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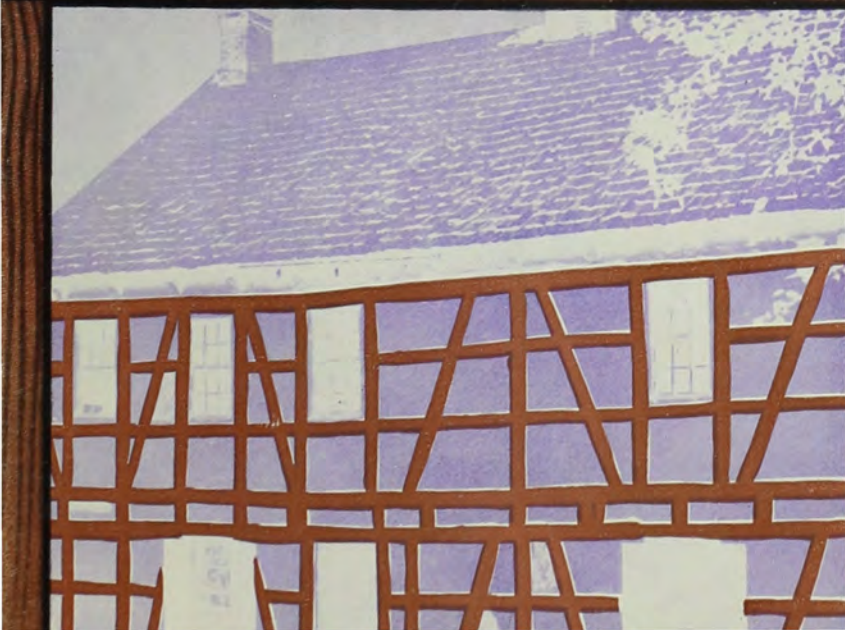
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HALF-TIMBERING IN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE



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Fig. 1—Half-timbering in a Palatine village.

HALF-TIMBERING

in American Architecture

By WILLIAM J. MURTAGH

Half-timber construction is an interesting mode of building which has received little or no study from scholars. It is probably much more correct than incorrect to say that there is more half-timber construction extant in the United States than is usually supposed. In the early years after the founding of the American colonies, edifices of this type were undoubtedly one of the more common modes of building. Most authors who have touched upon the subject usually agree with this theory of the early prevalence of

this type of construction in this country. They acknowledge that there is little, if any, documentary evidence to substantiate this hypothesis and rely on the tenacity of a building tradition which transferred to the New World the accepted half-timber practices of the various origin countries of the migrants.

It should be noted that half-timber construction certainly was not only confined to the efforts of German settlers in America and especially to the Germans in Pennsylvania.

Courtesy: Lancaster County Historical Society



Fig. 2—A one-and-a-half story brick house (no longer standing) with half-timbered gable end in Lancaster.



Fig. 3—Half-timbered structures with brick nogging in early Lancaster.

Half-timbering is essentially a medieval type of construction, prevalent in practically all areas of Europe until and into the period of the Renaissance. It is actually a type of construction very compatible with our mid-twentieth century aesthetic of honesty in architecture. Like the revealed skeletal steel frame of a Lever House in New York, the exposed members of the half-timber construction are the structure of the building—the supporting skeleton which keeps it standing. Likewise, the curtain wall of our modern skyscraper can be equated to the whitewashed surfaces between the exposed members of the half-timbered building and serve no functional purpose save to separate interior from exterior space. Common practice filled these spaces with brick nogging, i.e. bricks, many times laid on end. A

cruder and perhaps earlier mode of filling these areas consisted of a wattle and daub insert which is nothing more than a sheet of woven twigs, cut to fit the space, into which a mixture of mud, animal dung and straw or hair (to serve as a binder) was pushed. Buildings of this nature were eventually replaced by structures of stone when the Renaissance became accepted by the common man.

Half-timbering is still easy to find, especially in such countries as France where one sees much of it in the Alsace-Lorraine area. The entire section of the old city of Strasbourg, for example, is filled with constructions of this type. One even sees it occasionally as one travels farther south in France, in such places as Perigieux and Angôleme.

In England, the survival of such buildings is perhaps

stronger and villages where it can be noted are numerous. There is certainly ample evidence to indicate that this was the primary mode of construction in England before the great fire of London in 1666. Laws passed as a result of this fire negated a continuation of this type of building in the city, although this mode of construction continued in many parts of England after the fire date. Hence we still find half-timber construction with brick nogging in many of the smaller towns and villages of that country.

It is in Germany especially that one can still see entire villages and towns built by this method (figure 1). It certainly is the type of construction which one associates with northern countries and especially with the Germanic peoples.

German scholars divide the types of half-timber construction in Germany into three basic styles: the "Alemannische" style, the "Niedersächische" style and the "Fränkische" style.

The "Alemannische" style is characterized, among other things, by a rather crude, simple type of half-timber construction in which the small windows do not use the entire space between the members of the basic frame of the half-timber. According to Hermann Phleps in "Deutsche Fachwerkbauten" the earliest "Alemannische" type had interstices which were not filled with wattle and daub, or brick nogging, but which were covered with wooden members and which were completely surfaced in this manner. Out of this apparently grew the practice of using wattle and daub or brick nogging to replace the solid wood formerly used.

The "Niedersächische" style differs from the "Alemannische" type in that it has, among other things, the uprights of the half-timber construction frame much closer together with the openings for windows using the entire width of the area between these uprights. It also increases the num-

Courtesy: Berks County Historical Society



Fig. 4—The most famous half-timber building in the state, the Oley Moravian Schoolhouse. It fell in ruins in the last few years.

ber of windows and they are always larger in scale. This form appears to be an outgrowth of the "Alemannische" style.

The third style is the "Fränkische" type which seems to be an outgrowth of the "Niedersächsische" style in that the fenestration is usually compatible with the latter. One of the differences is the introduction of a fanciful pattern of members in the "Fachwerk" to create a much more intricately designed facade. These usually consist of angle members placed in the areas not used by the window openings to form a pattern in the sections beside or below the windows and in the gable areas of the building.

Variations on the theme occur throughout all Germanic areas of central Europe. That area which has most affected half-timber construction erected by Germans in this country and the one which has the most direct relationship with

America, is the Rhine area from whence came most of the Germans in Pennsylvania. This is characterized by a relatively simple type of half-timber construction in which the various members are spaced much further apart to give a less dense contrast of dark structural members against the light areas of the interstices.

The early stream of English migrations to America occurred at a date when the architecture of towns from whence they came was still of a medieval character. Consequently, half-timber construction was the dominant building mode in the home country, especially in the areas of Middlesex and Surrey. Because of the severity of New England winters, few if any half-timbered buildings erected on this side of the Atlantic remained exposed for very long. Thus it was, that at a very early date, the exterior surfaces were protected by clapboarding of wood, since wood was the

Courtesy: Berks County Historical Society

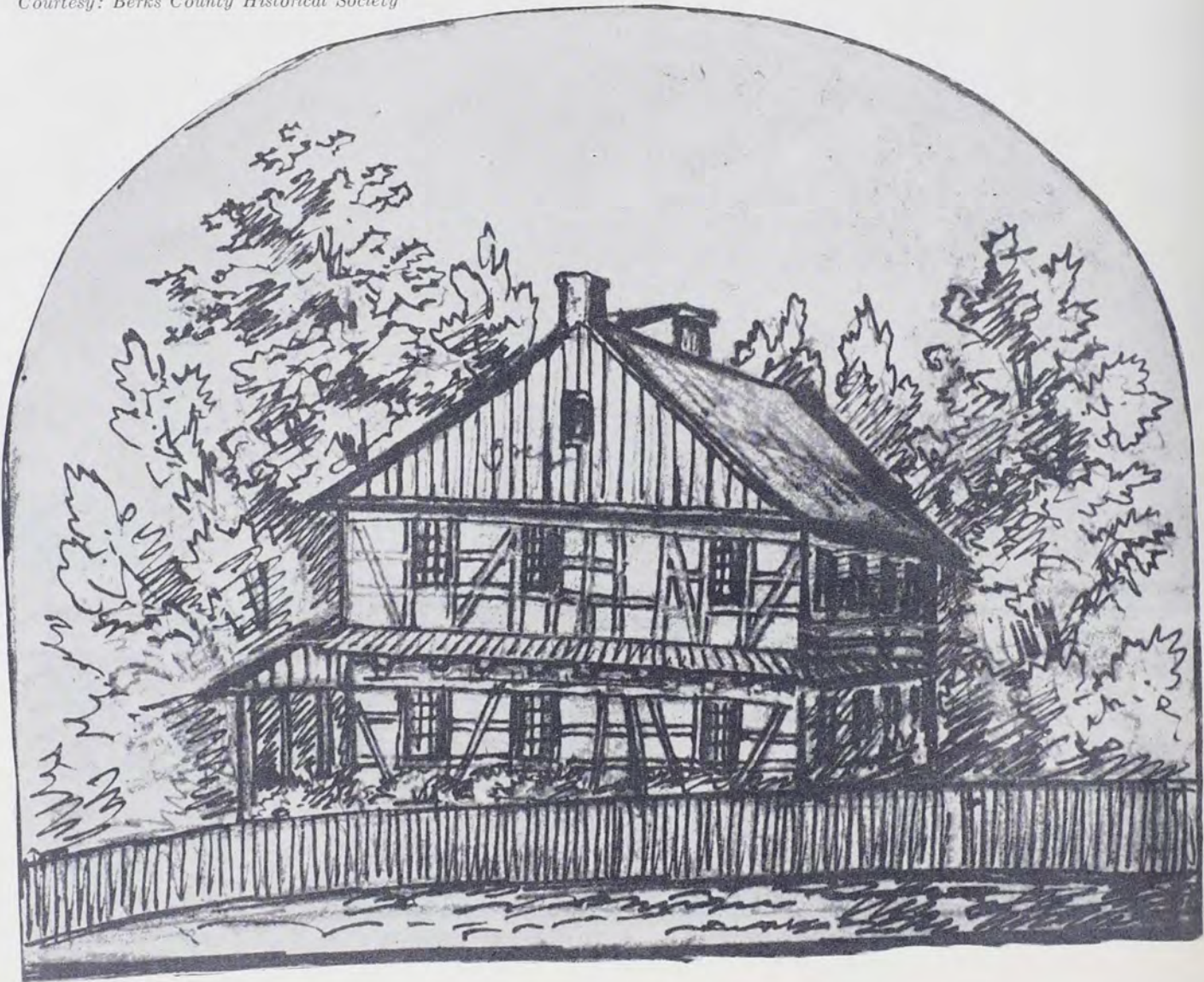


Fig. 5—A sketch of the Oley Moravian schoolhouse, with pentroof, executed in 1855 by Rufus A. Grider. The original is in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem.



Fig. 6—This half-timber house stood at Landis Valley, about 6 miles north of Lancaster. The photograph was taken in 1890.

cheapest material available to the New England colonists. There are any number of late seventeenth century buildings in the New England area today which are part or entirely half-timber construction beneath their present clapboarded surfaces.

This type of construction was not, of course, confined only to New England and one sees that the possibility of also finding the same type of building, common to New England in those early days, in more southern settlements such as Jamestown and Williamsburg in Virginia is plausible. Since colonists in either settlement would have been familiar with architectural or building practices in England, there is no reason to believe that the first buildings of any permanent

character in this latter colony could not have been half-timber construction with wattle and daub, possibly of clay, with straw or salt marsh binding or brick nogging. According to Hugh Morrison, there is absolutely no evidence to prove this supposition but certainly with the known prevalence of the type in New England, it is a quite logical theory not difficult to accept.

The French also settled in America in French Louisiana and there still remains one example of half-timber construction that grew out of these French efforts at colonization. This is LaFitte's Blacksmith shop in New Orleans which was built between the years 1772 and 1791 by Jean and Pierre LaFitte. It is an extremely interesting structure with



Fig. 7—A house in York with gable-end half-timbering, sketched by Lewis Miller, famous primitive artist.

a "Briquete-entre-poteaux" type of construction in which soft brick was laid up between the framing of cypress timbers. One of the most interesting and largest half-timber structures in this area was the Ursuline Convent in New Orleans, the first building of which was erected in 1734. This was a three story high half-timber structure which had diagonal bracing in between the vertical members of the timbers and had the interstices filled with brick. According to Morrison, this was the type of construction common to medieval France and consequently was widely used in the early days of the Louisiana settlement.

In Pennsylvania, there is ample evidence for quite a number of half-timbered buildings in the early settlements. They are not, however, all Germanic in origin. LaFayette's headquarters at Chadd's Ford is a structure that is partially half-timber construction, some of which is exposed on the interior of the building.

Another very interesting half-timbered structure was discovered three or four years ago in the 200 block of Delancey Street in downtown Philadelphia. This was a back-building, which was hidden to the casual observer walking along the street. Hence, it was only upon the demolition of the front structure that the half-timbered rear wing became known. Unfortunately, the structure was not saved. The site and building upon it had been purchased by a local contractor who tore down the building to make room for a parking lot for his truck. However, the facade has been purchased and is in sympathetic hands, awaiting possible re-erection at some future date.

This particular building had all the characteristics of a medieval town-house of pre-fire London. There was, for example, a second floor overhang. The interstices between the structural members of the exposed timbers were filled with hand made, oversize bricks, laid up in a vertical

fashion, standing on end, thus making the wall the thickness of a single brick. The interior and exterior surfaces were then plastered. Windows in the building were quite small and glazed with handmade panes. The doors in this section of the building slid on wooden tracks since the diminutive size of the structure in the space allotted for it was too small in many instances to allow for a normal door swing. The latches were made of wood and leather. Unfortunately, the roof was already gone when the author saw the building for the first time. There is little doubt, however, that it was a single pitch shed-type roof, if the pattern line on the adjoining building is to be believed.

Throughout the sections of the state commonly referred to as the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, there remains no half-timber construction known to the author. Old photographs do indicate that at one time this type of building was much more common than the rare examples which have existed until quite recently. Such towns as York and Lancaster were at one time populated with buildings of this constructional type. John Pearson's "Description of Lancaster and Columbia," written in 1801, which was recently published by the Lancaster County Historical Society, makes this interesting observation:

You will observe many of the genuine German kind of a frame bricked with a great number of tiles and studs the studs frequently lean and often are hewed and crooked I suppose for ornament and stand in almost every direction. Their brick walls are painted in many instances; they are a composition of the consistence of white wash which they daub over and then pencil with white wash (I believe) on the joints for the composition they use an equal proportion of venetian red and spanish brown mixed with water in which glue is dissolved, which helps the color of their brick and is said to have an effect for many years.

Writing at the time he did, Mr. Pearson indicates that the town houses were closely and compactly built of various types of building material. He decries the fact, however, that there are not more two and two and a half story houses and indicates that many of the buildings in and near the center of the city of Lancaster are "very mean houses of a single story." Apparently, this single story type of residence was a much more common building form in the later years of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries than is usually supposed. Certainly it was found in Lancaster and in York and was a common type of residence in Bethlehem where some of this type still exist. An old view of Lancaster (figure 2) indicates an interesting little one story house of brick, with a wood shingle roof, with a half-timbered gable end. The latter is a constructional type which is very analogous to the widely spaced half-timbering one finds in the Rhineland in Germany.

Another old photograph of Lancaster (figure 3) shows a two story half-timbered structure with brick nogging and this building, like the previous one mentioned, has the same widely spaced character of timbers of the Rhineland style. It also has the very interesting structural device known as "Wilder Mann." This is a diagonal bracing which overlaps in the form of a partially executed X. This can especially be noted at the corner construction. The windows which may or may not be original to the structure, use the entire space between two of the uprights of the exposed timbering which indicates an analogy with the "Niedersächische" type of "Fachwerk" of Germany. The photograph shows that the facade—the lower half—has most likely been added to the original facade. This brick covering has hidden the

exposed half-timbering of this part of the building. The observation is borne out by the heavy band between the first and second floor and the fact that the lower half of the facade extended further forward than the upper half does.

One of the most important buildings in America has recently been left to fall into a ruinous state, much to the undying shame of all persons professing an interest in history, the local historical society of the area and groups responsible for its original erection. I refer to the former Moravian schoolhouse (figure 4), erected in the Oley Valley, in Pennsylvania, in the early 1740's. As opposed to almost all half-timber buildings in America, the interstices of which were usually filled with brick nogging, the Oley schoolhouse employed the more medieval, the cruder wattle and daub construction. A sketch (figure 5), executed in 1855, by Rufus A. Grider, of Bethlehem, now in the Moravian Archives, calls the building the "Gemeinhaus" of Oley. The chief interest of this sketch, aside from the half-timber construction, is the encircling pent roof, running around at least two sides of the building, and probably around the entire structure. There are two schools of thought on the origin of such pents found on eighteenth century American buildings. One school subscribes to its origin on the Continent of Europe and the other says that it originated in England. Both could be correct if a view of simultaneous evolution were taken. The pent itself was a device employed by the late medieval and early colonial builders to help protect the relatively perishable walls of such half-timbered buildings.

In Germany there exist two types of pents known as the "Klebdach," which is a form created from an extension of the ceiling beams through the wall to support the pent roof, or another form known as a "Vordach." The latter has a different type of constructional form in that it is tacked to the surface of the building and is not an integral part of the supporting floor construction.

The Oley schoolhouse had a central hall plan with fireplaces facing each other in the hall. Holes in the backs of the fireplaces allowed for the attachment of either tile or cast iron stoves which in turn heated the various rooms of the building. This structure stood until about three years ago, at which time the roof was beginning to lose some of its shingles. Upon his last visit to the site, the author found the building had completely collapsed.

G. Edwin Brumbaugh published the picture of the old "saw-buck" house (figure 6) formerly located near Landis Valley, about six miles north of Lancaster, in the publication of "Colonial Architecture of the Pennsylvania Germans." This double dwelling illustrates but one more example of the former prevalence of this type of building construction in our state. This structure has completely disappeared, and at the time it was photographed many years ago was even then well on the road to total destruction.

One other half-timbered building in Pennsylvania is known to the writer to have existed until recently. This stood until last spring, within the confines of Bethlehem, on the northern edge of the city. It was demolished to make way for a housing development. In essence, it was not a true half-timber building in that the rough mortar technique between the brick nogging clearly indicated that the walls were always intended to be covered. Basically, however, the structural system of mortised and tenoned beams, with the areas between filled with bricks, does bring this building into the category of true half-timber construction.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the study of such structural methods of half-timbering in the colonies has hardly been touched. Little or nothing has been written upon the subject. To judge from contemporary eighteenth century accounts, as well as certain efforts of native folk artists, as Lewis Miller, there is no doubt that the half-timbered houses which formerly stood in our valleys and towns in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were an integral part of our landscape, especially in Pennsylvania (figures 7, 8, and 9). This State certainly had a very strong Rhineland tradition of half-timbering which the first generation of German-speaking immigrants brought with them

to the new land. Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker says in his "Founding of American Civilization" that "One is inclined to wonder why the second generation of Germans, when they planned their larger residences to supersede the log cabin, so seldom made use of the old familiar half-timber construction." Whatever the reason, it is a type of construction that practically went out of use when the first generation handed over the reigns of survival to their children. It is a phenomenon, however, that is part of the American tradition and deserves to be more integrated into the basic knowledge of the building traditions of the American scene.

Courtesy: York County Historical Society



Fig. 8—Sketch of half-timber farmhouse near York by Lewis Miller.



Fig. 9—A half-timber house with brick nogging in early York. Drawn from memory by David Heckert.



The Strouse Dance was revived at the seventh annual Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival at Kutztown in the summer of 1956. The photographs show the dance as recreated by the Paul R. Wieand Folk Players of Lehigh County. A fir tree is decorated with women's wearing apparel before the dance begins.



The director sells a ticket to a couple participating in the dance.

The Strouse Dance

By DON YODER

Pennsylvanians of the past liked to dance. Not all Pennsylvanians, of course, for some religious groups were suspicious of music, especially that produced on a fiddle, and woe to the member who yielded to the temptation of stepping on the dance floor.

But among the more world-loving Pennsylvanians—both in the settled rural valleys of the East and the frontier settlements of the West—the fiddler was an honored member of the community and each crossroads tavern periodically echoed fiddle music and sounds of revelry as the country dances continued far into the night.

Out of the 19th Century past comes evidence of a widespread rural custom called the "Strouse Dance." The evidence has come in from widely scattered areas—from Bucks, Dauphin, Cumberland, Westmoreland and York Counties in Pennsylvania, and Frederick County in the western end of Maryland. While the name would seem to be German (G.

Strauss: "bouquet, garland, decoration") and the areas of its appearance part of the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, it is impossible at this point to trace the origin of the Strouse Dance either to the Continent or the British Isles or to the Colonial Period of American History. We will present here only the evidence for its existence in the first half of the 19th Century.

The Strouse Dance was not so much a distinctive type of dance as it was an occasion, a festive evening when dancing was featured for the purpose of awarding among the dancers a prize known as the "Strouse"—usually consisting of articles of clothing provided by the manager of the dance or the participants, and "danced for" in the curious fashion described in our sources.

Our sources on the Strouse Dance are six in number: (1) a pamphlet entitled *The Life and Confession of Daniel Shaeffer, Who was found Guilty, In the Court of Quarter*



Before the dance begins, a candle, hung by a string, is lit at both ends.

Sessions of the County of Lancaster, Pa., in November 1831, Of the Murder of Elizabeth Bowers, And Sentenced to be Executed on the 13th of April, 1832 (Lancaster: Published by Peter Reed, Jr. & A. F. Osterloh, 1832); (2) an article on "Corn Husking" from the *Greensburg Gazette*, January 10, 1823; (3) William J. Buck's *Reminiscences of Upper Bucks*, undated clippings at the Bucks County Historical Society; (4) an article entitled "Seventy Years Ago" by D. K. Noell, in the *York Gazette* of August 19, 1895; (5) *The Life and Travels of John W. Bear, "The Buckeye Blacksmith."* Written by Himself (Baltimore: D. Binswanger & Co., 1873); and (6) S. Dunlap Adair's "local-color" short story, "Der Teufelskerl. A Tale of German Pennsylvania," in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* for 1840.

Daniel Shaeffer's Testimony

Daniel Shaeffer (1793-1832), who was born in Frederick County, Maryland, and reared in York County, Pennsylvania, gives us our first and earliest evidence of the existence of the Strouse Dance custom.

During the War of 1812 he went into the militia as a substitute for the son of "an old Mennonist." After his term of duty was over, he returned to his former home in Frederick County, where, he writes, "My militia money was spent in frolicking and drinking; and one evening I went to a place called Strasburg, to attend a *Strouse Dance*, that

was going on there." And, he admits, "I danced as lively as any of the company." So much for Daniel Shaeffer.

The Westmoreland Version

The article on "Corn Husking" from the *Greensburg Gazette* of January 10, 1823, associates the Strouse Dance with harvest time:

"Things went on in preparation in the house, for the dance, and we already heard the fiddler tune his instrument. 'The red ear,' 'the read ear,' 'Peggy Primp, that dass'd lucky thing, who got the Strouse, has got the red ear,' I heard bawled out by the same lad who had been so disappointed in not getting the prize at the *Strouse Dance*."

A Voice from Bucks County

William J. Buck, the local historian of the Bucks County area, whose *Reminiscences of Upper Bucks* are preserved at the Bucks County Historical Society in the form of undated but obviously pre-Civil War clippings, gives us our next bit of evidence. He writes, "As the writer resided at Stony Point from 1830 to 1836, and has therefore an early remembrance of the place and vicinity with which are associated some interesting reminiscences and which is rather a pleasure than a labor to thus make use of. An aged relative informed me that about 1820 a party of young folks in the neighborhood held at this house a social gathering called a 'Strouse.'



The fiddlers strike up the music and the dance is on.

"As such an affair is new to me and most likely to nearly all our readers, I am disposed to give a brief account of it. The name is certainly German, and may have perhaps been peculiar to this section. The 'Strouse' was understood to be a prize made up by the party, and liable to be won by any one concerned therein. For this purpose they all joined hands and formed a large circle, moving around. A candle was so regulated that after burning awhile, would drop at a particular spot, and the one nearest to it would be allowed the prize."

Evidence from York County

D. K. Noell's article, "Seventy Years Ago," in the *York Gazette* for August 19, 1895, gives us additional information from the 1820's:

"Sometimes there would be a *Struss[sic]* dance in some of these cake and beer houses. A candle was cut nearly through in its middle and hung to the ceiling above, lighted at each end. Then one who had paid five or ten cents would take a key and walk around a table, above which the candle hung, and whoever had the key, when the candle burned off the string got the highest prize. Whilst walking round the table a dance would go on, and each, as called, would leave the dance and take the key and walk around the table. This gave rise to considerable amusement, and was always conducted soberly."

"The Buckeye Blacksmith" Testifies

The "Buckeye Blacksmith" (John W. Bear), was born in Frederick County, Maryland, in the year 1800. While most of his curious little autobiography (Baltimore, 1873) is concerned with his rather extensive participation in Amer-

ican political campaigns, some of his earlier pages contain a great deal of valuable social history.

Sometime before the year 1824 he decided to leave Maryland. "I had," he writes, "a great idea that Pennsylvania was the greatest country in the world, so I concluded to finish my [blacksmith] trade there. About this time there was a man from Pennsylvania buying cattle through our country and I made a bargain to go with him east; he gave me fifty cents a day with no return money and advanced my mother ten dollars." So he left home with his mother's consent—"by this time I considered myself a man, and was a pretty good workman at some things. I could shoe a horse with the best of them."

The cattle were taken to Doe Run in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and the young blacksmith found his way back to the village of Highspire, along the Susquehanna in Dauphin County. "A few days after my arrival there," he continues, "the young people got up what they called a Strouse dance, a thing which I had never seen, of course every man had a right to go and take a girl with him if he bought a ticket; I being an entire stranger, had no girl, but went by myself to see the fun.

"When I arrived the tickets were all sold but one, and I bought that one. They were waiting to sell the last ticket so as to begin the dance. A Strouse dance is nothing more nor less than this: The manager buys the materials for a full suit for a lady, (dress, bonnet, shoes, stockings, &c.,) spreads them on a pine bush as a prize; they then place a candle in a dark lantern, tie a string around it, pass the string through the lantern and fasten a small key to it



The party dances around the burning candle. After each round a key is passed from one dancer to the next.

on the outside, light the candle and commence dancing a regular step around the room.

"The manager, when the dancing begins, hands the head of the column a small stick; he carries it around the room, hands it to his partner, if he has one, if not, he carries it twice around and then hands it to the next, and he to his partner, she to the next, and so on, until at the end of several hours the candle burns down to the string, burns it off and the key falls; whoever has the stick when the key falls, wins the strouse. If it is a gentleman he gives it to his partner, if a lady it is hers."

From the Gentleman's Magazine (1840)

In 1840 S. Dunlap Adair of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, published in Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine* a local-color story which he entitled "Der Teufelskerl. A Tale of German Pennsylvania." Apart from telling of the love of "Diedrich Rodenheiser" for "Kattarina Schmickfleckchen" in highly stilted Victorian language, it throws some additional light on the Strouse Dance:

"Reader of the Gentleman's Magazine, hast any knowledge of strauss dance? Nay! Wast never at a strauss? Then we have a good mind 'to write thee down an ass.' Whilst

we pity we cannot but denunciate the poor gosling-souled oppidan, whose peregrinations extend not beyond his own fumid atmosphere, who knows nothing of rural fun and frolic, who breathes freely only in a drawing-room, whom no motion in concert pleases but that of the cotillion, quadrille, or vulgar waltz, and whose auditory instrument is shocked by an old-fashioned tune on a cracked fiddle.

"Away with every sort of dance but the strauss—the merry, noisy, intellectual strauss.

"With the hope that it will enable the uninstructed, whose eye may rove over our scribblings, justly to appreciate this favorite country pastime, we shall endeavor to convey some idea of it.

"The time and place having been appointed, an aufseher overseer, or director, is selected by the youngers, whose duty it is to provide for the frolic a supply of 'notions,' such as kerchiefs, gloves, hose, and the like. No gentleman is allowed to participate in the dance who brings not with him a female partner, nor is any permitted to bring more than one.

"When all are assembled, a lighted candle, having a small string fastened to it: at any distance from the flame, is



The person in line with the key at the moment the candle drops becomes the winner and gets the Strouse.

placed on the floor above, through which a gimlet hole suffers the twine to pass down into the room. To the lower extremity of this string is attached a key, or other weight sufficient to keep it tense, which hangs over a table set in the centre of the room. A chalk line is drawn on the floor opposite, to which and on one end of the table, sits der aufseher, holding in his hand a small rod. The company form a circle round the table, male and female alternating, the prize is proclaimed, glove, stocking, or plug of tobacco; and the gentlemen contribute each a trifling sum, rated according to the value of the article and the number of competitors. The rod is then handed to the person in the ring, who toes the chalk line, the fiddler wiggles his elbow, and off they dance around the table. When the possessor of the rod has completed the circle, he hands it to the

individual immediately behind him, who, when she in her turn has danced her round, passes it to the next, and thus it continues passing until the candle above, which of course is unseen by the rivals, burns through the string, and the weight falls upon the table. The music and dancing instantly cease, and whoever is then in possession of the rod is adjudged the prize. If a gentleman win he presents the reward to his partner, provided it be an article usable by a lady.

"The same procedure is repeated until all the merchandise is disposed of, the table is then banished from the room, and the whole party hoe it down in straight fours and set dances, till the hour when 'ghosts wandering here and here, troop home to church-yards.' This is what we kintra folk call a strauss."

SCHUYLKILL BOATMEN *and Their Ways*

Photos: Courtesy of the Schuylkill County Historical Society



A view of Dam number seven of the Schuylkill Canal at Schuylkill Haven. This photograph was taken about 1880. The boat in the foreground shows no stable, therefore it is a "company boat" of the scow type.

By JOHN BUTZ BOWMAN

There were three distinct classes of boatmen and boats: the river boatman, the individual boatman, and the company boatman. The boats were very much alike, but the men were vastly different. The river boatman was one who took his load of coal the first trip out in Spring, went down the canal, and did not return until the last trip in Fall, having done barge service on the rivers about Philadelphia, New York City, or on the Erie Canal. His boat was similar to a company boat but, often, of a larger type. The individual boatman owned his own boat and team, employed his own bowsman and driver, while the company boatman possessed nothing. The company furnished boat, team, and

driver. However, the captain found the bowsman, but the company paid him.

The cabin of the boat was home to the boatmen, when they made it so, perhaps several hours at night. It consisted of a very small room in the stern, just under the long tiller attached to the rudder. There were four bunks or sleeping places, two on each side of the room, one above the other, hardly long enough for a man to stretch out, a bunk each for the three men, the other for Cleopatra, when there was one. A very small table (more often a box answered the purpose) was often the sole piece of furniture. There were no chairs, the two lower bunks taking their place when sit-



A "company boat" on the Schuylkill Canal in front of the Motzer Bakery and the Mengel Butcher Shop in the 1880's.

ting was necessary. The cooking was done on deck on a small stove, which was removed to the cabin when occupied all Winter. There were no stairs descending, but a small ladder answered the purpose. Bedding was a scarce article. Two small windows at the rear gave light and air.

We will now deal with each class separately, taking the river boatman first. He was, as a class, the first. Yet let us not give the impression that the rest were bad, for there were very many just as good among the two other classes—religious, God-fearing men, who were the fathers of respectable, intelligent families. As I have stated, the river boatman's business was mostly about the large cities and apparently more lucrative. Their associations and homes were often better. Some of them settled in New York and Philadelphia and became rich.

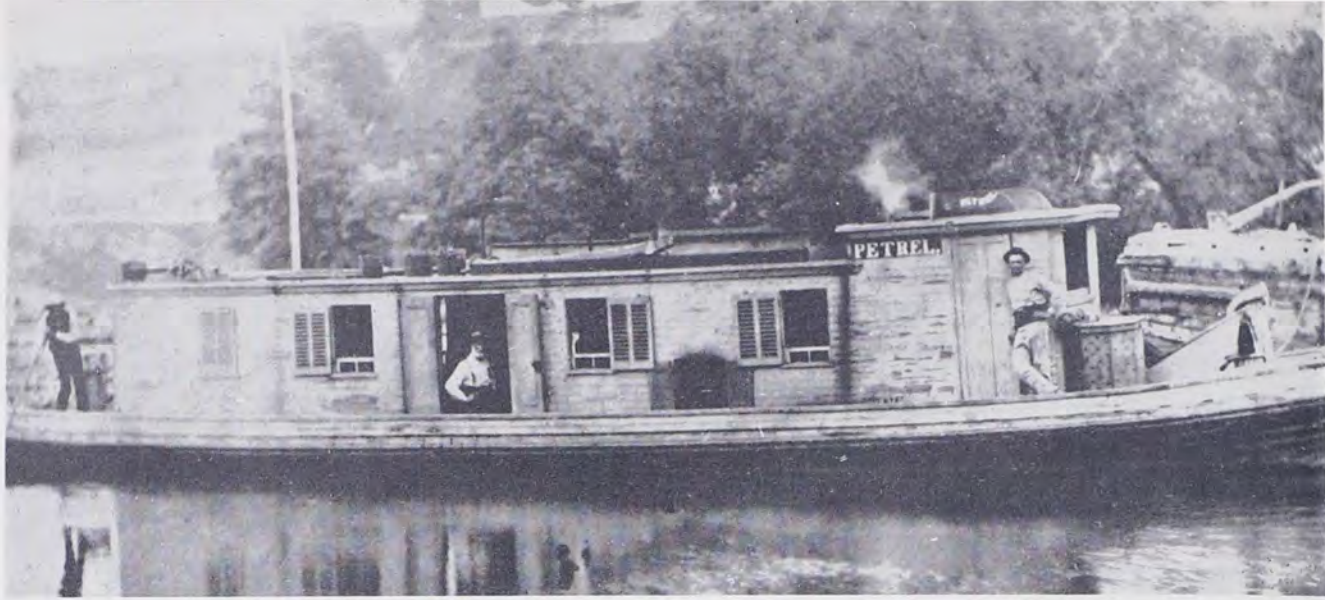
The individual boatman owned his own boat, but it was under the supervision of the canal company. The company could determine when he had to make repairs, or condemn it when beyond reconstruction. His boat was like other boats, with one exception: just in the center there was hung a small stable, part above deck and part below, large enough to house the teams. A small portable bridge, strong enough to bear a mule or horse, was let down to the towpath, and

the team was run up at night or when the boat was not in the service along the canal. When waiting for a load at the docks, the team could be housed at the stables owned by the saloonkeepers, who gave them free rental in order to procure the patronage of their owner.

On the individual boat, the captain came first; he was the boss and did little else besides steering and blowing the horn for the lock-tender. His place was always at the tiller. The bowman's place was at the bow; he had charge of the tow-line, had to pull it on deck at the approach of every lock, had to take the rope fender and let it down between the boat and any wall that they might approach. Especially at the locks, this was a dangerous task. Many lost their lives by being bumped off into the locks when the boat contacted, and it was invariably sure death, as there was no checking the momentum as the boat came on, squeezing the victim to death. The bowsman also had to cook the meals. The captain ate first, the bowsman second, the driver last, and he had to wash the dishes. The driver and the bowsman shared one another's tasks during the meal hour, while the captain paid all attention to the steering.

There were always two on deck and one on the towpath. The driver's main duty was the team; he had to do the driving, clean the team, look after the stable, and help the lock-keeper with the wickets, in opening and closing the locks. He had to put the team on board each night or find a suitable place to feed and bed them along the towpath. It was not always easy for an individual captain to secure his

This article, which depicts canal life in and around Schuylkill Haven from 1871 to 1886; is the introductory chapter of a two-volume manuscript, entitled "Schuylkill Canal Folklore." The manuscript, written between 1937 and 1947, was presented by the author (now 89 years old) to the Pottsville Public Library.



"The Petrel" was used in towing the boats to their respective places.

help. He was responsible for this condition himself, because of the poor quality of the food he furnished and his own temperament.

A boatman called "Dumpling Jim" owned his own home, raised a family beyond reproach, was kindly and friendly, yet always seeking help. The reason was that he compelled his bowsman to cook dumplings daily (hence his nickname) and his prospective help did not care to live upon duff.

Then there was "Bucket Bill" McDonald, who was on a par with "Dumpling Jim." He was one of those very sweet men, especially to young boys just big enough to drive a team. When he heard that a boy friend of mine wanted to make a vacation trip, he lost no time in looking him up and with another boy about the same age, they pulled out. The first day went all right until night came. Darkness meant just about half the day. They kept on until early in the morning, when they were allowed to go to their bunks. Before daylight, he soused a bucket of water down the cabin way, right upon my friend in order to wake him up again. Too far away to walk back home, and without money, he had to keep on. With this method of waking, poor food, and very little rest, they had to continue on. When within walking distance of home, on the return trip, my friend abandoned the team and lit out. "Bucket Bill" kept the boy's pay, also his own alias.

Among the individual boatmen were many veterans of the Civil War. They owned their own homes and boats, some were farmers from the surrounding country, and quite a number came from Berks County. They worked their farms between trips or left that work to the folks at home. Some came from Port Carbon, Palo Alto, and Pottsville.

The company boatmen, as I have said, owned nothing. There were good people among them. Many young men preferred the canal to the railroad, boat yards, and the landings, and they got a start by taking out a company boat. Sometimes an unfortunate without a home, with a small family, would sign up during the season, remaining on the boat all Winter, and became very poor and desolate in their small quarters. I can recall instances where they almost starved before their condition became known. Money was scarce, and the good people of the neighborhood always tided them over until boating began. As a class, the company boatmen comprised the riffraff, hoodlums, and drunkards, with fallen women. Nearly every captain had his woman and I have never seen or read anything like I ob-

served as a small boy, regarding women and men about the docks at Schuylkill Haven.

The captain had his bowsman whose duties were the same as on the other boats, but the company furnished the team and driver. He was called a station driver because he drove between stations. The company had stations at intervals along the canal. The driver could not be imposed upon by the captain, as he drove from station to station, where he fed himself and his team during the day and bedded down at night. Among them were many ruffians and fighters, but I am in doubt whether they were the majority, as many fine young men took teams as their first regular jobs. It paid well for a grown boy. He was given good grub and ready money paid by the company.

I recall when Schuylkill Haven established a school for boat boys, segregating them from the rest of us. The teacher's name was Helm or Helms. It is hard to recall just what they did to him, but plenty. The boys were big and rough. Among other things, one strapping fellow held the teacher out the window by the seat of his pants. The school wasn't a success, was closed, and the next winter we had them with us again.

The company captain had no money as a rule, when ready to pull out. The storekeeper grubstaked him for the trip. The company stood good for the grubstake, taking it out of the captain's pay when he returned. The merchant could not lose.

The docks were surrounded by high walls that supported the landings, from which the coal was shot down by immense chutes into the boats. Often in the Spring, the ice melted on the canal levels long before it did within the docks. This being the case, when it was time for shipping to begin, salt was distributed all around the boats to melt the ice. The boatmen and canal employees then cut the ice into immense cakes and holed them down into the open levels, where they readily melted.

Boys were always welcome on the boats. The bowsman would let us ride along, if we helped him with his duties, such as pulling in the line, etc. We rode frequently from Schuylkill Haven to Landingville, loaded, returning light. One Saturday morning, three of us decided to go as far as Auburn. That was some distance in those days. We arrived there hungry and tired, and while waiting for a light boat, two of us pooled our pennies (the other boy did not have any) and we bought a raisin pie. The third boy did not say anything, but when we handed him his share, he took

it, looked it over, and with a tear in his voice, he said, "I don't eat raisin pie at home, and I'll be damned if I'll eat it now!" and with that he flung it out into the water. It was two to one for a few seconds, but when a boat pulled into the locks all was forgiven.

Many boatmen owned small boats, or bateaux, and lots of citizens had them, too. This afforded a great deal of pleasure after shipping hours and on Saturday afternoons. I recall that a picnic party from Minersville came down one day by railroad train. They hired Matamora Hall, which long ago passed into history, as a place to erect their tables, and spent the entire day upon the canal, engaging small boats and riding from lock to lock on regular ones. We boys mixed with theirs and showed them the ropes. They learned plenty and had a happier time than in a picnic grove.

With the closing of the canal went many pleasures of the town people—boating, fishing, swimming, skating, etc. The spillways and dams were broken by the canal company and the polluted waters of the Schuylkill were permitted to rush through the levels.

At the extreme end of Schuylkill Haven was located Geiger's Locks, kept by Mom and Pop Geiger. This was the first lock out and the last lock in, on the home stretch, hence there was constant quarreling and turmoil at this point, each trying to get the locks first. Many fights took place here. More were started and finished, when time permitted. The place took on the name of "Quarrelly Point" and that section of the town is called so to this day.

About the docks were five business places. One sold milk, eggs, cakes, and pies; the other four were saloons. Contention and strife existed at these places almost constantly. You could seldom find out why they were fighting. Someone would yell "Fight!" and the crowd would gather. However, it was always known that when certain rivals came together scores would be settled.

The Schuylkill Canal has its best men on it, like other canals. In that case he was not a bully, but a fighter when he had to fight. I only saw him in action once. He was sober—possessed, and confident. There were ten men trying to conquer him; two had only one arm. He beat them down, he kicked them away, he flung them into one another. Faces were smashed by powerful blows, and finally he stood triumphant in the middle of the ring, his shirt in ribbons, a tower of strength, defying the crowd.

Then there was the fight between the Burns Twins and John Davis. Davis was a powerful man of excellent physique, always sober and of good character. It has always been a mystery to me how he could have become mixed with the Burns. The Twins, especially Ed, were always drunk and quarrelsome. They were slight of build. Frank, the quieter of the two, was the best quoit thrower I ever knew at that time or since. I cannot recall its cause, but the fight was a good one, if two to one can be called so. It seemed at the start that Davis would be too much for them. He knocked them down as fast as they came in, but, when down, the other was up; when one was out, the other was in. While one fought furiously, the other would slow up and get his wind, turn about. Davis' breathing came in gasps. He began to ask bystanders to keep them away as he did not want to hurt them, a sure sign of the handwriting on the wall in a fighter. He made a kick at Ed and Frank grabbed the leg. Ed dove in and pushed him backward, on his back, and they were upon him

like two terriers, beat his face to a pulp in no time, until he screamed for mercy, and the crowd pulled them away.

I stood on the outside of a fight, too small to get in front, at which a man bit Jim Drewerie's lower lip off. Jim went to the almshouse. I saw him in after years, from time to time, with his horrid, mutilated face.

One night I was awakened by a great commotion, as of a man and woman quarreling. I arose, dressed, and slipped into the shadow of the buildings. A saloonkeeper was having a difficulty with a familiar character. He had evidently beat her up. The place was lit up and it was a bright moonlight night. Quite a large number of boatmen had gathered on the outside and were cursing and taunting the man inside, calling him "woman licker" and worse. Finally I heard Paddy Belton say, "I'll fix the woman killer," and in he went, but just as soon he came rolling out with a chair on top of him. The man inside had stood ready, tray in one hand, a chair raised, ready to strike with the other. As Paddy crossed the threshold, he cut him full length across the forehead with the waiter and brought the chair down on his head.

I recall many fights at which everything went: gouging of eyes, biting of fingers, when an opponent tried to tear his antagonist's cheek. This was common, also kicking in the face or ribs. The principals, in most fights, I have forgotten or never knew. The only one I ever thought right was when a boy of about nineteen years beat up a man of thirty-five or forty for having blackened the face of his friend's father with shoeblack while he lay asleep, drunk, on a bench.

Boatmen Tales

Tom Snyder was a neighbor of Jerome Ditzler's. Jerome was a river man. Tom used to tell the story that he heard an unusual noise one night and got up to investigate. He found Jerome Ditzler's three boys throwing water against the house. When he asked where the fire was, they said, "Pop's just come home. He has been sleeping out on the harbor all Summer and when he got in, he complained he couldn't sleep so well on land, and we have to stay out all night and throw water up against the house."

The saloonkeeper had died and having been a good fellow to the boatman, they didn't wish him to be buried before they had paid their debts; also they wanted to pay it to him and to no one else. So they got their money together, made out their receipts, went to his house, lifted the corpse out of the ice box, set it up and with a man guiding its hand, the receipts were signed and the money paid before he was returned to the ice box.

Another story was that a boatman had died at Mt. Carbon. Two of his friends were thirsty, so they took the 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 whiskies and walked out, leaving the corpse. The saloonkeeper said, "Here, wake up! Pay for the drinks." No answer. "Pretend yer sleeping, will you? Well, I'll wake ye up!" and 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."

Spon Nugen was a vicious "bad egg" and was known as the "Catfish Mouth." Among other things that he did was

that he went to two different shoemakers, and from each he ordered a pair of boots. Later on he went to each one and said, "My mother is well-to-do and I am from a good family. She is going to pay for them, so give me one of the boots that I may show her what they are like." From one he took a right and from the other a left. Spon, the Bum, in this way got a new pair of boots without paying for them.

Characters of the Canal

Mr. E. lived in town. I don't know much about him. I went to school with his children and they were all right, but their father was always pointed out as the man who had stolen a regiment's whole pay, from the tent of the army paymaster during the Rebellion.

The Hon. Mr. L. was no better than the average drunkard when he was on the canal. He became a ward heeler, spent term after term in the Legislature, rose to the State Senate, and was appointed Governor of the Territory of New Mexico during Matt Quay's dictatorship.

There was old Captain Burket, a genuine Civil War captain. But when Blandy Eckert stole his wife, he placed his right hand on his left side and went around telling people that the skin of his heart was broke.

George W. was the dirtiest, most drunken character on the canal, always talking fight but never fighting. The best natured among good-natured, always singing. It was said that his little verses were original. They were very short and one ran something like this:

*Way down deep in the diving bell
At the bottom of the deep blue sea,
Pretty little mermaids,
Pretty little mermaids
All come courting me.*

He was constantly teased by everyone, always chasing children, but good-naturedly, not catching them. I have seen George so low, that he picked from a dung pile an ox windpipe and commenced eating it. When the canal closed, George went to the Soldier's Home. Years after, he visited old scenes, apparently a different man, but he hunted up a lot of old derelicts, bought a barrel of beer, and had a party in the woods north of town.

Hoffer Richards was the meanest boatsman on the canal, a deceitful, lying hypocrite. He was so mean that (after having lived with the lowest class of women for years) when he was put on a wagon and taken to the almshouse to die of a rotten disease, he pointed to the woman he was then living with and bawled, "That woman is killing me." Someone yelled, "Who cares?"

Old Mike Monahan was the biggest liar among the boatmen. We used to enjoy him. He stuttered and one evening he began, "Why, why, what, the place in Ireland I came from a mermaid swam up the River Shannon. She went to a rick o' hay and shed her scales. A young man married her and they had two boys." Just then John Davis grabbed a tin bucket from the water barrel and hit old Mike somewhere about the head. That ended the story. Mike got up and went into the saloon. I asked John why he hit him. He replied, "That old liar! I heard that story before. He would have told you kids that one night before daylight she got up, went to the rick of hay, put on her scales and swam down the river."

Old Bousman is supposed to have been the largest man ever on the canal or in these parts. My memory of him is more hearsay than actual; yet, I have a faint recollection

of his funeral. I can see the six white mules drawing one of Yuengling's beer wagons, in which he was conveyed to the grave, there being no hearse large enough to hold the casket. He was so fat that he floated on water, with a block of wood under his head; he could take a snooze or read a paper while floating. He became so large that it was necessary for the company to build a separate little building at the locks for him, which was mostly all door in front, as it was impossible for him to go through the door of the lock house where he resided.

The Jayhawker and Bill Liby were, as in *Treasure Island*, the man with one leg and the man with the hook. Jayhawker hopped on a peg, had only half a nose on his face and was all that his name implies. Of Liby, the man with the hook, we were all afraid, so was most everyone. He displayed his hook constantly as a weapon and was reputed to be a great fighter and bad man. I saw a fellow character discharge a pistol at him, almost face to face. Bill fell like a log and the man ran away; then Bill got up and said, "Well, I beat the trigger that time." He had let himself fall just as the man fired.

There were plenty of bad women on the Schuylkill Canal, with very few good ones. The latter were the wives and daughters of respectable boatmen, and were making mostly outing trips. Among the bad were Kitty Sands, Mary Ryan, Patsy Hulligan's wife Ellen Feory, "The Handsome Blonde" and many others.

Patsy Hulligan was rated the smartest man on the Canal, expert clerk and telegraph operator, but whiskey brought him down to the lowest level. When he died in the almshouse, the G. A. R. buried him on their lot in Union Cemetery. A lone woman was the only mourner. She had long been known as a low character, and after Patsy's grave was closed, she went to live on the boat of Willoughby Serls, the mulatto. I never knew anything real bad regarding Willoughby, but to keep her from men and drink he stripped off her clothes. She got away and came up on Dock Street with nothing on but a short chemise. Ellen Feory had many aliases: Old Ellen, Ham and Eggs, Cinderella who stole the ham, etc. Nothing was too low for her to do. She lived upon whiskey, always cursing, scolding, blaspheming, and yelling at the top of her voice on the public streets, and would raise her skirts and jig dance in the midst of her tantrums. She went up the pike to Pottsville and to jail, when the canal closed and was kept there.

The big "Handsome Blonde" came up the canal on a return trip with one of the boatmen. She immediately attracted the attention of the horde. One of the men concerned told me, in after years, that she entertained twenty-four men in one afternoon, in an adjacent thicket. There was one negro among them and they compelled him to strip off his clothes. The girl married and tried to lead a good life; however, at about the age of forty-five, she went insane and committed suicide by cutting her throat.

The first I knew of Jayhawker, of whom I made mention earlier, he had with him a wife and her daughter, Sallie. He had a peg leg and the half of his nose was gone, making a disagreeable noise when he spoke. His wife died and on her deathbed warned him that she was coming back to spook him. This caused him a great deal of uneasiness. However, he went down the canal with Sallie on board. She ran away; but the Jayhawker came back with a very little woman, thin and emaciated, and an ideal specimen of debauchery. He called her his Kitty. They were together



A typical canal company mule team equipped with every gadget.

several seasons. One evening, about dusk, Mary Ryan and Kitty came home, drunk as usual, after a day away from the boat. Kitty, in the lead, went up the plank first. They arrived at the inner boat all right, but in stepping on the outer one, Kitty tripped at the stern cleat and went head foremost into the water. Mary was too drunk to hook her out with a pole, she just screamed for help. When it came, Kitty was drawn on board, but had ceased to breathe. Through ignorance or drink, there was no effort made to restore her. In the meantime, boy-like, I nosed in. I can see the Jayhawker now, standing there with Mary Ryan, opposite the body of Kitty stretched out on the hatch between them. He blasphemed and cried unto God, cursing Mary and yelling, "Mary Ryan you S-of-a-B, you drowned my Kitty." Then he would take the body up in his arms and moan, lay it down again, and cry unto Heaven. This was kept up until the coroner came with his jury. Kitty was carried from the deck into the saloon and the inquest held: accidental death by drowning, the verdict. The old darkey from the almshouse put all that was left of her in a pine box and she was driven away to the potter's field. But the irony of Kitty's fate was that the Jayhawker's boat was called for a load the next day. Then he stole Mary Ryan, whom he had accused of murdering Kitty, from Noah Cross and went with her down the canal.

"Corky Tom" I used to believe was Tom Corkran, but it developed that he was Thomas Malone. He was called "Corky Tom" because he came from County Cork in Ireland. Tom had a hard time of it, as both men and boys yelled at him: "Corky in the Flour Barrel" at which he would make a face, skip with his feet, cover his face with his sleeve, and good-naturedly move along. Tom and some friends left their boats at the dock one night, in New York City, to take in the slums. It wasn't long before Tom found himself stark naked in a back yard. He had been shot down a chute from the second floor of a building. His friends secured a barrel and led him back to the boat in a flour barrel, hence "Corky in the Flour Barrel."

The Negroes

The negroes of the canal were not as quarrelsome as the white men. To be sure, they were in the minority. Black Billie Haines was a giant negro, coal-black, and had only one arm. He was supposed to have been a very bad man. I cannot recall any particular things that he had done other

than it was common to hear, "Black Billie Haines is in jail again."

Jim Emery was a typical African negro. He wore his hair coiled high upon his head like a woman's old-fashioned waterfall, and always went without a hat. Everyone was afraid of Jim. It was said that he could cut off the upper button of your shirt with one slash, without cutting your throat. I saw him sitting on a snub post, threatening with his razor to carve a big mulatto, sitting across the canal, who had a revolver leveled at Jim to keep him from swimming over.

At the various saloons there was always some white man fiddling for Jim—"Turkey in the Straw," etc. And, on most quiet nights, strains of song and music came up from the canal. Uncle Josh, a well-beloved, well-dressed negro would take his guitar and sing:

*The sun do move, the sun do move,
That's what the colored preacher preaches
Way down Suf, upon his knees.
He will say that the sun do move.*

Benjamin Walker played the autoharp; and how he could sing "Pretty little Mary, she was the keeper of a dairy." He told me that he had followed the show business with success since the close of the canal.

Jumbo was a three-hundred pound negro without any manhood, a big baby that would cry piteously when the boys teased him. He used to tell that he did not know what had become of his mother. She had been a slave; his father had been a "Buck Nigger," kept for breeding purposes. When Jumbo sat back of a hot stove, he fairly fried out and perfumed the whole surroundings.

The negro women were worse than the men. There were two women, Pennsylvania Dutch mother and daughter, who were among the worst. I remember "Old Quittadad" as a dried-up, little Dutch darkey woman who had outgrown her usefulness. When teased and annoyed, she would try to say, "Quit that!" and it came out "Quit-a-dad!" It was said to know her was to bring good luck, and the soldiers on furlough during the Civil War went to see her before they went back to the front.

I have written these things from the silver streak in an old man's memory of a happy boyhood. He was casting about for knowledge among the boatmen of the Schuylkill Canal, which helped him resolve the philosophy of life, while time dragged him along in the dust of passing events.



This scene of Philadelphia Mummers is the illustration accompanying Egan's "A Day in the Ma'sh" in Scribner's Monthly, July 1881. It carries the caption: "Bell Snicklin'."

Some Early Phases of the Philadelphia Mummers' Parade

By CHARLES E. WELCH, Jr.

Philadelphia mummery got its start in the section of the city known as the "Neck." This area of South Philadelphia was inhabited in its early years by industrious Swedish farmers, and it is felt by some that the Swedish mode of celebrating New Year's Eve was the impetus for our present parade. However, this is *only* conjecture.

Dr. Francis B. Brandt tells of reading in the memoirs of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg an account of meeting a band of these early Swedish settlers on the roads in Tinicum and Kingsessing celebrating the New Year disguised as clowns "shouting at the top of their voices and shooting guns."*

With the further development of the English settlement they, too, celebrated the turn of the year. It was among these early English pioneer families, as well as the Germans and the Scotch and Irish, that the original Mummers were found. Their folk-customs, blended with those of the Swedes, gave us the parade as we know it today.

Early in the history of the Parade the English played a prominent part. George F. Kearney, a former editor of the *Public Ledger*, in an unpublished manuscript "Mummers' Parade in Review" writes: "This custom developed and spread out to embrace all groups of the early settlers, especially the English. Among the records of those early English settlers there is a detailed account of the Mummers' New Year's Party held at the home of the High Sheriff of Philadelphia, James Coultas, whose home once stood at 58th Street and Florence Avenue."

George Washington, throughout his seven Presidential years in Philadelphia, practiced the custom of New Year's calls. The Mummers carried on this custom in their own fashion, by reciting doggerel and receiving in return cakes and ale. A description of this period of the Parade's life was handed down to us by Dr. Francis B. Brandt, who quotes from the diary of an old Quaker family: "It was considered the proper thing in those days to give the leading mummers a few pence as a dole, which in the language of the present time they would pool, and buy cakes and beer. It was also regarded as the right thing to do to invite them into the house and regale them with mulled cider, or small beer, and homemade cakes. It was considered a great breach of etiquette to address or otherwise recognize the mummer by any other than the name of the character he was assuming. I remember a little girl who, with all the curiosity of her sex, had discovered a neighbor's boy in the party; and with childish impetuosity she broke out with, 'Oh, I know thee, Isaac Simmons! This is not George Washington!'"

* Francis B. Brandt, *Philadelphia Evening Ledger*, November 17, 1930. Brandt seems to have erred in ascribing this quotation to Muhlenberg, for a search of his writings failed to bring it to light.

The Mummer impersonating Washington had several poems and speeches to recite, one couplet runs as follows:

*Here am I, great Washington
On my shoulder I carry a gun.**

From a diary of this period we get a somewhat humorous evaluation of the "music" of the early mummers, and a reference to shooting: "1781—January 1—Firing guns in the night, before day sundry kinds of music, I presume, paraded the Streets, as they came up our way."**

There is a constant reference to the shooting of guns in celebrating the New Year in the diaries of this era. This could very likely be the source of the name by which the paraders are known "Shooters." The custom of celebrating the New Year with shooting and mummery was not popular with the aristocratic Philadelphians. The Quaker attitude can be seen from a brief quotation from the journal of a Quaker lady: "1793—Dec. 31. They are now practicing the foolish custom of firing out the old year; may the next be spent to good purpose by those who are spared to see the end of it."***

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, this custom of shooting and mummery apparently grew to serious proportions, in the opinion of the elders of Philadelphia, for in the year 1808 an "Anti-Masquerade" act was passed. This act decreed that masked balls and masquerades were "common nuisances," and all persons who allowed masked balls in their homes, or co-operated in any way to organize them would be subject to a fine of between \$50.00 and \$1000.00, and would be liable to imprisonment for up to three months. In addition, the recalcitrant masquerader was required to give a surety to be on good behavior in the future.****

An interesting parallel to this action may be found in the *Mardi Gras* which was outlawed in 1806. To Pennsylvanians there is still a stronger connection with the *Mardi Gras*, as may be seen from the following quotation concerning the first major parade after the *Mardi Gras* was reinstated in 1827: A young man named Michael Krafft, who had been born in Pennsylvania and who had nothing that was Latin in him, had organized the Cowbellion de Rakin Society in Mobile in 1831. It was this organization which

* Robert Shakleton, *The Book of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1918), p. 402.

** Christopher Marshall's Diary, MSS. Vol. F, Unpublished, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

*** Henry D. Biddle, ed., *Extracts From The Journal of Elizabeth Drinker—1759-1807*.

**** Act of February 15, 1808. (P.L. 39). Chapter XXXI. "An ACT to declare Masquerades and Masqued Balls to be Common Nuisances, and to punish those who promote or encourage them."



Courtesy: Atwater Kent Museum

A panorama of Philadelphia mummers in the Atwater Kent Museum. The Museum is laid on New Year's morning, 1880 in the South Philadelphia area. The Mummers, composed of men and boys of that section are engaged in their old, traditional 'New Year's Shooting.' The scene is based on an eye-witness sketch. The Uncle Sam Mummers have been celebrating these celebrations since early in the last century. Because many Hessians lived in the area, the Mummers have Germanic overtones. It was once known as 'Bell Snicklin.' There appear to be old customs still in vogue.

first paraded with torch and float, although in Mobile the pageants appeared on New Year's Eve. (Not until 1866 did Mobile have parades on *Mardi Gras*.) The entire conception of the parades of the Cowbellions and of those later to become popular in New Orleans seems to have originated in the minds of Krafft and a few of his friends.*

The earliest known club to be formed among the Mummers was the "Chain Gang," which, according to legend, was formed sometime around 1846. Nothing is known of this club, except that it did exist, and did parade throughout

the South Philadelphia area. There are still some men living whose fathers remembered this organization. Other groups soon were organized; this changed public opinion and forced the repeal of the "Anti-Masquerade Act" in 1859.

In the *Public Ledger* for January 3, 1876, there was printed the following notice under the heading *Local Affairs*: "On New Year's Day the weather was as uncomfortable as usual lately, but it seemed to have little or no effect on the spirits of our citizens . . . The Fantasticals or "Shooters" were out in force during the whole day, and caused much boisterous amusement. Indians and squaws, princes and princesses, clowns, columbines and harlequins, negroes of the minstrel-hall type, Chinese and burlesque Dutchmen,

* Robert Tallant, *Mardi Gras* (New York, 1948), p. 100.



reads: "Mummers in 'The Neck' area known as 'The Neck.' Here, annual neighborhood celebration of for example, has been a figure in 'The Neck,' the celebration has many English and Swedish customs woven

bears, apes, and other animals promenaded the streets to the music of calithumpian, cow-bells, or the more dignified brass bands, and kept up their racket until late at night. Independence Hall was the grand objective point for them all, and the old building received many a cheer, both burlesque and serious. In the middle of the day several of these parties united in one grand parade and made a striking display."

In South Philadelphia, in that section known as the "Neck," "Shooting" became more and more popular. In Smoky Hollow, Stone House Lane, Prospect Bank, Martins Village, Gardners Crossing, Greenwich Point, Peacock Farms, and Windy Point, the men of the house would leave

early to celebrate the New Year in the, even then, "good old way."

Some idea of these celebrations can be had from an article in *Scribner's Monthly*: "He explains that the accordion is not what it was; he broke it last New-Year's night 'out bell-snicklin.'* This custom is known in other parts of the Neck as 'New Year's Shooting.' On New Year's Eve, crowds of men and boys dress themselves in fantastic costumes, and roam through the Neck and lower part of the city all night. This custom, doubtless a remnant of the Old English Christian 'mumming,' grows year by year in Philadelphia, and the mummers, becoming bolder, penetrate as far north as Chestnut Street."**

A leader or "Speech Director" was always appointed by these early Mummers. This leader had a special little dance step and recited a rhyme, which went something like this:

*Here we stand before your door
As we stood the year before;
Give us whiskey, give us gin,
Open the door and let us in.*

For those of less lusty appetites, the Director had this version:

*Here we stand before your door
As we stood the year before;
Give us coffee nice and hot,
And we'll make this a happy spot.*

It is not recorded which was the most successful version in procuring gifts, nor which was the most popular with the Mummers. This much might be said: the second version is not nearly as well-known as the first.

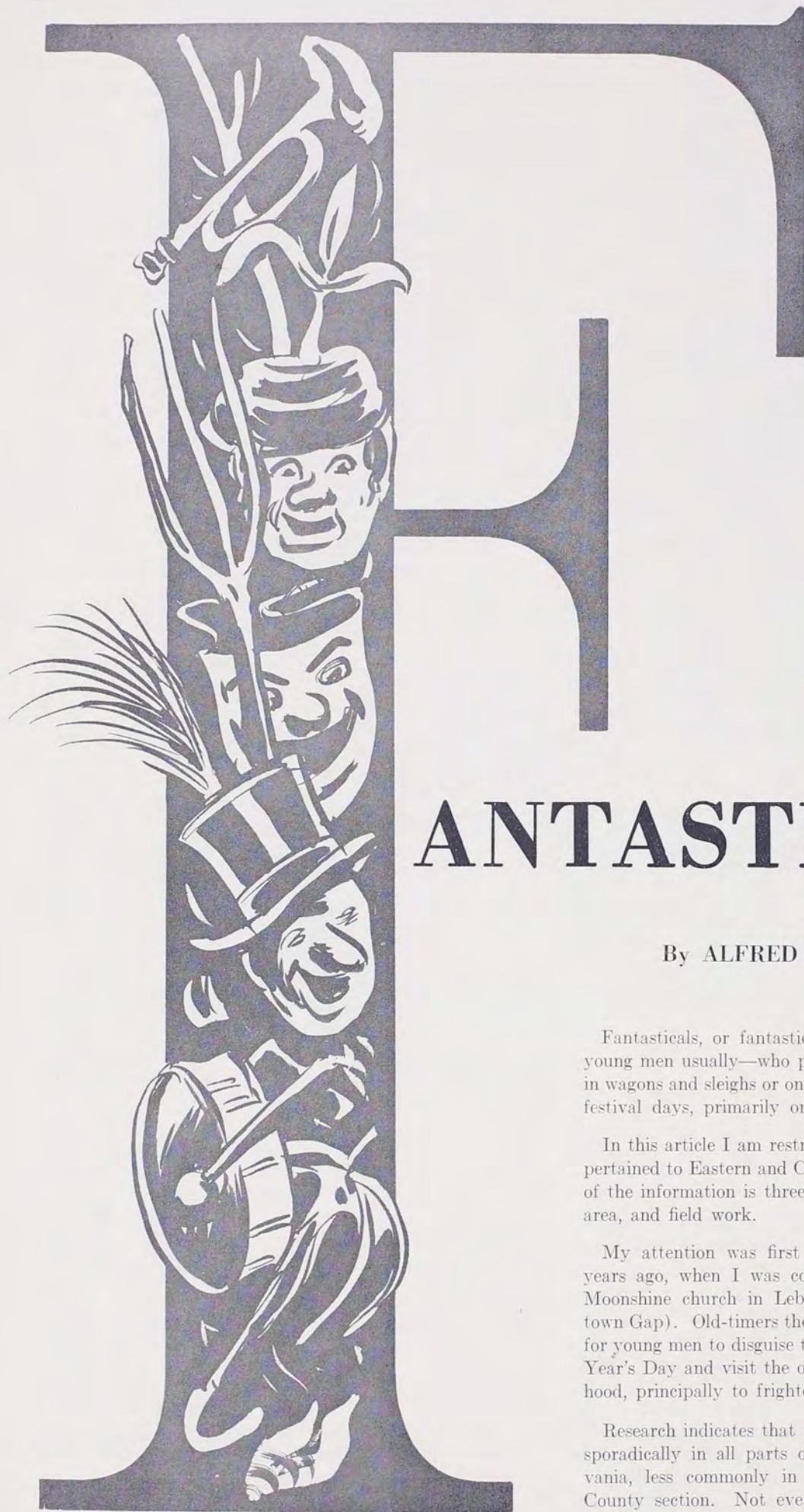
Many of the early clubs, especially the comics, had amusing names: The Early Risers; The Dark Lanterns; The Hardly Ables; The White Caps; and The Energetic Hoboes were a few. These clubs early established the pattern which they were to follow through the years. They were purely local in nature, that is each group represented some particular section of Philadelphia. At first these groups did not feel the need to organize further; they were satisfied with individual parades. This attitude eventually was changed when local merchants began contributing cash prizes, together with various types of merchandise, for the best group.

The Mummers would be accompanied by a wagon known as a cake-wagon, used to gather up donations. Later, usually within a few days, cake-cutting parties would be held; at which time, the prize cakes would be cut and served. From these cake-cutting parties sprung annual New Year's fund-raising balls, which became the social highlights of the year. These balls were used by the Mummers to entertain their friends and to raise funds for their costumes.

By the end of the 19th century, the Philadelphia Mummers' Parade was a well established tradition, and was growing rapidly. A Philadelphia political leader, Bart McHugh, suggested to the Mayor of the city that the various organizations be banded together to march up Broad Street on New Year's Day as part of the celebration to greet the new century. The City Council appropriated the sum of \$1,725 to be distributed as prizes. This was the first official Philadelphia Mummers' Parade, and the end of the first phase of its history.

*The Belsnickel was a sort of Beelzebub, disguised; he carried a whip to punish bad boys and would come knocking at windows and doors on Christmas Eve.

**Maurice F. Egan, "A Day in the Ma'sh," *Scribner's Monthly*, July, 1881.



FANTASTICALS

By ALFRED L. SHOEMAKER

Fantasticals, or fantastics, were grotesquely clad men— young men usually—who paraded the streets on horseback, in wagons and sleighs or on foot in a noisy fashion on certain festival days, primarily on New Year's morning.

In this article I am restricting myself to the custom as it pertained to Eastern and Central Pennsylvania. The source of the information is three-fold: diaries, newspapers of the area, and field work.

My attention was first called to fantasticals about six years ago, when I was collecting lore in the area of the Moonshine church in Lebanon County (north of Indian-town Gap). Old-timers there told me it used to be a custom for young men to disguise themselves, mask and all, on New Year's Day and visit the one-room schools of the neighborhood, principally to frighten the innocent youngsters.

Research indicates that the fantastical parades were held sporadically in all parts of Eastern and Central Pennsylvania, less commonly in the Bucks-Montgomery-Chester County section. Not every community had a fantastical



*A reproduction of a plate in Henry L. Fisher's *Alt Marik-Haus* (York, 1879). Mr. Fisher gave it the title "*'S Gross Battalia—un die Fantasticals*," which translated means *The Large Battalion and the Fantasticals*. The *Fantasticals* are the tail end of the parade. Some of them, men dressed like women, are wearing extra large sun bonnets, and appear to be carrying brooms.*

parade by any means; they were scattered, seemingly much like the Battalion Days of former times.

The fantasticals were either the whole show—as on New Year's Day or "Second Christmas"; or they were incorporated as parts of a bigger parade—as on the Fourth of July, Battalion Day, and on Washington's birthday.

How old the custom is and whence its origin are both unknown quantities as of now. The name fantasticals or fantastics* itself strongly suggests British Isle roots. The earliest evidence for fantastical parades in the area under study is for the year 1829. On New Year's Day of this year a group of Schuylkill Countians participated in a fantastical parade in neighboring Berks County. One of the participants, Solomon Berwin, in 1895, described their experiences as follows: "About three o'clock on the morning of January 1 [1829] we had visited thirty-seven different farm houses and traveled at least ten miles. We then all struck for Shartlesville and thence the entire party proceeded to Rehrersburg, where a parade was to be held at eight o'clock. We Schuylkill Countians took our teams and loaded on as many of the rest as could get on. We could

not drive fast on account of our heavy load, so it was almost daylight by the time we reached Rehrersburg. Here everybody was already astir. A number of teams that were to enter the procession arrived some time before our party. By eight o'clock at least thirty large teams were in line, about half of which were composed of six and eight horses. The drivers were dressed in all sorts of fantastic costumes. Several large hay wagons loaded with young women dressed in the most ludicrous manner possible, were mixed in with the sleighs. The teams were followed by about seventy men on foot each of whom carried a gun. On account of the horses the shooting was postponed until after the parade, but then there was a series of reports that could be heard for miles."

It is not until the 1850's that we have the next evidence. In this decade we have proof of the custom for Lancaster, Franklin, Lebanon, and York Counties. On July 4, 1853, Simon Snyder Rathvon, a famous naturalist and antiquarian

*The term fantasticals is used more commonly than fantastics; the ratio of use is three to one.

of Lancaster, entered in his diary: "I have just witnessed the passing of a procession of 'invincibles' or 'Fantasticals' (perhaps fanatics would be more apposite) egypt the 'Santa Ann's Club,' on horseback, no two of which were dressed alike. I do not exactly see the propriety of such a procession on the 4th of July. Perhaps those who compose it may know—under any circumstances they are a ludicrous looking company enough, and afford abundant 'fun and frolic' for the numerous troop of boys who follow in their wake on either side of the road."

The only other diary reference I have been able to find to this custom is in the William Rank diary at the Lebanon County Historical Society. Under date of Dec. 26, 1857, Rank, who lived a few miles outside of Lebanon, wrote, "In town with Sleigh, Fantasticals out on parade."

The *Valley Spirit* of Chambersburg in its Jan. 9, 1856, issue carried an article lifted from the *Waynesburg Record*: "Fantasticals. On Tuesday last (New Year's day) our town was the scene of considerable merriment and novelty occasioned by the appearance of the 'fantastical company' composed of men and boys, who marched through the streets

in disguise—some on foot others on horseback. The procession must have numbered fifty or sixty supremely odd looking characters. The whole was preceded by a Band with violins, a number of old brass instruments, and a flour-barrel for a drum. Each one playing his own tune, of course, the music was enchanting, causing old and young, mothers and modest Misses to stare."

The *Wrightsville York County Star* of Jan. 8, 1858, gives us the only other description we have of a fantastical parade for the decade of the 1850's: "In the after part of the day, the juveniles were highly excited by the appearance on our streets of a company of Fantasticals on parade, who marched through town in Indian file, under the command of Captain H. Dyer. There were about twenty in rank, dressed in the most grotesque and ludicrous style, accompanied by young America in great numbers, who seemed to enjoy the sport enormously, while their curiosity was up to fever heat to know who was who, and what was what."

The type of disguises used by the fantasticals seems to run the gamut of masquerading. The young men frequently dressed up like women. John Butz Bowman of Pottsville,

After this article had gone to press the author located two additional items of great importance. They follow. The first is from the *Easton Centinel* of Jan. 10, 1834:

"The Fantasticals. On New Year's day our borough witnessed a parade of the fantasticals—the immediate body guard of the lately elected redoubtable Col. Sheffler. It was a new and perhaps an improved edition of the late parades in New York and Philadelphia. The corps including music [numbered] about one hundred. The Calithumpian band had been uniformed and pressed into the service. These commenced their melody at about 10 o'clock in the forenoon and made the circuit of the town, playing the most splendid and novel voluntaries and variations. Their dresses displayed taste and ingenuity. All the quarters of the earth appeared to have been ransacked to swell the ranks of this Enterprisan band. Indians, negroes, hunters, Falstaffs, Jim Crows and non-descripts, all displayed the most surprising skill upon their several instruments, and with the most praiseworthy independence every man played his own tune—if he knew one; the greater number however gave voluntaries. Couch-shells, old cracked instruments, stones, shingles, tin-horns, speaking trumpets, here and there a bassoon, old kettles, pot-lids, dozens of cow-bells strung upon poles and iron hoops constituted their musical instruments. One had a leg covered with feathers, another had one of his understandings compressed into the smallest imaginable space, while its fellow was stuffed out to the dimensions of a moderate sized watchbox. It was high treason for any man's leg to look like its fellow; whiskers of all materials, and many of the size of an ordinary currant bush graced the masks or painted faces of the heroes. At about 11 o'clock the Colonel and an aid marched the corps in front of the band, who were stationed in the square. Upon the appearance of their commander such of the musicians as could do so without danger to their habiliments, saluted him by going down upon their knees. The Captain of the band wore a chapeau which was calculated and no doubt intended, in case of bad weather to serve as a tent for the whole corps. The Colonel was mounted upon a Jackass, and the aid upon a black poney, which had the fodder for both tied to his tail. Their spurs were of tin of enormous size and of the latest and most approved construction, with swords to match. The provisions of the corps, consisting of mackerel, herring, beef-bones, &c. were generally carried upon the back or around the neck. Their field-piece was an aqueduct pipe mounted upon wheels, and fitted up in a corresponding style. One man in lieu of a musket sported a venison skin which had been polished by the guests of the Shakespeare; and another carried a tin musket and bayonet with which he might have pricked a hole in a thunder cloud. If we remembered and wrote by steam, we perhaps would be able to give a detailed account of the dress, caps, mottoes, &c. as it is, we despair. One cap we remember ran up to a peak that rivalled the Peak of Teneriffe and could boast what the latter cannot—a weathercock upon the top of it. One (a loyal fellow no doubt) carried a placard upon his back with a correct likeness of the Colonel and the motto, 'I'm de feller what can beat de lawyers.'"

The second item is also from an 1834 *Easton* paper (unidentified), according to Ethan Allen Weaver's "Local His-

torical and Biographical Sketches" (Germantown, 1906), pages 90-91:

"On New Year's Day our town was enlivened by a parade unrivalled in the annals of this place. About 9 o'clock in the morning the Fantastical Band began to assemble in Delaware Ward, and before 10 o'clock, with a banner bearing the motto 'The Pride of Our Country' and trumpets sounding high the glorious notes of war, they took up their line of march. The Captain of the Band wore a dress which, as to shades, would have outshone Joseph's coat of many colours; his cap was something like four feet in length, having two canteens dangling at each end as tassels, and the whole surmounted by a weathercock. There were horns of every variety, from the long tin horns down to the penny trumpet, and each musician (if we may be allowed so to call them) tried his outmost to outdo his neighbor in raising the full chorus of discordant sounds. One of them, in the character of 'Jim Crow,' acted his part with admiration and danced to the music of an organ grinder, marching at the side of the Captain, in a manner that would have put the real Jim Crow in the background.

"After marching through several of our streets the Band formed a line in the Centre Square and soon afterwards the remainder of these 'men of war,' having formed at the point tavern, marched to join them, under command of their redoubtable Colonel, who, mounted on a donkey trimmed off with a profusion of sleigh and cow bells and bearing a monstrous pair of ram's horns affixed to his head, appeared at the head of his invincible Regiment. As to his steed, we might safely say, in the language of the day, that the steed of Don Quixote 'wasn't a priming' to the donkey. The Colonel himself, as to the splendor of his military equipments, threw the doughty Hudibras in the shade. They marched past the band, who saluted them with nodding plumes, waving banners, loud braying horns and clanging potlids as they passed. Among them was to be seen the native of the forest with bow and tomahawk, the physician with his medicines, followed by the grave-digger, bearing his spades and mattock strapped on his knapsack, which bore the motto, 'I bury the dead.' Banners bearing various devices were seen along the line, and we observed among them mottoes of 'United we stand, divided we fall,' 'Give us liberty or death,' 'Time rules all things,' 'Success to the malicious system,' &c. Their provision store, which was a large basket partly filled with mackerel and herring, was strapped on the shoulders of one of their number. Hog's ears, tobacco plugs and whitewash brushes were used in lieu of epaulettes—caps from the height of four feet down to a calash, on which were lettered mottoes, that would beggar all the powers of description.

"The rear of this display of nondescript soldiers was brought up by a fellow marching along with all the gravity and importance of an old veteran, masked and wearing a gypsey hat, a leg of a deer for his musket, his coat corded with segars and herring, a two-gallon canteen labeled gin, and wearing a United States knapsack upside down, with the motto 'Our country's wrong' attached to it. After parading through town until about noon they dismissed. We understand that they are to have another parade in the spring."

89, tells me he participated as a fantastic when a small boy in the George Washington birthday parade held annually in Schuylkill Haven years ago. He wore his sister's dress. Thomas LeVan of Kutztown described a parade, called the Fantastic, as a big feature of Battalion Day. He said, "Young fellows, impersonating girls, rode side-saddle garbed in women's clothes, long shirts, and all the trappings. Often 150 were in line."*

In a Fredericksburg news item in the *Lebanon Courier* of Jan. 3, 1877: "On 'Second Christmas' some young men gave a street entertainment by dressing themselves in their parents' old clothes and marching through town in the noble capacity of 'fantastics.'" A Strasburg news item in the *Chambersburg Valley Spirit* of January 12, 1876, says, "A grand parade was given by the *fantastics*, who took possession of the place at an early hour, and held it until about 10 o'clock A.M. Marching from their rendezvous, (The Rising Sun Hotel) through the different thoroughfares they came to the uninhabited *half acre*; and there revealed the names. The different costumes worn represent the style, for the last nine centuries."

Only one source compares the masked fantasticals to the *bellsnickels*, the Christmas Eve masqueraders of the Dutch Country. It is the *Lebanon Daily Report* of Dec. 27, 1893: "The fantasticals who yesterday attracted the attention of the inhabitants of neighboring towns, were both numerous and curiously attired. There were some 20 of them, and they passed through Fredericksburg, Jonestown and other places on the northern border. They were all mounted, some on horses, others on mules, and wore the usual accoutrements of the *bellsnickle bogie*."

C. H. Leeds in his "Old Home Week Letters" (Carlisle, 1909, page 10) writes that in his youth a colored man "was hired to take the part of a red lion in one of the annual midsummer fantastic parades."*

I have two references to fantasticals making their rounds on New Year's Eve. One is from the *Bucks County Intelligencer* of January 10, 1885: "At Bristol the New Year was ushered in with the sound of booming guns as the last night of 1884 passed away. The merry groups of masqueraders went from house to house during the evening, and where they could obtain admittance made high carnival." The other reference is from an informant, W. E. Spriggle of near Richfield, Juniata County, who told me a number of years ago that his parents used to fill baskets of food for the needy of the neighborhood which the fantasticals then distributed on New Year's night. In Snyder County it seems that the fantasticals were chiefly abroad at evening time.

On a folklore field trip I made to Perry County in 1953, William Kerstetter described the fantastical parades of his youth as follows, "Some fifty young men, on horseback, were in disguise. We had two leaders, on black horses, carrying sleighbells. Some of the chaps rode noise-making farm equipment—old worn out hayrakes with teeth dragging and buggies with spokes missing from the wheels. Some had their faces blackened; others wore a horn, were dressed like the devil. We didn't stop in anywhere."

In the files of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center

we have but one manuscript item on the fantasticals. It was written by Victor C. Dieffenbach of Bethel in the mid-1950's. Mr. Dieffenbach wrote, "I remember as a kid I went to Millersburg [the former name for Bethel] on the day after Christmas to see the fantastic riders that could always be seen at the various hotels. There might have been fifty riders, from different places, assembled in the square, vying with each other with their comic regalia and occasionally some well accoutred steed. A big lout of a fellow from Hamburg was up on an immense mule, fully eighteen hands high, and he was what today, in army parlance, is called the 'Big Brass.' Every inch of harness was full of bright brass spots, and that mule glittered so one could hardly bear to look at him. This 'Beau Brommel' was now in the hotel, having himself a good time. Along came a kid and looks at that mule, all bedazzled, and as he walked around him his eyes were taking in every detail of the shiny outfit. Finally, to satisfy his childish curiosity, he lifted up the mule's tail, looked under, and silently shook his head. Undoubtedly he was disappointed in not finding any more brass hidden, and so he gave the mule's tail a yank. And did that kid roll—clean across the square! He got up and went into the barroom. He told that big fellow, 'You better move your big shiny mule out there. I looked at him and I fell over.' This remark so pleased the crowd that the kid had more ice cream and candy than he could eat. Luckily, having been so close to the mule, he was not injured but keeled over, and badly scared."

The turn of the century* saw the end of the fantasticals. Several reasons contributed to the dropping of this interesting New Year custom. No doubt one was that young men, farm youths for the most part, no longer rode horseback. A writer in the *Norristown Weekly Herald* of January 6, 1890, conjectured that Halloween replaced the New Year's custom. He wrote, "There was a conspicuous absence of the fantastically costumed masqueraders who are seen in numerous parties on Hallow E'en. In fact the latter festival has of late years become the more important of the two and is more closely observed as a carnival than New Year's Eve."

In conclusion, we have one more bit of information on the fantasticals, an editorial of sorts, from the *Allentown Democrat* of July 2, 1899: "The young men of Catasauqua are making extensive preparations for a fantastical parade in said place on the 4th of July. One who knows informs us that two hundred persons, fully equipped, will participate, thus making the parade quite a pageant—one that will afford amusement and pleasure to the citizens, as well as visitors. There will be costumes of every character in line, though the tendency towards the ugly and comical will probably predominate among the 'Mystic Krew of Komus.' There are those who are not enthusiastic admirers of fantastical parades, and who have never been fully convinced of their refining and elevating tendency, but for our part we think it is better to be merry than sad, and if, as some genial writer asserts, a good hearty laugh takes a nail out of your coffin, a parade of the fantasticals can not fail to lessen the bills of mortality."

*I located but two references to fantastical parades after 1900. One is from the *Bellefonte Democratic Watchman* of January 3, 1902: "New Years Mummings had a great parade in Nittany valley on Wednesday. There were between fifty and sixty vehicles carrying fantastically dressed people in line." The other reference is from the *Hanover Daily Record* of Jan. 7, 1904: "The Pleasant Hill band was one of the big features of the fantastic parade in East Berlin on New Year's Day."

*The *Allentown Morning Call*, Nov. 20, 1937.

**Theodor Gaster, *New Year's History, Customs and Superstitions* (New York, 1955), p. 95. "A peculiar and puzzling New Year custom, prevalent in several parts of the world, is that of dressing up as animals or parading in animal skins."

Joseph Henry Dubbs

as a
Folklorist



Joseph Henry Dubbs

By ELIZABETH CLARKE KIEFFER

Speck-Hansel and Zitter-Bevely

The old church in Salisbury Township, Lehigh County, which is now dignified by being termed "the Jerusalem church," was of old popularly called "Schmalz-gass," which being literally translated, signifies "Lard Street." It is so called in "Schlatter's Journal," and in many ancient records. The name was probably first given to the road on which the church stood, but in course of time it came to be applied to the church itself. There can be no doubt of the propriety of the name when applied to the surrounding country, for porkers are so numerous, and at butchering time LARD is so plenty, that Salisbury eminently deserves to be called the "Land of Lard."

In the "Land of Lard" dwelt "Speck-Hansel," a kind-hearted, simple old Suabian, who, though perfectly honest and sober, was very poor and unable to support himself without the assistance of his neighbors. His real name was Johannes Reichert, but as he, to use his own term, "collected a great deal of *bacon*, they called him "Speck-Hansel," that is, "Bacon Johnny." His wife's name was *Barbara*, but on account of a nervous affliction, from which

she suffered, she was generally known as "Zitter-Bevely," or "Trembling Barby." In Autumn they made a grand "collecting" tour, which was generally continued for several months. On these excursions they were everywhere kindly received, and never returned home empty handed. Sometimes they could hardly carry the load of gifts which they had received, but they took their own time and finally got them all safely home. In fact, "Speck-Hansel" was much stronger than he appeared to be. On one occasion, while he was "collecting" buckwheat, he came to a mill and asked the miller to put a little more grain into his sack, which already contained nearly two bushels. As there was a half-bushel measure full standing near him, the miller poured about one half of it into the bag, and then asked "Hansel" whether he wanted any more, supposing that he could not carry what he had already. But "Hansel" was, by no means, modest in his demands, and while thanking him for what he had already received, said, "I will take all you give me." The miller then poured the rest of the grain into the sack, and the old man trudged merrily homewards

When the widowed Mrs. John S. Murphy (born Eleanor Lerch) became, in 1837, the second wife of Joseph S. Dubs, pastor of the "Allentown Charge" of the Reformed Church, she brought with her a varied racial and cultural background. Her father's family, immigrants from Saxony, had long been leaders of the Saucon community. Her great-grandfather had been a delegate elder to the first meeting of the Reformed Coetus of Pennsylvania, her grandfather a member of the Committee of Safety, had later been a State Senator. Her mother's family, of mixed Welsh and Kentish blood, with Moravian leanings, had been among the founders of the Welsh community at Skippack.

Eleanor was born on Christmas Day 1802, a fact which accounts for the intense love of Christmas, which she passed down to every one of her descendants. If it is true that Christmas children can see the fairies, it may also account for the vivid quality of the wonder-tales, which her son and her grandchildren all recalled as her greatest charm. It was said of her that she knew the Arabian Nights by heart, and could tell the Grimm, Andersen and Perrault fairy tales more fascinatingly than any of the published versions. The Irish tales which she learned from her first husband mingled pleasantly with Ghost stories and *Hexerei* from Dutch Pennsylvania. To her belongs the credit for the Lehigh Valley horror tale which her son versified successfully as: *The Legend of Tambour Yokel*.

After her brief and childless first marriage, she lived for some time in the home of Bishop Van Vleck of the Moravian Church (a connection by marriage), first in Nazareth, later in New York, where she learned to speak German, and to teach children, a skill which she put to use when she later went to live with her mother in the Lehigh Valley, where she kept a select school for girls for seven years. She was thus, at the time of her second marriage, thirty-five years old, and thirty-six when her first and only surviving child was born. Of her three stepchildren, the oldest was eleven, the youngest eight, when she married. She cared faithfully

for their physical needs, but it was too late to waken in them a passion for mystic enchantments. After the early death of her second son, she devoted most of her skill as an educator to the little Joseph Henry. A card written by her to him on his fortieth birthday, and preserved in his autobiographical scrapbook in the Franklin and Marshall library, speaks through all its quaint formality of the intense intimacy which drew them together.

Joseph Henry Dubbs (1838-1910), son of such a mother, grew up in an atmosphere that is itself folklore. The farm-parsonage at Whitehall united all the earthy humor of the early nineteenth century country home, with the cultured atmosphere of a scholarly preacher's study, and the refinements introduced by the second wife. Joseph S. Dubs has become, himself, a subject of folk-tales. The big jovial pastor-farmer, has gathered about himself a growing body of ana, some embroidered, some, I am sure, apocryphal, and some probably borrowed from the adventures of his colleagues. Some of the best of them were published by his son in *Reminiscences of an Aging Minister* (*Messenger*, April 29, 1877 ff.) (reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, June 23, 1949 ff. as: *Father Dubs Reminisces*). The son's own recollections are delightfully told in his two articles on: *Formative Influences in the College Student* (F and M) March 1897 and March 1898 where one gains the picture of the dreamy, lonely childhood days which so profoundly influenced his distinguished later career.

Of this career there is no need for this article to give details. An excellent article by the late Dr. I. H. DeLong, in the *Dictionary of American Biography* may be consulted in any public library. Educated in the Allentown Seminary of Dr. Christian Rudolph Kessler ("Trout Hall"), of which he gave a vivid account in *The Guardian* 1885, p. 332, he entered the sophomore class of the newly united Franklin and Marshall College at Lancaster in 1853. After graduation from the college and from the Theological Seminary in Mercersburg, he served three churches in Allentown, Pottstown and Philadelphia, before he was appointed (at the request of its donor) to the Audenried professorship of history and archaeology at Franklin and Marshall College where he remained until his death in April 1910.

As an historian, Doctor Dubbs is best remembered for his: *Historic Manual of the Reformed Church*, 1885; *The Reformed Church in Pennsylvania*, 1902; and *A History of Franklin and Marshall College*, 1903; as well as for many articles in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, and the publications of the Lancaster County Historical Society. As a pastor he was long recalled with affection, and many, still living, boast that they were baptized by him. For many years, while professor at the college, he served the Reformed Church at Manheim, and preached at many other county churches.

As a poet, he is represented by a slim volume of *Home Ballads and Metrical Versions*, 1888, of which the contents while not great poetry, is not to be despised, and has indeed received the ultimate compliment of appearing in anthologies and poetry columns with the annotation: "author unknown."

From 1882 to 1885 and again in 1890, he edited the *Guardian*, the magazine for young people founded in 1849 by Henry Harbaugh. Of his many collections perhaps his best known were his book-plates, although his stamps, coins, and Indian relics were famous in their day, and the published catalog of his autographs, sold in 1893 is enough to make a modern collector weep. Some of his other gleanings

with two bushels of buckwheat on his shoulders.

On one occasion when he was "collecting" bacon, somebody said, "Well, Hannes, had you no pig to kill last Fall?" "O, yes," said he, "we had a little one. Barby held it while I chopped its head off, and then she scalded it in the skillet. That is all."

Of Barby, good simple soul, many amusing expressions are still in the mouths of people. Once when a theft, which had long been concealed, was accidentally discovered, someone remarked that such was always the case, and that no thief would ever escape with impunity. This, Barby stoutly denied, and at last, to confirm her assertions, she exclaimed, "I know from my own experience that every theft is not discovered, for when I was a girl, I once stole a pint of honey, and no one has discovered that, and no one ever will." Pussy was out of the bag at last, and she is still at large.

In the year 1810 both "Hansel" and "Barby" died, and as they left no children, "their line has become extinct." No tombstone marks their resting place; we, therefore, dedicate this brief sketch TO THE MEMORY OF "SPECK-HANSEL AND ZITTER-BEVELY."

from Lancaster County attics now adorn important museums and libraries. He was first President of the Lancaster County Historical Society, President of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Great Britain, and twice served as interim President of Franklin and Marshall.

Some of his students became distinguished historians, themselves, but those who survive usually speak of him as, "Dear old Katy Dubbs," a nickname which he earned because an unprepared student could always lure him into telling the story about Katy, the spiritualist, which lasted most of the period.

To the grandchild who rode "Trot, trot to market" on his knee, enacted with him the delightful tragedy of the "Grasshopper sittin' on the sweet-tater vine," or was held spellbound by his versions of "Clementine" and "Vilikins and his Dinah," he was, as his mother had been to her grandchildren, an inexhaustible source of entertainment. She learned here letters from a reprint edition of the *New England Primer* which he bought her; made her first contact with little Bo-Peep in a scholarly edition of *Mother Goose* of 385 pages with introduction and footnotes; and, in the big library of his study at College Avenue and James Street (the house that was built from the proceeds of that autograph sale), she first made acquaintance with Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, Ennemoser's *Magic*, Gummere's *Germanic Origins*, Mackay's *Delusions*, and other even more surprising literature for teen-age consumption.

Outside of his home influences, two other sources of inspiration directed Dr. Dubbs' inclination to the study of folklore. One was Henry Harbaugh, whom he came to know well during his college days in Lancaster. The two of them held long conversations in the dialect, swapped anecdotes of early childhood, of which both had such vivid memories, and the editor even accepted and published the college boy's earlier efforts at literary composition. It was under the influence of Dr. Harbaugh's enthusiasm, that Joseph Henry even wrote one dialect poem: *Schlittefahre* which appeared in the *Messenger* April 16, 1862.*

It should here be noted that Dr. Dubbs, with all his interest in the preservation of folklore, was definitely out of sympathy with the movement to revive the dialect, which he considered a divisive influence, and a deterrent to integration. He would not permit his children to use dialect words or phrases, and requested older members of the family not to speak in the dialect before them. "After all" he would say, "one may study Babylonian cuneiform, but one does not use it in social correspondence."

The second interest which early directed Dr. Dubbs' attention to the science of folklore was his intimate friendship with Charles Godfrey Leland, begun during his pastorate in Philadelphia, and continued, mostly by correspondence, throughout their lifetimes. Leland (now best remembered for his *Hans Breitman Ballads*) was a distinguished authority on the Gypsies, second only to George Borrow, for whose works he inspired in Dr. Dubbs a vast enthusiasm. Through this association Dr. Dubbs first began to realize that the interests that had been to him merely an amusement, could be raised to the stature of a serious contribution to the history of civilization.

If he deplored cultural retrogression, he was very scornful

*This is frequently wrongly attributed to J. S. Dubs, but in his essay on Poetry of German Pennsylvania (*Guardian*, Mar. 1868) Dr. J. H. Dubbs states definitely that he wrote it after reading Dr. Harbaugh's poems.

of the pretension which denies one's origin. In *Our Young Baroness*, one of his earliest *Guardian* articles (December 1868), he tells of a childhood schoolmate, the schoolmaster's daughter, who, born and bred to the language and folkways of a Lehigh Valley community, was later discovered to be heiress to a German title and fortune. When, as an elegant young lady she revisited her childhood and refused to converse in the barbarous language of her childhood, demanding to be addressed in French or in English, her former playmate replied that since he spoke no French, and her English was too defective to be understood they had better not converse at all.

He derided equally the tourist-trap type of quaintness, which turned a restaurant at the Philadelphia Sanitary Fair into a "Dutch Kitchen." When a pert waitress snubbed his request for a menu with, "Whoever heard of a menu in a Dutch kitchen?" he gravely inquired, "Was hen ihr zu esse?" and to her blank incomprehension, remarked gravely, "Nor did I ever hear of a girl who couldn't speak Dutch, in a Dutch Kitchen."

Other early articles show a dawning interest in these subjects. *Poetry of the Pennsylvania German* (*Guardian*, March 1868); *Curious Predictions*, (*Messenger* June 1, 1872); *Notes on Surnames* (*Guardian*, October 1873).

It was when, in January 1882, he took over the editorship of the *Guardian* from Benjamin Bausman, Dr. Harbaugh's successor, that he began to discover the practical use of his immense store of miscellaneous information. The *Guardian* throughout its forty years of useful existence, remained always, more or less, a one-man periodical. Unable to pay for contributions, each editor in turn, had to wheedle what articles he could from his personal friends, and fill the rest of his pages himself, often writing under five or six pen-names to disguise the lack of variety. (If it were not that Dr. Dubbs kept a careful bibliography of all his writings, it would sometimes be impossible to prove which of the articles were his own.)

In his first number, he inaugurated a department which he called *Our Cabinet*, which regularly disposed of from two to four pages, filled with short articles, seldom more than a paragraph, on such varia as: *Irish Wakes*; *Swearing Parrots*; *Women's Names*; *Shoes*; *Rhymeless Words*:

"What's the rhyme for porringer?

The Duke of York a daughter had

And gave the Prince of Orange her."

Curious Names; *Copper Cents*; *Medieval Medicine*; *Signs of the Zodiac*; *The Rabbit and the Egg*; *Fairy Ring*; *The Christmas Rose*; *Tuten Berries*; *Inscriptions on Clocks*; *Inscriptions on Houses*:

"Die Menschen sagen immer

Die Zeiten werden schlimmer.

Die Zeiten bleiben immer

Die Menschen werden schlimmer."

During the same years, he published longer articles in the same and allied fields: *The Unity of the Human Race*; *Early German Literature of Pennsylvania*; *German Pioneers*; *German and Frank*; *Old Times and New*; *An Indian Raid in Eastern Pennsylvania*; *The Varieties of Pennsylvania German*.

In an article on *Peculiar Preaching* in June 1885, he reviewed the famous pulpit cranks from Antony of Vienna and Abraham a Sancta Clara, down to Lorenzo Dow and Jacob Gruber. This apparently reminded him of similar characters within his own experience, for he followed it

quickly with an article on Ludwig Stork, who once requested the use of the pulpit of Egypt Church to deliver an important message, and drove his audience away by reading his own poems for several hours. Dr. Dubbs' interest in such ecclesiastical tramps carried over into his *History of Franklin and Marshall College*, his *Reminiscences of an Aged Preacher*, and his *Formative Influences*.

With an editorial sigh of relief, the *Guardian* was turned over to Henry Martyn Kieffer in 1885, but after the resignation of the latter in 1890, it became necessary for Dr. Dubbs to resume the editorship for a year, until the periodical was merged with the *Missionary Herald* to become the *Missionary Guardian* under the editorship of A. C. Whitmer. In the years between, Dr. Dubbs had devoted his attention to the more formal aspects of history; but in this volume he emerges with a far more conscious attitude to folklore. His articles, such as a series on the nicknames of churches: "Welsch-karn Kirche"; "Smoke Church," "Straw Church" etc. His account of "Speck-Hansel" and his wife "Zitter-Bevely" are all obviously written more with the object of preserving lore than of entertaining the young.

Most indicative of this changed view-point, is his article on *Unconsidered Trifles*, (September, 1890). Here we find the expression of his ripened philosophy of folklore: "It is one of the chief characteristics of modern research to make much of things which were formerly regarded as trifles. In fact, the existence of trifles is now hardly recognised."

He goes on to cite the scorn which was visited by contemporaries upon Gilbert White when he began his solitary studies at Selbourne; upon Percy when he published his *Reliques*; upon Walter Scott for his long chats with highland shepherds. He mentions William J. Thoms, founder of the *London Notes and Queries*, and inventor of the term "folklore." He tells the story of the old man assumed to be mad by his neighbors because he sat all day blowing soap-bubbles in the sunlight, who turned out to be Sir Isaac Newton doing researches on the refraction of light. "The moon cares nothing for the baying hounds" he concludes, "Acquire habits of literary economy, save every particle of literary knowledge which your mind can possibly retain . . .

keep a notebook and a scrapbook for the fragments of knowledge that unexpectedly come your way . . . what at first seemed unmeaning piles of stones will grow into masses of solid masonry; and it may be that future generations will bless the toil that has provided for them a home."

This insistence upon the value of scrapbooks was not the least of Dr. Dubbs' contributions. Many of his articles deal with the minutiae of this procedure, even to discussions of the best kind of paste for the purpose. It is significant that in addition to his own collections, many of the fine scrapbooks in the collections of Franklin and Marshall, and of the Lancaster County Historical Society were the work of pupils and friends of his.

It was in the years following his final leaving of the *Guardian* that most of our scholar's books were published, so that he had little time for articles in this field. Aside from those already mentioned the most important was that on *Christmas Customs* published in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* the Christmas before his death (1909) and reprinted in Dr. Kriebel's *Pennsylvania German*, December 1911.

* * * *

The Moravian putz figures which Eleanor Dubs drove to Bethlehem to purchase, to add to the growing putz in the Whitehall parsonage, which enthralled but slightly shocked her husband's Reformed parishioners, made happy the Christmases of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren for long years after her death. The illuminated tokens (perhaps real fractur) which the children of the Nazareth school prepared for her were lost somewhere along the years (I never saw them). But in her son's heart, the love of learning which she fostered, flowered into worthy contributions to scholarship. The little chair on which she rocked him to sleep, and the quilt which she pieced for her granddaughter are remembrances of her in the home of that granddaughter's granddaughter. Her surviving grandson, aged 90, can still repeat the prayer she taught him as a boy.

What monument do we seek of greater worth?

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HORSE COMPANIES in Montgomery County

By JANE KEPLINGER BURRIS

Less than one hundred years ago almost every rural community had its "Horse Company," the objective of which was the recovery of stolen horses and the detection of thieves. In the 1850's these associations were at the height of their service and value to the cause to which they were dedicated. The formation period, the movement establishing the horse company, however, was general and widespread throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the adjoining states, and began in some instances before the Revolutionary War. Where the idea first had its beginning—a matter of some controversial interest—this article is not prepared to surmise. (New England claims to be the "first" with an association in 1795. However, a Pennsylvania organization, the Mount Joy Horse Company of Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County, claimed the right to celebrate its hundredth anniversary in 1874.) It seems to have been a spontaneous protective measure that was seized upon by men everywhere in a time of great stress—a time long prior to our efficient and modern network of borough, township, and state police.

Despite early legislation by the Commonwealth and severe punishment if convicted, organized gangs of horse thieves continued to flourish and roam the countryside at will. In 1780, an act of legislation was passed to increase the punishment for horse stealing, and quoting from the Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania, it reads:

Whereas the punishment heretofore provided against the crime of horse stealing have not proved sufficient to deter evil-minded persons from the commission thereof:

FOR THE REMEDY WHEREOF:

Be it enacted and it is hereby enacted by the Representatives of the Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That is any person or persons, from and after the passing of this act, shall feloniously take and carry away, any horse, mare or gelding of any other person or persons or of the United States of America, and shall be thereof convicted, every such person so offending for the first offense shall stand in the pillory for one hour, and shall be publicly whipped on his, her or their (bare) backs with thirty-nine lashes, well laid on, and at the same time shall have his, her or their ears cut off and nailed to the pillory, and for the second offense shall be branded on the forehead in a plain and visible manner with the letters H. T.

Many are the thrilling tales that have been handed down about the bands of outlaws that led lives of organized crime. Of these, the Doan Brothers, raiding during the years of the Revolution and since referred to as the "Bucks County Cowboys," were the most infamous. Of more recent years we have had another brother outfit, the Buzzard gang,

headed by Abe Buzzard, with their hideout in the Welsh Mountains of Lancaster County. Their incursions knew no bounds and Montgomery County was invaded on more than one occasion by these marauders in their heyday.

Sheeder relates in his quaint 1845 history of East Vincent Township, Chester County, that around the year 1793, he had been out to Wheeling, West Virginia, below Pittsburgh, on the Ohio River and word was given that several "horsies" were missing and that Indians had been seen in the neighborhood. Six or eight neighbors gathered and volunteered to go on the trail. They crossed the river and went some distance, but having seen no Indians returned, when it was found that the horse thief was one of their number and had been riding with them. It seems that there were two organized gangs of thieves, one at Wheeling and the other in Old Virginia and they had an arrangement whereby they exchanged stolen beasts and thus longer eluded detection. Sheeder further remarks that if they had seen or met with an Indian while on pursuit, the thief among them would have been the first to shoot, showing that blame was often unfairly and wrongfully foisted on the Indian.

For many hundreds of years since its domestication, the horse has been of supreme importance to man. He was dependent on it for mobility, as well as for service in the field and on the farm. Deprived of the horse, man was seriously handicapped, both from a physical and social standpoint. The appreciation of fine horseflesh has been inherent for many generations, and no real gentleman of yesteryear neglected his horse. The needs of the horse came first—it received the best attention and care available. It was man's most essential and valued piece of property, and because of its value, horse stealing was a lucrative business to certain outlawed members of society. The usual reward offered for a runaway servant or slave was from one to six cents. The reward for a strayed or stolen horse was from twenty to eighty dollars. This is by way of comparison to show the high value set on a horse. Indeed, it is written by historians regarding our early settlers that the loss of a horse, or other farm animal such as a cow, was much more serious, economically, than the loss of a member of the family.

The sheriffs of the county, in their succession, were conscientious and tireless in the prosecution of their duty, but hard pressed with the manifold responsibilities of their office; they were no match for the horse thief syndicates. The yearly newspapers further attest to the serious and critical condition existing that brought men to the realization that a concerted effort must be made to solve the problem confronting both the citizen and the officer of the law. The answer was born in the resolve of the free men to rise

up of one accord and accept the challenge laid down by the outlaw, and thereby outsmart and outwit the offenders in the chase. The records of these horse companies in the future were to bear testimony that the measure was effective, that it did indeed accomplish its purpose and was destined to be deemed the mightiest blow dealt the highwayman, and one that reduced horse stealing to a minimum.

Furthermore, the law recognized the aid of these companies as law enforcement agencies. Under the laws of New Jersey, any member of a thief detecting society had the power to make arrests. This authority had not been conferred upon the general members of Pennsylvania companies. The sheriff's name appears as a subscriber on the roll of the horse company which covered the bounds of his homestead. The sheriff rode in pursuit with his neighbor in order to bring the most contemptible villain of his day to justice.

In relating the organization, step by step, of a horse company, and in order to avoid repetitious data, it can be asserted almost of a certainty that what is true of one company is also true of another. The fundamental framework of operation and management was similar in most cases. Any exception to the general rule will be dealt with in the thumbnail sketches of the individual companies to follow. The constitution was a model of construction and contained fifteen or more articles. The other instruments of government were examples of great forethought in planning and were only subject to revision as the years passed to make way for progress.

A public notice was given, in the beginning, that a horse company was about to be organized in a certain vicinity and it was at this first stated meeting that the rules and regulations were adopted, officers appointed, and the subscribers placed in "classes" of pursuit. Classing was in regards to the numbered routes taken in pursuit. Groups

of members from one area were delegated to cover certain limits and in this way the neighborhood and highways were systematically combed without overlapping of territory and haphazard search. The members, right from the first meeting, were notified "to hold themselves in readiness at a minute's warning, to pursue the routes respectively allocated to them." Another usual stipulation was that a member must reside within a limit of seven miles of the rendezvous specified by his association.

The rules and regulations were most complete and thorough, and strictly enforced, almost to a military degree. The military influence is strongly felt in these organizations, as it was this same time that the dashing and romantic militia battalions were in their glory. In September 1824, when General Lafayette paid his last visit to Philadelphia, our county troops of horse paraded in the reception along with the military companies of the state. And it is related that General Lafayette remarked that the horses of the battalions from Montgomery County were the finest in the procession. The same names that appear on the rolls of the troops of horse appear on the rolls of the horse companies.

The fee for admission into a company was a sum ranging from one to ten dollars. To enforce regularity and punctuality at the yearly meetings, absence was fined and also tardiness. The amount of money in the treasury of the individual companies was never very large. Most of it derived from the fees and fines. Stated meetings were held annually and in some cases semi-annually. The usual procedure was sitting down to supper together, transacting new and old business, electing officers and committees, marking new routes and discussing methods of improvement.

The founders of these companies were leaders and respected members of their community. One of the greatest honors a farmer could have was to be elected a committee-

Photos: Courtesy of Montgomery County Historical Society

Rules & Regulations

OF THE

7984



JEFFERSON EXPRESS COMPANY,

For the Recovery of Stolen Horses, & Detecting the Thieves.

Woodcuts by Gilbert on early Horse Company broadside.

man on a horse company. The job paid a small fee, but it was the distinction, not the money, that made the position important, and in addition, it gave the committeeman the right to wear a high, silk hat! But to further complicate matters, the cunning thief also wore a high, silk hat, thus making it difficult for the confused pursuers to distinguish between the thief and the committeeman. The cry "stop thief" caused the farmer to drop his plough, jump to a horse, and join in the chase for the most feared and despised of all humans—the horse thief! Sometimes the farmer whose horse was stolen had to ride four or five miles to the nearest committee member. Sad, indeed, was his plight, if the horse stolen was the only one he owned. Neighboring farmers joined in the search. The hunt usually led to the nearest inn, where the thief sometimes remained for the night. Tollgate, turnpike and innkeepers usually cooperated with the committeemen in tracing down the thief. Owners of auctions, where horses were sold, frequently caught horse thieves, because the thief anxious to get rid of the animal would sell it far below its value. This aroused the suspicions of the auctioneer. But again, the clever thief knew the value of a horse and offered to sell at a fraction, or slightly less than its worth and thus would ward off suspicions.

Handbills were printed in quantity carrying the names of the subscribers. Each member received several copies to nail to the stable door or otherwise display at a prominent

spot on his premises. These handbills served as a warning to the trespasser, telling him in no uncertain terms that the owner had the support of his neighbors and would resist depredation on his property. The handbill, being subjected to the elements, did not last long and was replaced from time to time by new issues. Therefore, very few of the early handbills remain today, and when found are greatly prized. The protective part played by these handbills is not to be underestimated, as they exerted a considerable restraint on the potential criminal.

It was usually required by the constitution that no horse could be placed under protection unless it carried the company brand on it. Fifteen days was the limit given a subscriber to conform with the rules and register and brand a new horse. Also, the subscriber, in case of theft and for identification purposes, had to be prepared to describe his horse in writing.

If the thief was not apprehended, and the horse was not restored to the subscriber by the posse or the offer of a reward, the company paid the member the value of the animal as determined by appraisers. In later years coverage was extended to protect members not only from the loss of a horse or mule, but also other property from theft and arson. Up to this time the only insurance available was for fire. Barn fires by accident or by barn-burners was another source of great calamity. The danger was very real and was greatly dreaded because of the serious tramp problem

NOTICE!



A Meeting of the
"LIMERICK UNION HORSE COMPANY,"
of Limerick Township, will be held at the public
house of
on
Punctual attendance is requested.

Secretary

Meeting notices looked like this. Woodcut by Gilbert.

that twice swept the countryside during the lifetime of the horse company. Special vigilance committees were assigned to combat this ever present danger.

Two instances from the newspapers serve to illustrate the conditions then prevalent. The *Norristown Register and Watchman* of January 11, 1865, published this warning: "John Poley at the Trappe had a horse stolen on Saturday night. Look out for horse thieves and keep your stable doors locked!" Even the Reverend Henry Rodenbaugh, a Presbyterian pastor, was not exempt from the disrespect of the horse thieves. One Sunday after holding services, August 1866, at the Port Kennedy church he went to the horse sheds adjoining and was shocked to find horse and buggy gone.

The effort to be original in naming these companies was great, and is apparent in comparing the list of the titles in full of the county organizations. It was important to be distinctive, and one can imagine the prodigious hunt for synonyms and the profound thought that was put into the turning of a phrase to say the same thing, but in different words.

Around 1820 "The United Companies of Bucks, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Chester and Delaware Counties for the Detection of Horse Thieves and the Recovery of Stolen Property" was organized. The purpose of the consolidation was the better to cope with the culprits that escape the bounds of pursuit of one county into an adjacent territory. The various county associations met to consider "the propriety of sending a delegate to a convention of companies which had been organized throughout the state for the same purpose." A general consultation of the several companies was held May 19, 1821, in the tavern of Mrs. Ann Webb, The Washington House, Norristown, but apparently the attendance was small, for a new call was issued asking each company to appoint one delegate to another meeting at the same tavern "on Thursday of February court week." Nothing further is on record about meetings in Norristown of the consolidation, but on May 14, 1822, delegates from horse companies in the five counties mentioned met in

Philadelphia. At this meeting Evan Jones of Montgomery County was elected president, and John W. Irwin of Chester County, secretary. It was decided to have the annual meeting of 1823 at the tavern of John Elliott, at King of Prussia. That is the extent of what is known about this early effort at cooperation. However, twenty years later, similar meetings were again held. On May 17, 1846, the annual convention of the United Horse Companies was held in the Madison House, North Second Street, Philadelphia. Sixteen companies were represented, including five from Montgomery County.

Undeniably, the horse company added a colorful page to the history of Montgomery County. The time has come to set a limit on our general observation and turn to the individual sketches that follow. We have record of twenty-one horse companies once operating in Montgomery County. A further review of the county newspapers may reveal additions. But with twenty-one companies accounted for, it can readily be seen that Montgomery County's 480 square miles was a well covered and protected area.

With the advent of the telegraph, the telephone, the automobile, insurance companies, and other organized law enforcement agencies, the necessity of the horse company gradually diminished and they became obsolete. They are continued today in some instances only as social organizations.

THE UNION SOCIETY OF LOWER MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOR THE DETECTION OF HORSE THIEVES AND THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN PROPERTY celebrated its Centennial in 1912. This company is still active as a social organization. In 1947, William S. Livengood, the then Secretary of Internal Affairs of Pennsylvania was the victim of a humorous and mock claim and was accused of stealing a horse at Melrose Park. He was given the benefit of a "fair trial" by Judges Knight of Montgomery County and McDevitt of Philadelphia County, and was sentenced to be hanged. Samuel M. Glass, the then sheriff of Montgomery County, officiated at the hanging.

Minutes

At the Annual Meeting of the Blue Bell Association of Montgomery County for the recovery of stolen horses and the detection of thieves held at Sellers Tavern Dec 16th 1844.

On motion the roll was called and the following persons answered and paid as follows:

Wm Glatthey	50	John C. Stungluff	50
John Fitzgerald	50	George Koert	50
David DeHaan	50	Holmy Greenwall	50
Benjamin Hill	50	Jeffe Barnes	50
Job Roberts	50	Thomas C. Wentz	50
Adam Knudler	50	Peter C. Evans	62 1/2
David Greger	50	Job, R. Matthew	50
John Zimmerman	50	Carand Booz	50

Page from the minute book of the Blue Bell company.

THE UPPER DUBLIN HORSE COMPANY FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND DETECTION OF THIEVES. This organization was founded in February 1828. Seventy-five of the annual meetings of this society were held in the old Three Tuns Inn, which was destroyed by fire in recent years.

THE WARREN VIGILANT SOCIETY OF HATBORO FOR THE ARREST AND CONVICTION OF HORSE THIEVES AND OTHER VILLAINS was in existence when John Quincy Adams came to the White House in 1824.

THE STEED FRIENDSHIP COMPANY. Three remarkable notices from the newspaper files of 1807 and 1808 tell the story in full of the beginning of this society. The first notice of September 2, 1807, reads:

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given the subscribers of the Horse Company about to be organized in the neighborhood of Hickorytown and its vicinity, that a meeting will be held at the house of Frederick Dull, innkeeper at Hickorytown aforesaid, on Saturday, the 12th of September next for the purpose of adopting the rules and regulations for the government of the said company, as well as to appoint their officers, etc. Punctual attendance is requested. Signed in behalf of the committee. August 31st, 1807: Andrew Norney; William Henderson.

This was followed on October 7, 1807, by:

STEED FRIENDSHIP COMPANY. At a meeting held, September 12th, at the house of Frederick Dull in Plymouth township, Montgomery county, for the purpose of organizing the "Steed Friendship Company," for the purpose of guarding more effectually against the felonious practice of horse stealing . . . When the meeting took into consideration the articles for the government of the said company; and having agreed to the same, they proceeded to the choice of officers, and appointed the following gentlemen tellers, viz.: Michael Wills, Wm. Hallman and John Davis, who after counting the ballots, reported, that William Henderson was unanimously elected president of the society. Andrew Norney was unanimously elected secretary, and Samuel Maulsby, treasurer.

On motion, resolved that a committee of seven be appointed to class the members agreeably to the rules of the company, when Isaiah Wells, Septimus Wood, David Lukens, Wm. Hallman, Andrew Norney and Wm. Henderson were accordingly appointed, and proceeded to class the members.

And then on January 6, 1808, this appeared:

NOTICE. The members composing the Friendship Steed Company, will meet on Tuesday, the 12th day of January next, at the house of Frederick Dull, in Hickorytown, at 10 o'clock A.M. Punctual attendance is requested—and those persons who wish to lay their horses under the protection of the company will bring them forward to have them branded. By order of the president. December 28th, 1807. Andrew Norney, Secretary.

THE CENTER SQUARE ASSOCIATION OF MONT-

Meeting notice from the press of the day.

The Lower-Merion Society
For the Detection and Prosecution of HORSE
THIEVES,

WILL hold a stated meeting at the *Buck Tavern*, on Saturday the 23d inst.—The roll will be called precisely at 4 o'clock, P. M.

EDWARD P. WALTER, Sec'ry.
 Feb. 7th, 1822.

GOMERY COUNTY FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND THE DETECTION OF THIEVES. The history of this company began on December 11, 1819, when a number of citizens met at the Waggon Inn, the public house of Samuel Wentz in Whitpain to form the organization. Another meeting was held on December 23, 1819, when each person present signed the constitution and the company was ready for action. The annual December meetings were to be held alternately in the townships of Gwynedd and Whitpain.

The decision to dissolve having been reached, the final meeting of this association was held January 4, 1900, at Eben Clark's Hotel in Gwynedd. At this last meeting the following resolution was adopted:

Whereas, the books of this Association have accumulated for the past eighty years, and as they are of no further value to the members, and it is desirable that the same be preserved, it is hereby resolved and the Secretary is authorized to tender them to the Historical Society of Montgomery County.

Today, more than fifty years later, the records of the Centre Square Horse Company are a highly valued collection in the archives of the Historical Society of Montgomery County at Norristown, and the means by which these notes are written.

THE JEFFERSON EXPRESS COMPANY FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND DETECTING THE THIEVES. The first meeting establishing this society was held December 1, 1821, at the public house of John Miller in Norriton Township. Other meetings were held at the house of George Weidner in Evansburg. And in 1828 when Daniel Morgan was president and A. Markely was secretary, the annual meeting was held at the Jefferson Inn (no longer standing) at Jeffersonville. A quaint old woodcut by Gilbert which appeared on the Rules and Regulations of this company is reproduced in this article.

The records of this association from 1837 to 1899 were presented in 1909 by D. Morgan Casselberry to the Historical Society of Montgomery County.

Secretary.

Eighty Dollars Reward.



WAS stolen from the stable of John Jones, in Horsham township, Montgomery county, on the night of the 25th instant, two HORSES, one a light gray, five years old, 15½ hands high, long body, Roman nose, short tail, which he carries high, splinted in the fore legs.—The other is a dark bay or brown, four years old, fifteen hands one inch high, plenty of bone, long tail, the off hind foot white, and some white on the off fore foot, good carriage, and both natural trotters—branded with letters M. C. under the mane.

Any person taking up the said horses and the thief shall receive the above reward, provided the thief is prosecuted to conviction, or twenty dollars for each horse, or the thief only, and reasonable charges paid by

JOHN JONES,
President of the Montgomery County Society for the recovery of Stolen Horses.

May 28th, 1822.

A typical newspaper advertisement by a Horse Company.

MOUNT JOY HORSE COMPANY.



LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE MOUNT JOY SOCIETY, FOR THE RECOVERY OF Stolen Horses and Detection of Thieves.

[The Society meets semi-annually, to-wit:—On the Second Thursday in May, at 4 o'clock, P. M., and on the Second Thursday in November, at 3 o'clock, P. M.]

Class No. 1.

Robert T. Potts,
William H. Holstein,
Roberts Moore,
Alex. H. Supplee,
David Adams,
William Carver,
Isaac W. Holstein,
Jacob Shainline,
B. D. Abraham,
William Hughes,
John J. Hughes,
Hiram Supplee,
Hugh DeHaven,
James Abraham.

OFFICERS.

PRESIDENT,
ALEX. H. SUPPLEE.

Secretary,
WM. H. HOLSTEIN.

Treasurer,
JOHN B. ADAMS.

HONORARY MEMBERS.

JOHN ELLIOT, WILLIAM HENRY,
GEO. W. SHAINLINE, JAMES McPHERSON.

Class No. 2.

Wm. M. Stephens,
John B. Adams,
Wm. B. Roberts,
Samuel Barry,
Mord. M. Stephens,
Isaac Moore,
Cadwallader Evans,
Jonathan Phillips,
John C. Elliot,
Samuel Tyson,
A. Jackson Anderson,
William West,
Nathan R. Hughes,
Henry Newberry.

Broadside showing membership and classes.

THE WHITPAIN AND WHITEMARSH ASSOCIATION FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND OTHER PROPERTY. This was a young society in December 1843, when it called for a meeting at the public house of William Michener, Broad Axe, Whitpain Township.

THE FARMERS' UNION HORSE COMPANY FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND DETECTING THE THIEVES, FAIRVIEW VILLAGE, began operating in 1833, being officially organized and chartered in 1834. One of the most unusual facts about the company is that it has had but five presidents during the 118 years of its existence. The protection radius of this company was four miles from their rendezvous, the Fairview Inn, in Worcester Township. Many of the earlier records of this society were lost when the hotel was destroyed by fire around 1915.

This company has a record of eight horses stolen, six of which were recovered. The last claim was paid to Henry Pawling of Worcester of \$41.00 in 1894. On this occasion the riding committee traveled sixty miles in pursuit, traced

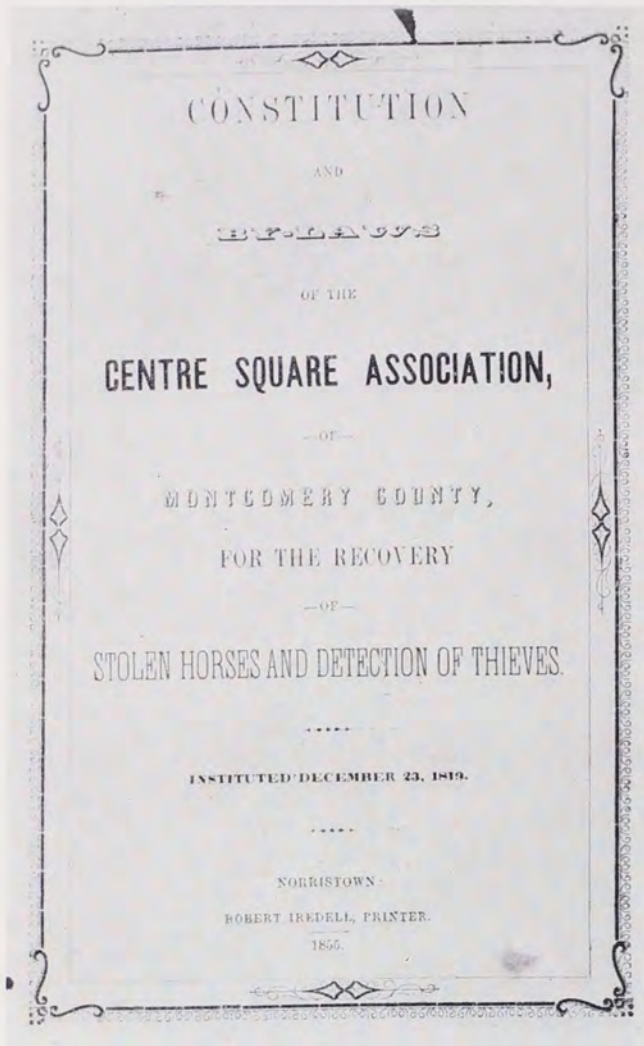
the thief to the Welsh Mountain area and there completely lost the trail.

The Farmers' Union has taken the lead in the survival of the horse company as a social organization. Under dynamic leadership beginning with 1940, an annual parade followed by a horse show is held on the first Saturday in June, which attracts huge crowds to Fairview Village.

THE SCHUYLKILL SOCIETY FOR THE DETECTION AND CONVICTION OF HORSE AND MULE THIEVES AND RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSE AND MULES. This society celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1902 by a supper at Belmont Mansion. The society was instituted on June 5, 1802 at the "Sign of the Black Horse," on the Old Lancaster Road in Lower Merion township.

There is no record of the earlier years of the society. The first minute book is lost; the second, dating from "6th of March, 1824" names Joseph George, president; James Bealer, treasurer; and Joseph Trasel, secretary.

*Title-page of a
Horse Company constitution.*



*Cover of menu of a Horse Company
still in existence.*

THE MINGO EXPRESS HORSE COMPANY FOR THE APPREHENSION AND THE RETURN OF STOLEN HORSES was organized in 1836 and chartered in 1872.

The first old minute book covering the years 1836 to 1859 was found recently in the attic of the old homestead in Perkiomen Township of John S. Hunsicker, former secretary. Among the roster of original members is the name George Hagey, one of the famous family of brother clock-makers, and Dr. Philip Wack, an eminent "doctor of Phys-ics" who once advertised a cure for cancer.

The territory covered by the Mingo Express Company as stated in the first minute book was "The bounds of this company shall be on the East side of the Schuylkill River, from the mouth of the Perkiomen Creek, northward, including the townships of Upper Providence and Limerick and their vicinities." Through the years meetings were held at the Fountain Inn, Trappe; Lamb Tavern, Trappe; Black Rock Tavern, Upper Providence; and Iron Bridge Hotel at Rahns in Perkiomen township.

President of the company since organization in 1836 have been John Patterson, 1836-1858; Abraham Hunsicker, Jr.,

1858-1876; D. S. Raudenbush, 1876-1928; Harry S. Shain-line, 1928-1952; J. Harold Brownback, 1952-1953; Henry D. Allebach, 1953-1954, and Fred W. Grimison, the present incumbent.

LIBERTY COMPANY. A letter from Matthew Richards, Jr., with the heading "Longswamp, June 19, 1801" and addressed to Daniel Yost, Esq., Marlborough, Pa., reads "Sir, I have received the money of five new members that wishes to be and have shear of Our Liberty Company, therefore I would request when and where the Society are to meet next time." Was this a horse company?

THE MOUNT JOY HORSE COMPANY OF UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP. As early as 1874, this one of Montgomery County's horse associations was able to mark its centennial. Its 100th anniversary was celebrated in November 1874, with a banquet at the Veranda House, Norristown.

When founded in 1774, a year before the American Revolution, the company took the name of Mount Joy from Mount Joy Manor, which William Penn had granted to his daughter, Letitia, and which comprised part of Upper Merion. This company was three years old when the

American Army encamped at Valley Forge, within its limits. Notwithstanding that it was customary for horses to disappear wherever military operations were in progress, it is said the Mount Joy lost only several horses that winter of 1776.

A notice of special interest concerning this society appeared in the county newspapers on October 30, 1816. The discrepancy in the two accounts recited here are not necessarily contradictory. The earlier date of 1774 given as the beginning of this company might refer to activity and the other referred to by George W. Holstein as 1798 probably refers to a charter. Following is the warning to horse thieves, as published by George W. Holstein, secretary of the Mount Joy Company:

HORSE THIEVES! Be cautious how you transgress within the lines of the above society, for this society has both the means and men to ferret you out, tho' you should be hidden in the most secret haunts the United States can produce. This society has been in existence since the year 1798, and in the whole of that time has had but one horse stolen within its bounds, and on that occasion, the class whose turn it was then to go with a few hours' notice, were flying in all directions, and the thief being so closely pursued, he abandoned his prize before he reached the Delaware, and he fled to the mountain for safety. Of all thieves, horse and cattle thieves are the most difficult to guard against. It certainly would be very laudable in all neighborhoods to form societies of this kind, so that their nests might be broken up, and the fugitives may be confined in our prisons, or extirpated from our shores.

THE SKIPPACK SOCIETY FOR THE DETECTION OF HORSE THIEVES. The Minute Book of this organization is in the Schwenkfelder Memorial Library at Pennsburg, and from this we learn that "Agreeable to public notice given, a respectable number of Citizens of the Vicinity of Skippack convened at the house of John Snyder, Innkeeper, in Lower Salford Township, in the county of Montgomery on the 6th day of May, 1820, for the purpose of associating into a company for the detection of horse thieves."

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOCIETY FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND BRINGING THIEVES TO JUSTICE was in operation prior to 1805. This information is based on notices that appeared in the *Norristown Weekly Register*. This company offered eighty dollars reward for the conviction of a horse thief, in May of the year 1822. The advertisement is reproduced in this article.

THE BLUE BELL HORSE COMPANY FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND THE DETECTION OF THIEVES was called together for the first time at the public house of Jacob Stauffer, at Blue Bell, November 24, 1841. A charter was secured in 1869. The constitution provides that the annual meeting of the society shall be held at the public houses along the Skippack turnpike, either at Blue Bell or Centre Square. This is an active social organization with an annual meeting and dinner. In December 1941 a very fine historical sketch was compiled by one of its members, Colonel George S. Davis. The original records of this group are held intact.

LOWER PROVIDENCE UNION EXPRESS COMPANY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY. Lower Providence also had its horse company, which, however, was not organized until 1858. In 1912, with only eighteen members remaining, it was decided to disband. The remarkable

thing in the history of this company is that it had only one president during the entire fifty-four years of its existence—Samuel F. Jarrett, of Jeffersonville.

THE LIMERICK UNION HORSE COMPANY. It is not exactly known when this company was organized. Of a certainty it was prior to the 1860's. The only evidence on hand of the one-time existence of this association is a blank notice of meeting found in the pages of the family Bible by Garrett A. Brownback of Linfield.

THE UNION SOCIETY OF FLOURTOWN FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND DETECTION OF HORSE THIEVES gives public notice of an annual meeting to be held at the house of Jacob Keisel, in Flourtown, on the 8th of February, 1830. It is signed by John Katz as secretary. This company held meetings in February and August of each year. It has not been definitely established when this company first met, but it is a conjecture that the societies carrying the word "Union" in their titles were formed shortly after 1822 when the movement of united companies got underway.

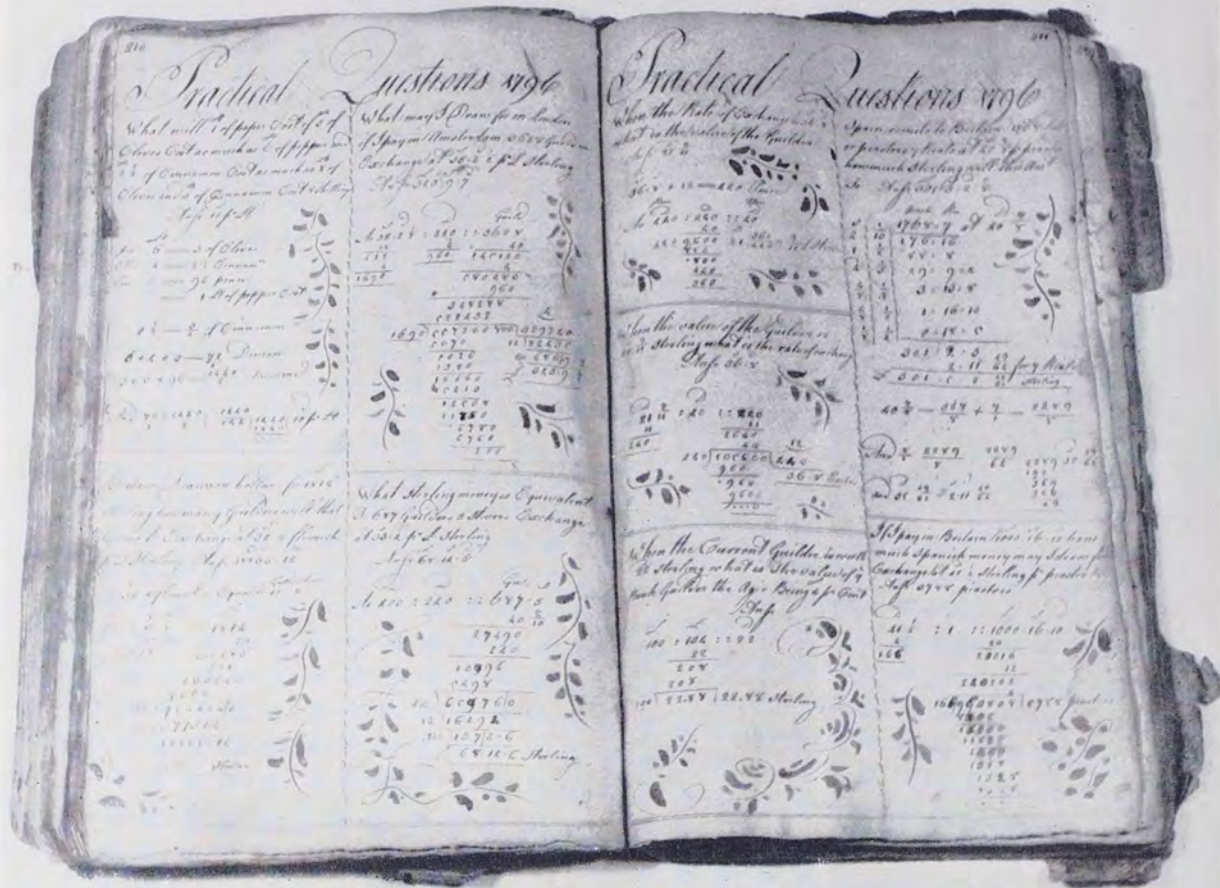
THE GOSCHENHOPPEN HORSE COMPANY FOR THE CAPTURE OF HORSE THIEVES AND RECOVERY OF STOLEN PROPERTY. It cannot be exactly said when this company was first organized. All evidence indicates that it was in existence at least from 1817. The first written records, however, was in the adoption of the constitution and by-laws on February 28, 1835. This constitution stated that the house of Ely Keyser, Marlborough Township, was to be the rendezvous and that all members shall live seven miles from that point.

THE MONTGOMERY UNION HORSE COMPANY FOR THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN HORSES AND OTHER PROPERTY AND DETECTION OF THIEVES began its activities in 1827. In August and December 1830 meetings were held at A. Meyer's, Montgomery Square, and at Henry Slight's, Montgomeryville. R. M. Donaldson was secretary at the time. In December, 1843, a meeting was held at Scarlet's Tavern at Spring House with S. Calwader, secretary. The greatest note of length that can be written of this society at this time, is its name.

THE WILLIAM PENN HORSE COMPANY held its annual meeting at the public house of George Boyer, Norriton Township, December 1, 1851. The secretary was William Wills. Unfortunately nothing more has come to hand about this company. Probably not an early one.

THE LOWER MERION SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF STOLEN HORSES AND THE DETECTION OF HORSE THIEVES was in existence from January 24, 1818, on which date Joseph Price wrote in his diary ". . . wind east, snowed and sleeted, covering the ground, misting and freezing all day . . . afternoon at Buck forming horse company for apprehending horse thieves. Nineteen men met and appointed a committee of seven to draw up the Rules . . .". Less than two weeks later, on February 7, 1818, is an additional entry, ". . . to home and then up to Buck to meet Horse Company . . . we paid 100 cents entrance and 256 cents expenses . . .".

A notice appears for May 21, 1834, in which this society titles itself "The Lower Merion and Haverford Society for the Detection and Prosecution of Horse Thieves and the Recovery of Stolen Horses," and calls for a meeting at the "Buck" with Joseph Amies, of the papermaking Amies, signing as secretary.



1. Hand-copied arithmetic book of Jacob Ziegler, Lancaster. Each of the 382 pages (8 by 12³/₄ inches) is embellished with colored fraktur devices.

Books NOT for Burning

By EARL F. ROBACKER

No intelligent collector of antiques needs to be told to read as widely as possible in the field of his interest before he achieves the stage of reaching for his checkbook. Without a sound background of information gleaned from trusted friends, from close observation, and from the authoritative written word he could soon become the prey of sharpers and the mockery of his acquaintances.

Not every collector, however, realizes that in books as collectibles in themselves and not as sources of information only there are at least a dozen different fields in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country alone. Some of these fields are for the linguist, the moneyed individual, and the expert; others are wide open to the average person who has enough astuteness to secure and preserve something of moderate present cost but great future importance. Some books are known to the scholars, but so rare that they may be run down only after years of patient sleuthing; others, not now recognized as important and therefore given little or no publicity, are

carried from old attics and burned, or sold for pennies at country auctions.

For the collector of fraktur manuscripts there are several closely allied fields in books. At the moment, there are still *Taufscheine*, *Vorschriften*, and other important and colorful pieces to be had—at increasingly high prices, of course, as they become more and more scarce. Before long, however, such pieces will change hands only when a collection is broken up because of death or other extreme circumstances, and the new collector will be denied possession. The admirer of early documents would do well to start now to look for the hand-decorated account books, handwritten scrapbooks, ledgers, textbooks, and private logs or diaries to which few persons are paying attention. Quantity consignments of old books often go to junk dealers because their owners do not know what else to do with them—but there are still more packed away, sometimes forgotten and generally unwanted, in the attics of old homesteads. Among



2. A 1749 edition of the Martyr's Mirror, published at Ephrata, Pa., by Cloister brethren. The collapsible walnut stands on which it rests, ingeniously contrived from a single slab of wood, is said to have been made at the Cloister also.

Illustrations from the Robacker Collection

Photos by Guy Newton

such collections there may be no single treasure—or there may be a dozen, well worth searching for. Any book with hand-done art work, no matter how crude it may appear to the uninitiated, or any book with genealogical data, fragmentary though it may appear to be, should be preserved.

Manuscript books like the one in Illustration 1 rank high on the list of desirables. It is assumed as reasonable that in the Eighteenth Century, when books were more costly and less commonly owned than they are now, and when penmanship was regarded as an art, there must have been many such volumes. Few are known still to be in existence—and yet the one shown here was acquired reasonably at a city antiques show within the past two years.

Manuscript poems and other literary efforts which never reached the point of publication not only throw light on the thought and mores of earlier times but also make an interesting collection, especially when they were copied out on

the blank pages of volumes bound expressly for the purpose. The poems of Eli Keller, at Muhlenberg College, are preserved in this way.

Imprints from early presses have a fascination for some collectors, entirely apart from their content. Fine bindings, rarity, historical association, family tradition—all these help to make books "wanted," and any one factor may serve as the starting point for a valuable collection. Highly desired are works from the press of the Seventh Day Baptists at the Ephrata Cloister. The *Martyrs' Mirror* (Illustration 2), the German title of which is *Des Blutigen Schau-Platzes oder Martyrer Spiegels der Tauffs Gesinnten oder Wehrlosen Christen*, is an account of the sufferings of the early Christian martyrs and was translated from the original Dutch into German at the Cloister. Limited in popular reading appeal, it offers a further handicap in its archaic German set in Gothic type—but it is one of the world's most beautiful books and one of the most sought for among the dozen or more titles published at the Ephrata press. Like most books of its size (8½ by 14 inches) it is bound in leather over board covers, with heavy leather clasps and metal bosses.

Similar in binding and sometimes comparable in beauty are many early family Bibles like the one shown in Illustration 3. While American antiques dating from the 1600's are all but non-existent as far as the average collector is



3. Bible of the Fenner family at Sciota, Pa., printed in Switzerland in 1798. The title page is in red and black.



4. Above: Three New Testaments bound in leather. Below: The personal book of religious instruction of Abraham Newcomer, Northampton County, printed in Germantown by Michael Billmeyer in 1790.





5. Two songbooks or hymnals, both of which also contain liturgical material: Martin Luther's celebrated 1784 Marburg edition, and an Evangelical work printed in New York.



6. Hand-written songbook (16 pages) done by or for Maria Joder (Yoder), according to the fraktur title page. Undated.

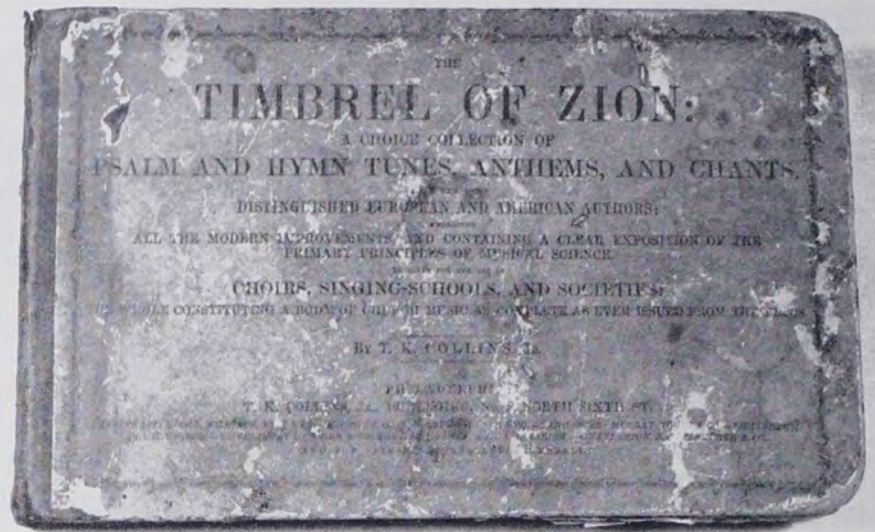
concerned, Bibles from the same period and even earlier—European in origin, of course—are by no means uncommon. Their massive size and sturdy bindings have contributed to their longevity, but of greater significance seems to be the fact that because of family sentiment comparatively few Bibles have ever been destroyed. There is a popular misconception that old Bibles, especially when printed in a language other than English, are monetarily very valuable; actually, their value is intrinsic rather than extrinsic in all but a very few cases.

Less ponderous but often equally interesting are copies of the new Testament—leather-bound but not usually over boards. Fly leaves of Testaments were often decorated with fraktur artistry. Similarly decorated were devotional books of various kinds; these have not infrequently been overlooked in the past by collectors. The open copy in Illustration 4 is such a book—a statement of articles of belief, followed by questions and answers intended for the

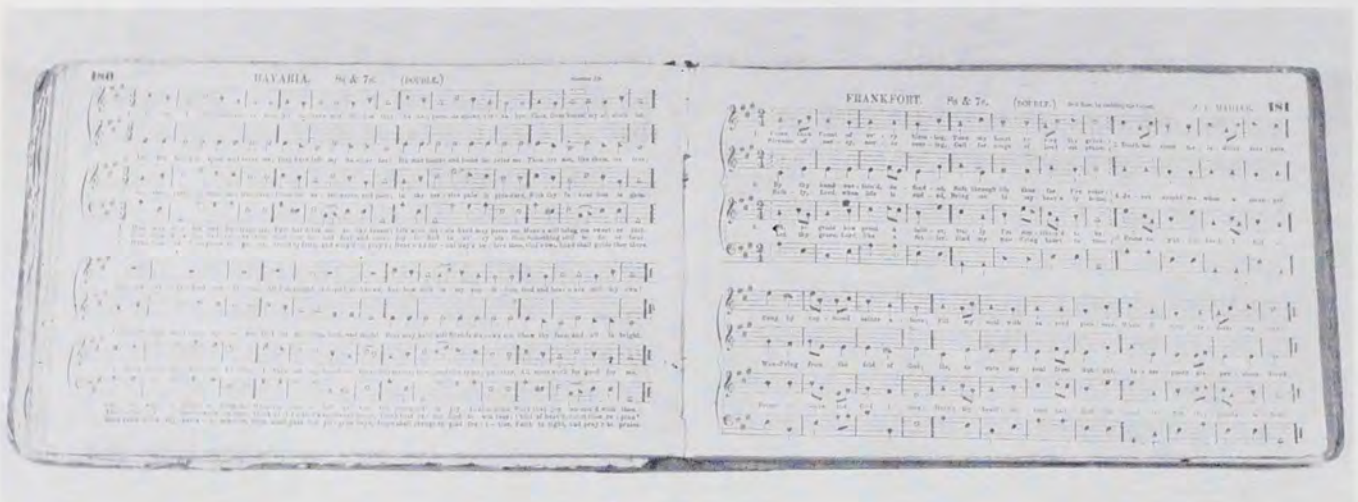
instruction of youth. In this case it was for youth of the Mennonite faith—young people “Unter dem Namen der Mennonisten,” as the book has it.

Shown in Illustration 5 are two books similar in nature, but separated by a figure of 77 years—and to the collector by as many dollars! The Marburg *Gesang-Buch* of Martin Luther (1784), illustrated with woodcuts and bound in tooled white leather with red and green decoration, is a great rarity; the *Gesangbuch zum Gebrauch der Evangelischen Brüdergemein* printed in New York in 1861 and bound severely in black probably has a hundred counterparts throughout the country. An interesting feature of the Marburg book, as of many early German imprints, is that the words GOTT and JESU are consistently printed with two capital letters instead of one. Only the words of the songs are printed; there is no musical notation.

Once not uncommon but now rarely found are hand-written songbooks of the kind pictured in Illustration 6.



7. A "shape-note" hymnal with a few familiar and many long-forgotten tunes, published in Philadelphia in 1857.



The system of musical notation is now obsolete and the fine German script is hard to read, but the beauty of the workmanship is unquestionable. Tiny books like these are easily overlooked in the clutter of papers and memorabilia which must be dealt with in the settling of family estates; yet the loss of even one is a loss to all folk art, the more so when, as in the present instance, the fly leaf has been done in fraktur.

Another kind of songbook, or hymnal, to be explicit, is shown in Illustration 7. This is the "shape-note" type of work, in which each step on the musical scale is represented by a note of a different shape, whatever the key signature. Because of the impression of sharp angularity conveyed by the page as a whole, the term "buckwheat" notes was once commonly used as a descriptive term. The songs are arranged for part singing; the accompanist, if any, must improvise as he goes along, picking up the melody from the third of the four staves.

Shape-note books were printed in great quantity and wide variety as early as the 1840's. Some are still printed and used in the South, for revivals, camp meetings, and other occasions, but few singers or musicians elsewhere are familiar with them. Shape-note books were ordinarily non-denominational and can not be considered characteristically Pennsylvania Dutch. However, *The Timbrel of Zion's Harp*, and *The Christian Minstrel* were in common use in

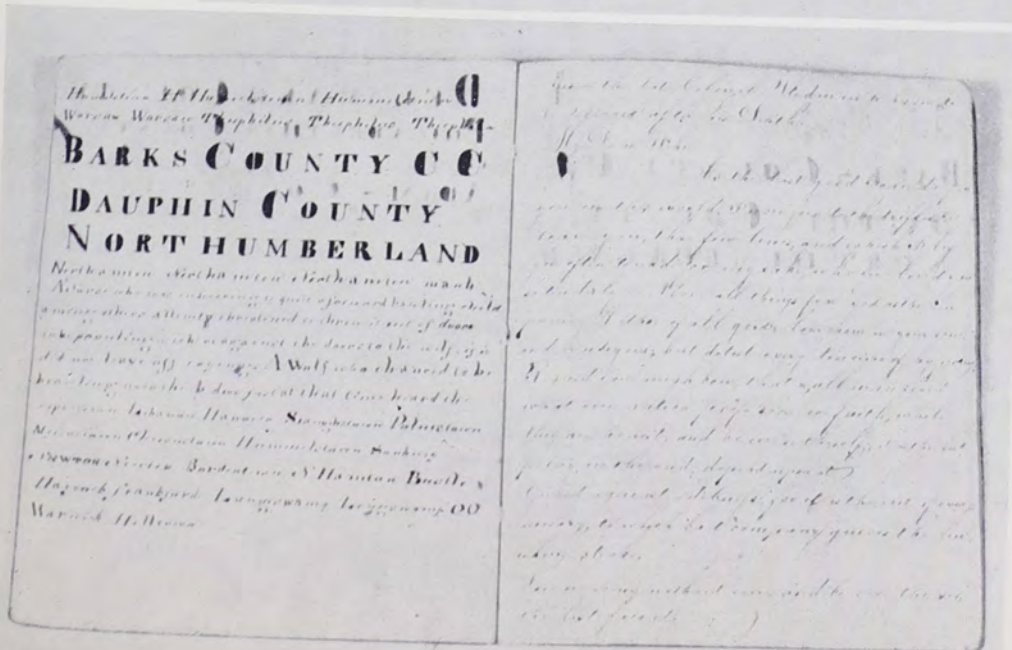
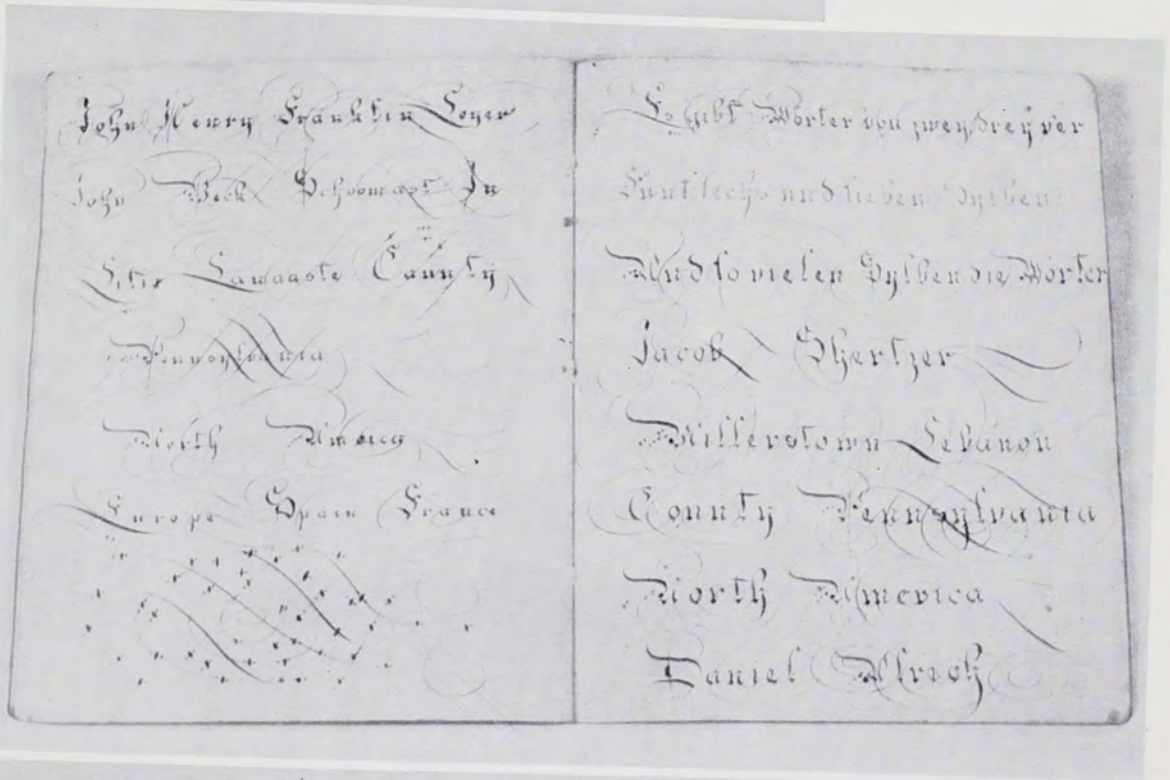
the Dutch Country. Such books offer the collector or the would-be collector a unique opportunity, for as yet there is little popular demand for them.

A-B-C books have long been sought out by bibliophiles in English-speaking America, but German-language imprints have been too long neglected. Up to 1834, most school instruction in the Dutch Country was in German, oftener than not under the wing of the Church. The religious note set by the celebrated *New England Primer* in 1650 ("A: In Adam's fall/We sinned all") is matched in tone by Dutch Country primers in many cases. Some, however, are on the secular side—and it may sound blasphemous to suggest that they are often the more interesting! When English became the official language of instruction in 1834 in public schools, instruction in German often continued in Sunday School. The *A-B-C Buch für Sonntags-Schulen* shown in Illustration 8 contains, in the pages following the illustrated alphabet, simple poems and stories—accounts of David, Jonah, and the Tower of Babel, among others. Outranking many such imprints in present popularity are those from the press of Michael Billmeyer, perhaps because his "D for Distelfink" gives printed status to the spoken word used in the Dutch Country for the thistle finch, or wild canary.

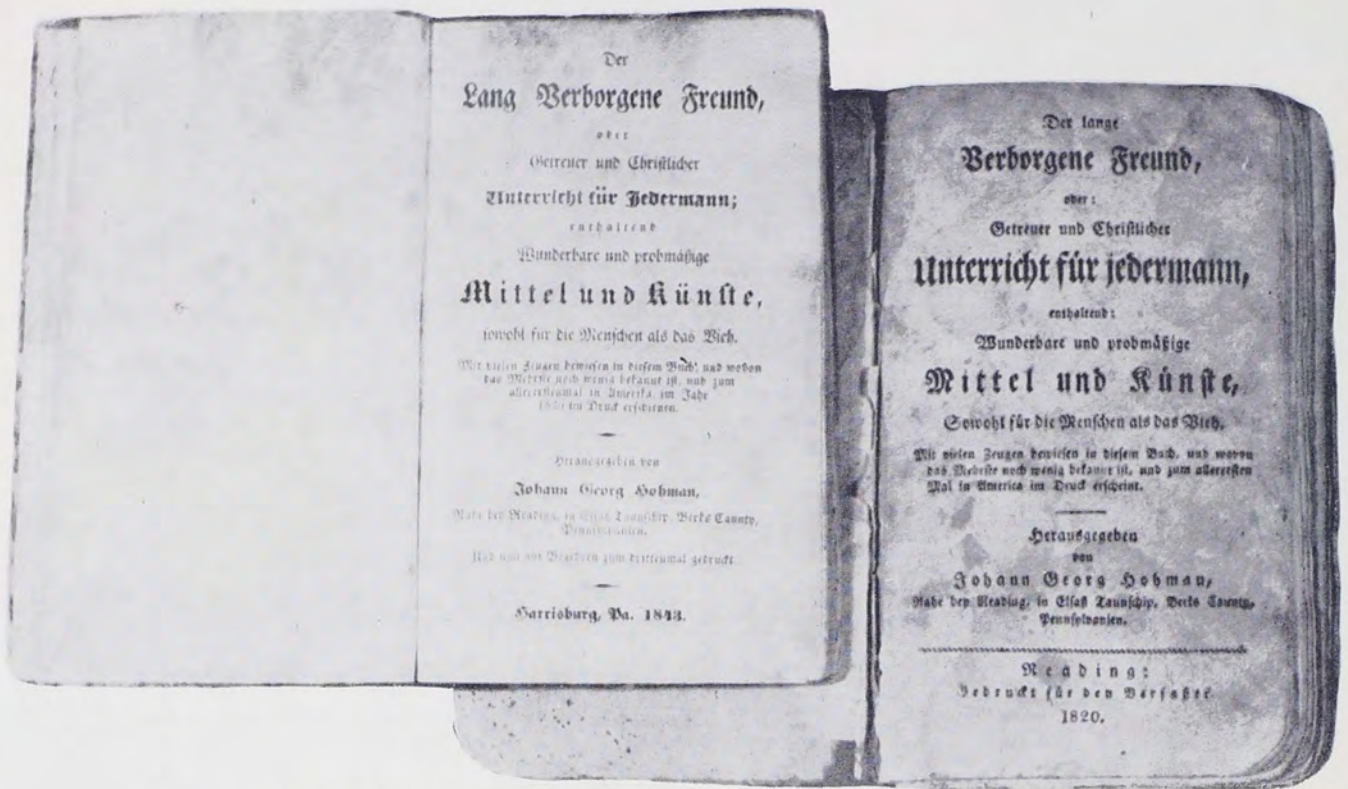
Fine handwriting was an art which could be mastered by only a few in times gone by, but those who did master it often grew spectacularly adept. The deciding factor in the



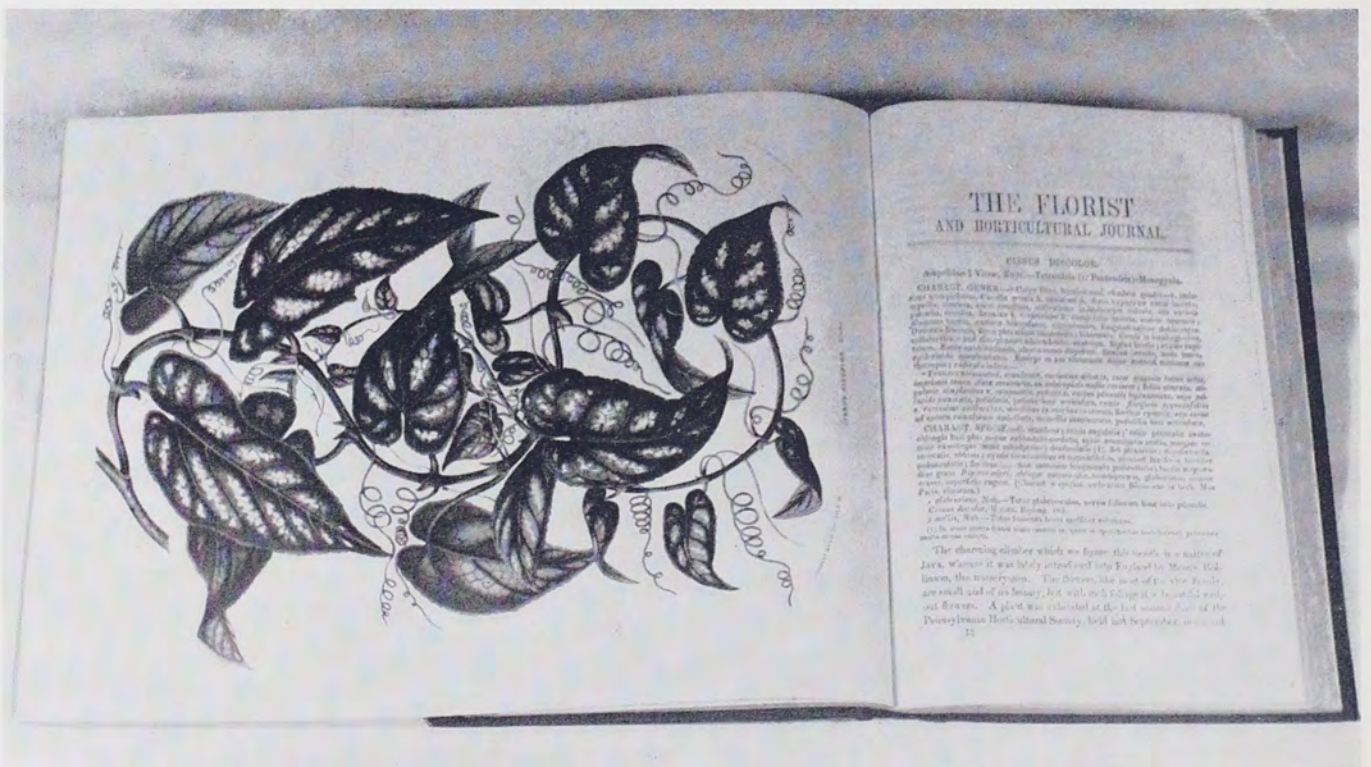
8. Primer or "A-B-C" book used in German-language Sunday School instruction, printed in Philadelphia for the Evangelical Church in 1870.



9. Specimen pages in a copybook "Given to Robert Steinmetz by Grandfather." The inside cover carries the notation "February, 1827, Litz (sic), Lancaster County."



10. Two editions of John Hohman's "hex" or "powwow" book, one printed at Reading in 1820, the other at Harrisburg in 1843.



11. A bound volume of the issues of "The Florist" for 1854. Edited by H. C. Hanson, Philadelphia, the pamphlets were first issued separately. The hand-colored print, shown extended here, is one of a number which fold into the volume when it is closed.



12. Left: A typical hand-colored illustration in *Leaf and Flower Pictures*, a gift to "Susan and Jeanie Croasdale, Philad., 10 mo., 1858." The Croasdales were a prominent Quaker family, one branch of which lived near Stroudsburg, Pa. Right: A typical floral album, dated 1846, with hand-colored illustrations for a collection of verses.

choice of a schoolmaster was frequently his calligraphic skill, and an important measure of his success was his ability to teach children the art. Copybooks, now almost a thing of the past, were used to record the best efforts of their owners, and prime examples are in demand by collectors today. A complete copybook would utilize all the letters of the alphabet, in upper and lower case, in print and in script, plain and with flourishes. Sometimes the flourishes became so interesting—with their renditions of birds, animals, and human figures—that later generations have removed pages from the books and framed them. Copybooks are discovered more often in English than in German, but there is strong kinship between the *Vorschriften* of the fraktur writers and the copy set by the schoolmaster in English-speaking schools.

The capstone in any collection of books from Dutch Pennsylvania is now and probably always will be a "pow-wow" book—the little *Long-Lost Friend* of Johann Georg Hohman ("Nahe bey Reading, in Elsass Taunschip, Berks County"). Probably only the Bible has a greater influence on any large, homogeneous section of the citizenry in this country, and certainly no other book has been so trusted, so revered—and so shunned and so feared.

The book itself is innocent enough; it is a matter-of-fact compilation of remedies, cures, and naive charms, few of them original with Hohman, and most of them in serious religious vein. In the hands of a "braucher," or faith-healer, however, it came to be endowed with all manner of supernatural attributes, perhaps because of ignorance or superstition, but perhaps also because there were notable instances of healing—to say nothing of an occasional misapplication of the principles of the book. Even today there is a little-understood but deep-seated half-belief in magic among many persons, and in a less enlightened age in Pennsylvania, a territory which never resorted to witch-burning, this feeling seems to have centered powerfully about the

Long-Lost Friend. Small wonder, then, that today there are those who refuse to touch the book or have it under their roof; those who believe that crows will flock to the house which conceals a copy; and that—just possibly—among the crows there will be one which is an evil spirit. Today's collector will hardly be deterred in his quest by fear of a visitation of crows; he is more likely to be deterred by the fact that it is all but impossible to buy the book, since few owners will admit to possessing one.

The *Long-Lost Friend* was printed at many times and in many places, beginning with the Reading edition of 1820. Dates go to the 1870's. Collectors seem to prefer imprints from Reading, Harrisburg, or Kutztown.

In completely different vein is another type of publication—not peculiarly Pennsylvania Dutch but commonly found in the Dutch Country. Printed in English, these works are the horticultural journals, books, pamphlets, and leaflets which feature hand-colored art work (Illustrations 11 and 12). The books were printed with fine line-cut illustrations, but before publication the cuts were filled in by hand, much as were the Currier and Ives and other prints intended for framing. Especially well known was "The Florist," published in the 1850's but there is a variety of choice for those who will take the time to search for such publications in miscellaneous collections of old books. It might be noted that illustrations from "The Florist" are sometimes abstracted, framed, and sold as floral prints.

Flora's Album, shown in Illustration 12, is as interesting in content as in its handwork. The compiler went to great pains to match illustration and poetry. For an example: The print illustrating the mourning geranium faces a page with Eliza Cook's "Despondency," which begins

He led her to the altar

But the bride was not his chosen—

and continues in a vein melancholy enough to make any geranium weep.



13. Works by two well-known Pennsylvania Dutch dialect writers. Copies of Penn'a-German Poems are bound in blue gingham, a cloth fondly associated by the author with his little daughter.

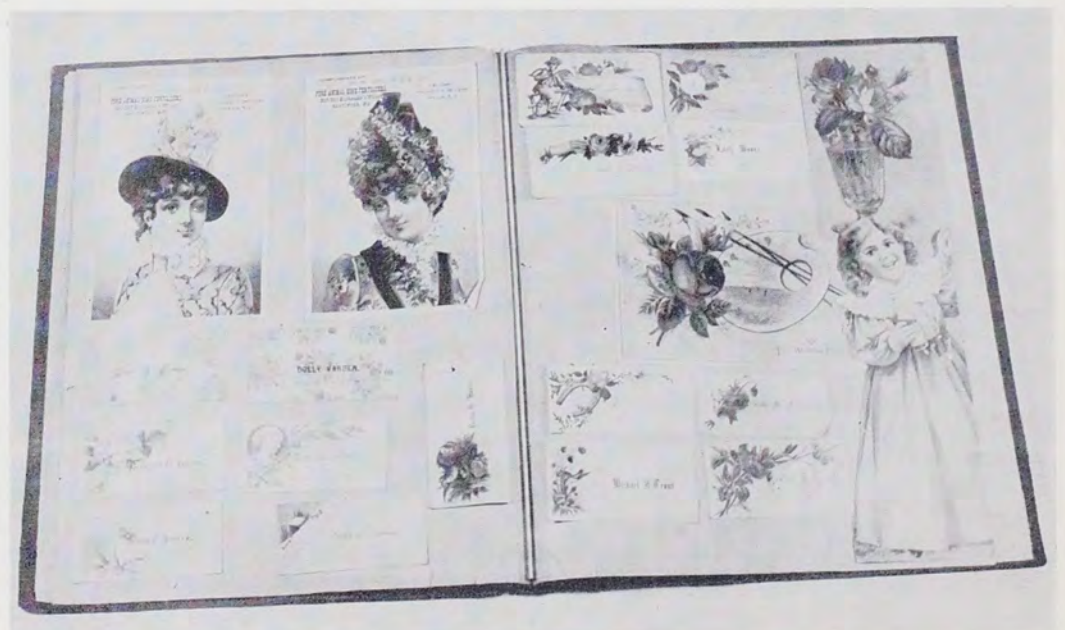
Perhaps only the language specialist is interested in collecting the works of the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect writers—those gifted humorists, poets, and newspaper columnists in whose ranks the late William S. Troxell shone so brilliantly. The original articles were first published in newspapers; collections appeared after the author had become popular. Editions were almost always limited, and copies are becoming increasingly scarce as interest in Dutchiana has grown. Practically the only source of supply seems to be the second-hand book dealer.

Seemingly almost too recent to have achieved the status of a collectible is the picture scrapbook of our parents' or grandparents' day—that colorful repository for lacy valentines, lithographed and embossed pictures of all kinds, and especially the ornate friendship cards on which a floral creation could be lifted up to reveal the name printed beneath. Scrapbook-making became a major fad in the

1880's and 1890's, and it would seem that every well brought up young lady had at least one such volume. When lithographs and embossed cards were lacking, color plates from seed catalogues were pressed into service, and it must be observed that representations of asters, nasturtiums, or pansies in Victorian times were at least as lushly magnificent as they are today.

All these books, and others like them which space will not permit even to list, are important as records of the past—to new generations of students, to historians, to artists, to genealogists, to all those who have a feeling of respect for or interest in their American heritage. Readers in possession of such books who may not be personally interested in establishing a collection would perform an important service by seeing that the volumes reach a library like that of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center, where they can be made available for study and research.

14. Pages in a Victorian scrapbook. Such books are usually a colorful collection of lithographs, greeting cards, calling cards, advertising cards—and illustrations from seed catalogues.



Classified Advertisements

The charge for classified advertising is 20 cents a word, payable in advance. Deadlines are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1. When you are figuring the number of words be sure to include name and address. For example: J. H. Snyder is three words.

Books Wanted

Books, broadsides etc. printed by Peters in Harrisburg, 1827-1847, and by Moser and Peters in Carlisle in the 1820's. Kirke Bryan, 534 Swede Street, Norristown, Pa.

Color Slides

Amish and Mennonites, Beautiful Colorslides. Twenty titles available. 3 for \$1.00, complete set \$6.00 postpaid. Free catalog. STEL-MAR, Box 23D, Mount Joy, Pa.

OLD ORDER AMISH in all phases of their picturesque life on bright color slides by professional photographers living among them. Catalog, sample slide (30c). Photo Arts, 962 Salisbury, Lancaster, Pa.

Genealogical Queries

DITZLER—Melchior and Anthony, brothers, settled Greble-Rehrersburg area prior to 1750. Known sons Peter, Simon, Michael. Daughters married Fieser, Dollinger, Schaefer, Gerhart, Houtz, Noll. Desire information about descendants. Ralph P. Tittsler, 503 New York Avenue, Takoma Park 12, Md.

SNAVELY: I am attempting to list the various immigrants to Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century by the surname Snavely

and to list the first generations of their descendants. Invite correspondence with anyone who can help. Frederick S. Weiser, P. O. Box 121, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

WARLICK—Daniel Warlick, wife Maria Barbara Schindel of Pennsylvania went to North Carolina, about 1750. Want names of parents, birth, death, where they lived, with ancestry to the emigrant and time of entry. Lucie Warlick Word, 125 Rumson Road N. E., Atlanta 5, Georgia.

Genealogical Research

Buy and sell genealogies. Also do genealogical research. Specialties—Mennonites, Amish and German families. Delbert Gratz, Ph.D., Bluffton, Ohio.

I will do research in Adams County families on an hourly basis or in exchange for research I desire to have done in other areas. Contact Frederick S. Weiser, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa.

Magazines Wanted

Wanted to complete a file of the Pennsylvania Dutchman: vol. 2, nos. 1 and 21; vol. 3, no. 10; vol. 4, no. 4. Evelyn A. Benson, 127 E. Orange St., Lancaster, Pa.

Pamphlets for Sale

In addition to the literature advertised on the front inside cover, the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center, Inc., Bethel, Pennsylvania, has the following publications for sale:

Songs Along the Mahantongo by Walter E. Boyer, Albert F. Buffington, and Don Yoder. 231-page anthology of Pennsylvania Dutch folksongs. \$3.75.

Conestoga Wagon Lore by H. C. Frey. \$50.

Traditional Rhymes and Jingles by Alfred L. Shoemaker. \$50.

Facsimile reprint of Edward H. Rauch's 1883 Rip Van Winkle. \$1.00 (This is in dialect.)

3 Myths about the Pennsylvania Dutch Country by Alfred L. Shoemaker. \$25.

Check List of Pennsylvania Dutch Printed Tauscheins by Alfred L. Shoemaker. \$1.00. (Well illustrated.)

Facsimile reprint of Edward H. Rauch's 1873 The Pennsylvania Dutchman, Vol. 1, Nos. 1, 2, and 3. \$3.00. Complete set.

Facsimile reprint of Edward H. Rauch's 1868 De Campain Breefa. \$1.00. (This is in dialect.)

Schnitzelbank Chart. \$50.



NINTH ANNUAL

Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival

JULY 2-3-4-5-6, 1958

Fairgrounds, Kutztown, Pennsylvania

Route 222, between Allentown and Reading

Sponsored by The Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center

Join the
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June 18 — August 9, 1958

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