of the furnace, circulated it through retorts and then sent it through a pipe to the tuyere, the nozzle which blew air into the furnace.)

A true hot-blast system was installed at Joanna in 1889. At that time L. Heber Smith raised the stack height from thirty to forty-five feet, installed a Weimer engine, a bell and hopper (this was a loading device for the blast furnace situated on the very top of the stack), a blow-out door, and a downcomer pipe.⁷ Because the stack was raised, a water-hoist elevator was built to lift the ore, charcoal, and limestone from the bridge house to the top; it was an early hydraulic system operated by water pressure.⁸

THE PRODUCTS AND THE PEOPLE WHO MADE THEM

In addition to the bars of pig iron and the munitions already mentioned, Joanna Furnace produced and sold domestic hollowware such as pots, pans, and kettles, gudgeons (reinforcing brackets for wagon- or waterwheels), horse tie downs, and other castings such as bakeoven doors and Franklin and ten-plate stoves (named for the ten patterns needed to produce them). Far more efficient and economical than open fireplaces, stoves rapidly increased in popularity. They were made at Joanna as early as 1809 with many different door designs, and the stoves owned by the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association and by others reflect that individuality. Most of the known examples, however, are labeled "Darling and Smith" and date from the 1840s and 1850s. Known for their quality and efficiency, they were extensively advertised and sold as far away as Philadelphia. Joanna's products were shipped first over dirt roads by horse and wagon, and after 1825 through the Schuylkill Canal. The opening of the Philadelphia to Reading Railroad before mid-century made life easier since goods could be shipped more cheaply and expeditiously; Joanna even had its own station.



Details of the Early American construction practices used in the reconstruction of the charcoal house at Joanna Furnace. (All Photographs courtesy of the HCVHA)



Like other iron-furnace communities of the time, Joanna tried to be as self-sufficient as possible. The Furnace property comprised approximately 4,000 acres, much of it the woodland necessary if the Furnace was to produce its own charcoal. Extensive primary sources such as daybooks, ledgers, correspondence, and the minutia involved in running a business have provided information on the owners, operators, and workers involved in its operation. At the height of Joanna's prosperity around 1870, twenty to twenty-four people worked fulltime at the site, but there were about 135 employees altogether; most were local farmers who worked at the Furnace for additional income. In fact, at that time Joanna Furnace was the economic mainstay of the surrounding area—a community of more than a

thousand people.

Many free blacks were on Joanna's payroll in a variety of positions. They were paid the same as their white coworkers, and women were paid the same as men when doing a man's job. Some of the workers lived in the ten to fifteen tenant houses (only two of which remain) owned by the Furnace. The workers worshipped and were buried at nearby Bethesda Church, at Harmony Methodist Church, at Plow Church, at Robeson Friends, and at Mt. Frisby AME Church, located between Joanna Furnace and Hopewell Furnace which also employed free blacks. The ironmaster's children and the children of the furnace workers attended Joanna School, built on ground donated by Levi Bull Smith.



One of the almost 1500 volunteers who participate in the HCV Fall Festival. Many entire families take part with the youngsters being apprentices in the many craft areas.



The bandbox maker, one of over 200 authentic early American crafts people interpreting their work at the Hay Creek Fall Festival.



In addition to interpreting their crafts, some artisans at the festival give visitors opportunities to produce their own craft pieces.

THE HAY CREEK VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION AND THEIR RESTORATION WORK AT JOANNA FURNACE

The roots of the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association (HCVHA) go back to 1975 when a church in the area held a 125th anniversary celebration at which a group of people put together a display of historical materials. In 1976 a local Boy Scout troop also had a historical display and in that same year a small group got together and did some minor research on local history. It was to this small group, the fledgling Hay Creek Valley Historical Association, that Bethlehem Mines Corporation deeded the remains of Joanna Furnace in 1979. When the Association took over, the site was so completely overgrown that the buildings were hidden; an advantage since it preserved them from looters and arsonists.

As soon as the covering of trees, shrubs, vines, and briars was removed the leveling of the slag piles began. Following this, archaeologists began work on the first of the buildings to be studied, the 1830s blacksmith shop. Nothing remained of it but several broken sections of the stone foundation and the original tuyere, found in place. With the labor of many volunteers the building was reconstructed, using archival photographs and archaeological evidence. Over the ensuing years more than a dozen sites have been unearthed by archaeologists and various field schools of graduate students, college students, and high

school students. After the archaeological work has been completed on a particular site, volunteer researchers and restoration people go to work and create the plans and procedures for the actual restoration. It should be noted that all restoration is based upon meticulous research and archaeology, and all projects are as accurate as is scientifically possible.

The charging shed and the bridge house which leads from the charcoal barn to the stack, for example, had many layers of charcoal that archaeologists had to work through; some excellent artifacts lay buried under these layers. Archaeological work was also done in the interior and around the outside walls of the charcoal barn before restoration work began, first on the buttresses essential for supporting a building of this size which, when filled, would have great pressure exerted on its walls. Volunteers then mortised and tenoned and erected the building's great timbers and put on the roof. Completed in 1989, the restored 1856 charcoal barn (rebuilt that year after it had been destroyed in a fire) now serves as a historic interpretation center during the Association's annual fall fundraising festivals.

Because of safety issues and for legal reasons, Bethlehem Mines Corporation dismantled the ironmaster's mansion in the 1960s. Another building, the Moore house, long considered the oldest house on the property, may have been the first mansion; it was only rubble when excavated in 1988 and 1989. From that rubble, however, have come enough ceramics and pottery to develop a two-hundred-

The blower engine house as it appeared in 1980, before restoration.



year profile of the site. The latest excavation work has been in the casting house which will have to be completely reconstructed. Work thus far has yielded detailed stratigraphy, a ladle possibly used to pour molten iron, and a set of rails that initially puzzled everyone—they may be the rails that held a little car that ran across the casting house. Another puzzle concerns the discovery of three front walls. Why three remains a mystery, but that is where historic research and archaeology work together to uncover answers.

THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS

Perhaps even more remarkable than the history of Joanna Furnace is the story of its restoration—Hay Creek Valley members know of no other such site being restored by volunteer effort. In fact, it is because this project approach is so rare that in 1989 Joanna Furnace was the only charcoal-fueled iron furnace to be represented at the National Iron and Steel Preservation Conference in Pittsburgh: The invitation came because such volunteer work is unheard of in the historic-restoration arena. Early on, seed money in the form of two \$10,000 grants (a community block-development grant and a state legislative-initiative grant) allowed the HCVHA to begin the work of clearing, stabilizing, researching, and restoring Joanna Furnace. These supplements to the volunteer effort enabled the Association to purchase construction materials and thus build momentum in the restoration program.

Since 1980 the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association has held two yearly fall festivals, and thousands of visitors flock to them to celebrate not only the rebirth of Joanna but the achievements of hundreds of volunteers in working

toward that goal. During the early years of the restoration program, when the undergrowth of eighty years was being cleared and the crumbling red sandstone buildings were being stabilized, the Association managed to funnel only about \$2,000 into its yearly restoration program. But with the success of the yearly festivals, the Association's general budget has grown into the hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last sixteen years. In fact, the festivals raise almost the entire amount needed for the restoration.

In addition to the thousands of dollars raised each year, Joanna's volunteer program has saved the Association significantly more than was spent; indeed, without the efforts of the group's 1200 volunteers the progress made would not have been possible. With the wealth of talent they put at the Organization's disposal, "impossible" jobs are done very efficiently. There are people available to do almost any kind of job from earth moving to archaeology; stone masonry to making microfiche; furniture restoration to marketing—a great support group for a project of this magnitude.

It has been calculated that because of their volunteer efforts, every restoration dollar spent by Hay Creek Valley has an effective purchasing power of more than five dollars. Restoration committee chairman Charles Jacob cites this example: "We got a professional estimate of \$500,000 for roofing the charcoal house and adding a second floor. Our volunteers did the job for \$110,000." The restoration of the blacksmith shop (1980-84) is another example of money saved. The restoration architect estimated the entire project would cost over \$60,000; members put in 1130 volunteer hours of labor and completed the job for approximately \$9,000.

The public is astounded at what has been accomplished at Joanna Furnace in only sixteen years. People keep returning to the festivals each year, many to see what has been achieved since the previous year. Sometimes it is even difficult for those involved in the Organization to comprehend what has been done; they are so close to the volunteer program that it has become almost the "normal" way of doing things. Realizing that since 1990 almost \$147,000 has been spent and thousands of hours of labor put in on the various aspects of restoration, research, planning, and documentation, they cannot even imagine what the cost would have been without the work of volunteers. They are tremendously proud of what has been accomplished, and it is their volunteer program that gives them the ownership and the stimulus to keep at it.

THE MASTER PLAN

In 1988, nine years into the restoration program, Hay Creek Valley found itself in the unique position of having completed two thirds of its initial twenty-year program. The various committees were functioning well and things were moving along at a very easy pace. The only real problem was that in 1987 a flood had destroyed the state highway bridge over Hay Creek. Now this major historic site which had been bisected by a state road was suddenly almost isolated and protected from major disruptions. So, while the twenty-year plan was still being followed, there were now many major changes (or at least matters to consider) that plan did not take into account. One of these major concerns was the potential impact on the site when the bridge was replaced: If standard current specifications were followed, the road would have to be widened and the grade raised almost two feet.

Such a change would have had a disastrous impact on this historic site but fortunately, after much negotiation and with remarkable consideration and cooperation, the Association came to an agreement with the state and township in which everyone involved came away a winner. Because the township and the Association were able to exchange the right-of-ways of the public road and a private lane along the outer edge of the Furnace property, the state does not have to rebuild the bridge; the township will be able to reopen a road closed for nine years; and when the project is completed in August, 1996, the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association will have its twenty-six acres in one contiguous unit.

In 1993, a new master-plan committee was formed, and through its enlightened and sensitive work a new direction was charted for the Association and for the Furnace site. Adopted in June, 1995, this new master plan could not have come at a better time. In a period of increasing suburbanization of the Berks County landscape, Joanna Furnace is a place where time, to some extent, stands still. Although work at the Furnace over the next twenty to fifty years is not intended to restore it in such a way that it

represents only one era in the history of iron making, the Furnace complex and plantation will capture the full essence of life, work, and play for this rare example of early American industry.

* * *

One of the issues that has always been at the heart of the volunteer Hay Creek Valley Historical Association is that of community service. The Association thrives because community members donate time and money, and in turn the Association serves the community by giving back to it. A scholarship is offered to high school seniors, and educational outreach programs are available to schools and civic and service organizations. Moreover, a great deal of money is spent within the community each year in purchasing the building materials necessary for restoration and in producing the two festivals; \$130,000 is spent locally on the latter. In 1995 over \$26,000 was paid to community civic, church, and service groups who took part as food vendors in the Fall Festival. Since 1980 almost a quarter of a million people have come into the area specifically to see historic Joanna Furnace and attend the festivals. With many coming great distances and returning year after year, this historic site certainly has a significant impact on the area's economy.

The pride exhibited by the many volunteers who contribute to the creation of a place of national renown is focused on principles of heritage and legacy. Those who belong to the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association have great respect for their land and its resources. Wishing to preserve their heritage, they devote an incredible amount of energy to resurrecting this relic from the industrial past. And, although much still needs to be accomplished at the site, it already reflects the pride of the Association and its members and represents a legacy to the people and culture of Berks County and the surrounding area.

ENDNOTES

¹*Hopewell Furnace* (National Park Handbook; 124. Washington, D.C., 1983) p. 11.

²The daughter of Thomas Holland, a Philadelphia merchant, her surviving correspondence and will shows she was well-educated. Her writing is fluid and easy to read and her letters reflect her interest and concern about the people she knew.

³Popularly known as "Jennie," she and her husband remodeled the mansion from its Federal style in 1877. Indoor plumbing and hot water were added, a greenhouse was built onto the side of the house, and wood, stone, and metal fencing enclosed the spacious grounds.

⁴Phelps had owned a pocketbook factory in New York but wanted lower labor costs. He relocated to Birdsboro for a short time before purchasing Joanna Furnace from the Smith family. While here his talented wife, designer Elizabeth Phelps, developed "work" clothes that were written up in *Life*.

⁵*Hopewell Furnace*, p. 15.

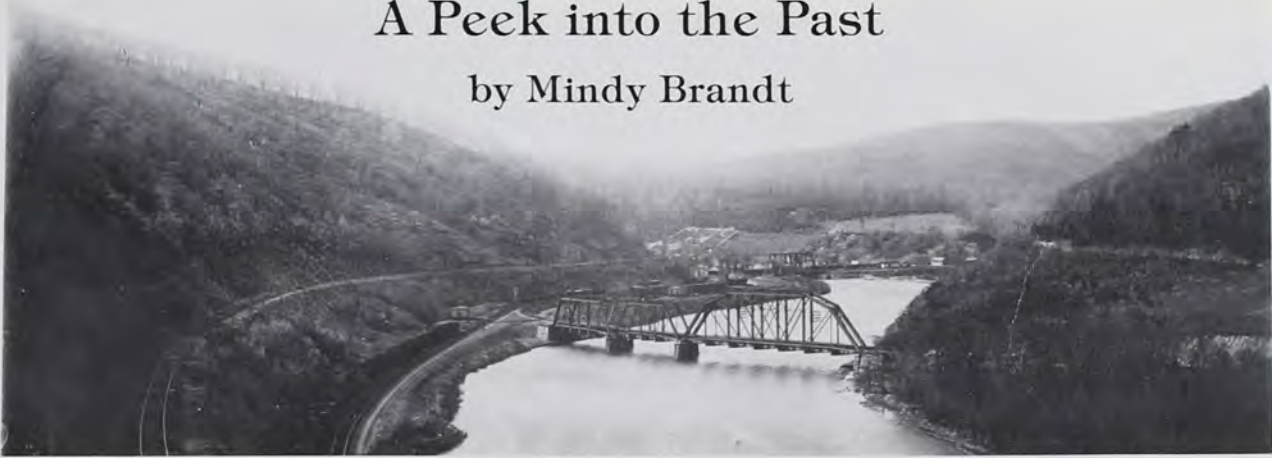
⁶W. David Lewis, "The Iron Plantations," in *Hopewell Furnace*, p. 9.

⁷The bell and hopper is sealed over with cement. The derrick/crane of the bell and hopper lift remains on top of the stack.

⁸Until the 1995 archaeology season there was little visible of this interesting artifact. It is now exposed. It will be removed and a working reproduction will be built by the engine members of the HCVHA. The original will become one large artifact.

PORT CLINTON: A Peek into the Past

by Mindy Brandt



Looking north along the Schuylkill toward Port Clinton where the Schuylkill Canal is cut through the Blue Mountain Water Gap. The tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad can be seen on

the side of the mountain at the left, while those of the Philadelphia and Reading are below. (All photographs courtesy of the Transportation Community Museum)

Route 61 is a four-lane highway which follows the old Sunbury Road. Today as in the past this highway connects Reading on the Schuylkill with Sunbury on the Susquehanna. The Sunbury Road, established in 1770, was transformed between 1806 and 1812 into a tollroad, the Centre Turnpike. The Centre Turnpike made the shipping of mail, the hauling of freight and the transporting of people from colonial cities to frontier villages a lot easier.

Today, as you drive north on Route 61 from Reading, you begin to see the Blue Mountains in the distance. As you pass by Hamburg, the gap through which Route 61 passes emerges and Fork Mountain can be seen just beyond the gap, named because it is a fork off of Blue Mountain. As you arrive at the base of the mountains and as the road weaves through one of the gaps, you pass by the town of Port Clinton. The town passes by very quickly since there are very few buildings that stand on the edge of the highway. At one end of the town is the Union House, a restaurant and bed-and-breakfast establishment, at the other, are a few homes. In the middle there are several businesses including a motorcycle dealership and repair shop, a candy and nut shop and the Port Clinton Hotel which caters to, among others, hikers on the Appalachian Trail which passes just south of the town.

At first glance it is difficult to imagine why this town is sitting here. The buildings are not new, so it has not been designed as a bedroom community for Reading, even though most of the residents today earn their living outside of town. Spend a little time at the Port Clinton Transportation Museum – an independent, community run establishment – and you will discover that this town was an important transportation center during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was laid out in 1829 as a port for the transferring of anthracite coal from the trains that hauled the coal from the mines in the north to canal boats on the Schuylkill to be hauled to Philadelphia.

THE SCHUYLKILL CANAL

From the earliest years of settlement in the 17th and 18th centuries to the present decade, the Keystone State has been in the forefront of the evolution in transportation. The horse and buggy (still in use, by the way, by members of Lancaster County's Plain sects), the Conestoga wagon, the canal boat, the locomotive (many of which were built at Philadelphia's Baldwin Works) and the helicopter, built in Delaware County, all play an important role in the history of the Commonwealth. Two of them – the canal boat and the train – are an integral part of the history of Port Clinton.

Situated "at the confluence of the Schuylkill and Little Schuylkill Rivers, in the dual Schuylkill Water Gaps between the Blue Mountains and Fork Mountain,"¹ Port Clinton was also near the coal fields of Schuylkill County, immediately to the north. Early mapmakers called the area surrounding present-day Port Clinton "Old's [sic] Forge" after Joseph Olds and his wife, Rebecca Ege Olds, who managed the business started by her father, George Ege, in 1794 and called Schuylkill Forge during his lifetime. The establishment of Schuylkill Forge brought workers and settlers into the region. The town itself was built on land (226 acres) bought by Leonard Rischel from the State in 1816. Incorporated in 1850, it was named by residents for DeWitt Clinton, the New York Governor who was the prime sponsor of the Erie Canal ("Clinton's Ditch").

"Port" Clinton was certainly appropriate for, in the years "from 1815-1825, a water route from the coal fields to the sea was surveyed, engineered and constructed by the Schuylkill Navigation Canal Company through the only possible pass in that Mighty Blue Mountain barrier."² In its heyday, the Schuylkill Canal with its more than seventy locks ran from Mt. Carbon in Schuylkill County to Philadelphia, a distance of over one hundred miles. In the beginning the canal boats were pulled by men using breast



Lock on the Schuylkill Canal at Auburn (1950).

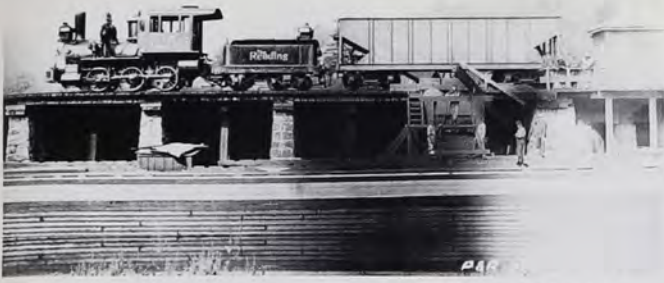
bars and long towlines as they trekked along the riverbank. Later a towpath was made and mules were used to move the boats. Mules proved to be the best animals for the job since they were strong and could be trained to pull to one side so as not to be pulled into the canal by the weight of the boat and its freight.

John Butz Bowman, who was born in 1868, grew up in Schuylkill Haven and spent the rest of life in Pottsville. Bowman shared many of his memories of the Canal in his two-volume work entitled *Folklore of the Schuylkill Canal*.³ In it he claims that there were three kinds of boatmen to be found working on the Canal. The first group, the river boatmen, often a higher class than the other two, went down the Canal in the spring and did barge work in Philadelphia, in New York City, or on the Erie Canal, not returning home until fall. According to Bowman, a neighbor (identified only as "Tom S.") of one of these river boatmen told of hearing an unusual noise one night and getting up to investigate. Seeing the boatman's three sons throwing water against the side of the house he assumed there was a fire but was quickly told this was not so. The boys explained their actions by saying, "Pop's just come home. He has been sleeping out on the harbor all summer. When he got in, he complained he couldn't sleep so well on land. [So] we have to stay out all night and throw water up against the house."⁴

The second group of canal boatmen comprised individuals who owned their own homes and boats. Some were Civil War veterans and/or farmers from surrounding counties who either worked their farms between trips or left that work to their families. There were always three workers on individually owned boats – two on deck and one on the towpath. The captain remained on board to steer and to alert the lock tender of their arrival. At the front of the vessel the bowsman handled the towline. "At

the approach of every lock [he] had to pull the towline on deck and take the rope fender and let it down between the boat and any wall that they might approach. This was a dangerous task. Many bowsmen lost their lives by being squeezed to death when they were bumped off into the locks when the boat made contact with the walls."⁵ (The bowsman was also responsible for cooking the meals and the driver had to do the dishes.) Although the individual owned his own team of mules as well as his boat, the latter was under the supervision of the Canal Company, who determined the need for repairs or for condemnation should that prove necessary.

The third group of boatmen worked directly for the Canal Company which provided them with a boat, a team, and a driver. Some poor, homeless family men worked on company boats and some company boatmen were good people; for example, Bowman mentions one Methodist clergyman who was a station driver and also tells of many good businessmen who worked on Company canal boats. But many were "riffraff, hoodlums, and drunkards. Nearly every captain had his fallen woman."⁶ Bowman tells the story of a boatman who died in Mt. Carbon and two of his disreputable friends. Thirsty, the two took his "body between them, like a drunken man, over to the saloon and placed it up against the bar, with its arms resting on the counter as though asleep. They ordered two whiskeys and walked out, leaving the corpse. The saloonkeeper said, 'Here, wake up! Pay for those drinks.' No answer. 'Pretend yer sleepin', will you? Well I'll wake ye up!' He struck the corpse on the head with his bar stick, which sent it sprawling to the floor. The two boatmen, who were watching from the outside, rushed in and accused him of having murdered the man. The bartender, all affrighted, said, 'It was a clear case of self defense. He drew a knife on me, and I had to defend myself.'" ⁷



Yard engine loading a canal boat at the Port Clinton dock; c. 1910s.

Reading Railroad locomotive and freight train.



THE RAILROADS

In Pennsylvania (and nationally), canal companies enjoyed a relatively brief period of prosperity, for they were quickly eclipsed by railroad companies; trains could travel faster and farther than canal boats. In addition to competition from the railroads, the Schuylkill Canal Company was faced with the problem of coal silt collecting in the waterway. It made navigation increasingly difficult and then impossible; by 1888 the Canal was closed between Schuylkill Haven and Port Clinton. The Port Clinton dock was one of the last to close, remaining in operation until 1915. The last coal shipment on the Canal was sometime in 1924-25; there was commercial traffic on the Canal between Manayunk and Fairmount in Philadelphia until 1931.⁸

The Schuylkill Canal had not been in operation for a decade when the first major railroad in the region (and the third in the State) was built between Port Clinton and Tamaqua, prompted by the discovery of new coal fields in the Valley of the Little Lehigh in 1831. The steam locomotives Catawissa and Comet, imported from Liverpool, England, were assembled in Port Clinton in 1833. They were built to travel over "wood rails covered with flat iron strapping,"⁹ but on a trial run "the engine spread the rails and ran into the river."¹⁰ Despite this initial setback the Little Schuylkill Railroad soon justified the hopes of its builders, Dr. Isaac Heister; Frederick List, a German economist in exile in the United States who later became known as the "Father of German Railroads"; and Moncure Robinson, a civil engineer from Virginia who helped in the construction of one-third of all the railroads built in the country in the decade after the introduction of the "Iron Horse."¹¹ In fact, "Moncure Robinson was to see his dream of railroads, railroads, railroads fulfilled and he was to become the 'Genius of America's Earliest Railways.'"¹² His 1832 Port Clinton home still stands and is one of the highlights of the walking tour through the town.

The Little Schuylkill Railroad soon had major competitors: The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad was built through the Gap to the coal fields in Pottsville in 1842. By that time, "2,400 railroad cars were running over 105 miles of track compared with 1,750 boats still in use on the canal."¹³ The Philadelphia and Reading absorbed the Allentown Railway Company in 1856 in order to eliminate

competition; the latter had been cutting and filling in preparation for laying its own track when the takeover occurred. The Pennsylvania Railroad laid its track on the side of the mountain above the Philadelphia and Reading Line in 1887. Major employers in the area, these railroad companies provided jobs for many of those put out of work by the decline of the Canal Company.



L. to r.: Harry Fisher, Irvin Reppert, and Vincent Fisher. Because of the work of these men and others, the history of the Port Clinton area is being preserved (1986).

IRVIN REPERT, PORT CLINTON'S RESIDENT HISTORIAN

Irvin Reppert is one of Port Clinton's most active and prominent citizens and its resident historian. Born and raised in the town, his roots go deep: His father, grandfather, and uncle were all canal boat captains based in Port Clinton. In fact, his father, William H. Reppert, quit his canal job in 1914, the year Irvin was born, since the Canal Company was now in dire financial straits; he then took a job with the Pennsylvania Railroad as a track laborer.



Centre Street in Port Clinton, c. 1920s.

With his longtime connections to the town and its history, Irvin Reppert is able to relate much of the area's lore. For example, he read somewhere that local farmers always left the first few rows of corn next to the Canal for the boatmen, although he is not sure whether this was out of good will or simply because they felt it would be taken anyway. Based on another Reppert anecdote, the latter may be more likely, for he explains with a laugh that if, when the canal drivers came by, "some woman had her wash hanging [out] and . . . [there] was a better shirt than his, why she had a dirty shirt and he had a clean one on his back!" He goes on to say that knowing this, his mother would holler to his father in the Pennsylvania German dialect, "Take the wash in. Here come the boat people."

* * *

Irvin Reppert was born just a few houses away from the former school (now the Port Clinton Transportation Museum) he attended as a child. When he was a student there, there were three rooms and, he estimates, about 170 pupils in grades one through eight. After completing the eighth grade he worked for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) for about five years. Because the job made him feel dependent on the government – a feeling he didn't like – he left and got a job in 1937 as a laborer with the Pennsylvania Railroad. He was not happy working for the Company, calling their practices "man-killers." His job involved working on the tracks, and he tells how he and another laborer, who was Italian, had to drag railroad ties along the track in the summertime. "When it's ninety out here, you can figure it's about one hundred and twenty on the railroad. [We were] in that field all day . . . and all at once [the Italian] started staggering, I don't know why. And the foreman said, "What the hell's wrong with you?" Boy, I thought, I've got to get off this railroad."

Irvin Reppert did "get off" the Pennsylvania Railroad, taking a job with the Reading Railroad (known as the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad until 1887) around 1940. He was much happier working for the Reading, and in fact it was this job which kept him from being drafted. "I got called, and legally I got cut, and I was only an extra boy." Irv went on to explain how common his job was at first. "Boy, that was low. I was in eight, out eight, in eight, out eight. And I went to work any day of the week, any hour of the day." He worked for four years as a brakeman, and then became a conductor on freight trains. "It was a [much] easier job, and it was more money." Irv remained on the Reading Line until he retired in 1974.

Irvin Reppert has lived in his current residence since he was a child. He says, "I like the town because I was born and raised here. I never had any reason for leaving. I figured Port Clinton was as good as anywhere." He and his wife, the former Arlene Acker, have six children, and he explains that "when the kids were growing up, I was on the railroad. My wife raised the family." The Repperts will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary this year, and although they've always lived in a quiet town, their lives have been anything but quiet. Irvin has served as mayor of the borough and as president of its volunteer fire company. In the latter role he was instrumental in getting the firehouse, located at Broad and Penn Streets, built.

The current mayor of Port Clinton, Edward Wright, tells of the Saturday morning on which Reppert planned to start building the structure and on which he expected many of the townspeople to come out and help with the project: "[When] no one showed up . . . Reppert came and pushed the fire alarm. People answering the alarm got both a rude awakening and a civics lesson from Reppert . . . [who told them] 'That's no fire . . . We're going to build the firehouse.' He was somewhat cantankerous but the result



Looking east at the loading dock and canal boats at Port Clinton; c. 1912.

of all that was he got things done.”¹⁴ Another Port Clinton resident, Herman Bayer, remembers that Irvin Reppert was also instrumental in the acquisition of the Company’s fire truck in 1979, saving money from block parties and putting it in a truck fund.¹⁵

THE TRANSPORTATION COMMUNITY MUSEUM

In addition to his other civic work, Irvin Reppert has played a major role in preserving Port Clinton’s rich history, most notably as president of the Borough’s Transportation Community Museum. The museum had its beginnings in 1981, when a group of boy scouts led by Vincent E. Fisher stumbled upon a large anchor while tubing down the Schuylkill. As Irv Reppert tells the story, “[Vince] was floating down the river with the boy scouts, and they seen this here sticking up out of the mud, and they started digging around, scratching around, and they found out that it was an anchor. And of course they couldn’t bring it out that day [it was far too large and heavy], so they covered it up and marked the spot And they went up later on . . . and put the anchor on [a large inner tube] and they floated it down the river, and brought it to the museum, and behind the firehouse, that’s where they stored it.”

That anchor, which sparked the interest of the poeple of Port Clinton and invited them to take a closer look at their town’s history, is now prominently displayed in the Museum’s main room along with the rudder from a canal

boat, part of a railroad car, and railroad telephones. There are also models built by Mr. Reppert – replicas of the railroad, the canal boats, town landmarks, and a covered bridge used in earlier years. Outside the building is a door from a canal lock and a railroad flagstop station.

Although Vincent Fisher was the prime mover behind the establishment of the Museum (and its first curator), Irvin Reppert has contributed much of his time to working there. Working with him is Edward Wright, Museum vice-president and transportation-history enthusiast. He spoke about the Museum in a newspaper interview several years ago, explaining that the board of directors has been very careful with financing the work (including the purchase of the former school in which it is housed) and says, “They are proud to be totally self-sustaining.”¹⁶ Other volunteers, too, donate their time and money. Harold Hafer is now the full-time curator, and Herman Bayer, councilman and owner of the bed-and-breakfast establishment on Route 61, recently purchased a property which includes an old lock southwest of the town’s present Little League field. Bayer plans to restore the lock and preserve it for generations to come.

Today, then, because of the work of these men and others, Port Clinton has a facility which houses photographs, documents, and other memoriabilia which tell the story of the Schuylkill Canal, the historic Towpath Trail, the railroads, and the people who founded and helped make the town what it is today – the repository of two hundred years of transportation history.

ENDNOTES

¹ *The Scenic, Historic Schuylkill Water Gap and Port Clinton, Pa.* The Northern Berks-Southern Schuylkill Historical Association, Inc. brochure, n.d.

² *Ibid.*

³ Quoted in Harry L. Rinker, *The Schuylkill Navigation: A Photographic History* (Berkeley Heights, N.J., 1991).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.9

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹ *The Scenic, Historic Schuylkill Water Gap and Port Clinton, Pa.*

¹⁰ Colleen Hoptak, “The Biggest Little Town on the Schuylkill River,” *The Call*, Schuylkill Haven, Pa., June 17, 1993, 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Early Transportation in Schuylkill County*, The Historical Society of Schuylkill County, Pottsville, 1986.

¹³ *The Call*, June 17, 1993, 10.

¹⁴ Peter Bortner, “Mr. Port Clinton: ‘Fat’s Memories span 7 decades of town’s history,” *Pottsville Republican*, Nov. 19-20, 1994, 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *The Call*, 10.

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