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6-30-1939

Folktale About Rising Bread, June 30, 1939

Alfred L. Shoemaker

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Chris. Heige, Informant Irwin J. Seffler

6/30/39

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The possession of apparently supernatural powers, by some of the old Pa. Germans, seems almost uncanny. Illustrating this point is the following: A friend of my informant's, a typical old Pennsylvania German was engaged in the baking business, and had phenomenal success in his finished products, when he did it himself, or when he simply supervised its doing. Occasions were not infrequent, when his attention was required outside and away from the bake-shop, and at these times the entire shop's procedure would necessarily fall to his assistants. It is related, that on numerous occasions, these assistants would set a batch of dough, in exactly the same manner as prescribed and used by the old baker himself, but with widely different results. The dough often refused to even do so much as raise one iota, no matter what they tried. The boss, on returning, would curse and fume at them, then lapse into a quiet mood, and just look at the previously inert mass, and lo and behold, the dough would actually start to raise before their very eyes, and continue to the necessary stage, when it was panned and baked to the customary perfection. It is thought the idea may have been the boss's throughout, to keep

his help from getting the idea that they were
getting good in their craft, and start kicking
for a raise in wages.