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Spring
PENNSYLVANIA
FOLKLIFE
 1997



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SPECIAL FESTIVAL ISSUE
48 YEARS OF FOLKLIFE

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—*Information from The Dutchman, Vol. 6, No. 1 (June, 1954) and Vol. 8, No. 1 (Summer, 1956); and Pennsylvania Folklife, Vol. 11 (special Folk Festival issue, 1960); and Vol. 33, No. 3 (Spring, 1984)*

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COVER:

Fractur from the Collection of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society, Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pa. As Frances Lichten notes here-in, fractur drawing "is the outstanding contribution of the Pennsylvania Dutch to the folk art of this country." It is, however, only one of their many contributions to the larger society, and in the late 1940s, three men associated with Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster began to collect and preserve documents, artifacts, and records of oral history pertaining to this unique minority.

In 1949 the three — Alfred L. Shoemaker, Don Yoder, and J. William Frey — began a weekly newspaper, the Pennsylvania Dutchman, in order to share their findings. In 1950 they founded the Kutztown Folk Festival so they could show how the Pennsylvania Dutch lived. The newspaper evolved into a quarterly magazine first called the Dutchman and later, Pennsylvania Folklife to reflect a broader outlook. But the emphasis has always been on the Pennsylvania Dutch, and this special issue is meant to pay tribute to all of those who, over the past forty-eight years, have helped to tell their story.

TWO WORLDS IN THE DUTCH COUNTRY

by Don Yoder



The Plain Dutchman prefers to live apart—in the world yet not of it.



The Dutchman who belongs to a Lutheran, Reformed, or other such church makes no attempt to reject “worldly” ways.

Like our forefathers, the Amish create their own rural amusements. Traditional American play party games (actually folk dances) are still very much alive at Amish "Singings."



A group of Gay Dutch hoedowners at the Kutztown Folk Festival.



Two worlds there are in the Dutch Country; two completely different ways of life. One might say that the Dutch Country has a double soul, a split soul, had it ever been united. But it has not. Pennsylvania has been characterized from the very beginning of its history from what Professor Crane Brinton in *The Shaping of the Modern Mind* calls the "multanimity" of Western Civilization.

The main cleavage has been along religious lines. The division has been between "Gay Dutch" and "Plain Dutch." The Gay Dutch (Lutherans, Reformed, and others like them) were those who lived in what we call, religiously speaking, the "world," and made no attempt to reject its total cultural pattern. The Plain Dutch (Mennonites, Amish, Brethren, and related sectarian groups) were those who preferred to live apart, in the world and yet not of it. The term "gay" in reference to the world's people in Pennsyl-

vania Dutch culture comes from the Plain People themselves, among whom "going gay" means becoming worldly: i.e., leaving the plain group. By the same token, "turning plain" means joining the church, adopting the full adult requirements for plain dress. (This use of the terms "gay" and "plain" originated among the Quakers, although in the 18th century the curious term "Wet Quaker" was synonymous with the term "Gay Quaker.")

The Gay Dutch have always been the majority, the Plain Dutch the minority. The Gay Dutch set the patterns of what we know generally as "Pennsylvania Dutch culture." The Plain Dutch created a Plain world of their own, which through the disappearance of the general Dutch culture has become the symbol of everything Dutch. We used to be the Quaker State. We are still, to the outside world, the "Plain State," and the Amishman has become our symbol.



Barefoot Amish boys with lunch kettles on the way home from school.

WHAT IS "PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH"?

The basic question to the outsider is, "Who are the 'Pennsylvania Dutch?'" First of all, they are not Holland-Dutch and they have no connection with Holland or Holland-Dutch culture. They are the descendants of the 18th-century German and Swiss wave of migration across the Atlantic, with a few German dialect-speaking Alsatians and Lorrainers in the bargain. In most cases the ancestors of the present Dutch were prerevolutionary Americans, colonial German dialect-speaking emigrants.

After two hundred years in America there can be no question of "pure" Dutch strains. Inter-marriage with the Quaker, the Scotch-Irish, and other strains began in the colonial period, and in areas where the German dialect known as "Pennsylvania Dutch" predominated—as for instance the Eisenhower Country of Lykens Valley in Dauphin County—the Scotch-Irish and English minority was absorbed into the Dutch majority and adopted the



This boy's forebears were most likely part of the wave of German and Swiss migration to Pennsylvania in the 18th century. Despite the sign, the ancestry of the kittens is probably less certain.

Dutch tongue. Hence in that valley, northward of Harrisburg, we have in 1960 Dutch-speaking families called Dunleavy (Scotch-Irish name), Davis (Welsh name), and Buffington (English Quaker name), all as "Dutch as sauerkraut"—an expression which in the Dutch Country is an affectionate rather than a derogatory one—but with family names and family heritages that go back to the British Isles.

Radically more important than "blood" in a definition of Dutchness is culture. "Pennsylvania Dutch" is not a blood-based, D.A.R.-type, restricted-membership organization. "Pennsylvania Dutch" is (or better, was) a culture, a curious mixture of Continental and British Isles folkways that was created here in the Dutch Country and is to some extent still preserved in the cultural aspic of the dialect.

Actually the elements of the culture which we today call "Pennsylvania Dutch" are very much of a mixture. Pennsylvania was never a "Little Germany" where pipe-smoking and beer-drinking peasants transplanted their entire



Public sales are one of the very few occasions when Plain and Gay Dutch mingle.

homeland way of life. There was always, from the very beginning, the interplay of culture with the Scotch-Irish and Quaker neighbors, an interplay which spread both ways. The typical "Pennsylvania barn"—the Swiss or bank barn—that two-story affair with stables on the ground floor and the threshing floors and mows approached from a drive-in entrance from a higher level—is a Continental adaptation. The Quakers and Scotch-Irish borrowed this barn pattern, and Pennsylvanians spread it as far west as Iowa. On the other hand, the typical Pennsylvania farmhouse was English Georgian in pattern—and the Dutchman borrowed it from his English-speaking neighbors. It was an even trade.

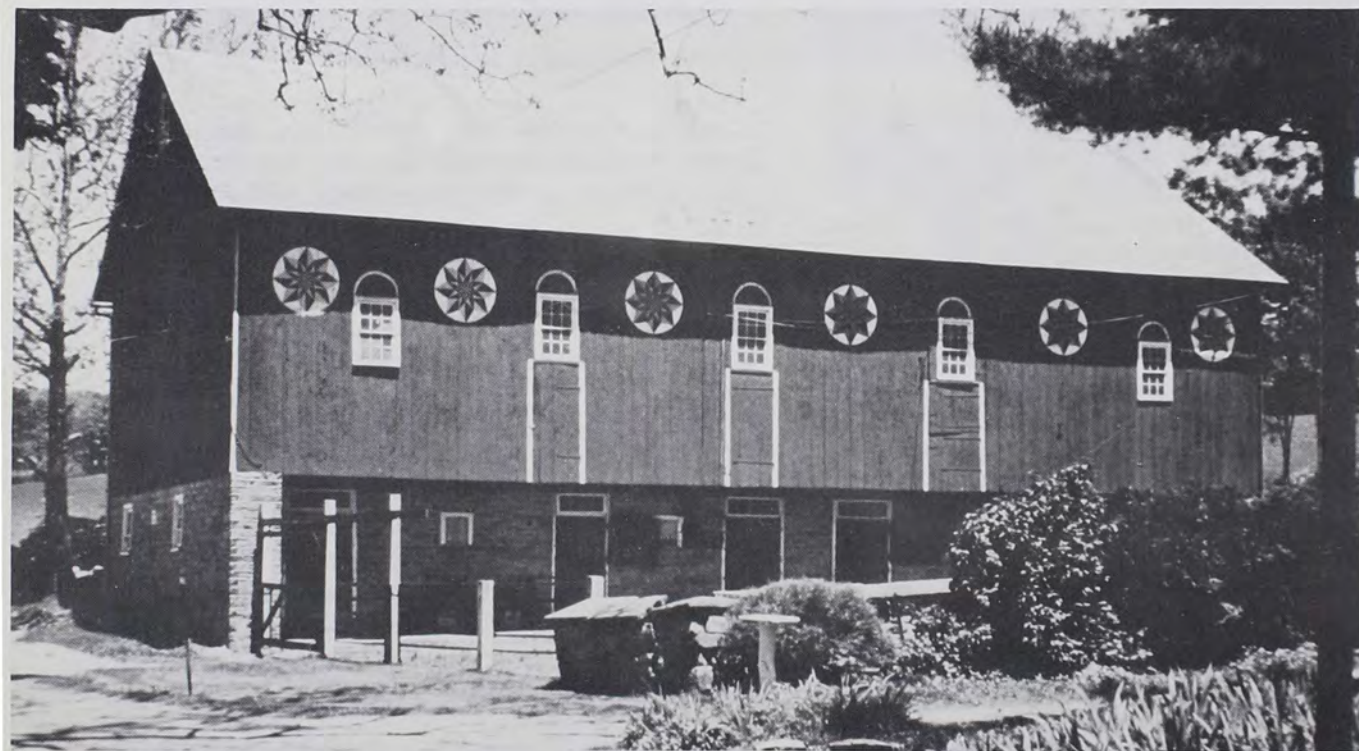
So general was this cultural adaptation between Continental and British Isles groups here in Pennsylvania that we can say that the American pattern of cultural interchange, of mutual adaptation, began in the Middle Colonies and principally in Pennsylvania. Not in homogeneous New England or homogeneous Virginia, but in the Dutch Country, where the colonial emigrant peoples—brought hither by William Penn's patent of freedom—mingled as nowhere else. And while this mingling of cultures has not been without its problems, as we point out as we outline the concept of two opposing worlds in the Dutch Country, we can be proud to say that "America began here."

Through migration from Pennsylvania, these mixed patterns, American rather than European, were transplanted elsewhere. There was from Pennsylvania, beginning before the Revolution and continuing throughout the 19th century, a three-fold migration. Southward the Conestoga wagons rolled into Maryland and Virginia—the western parts, which therefore became different in culture from the slave-bound Tidewater areas—and Dutch-speaking Pennsylvanians got as far south as the Carolinas by Revolutionary times. Westward they went into Ohio—whose rural culture is half Pennsylvanian—straight through the Middle West, reaching Kansas by Civil War times. Northward they went too—into the Genesee Country of Western New York, and across the King's border into Ontario. While the Dutch dialect was spoken for years in these secondary settlements, it is (except for the Amish settlements of the West) defunct in West and South, but in Ontario, through cultural lag fostered by religious difference (again among Plain Mennonites) it is still very much alive.

Hence the term "Dutch Country," as we use it, means basically the dialect-speaking areas of Pennsylvania. Within Pennsylvania the Dutch Country is roughly Southeastern Pennsylvania—the triangle you can draw yourself by connecting Stroudsburg with Somerset. It overlaps however into parts of Central Pennsylvania (Centre and Clinton,



A plain barn in Lancaster County. The wagons surrounding it on a Sunday morning mean an Amish church service is being held there.



Decorated Leibby barn (1871) in Lehigh County, Pa. (Photograph by Robert Ensminger)



A typical conservative Mennonite meetinghouse



New Hanover Lutheran Church, New Hanover Township, Pa.

Union and Snyder Counties), and spilled over originally into the counties of Western Maryland and the upper Shenandoah Valley of Virginia which were until 1850 culturally part of the Dutch Country, the Mason and Dixon Line notwithstanding. It was this area where the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect was spoken and where the Dutch culture developed—all by 1800.

THE TERM "DUTCH"

A word on the term "Dutch." While we Pennsylvanians (most of us) know that there is no connection with Holland, the term is always confusing to outsiders, who picture us in wooden shoes among tulip gardens. They do not realize—and this includes many Pennsylvanians—that the terms "Pennsylvania Dutch" and "Pennsylvania Dutchman," with the abbreviated forms "Dutch" and "Dutchman"—have been in use for two centuries and are well established in American historiography. We needed a name for the culture and the people and this is it. There are a minority of scholars who prefer the term "Pennsylvania German"—"an uncouth name . . . one unsanctioned by time or use on man's tongue," Fredric Klees, author of *The Pennsylvania Dutch*, says of it.

"Pennsylvania German" leaves the impression, a radically wrong one, of hyphenated Americans, of "Germans" in Pennsylvania, which is exactly what we are not. While the majority of the ancestors were German or Swiss, the culture developed on American soil out of the interchange with English neighbors, as we have pointed out. "Pennsylvania Dutch" is as American as Pennsylvania itself.

It all becomes clear when we look at the history of the word "Dutch." While in general use it is limited today to Holland, in the 18th century, in the colonies and in England, the word "Dutch" was synonymous with German. It was not an American corruption of the German word "*Deutsch*"—the usage is much older. While the terms "Dutchman," "Dutchified," "Dutchiness," etc., came in the 19th century to be used in a derogatory sense, the terms "Pennsylvania Dutch" and the abbreviation "Dutch" for the dialect-speaking Pennsylvanians, are well-established Americanisms, established in historiography as well as popular usage. It merits our use as much as the partially misunderstood and equally well-established term "Scotch-Irish."

THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH DIALECT

"Dutch," or "Pennsylvania Dutch," is an American dialect derived, historically, not from Standard German, but from what linguists call a High German dialect. And it is not, as so many wrongly believe, a degenerate form of "pure" German. Its base was brought from the Rhineland by the 18th-century pioneers. Its main features show closest resemblance to certain *Pfalzisch* or Palatine dialects spoken in the areas around Heidelberg. Even the Swiss Mennonites had dropped most of their harsh Swiss dialect for the softer Rhineland tongue during their years in the Palatinate.

But the dialect of Pennsylvania and that of Heidelberg, say, are not mutually comprehensible today. Two hundred

years on American soil have made a great difference. New words have been adopted from the surrounding English language, and constructions modified to some extent from contact with English. German travelers in the 19th century used to look down their aristocratic noses and shake their romantic curls at what they called "this Bastard patois" or "this *Bush-German*." But today scholars are beginning to recognize it for what it is—an American hybrid, made up of elements brought from German-speaking Europe, mixed with elements picked up here, in the give and take of American life. And so our Dutch dialect, like everything else in the Dutch culture, is a mixture, an American hybrid.

The Dutch dialect is one of those peculiar treasures that can be appreciated only by the native. Rich humor, on the earthy side, and its evocation of childhood memories, make it the vehicle for yearly Dutch fests of laughter and dialect tomfoolery called *Fersommlings* (literally "meetings," i.e., "Dutch meetings") and *Grundsow Lodches* (Groundhog Lodges) in which displaced Dutchmen from the cities renew their ties with a largely defunct culture.

The dialect is one of the few things which binds the Gay Dutch and Plain Dutch worlds together. At least a Lancaster County Amishman can be understood by a Berks County Lutheran. Some words and expressions differ from east to west, but basically the dialect is one. There has been a large but now dying Dutch literature—mostly doggerel poetry and humorous newspaper letters—all with American rather than German themes; and there is today a variety of Dutch radio and TV programs and an occasional Dutch play given by a church group, but other than that the dialect is dying, and fast . . . only among the Amish, and certain ultra-conservative Mennonite groups who have religious reasons for its preservation—they preserve it and it preserves them—will it live beyond the present generation.

* * *

There is among the Pennsylvania Dutch themselves, no "Dutch consciousness," no sense of being different from other Americans, except in speech. As one of their historians has said, they may speak "Dutch," but they "think American." This has been true of every generation since the forefathers stepped off the emigrant boats and walked the red-brick streets of Philadelphia on their way to the upcountry farms that were their "promised land."

There is no movement—fortunately—to keep the Dutch language alive, and it is dying at the predicted rate. There is no Dutch nationalism, as in Canada, where French cultural nationalism, backed up by Roman Catholicism, fosters in the French-speaking *Canadien* a sense of eternal difference from his English-speaking Canadian neighbor. His world is hedged by language and religion and he prefers the outsider to keep on the other side. Fortunately, because of our basic religious diversity—our division into two religious worlds, gay and plain, Pennsylvania has been spared that sort of headache.

—Abridged version of an article in *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Summer, 1956)

BELSNICKEL LORE

by Alfred L. Shoemaker

Up to about twenty or thirty years ago the custom of "going Belsnickling" was still practiced widely in all areas of the Pennsylvania Dutch County. Today—a mere generation later—the custom has all but disappeared.

In this article I have brought together, for the first time, the major part of the literature on the Belsnickel, gathered over a period of the last six to eight years from newspapers, periodicals, diaries, and from students' term papers.

No effort is being made, at this particular time, to trace the Belsnickel custom to its sources in Germany. Suffice it to say that it was brought to America with the earliest immigrants from the Palatinate. Nor are we concerned, here, about the reasons for the disintegration of this colorful phase of our Pennsylvania folklore.

The material is presented chronologically.

The earliest account is from the Philadelphia Pennsylvania Gazette of Dec. 29, 1827:

Of all the religious festivities, none are so religiously observed, and kept in the interior of our State, especially in the German districts, as Christmas. It is the thanksgiving day of New England. Every one that can so time it, "kills" before the holydays, and a general sweep is made among pigs and poultry, cakes and mince pies. Christmas Eve too, is an important era, especially to the young urchins, and has its appropriate ceremonies, of which hanging up the stocking is not the least momentous. "Bellschniggle," "Christ-kindle" or "St. Nicholas," punctually perform their rounds, and bestow rewards and punishments as occasion may require.

Our readers are perhaps aware this Mr. Bellschniggle is a visible personage—Ebony in appearance, but Topax



Belsnickel with switch and bag for nuts and candies as depicted by Ralph D. Dunkelberger.

in spirit. He is the precursor of the jolly old elf "Chris-kindle," or "St. Nicholas," and makes his personal appearance, dressed in skins or old clothes, his face black, a bell, a whip, and a pocket full of cakes or nuts; and either the cakes or the whip are bestowed upon those around, as may seem meet to his sable majesty. It is no sooner dark than the Bellschniggle's bell is heard flitting from house to house, accompanied by the screams and laughter of those to whom he is paying his respects. With the history of this deity we are not acquainted, but his ceremonious visit



Belsnickel Christmas cookie cutter, Geesey Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

is punctually performed in all the German towns every Christmas Eve. Christkindle, or St. Nicholas, is never seen. He slips down the chimney, at the fairy hour of midnight, and deposits his presents quietly in the prepared stocking.

We need not remark that Bellschniggle is nothing more than an individual dressed for the occasion. He goes his rounds.

From John F. Watson's 1830 Annals of Philadelphia:

The "Belsh Nichel" and St. Nicholas has been a time of Christmas amusement from time immemorial among us; brought in, it is supposed, among the sportive frolics of the Germans. It is the same also observed in New York, under the Dutch name of St. Claes. "Belsh Nichel," in high German, expresses "Nicholas in his fur" or sheep-skin clothing. He is always supposed to bring good things at night to good children and a rod for those who are bad. Every father in his turn remembers the excitements of his youth in Belsh-nichel and Christ-kinkle nights . . .

From the unpublished diary of James L. Morris, of Morgantown, in the library of the Berks County Historical Society in Reading:

Dec. 24, 1831: Christmas Eve—saw two krisskintle's tonight—the first I have seen these many years. They were horrid frightful looking objects.

Dec. 24, 1842: Christmas Eve—a few "belsnickels" or "kriskinkles" were prowling about this evening frightening the women and children, with their uncouth appearance—made up of cast-off garments made parti-colored with patches, a false face, a shaggy head of tow, or rather wig, falling profusely over the shoulders and finished out by a most patriarchal beard of whatsoever foreign that could be possibly pressed into such service.

Dec. 24, 1844: This evening being Christmas Eve, we had the Kriskingle's annual visit. Some 4 or 5 hideous and frightful looking mortals came into the store dressed out in fantastic rags and horrid faces.

From the Reading Berks and Schuylkill Journal:

Dec. 27, 1851: Parents, within doors, were making all sorts of purchases for distribution on the morrow—while juvenile harlequins were running from house to house, scattering nuts, confections, consternation and amusement in their way.

Dec. 30, 1854: It is customary in these parts to associate Krisskingle with the grim monster, who frightened children, and whips them for amusement.

From the York Daily of Dec. 20, 1871:

When we were a child we dreaded him [the Belsnickle] because his hideous representative was always fearfully marked and was accompanied by a long whip and a bell.

From the Mount Joy Star of Jan. 14, 1878:

But there is an old custom in vogue which I think should be entirely condemned and suppressed. It is the practice of disfiguring the person with old clothes and a false face, and going around to neighbors houses frightening the children. I once saw a family of children frightened almost into convulsions at one of these nuisances, and I hope the time is not far distant, when our boys will be taught better manners, for such proceedings are entirely too far behind the enlightened age of the nineteenth century.

From an article by Simon Rathvon in the Lancaster Intelligencer of Dec. 24, 1871. The information applies to Donegal Township about 1822 or 1823:

All the others were the victims of the harmless little ruse which parents saw fit to resort to once a year, in order to furnish an agreeable surprise and pleasure to their little ones, whose boxes, hats, caps and stockings occupied different nooks and corners to receive the gifts of the "Bells-Nickel" to good little boys and girls, and somehow all claimed to be good on that occasion at least. But when the Bells-Nickel appeared in his proper person on Christmas eve, with his hideous visage, his bag of nuts, and his long whip, jingling his bells withal, and speaking in a dialect that seemed to have been brought from the confusion of Babel, the children were not quite so sure of their goodness, if they did not fly in terror from his presence and hide themselves under the remotest corner

of their beds. The name of Santa Claus as far as I can remember, had then no currency in the rural districts of our county. It was the Bells-Nickel that rewarded good children and punished bad ones, and it was he who filled the stocking legs, the hats, caps and boxes on Christmas night. These gifts to children, and indeed all gifts passing between the young and the old were severally termed a "Christ-kindly," but as little was heard and known of Kriss-Kingle as of Santa Claus.

From an article by Rev. I. K. Loos in The Messenger of Dec. 19, 1883. The information applies to Tulpehocken of 40-50 years earlier.

"In the Olden Time" we celebrated also the day succeeding Christmas, called Second Christmas. It was spent mainly as a social holiday—in talking, visiting, sleigh-riding, games in the house and barn, and by youths and maidens in tender love. The close of this day brought the evening for the "*Pels-nichol*," perhaps one side of the present *St. Nicholas*, clothed in *pels* or furs. But in the eyes of the children in the Olden Time, *Pels-nichol* was a personification of the principle of punishment of the bad, though this also had its good side. He was a rough, strong, fur-clad individual, with long, stout rods in his hand. His bells and heavy boots announced his coming, and his rude entrance struck terror into the hearts of the smaller children. The whole family was on hand; the smallest in mother's arm, the next on father's knee, safe from the rude blows which *Pels-nichol* administered to the boys, men and women, as he shed his coarser fare of walnuts and shellbarks on the floor, and compelled them to pick them up under the rod. With a bound and a yell he was out of the house, and striding in long steps towards a neighbor's house, where the rod and nuts were in like way dealt out.

When quiet was restored in the house and we stepped out, we could hear in various directions, the yells of *Pels-nichols*, or the shouts of sleighing parties on the turnpike, as one of these wild, uncouth figures rushed by them.

From W. J. Buck's chapter "Manners and Customs" in the 1884 History of Montgomery County:

Our intention here is only to mention briefly such customs as were associated with it [Christmas] the night before, upon the outside of the church. It was at this time that children would be induced to set plates on the tables or windows with the expectation that, if they would be good, the "Christ-kindlein" would bring them something nice, and, if naughty or disobedient, then the "Belznickel" whom they greatly feared, would come to correct them. They were made to believe that these could enter through fastened windows, locked doors or down the chimneys. The presents would generally consist of candy, toys, and cakes expressly baked for this occasion. The Belznickel was some disguised person who generally carried a rod, and the children that would promise him to reform from certain habits mentioned he would not chastise, but give presents;

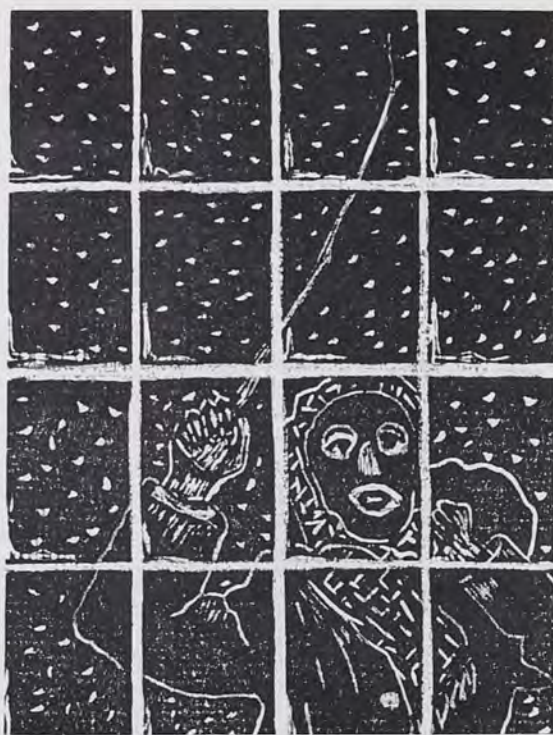
but if they did not make their promise good in mending their ways by the next Christmas, they would then receive the merited punishment. Instances have been known of the children banding together when the Belznickel attempted to correct them and ejecting him from the house, or of his being worsted by them. Sometimes he would go from house to house with a protecting company, who would enter the house first and report. Of course, on all such occasions he would be so disguised that it would be impossible to recognize him unless divested of some of his habiliments. If he happened to get into any tussle, this would be the great object. Where all would pass off well, on leaving the door he would sometimes remove his mask or a portion of his raiment, to leave room for conjecture as to whom he might be.

From the reminiscences of Matthias Mengel, then 65, in the Reading Weekly Eagle of Dec. 28, 1895, The information applies to Caernarvon about 1845:

Particularly vivid in my memory is a Christmas eve when I was one of three or four lads who started out to act the "Belsnickel." Well, each of us boys carried a switch in his hand. We dressed in the clothing we could find at home, tied handkerchiefs over our faces and filled our pockets with chestnuts and hickorynuts. We went to the house of a neighbor where there were children, and expected to have some fun by frightening the children by our singular appearance, throwing the nuts on the floor, and belsing the children if they should pick up any of the nuts. We tinkled our bells, entered the house and began jumping about and throwing nuts, when the head of the family, who was an old Amish, said very sternly, "I don't believe in such foolishness, clear out!" and we cleared. You see that was an English and Amish neighborhood. The English did not observe the German customs of Christmas and the Amish were a very plain people like the Quakers and had no festive occasions as had the Germans of other denominations in other sections of Berks, where Christmas especially was a season of feasting, merriment and general rejoicing. We knew nothing of Santa Claus, rosy and plump, with twinkling eyes and furry dress making his aerial visitations in a sleigh drawn by reindeers at dead of night and silently, excepting the tinkling of his bells, which the children could only hear if they were awake when Santa appeared, but the children are never awake at that time, for he comes only when they are asleep.

From an article by Daniel Miller in the Reading Reformed Church Record of Dec. 21, 1899. Miller hailed from near Lebanon:

In the days of the writer's boyhood Santa Claus was not known, at least in our neighborhood, but another personage filled the office now occupied by him. His name was "Belsnickel." He was not as rich as Santa Claus, but the children were thankful for his gifts. Weeks before Christmas the children were told that if they behaved well



Belsnickel Christmas card by Paul R. Wieand.

they might expect a visit from Belsnickel. That had a good influence upon the young folks. Well do we remember the first visit of the friend of children of those days. It was Christmas eve. Every now and then the question was asked, "Is he coming?" And frequently the children would lift the curtain at the window and peep into the darkness. Time passed and it looked as if we would be disappointed. Suddenly we heard the noise of sleigh bells on the porch, and the next moment Belsnickel was in the room. He looked very much like our Santa Claus, with a long rod in his hand. While giving expression to Christmas greetings he took a lot of gifts from his huge bag and threw them on the floor. These gifts consisted of cakes, chestnuts, small pieces of sausage, etc., and while the children stooped to pick up the gifts, Belsnickel laid his rod on their backs and explained, "Will you pray? Will you pray?" This threw the children into a state of fear and excitement, and by the time they had recovered therefrom Belsnickel had disappeared. Only his heavy footsteps and the jingling of his bells were heard as he went away. It was a wonderful experience. The same questions arose in the minds of the children then as now: "Where does Belsnickel live? What does this mean anyhow?" Some had painful cuts on their hands, but Belsnickel's gifts were relished by the children, and his visit was the subject of the family talk for weeks.

From an article "Folk-Lore and Superstitious Beliefs of Lebanon County" by Dr. Ezra Grumbine in vol. III, no. 9, 1905, of the Lebanon County Historical Society Proceedings:

"The night before Christmas" often bro't a wonderful personage clothed in an outlandish raiment of animal skins and old clothes. A home-made mask concealed his face, and he carried in one hand a bag or a basket and a long

switch in the other. His name was "Belsnickle," which means Nicholas in pelts, or skins. Unlike his English prototype, the mythical Santa-Claus, who rides in a sleigh drawn by reindeer and who enters dwellings on Christmas eve by way of the house-top and chimney, our "Belsnickle" was of flesh and blood, generally the wag of the neighborhood, and entered the house at the door. In his basket he carried apples, nuts, cakes and sometimes candy. These he threw upon the floor, and when the half-scared youngsters went to pick them up he would sometimes lay to with his stick, making them promise to be good and obedient children. The writer remembers one case in which a child was frightened into the nervous disease called St. Vitus's dance by a "Belsnickle's" performances.

From the reminiscences of W. W. Davis in the New Holland Clarion of 1909/10:

Permit me to drop a tear to the memory of Belsnickel. The dear old fellow must have passed away about the time we left the East [1850's], for I never heard of him here. How faithful he was to me year after year. No matter how cold or snowy he never failed to fill my stocking. There is a Santa Claus in the West, but I doubt his existence, as I have never had a glimpse of the chap and he certainly does nothing for me. Belsnickel, requiescat in peace!

From the reminiscences of John B. Brendel of Reinholds submitted to the author in 1948:

Christmas Eve, along about 8 o'clock, one would hear a sharp knock on the door and one of the parents would open up. There in the doorway stood some of the weirdest characters that one ever had the occasion to behold. Belsnickels they were, masked and carrying a peeled willow whip or a buggy whip. Then the kids would get a workout. A Belsnickel demanded to hear their "Grischdawgs Schtick" (a poem memorized for presentation at the Sunday School Christmas festival) or the latest poem that was learned at school. After this devilment was indulged in for awhile, there began to appear from the folds of the Belsnickel's garments chestnuts, walnuts, peanuts and pretzels. These were tossed in front of the children and when they tried to pick them up, they were whipped around the legs with the willows or buggy whip. After a few moments, however, the kids were allowed to pick up what had been thrown on the floor for them.

Then came the host's time to act. The woman of the house would bring "Grischdawgs Kichlin" (Christmas cookies) and apples. The man of the house went to the cellar for a pitcher of "Schdeefens Schdofft" (hard cider) or a jug of homemade wine, or both. Well, you can imagine what happened to the Belsnickel along about the fifth stop. I can pity those kids today that were the victims of one of the later stops. Those lashes of the whip stung. I know.

—Abridged from an article in The Dutchman, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Winter, 1954-55)

CARPET-RAG PARTIES

by Paul R. Wieand



The Paul R. Wieand Gay Dutch Folk Players here depict carpet-rag party guests at work. Note the piece of rag carpet in the foreground.

The term “carpet-rag party” has a strange ring to most ears nowadays, but to the Pennsylvania Dutch of bygone days it meant a night out with lots of fun. . . . Carpet-rag parties were one of the many forms of recreation enjoyed years ago when the home had no radio or television. Now and then a family had a music box, but who needed a music box for entertainment when there was more fun at a *loomba pairty* (rag party)!

After the *schnitzen* (apple quartering) party and the cornhusking party—parties of the fall—came the *loomba pairty*. This was one of the several social functions of the village or farm during the winter months. *Loomba pairties* were not held too frequently at most homes; however, several were sure to occur in the neighborhood during the sleighing season.

These gatherings forced neighbors and friends to work hard to get the daily chores done just a bit earlier than usual, so that a longer time might be spent at the designated party place.

Who came? The whole family. There were no baby sitters then. Of course the party soon became subdivided, and this did not take any special effort. The children gathered in one corner and soon had their games and fun. This happened early in the evening because as the hours passed they became tired and soon were asleep in their elders’ arms or resting upon the woodchest. The oldsters found another corner and had their common conversation, while they were seemingly trying to accomplish something for their hosts. The young, unmarried people found the parlor more enjoyable than watching their elders or lending



Mrs. Audra Miller demonstrates the first step—tearing the rags into thin strips.

a hand at the tasks of ripping, cutting, snipping, sewing, or winding. Therefore, before too many minutes were lost, games were initiated. Most of the work had to be done by the married couples, who told stories, related jokes, and asked riddles, all the while working earnestly at the rags. After putting in an hour or two at the rather arduous tasks, the workers also joined the young folk in their party games.

To the women fell the lot of cutting squares or rectangles of cloth from the worn-out cotton clothing—aprons, dresses, and shirts—which had accumulated since the last party. The rags had been washed and stored away by the *haus frau* in her *loomba foss* (rag barrel) or her *loomba sock* (rag bag), which was usually a burlap potato bag or a linen grain bag.

These rags or pieces of unwearable clothing were stored in the *loomba foss* in the attic and were brought down for the guests to convert into material for the carpet weaver. Buttons were salvaged for the button box. The hard-worn parts of the clothing were always cut away as were the seams, bands, and clumsy parts. All of the unuseables were put back into one of the *loomba* bags and sold to the rag man who made his rounds in the spring of the year during housecleaning time.

The swatches of material salvaged in this manner were transformed into long, seemingly endless, narrow strips. These long strips were formed by cutting into the piece of cloth about one inch from the edge and ripping the length of the swatch to about an inch of the opposite end.



Mrs. Paul R. Wieand trims the ends of the torn strips, the second step in the process.

You continued back again along the length of the cloth to one inch from the rip of the other end. In this manner you proceeded until the swatch of cloth was ripped into one long continuous strand. The person doing this had to watch the weight of the material. Heavier material was not ripped as wide as regular material. Lightweight cloth was made wider so that the same thickness resulted when it was used as weft.

To another woman fell the lot of snipping off the corners where the material made the turn as it was ripped to continue lengthwise along the material again. This snipping off of a triangular piece at the corners was to remove the excess thickness that occurred in the weaving when this strand was rewound from a ball as the weft for the shuttle.

Seated comfortably, several women sewed the strands or strips together. The ends had to be overlapped about an inch. The overlapped portion was folded lengthwise before sewing the two end pieces. When the strips were sewed together, care was taken so that the color of rags

was varied. The variation of colored strips provided a more colorful pattern in the finished carpet. "*Net all de hella bei-nonner*" (not all the light-colored ones together), were frequent words of caution. Interchanging dark strips with bright- and light-colored strands was a must.

Winding, of course, fell to the lot of the men who had to wind the sewed strands into balls. The balls, about six inches in diameter, were produced by continuous winding, while news, jokes, and riddles were exchanged. Scores of balls were needed for a roomful of finished carpet. Sometimes there were neighbors who delighted in bragging about the large balls of rags they had. Some of these large balls were even exhibited at county fairs. Tricks were even resorted to at times to produce such enormous balls at gatherings. Some balls were wound on large stones, while others were wound on peach baskets to form the base until the braggard was discovered by the carpet weaver.

Carpet weavers, when receiving the bags of carpet-rag balls, would customarily inquire whether they were made



The third step, sewing the individual strips into one continuous strand, is demonstrated by Mrs. Martin Wetzel.

at a party or whether *De Gremmy* did the work during her declining years. If a party prepared them, the price was usually a few cents a yard more for the finished carpet. Even if he was not told, the weaver soon knew, the reason being he had to spend extra time in correcting errors and sewing ends again where the happy gatherers failed intentionally or unintentionally to do it correctly.

The weaver could produce a beautiful carpet from such salvaged rags. He asked you whether you were interested in a dark or light warp, all cotton, or cotton-and-wool mixed. A dark warp was selected if you were interested

in carpet for the kitchen. A light warp was used for the bedrooms. If you had extra money to spend for the project, you usually decided on woolen strips running horizontally with the length of the carpet. The width of this woolen stripe again depended on the extra money you wanted to invest. Wool was more expensive than cotton warp; however, wool allowed for brighter colors, and the Dutch liked bright colors. The well-to-do families in the neighborhood usually had the broader stripes of wool in their carpets. Every additional inch of wool warp in the carpet meant



After the strips are sewed they are rolled into balls. Allen Stephen and Martin Wetzel show how it's done. The balls are then put into bags, ready for delivery to the local carpet weaver.

an extra outlay of money as well as additional care in preventing moths from destroying it. Ironically, the lowly rags, put to good use in making colorful carpet, denoted material wealth or were an economical way of saving a few dollars which came in handy on a rainy day.

Without too many halts, the fun and play continued until the prescribed work was finished. Generally the younger ones enjoyed forfeit and guessing games, promenading, and

singing in the parlor as long as the older ones desired to remain. And of course, refreshments were not forgotten. A glass of *ab-gekochter* (mulled cider) and a plate of Fallawalter apples, served with a knife, were very appetizing at such a gathering.

—From Pennsylvania Folklife, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Summer, 1961)

QUILTING TRADITIONS OF THE DUTCH COUNTRY

by Earl F. and Ada Robacker



Women quilters met once a week at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Altoona, Pa. (C. 1960; Pennsylvania Folklife Archives, Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pa.)

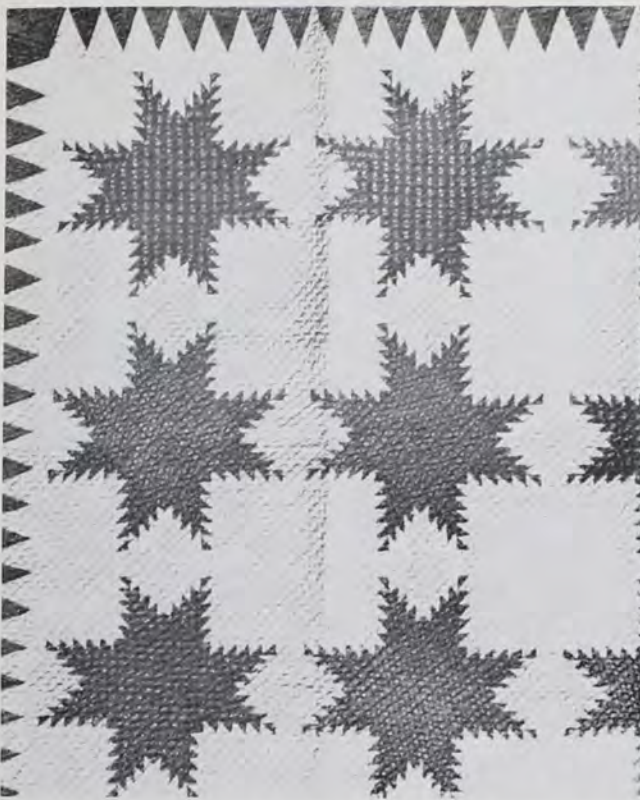
As long as a century ago, sentimentalists were decrying what they felt sure was the passing of the good old days in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country. They wept for the supposedly imminent demise of the language, the dropping off of old customs and practices, and the loss of the arts and crafts they felt to be peculiarly Pennsylvanian.

However, there must be something special in the Dutch Country air—an elixir which not only kept the presumably dying culture alive but nourished it along toward a condition of robust health evident now to the veriest novice in matters of folk crafts and folk ways.

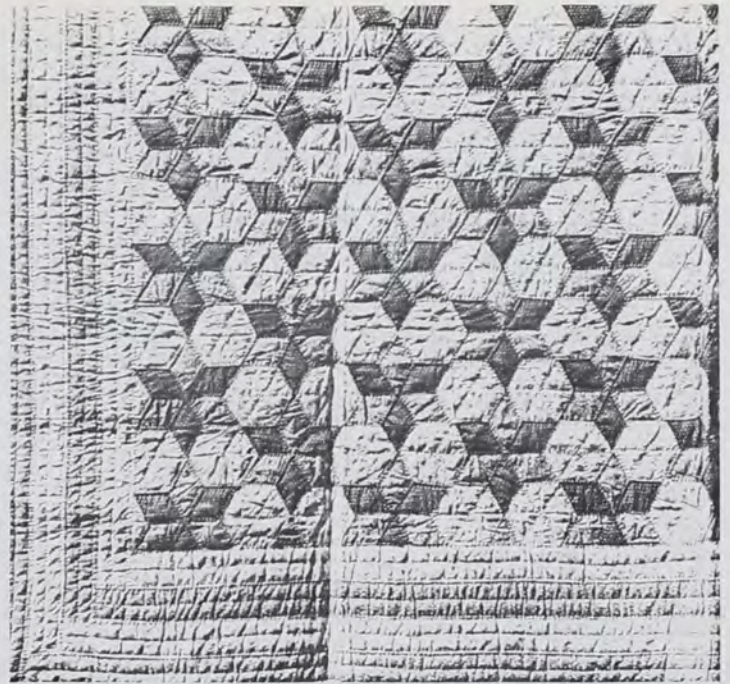
In no area of old-time crafts is the flourishing condition of a specific skill more in evidence than in that of quilting. There was a time, it is said, when every maid whose family

made any pretension to social status had thirteen quilt tops in her private blanket chest before she was married. Twelve of these constituted a backlog of comfortable size in outfitting the new home—not that there was anything especially significant about twelve; it just seemed like a good number to have—and the process of turning the completed tops into actual quilts might start at any point after the engagement had been announced. There was, as we shall see, something very special about the thirteenth.

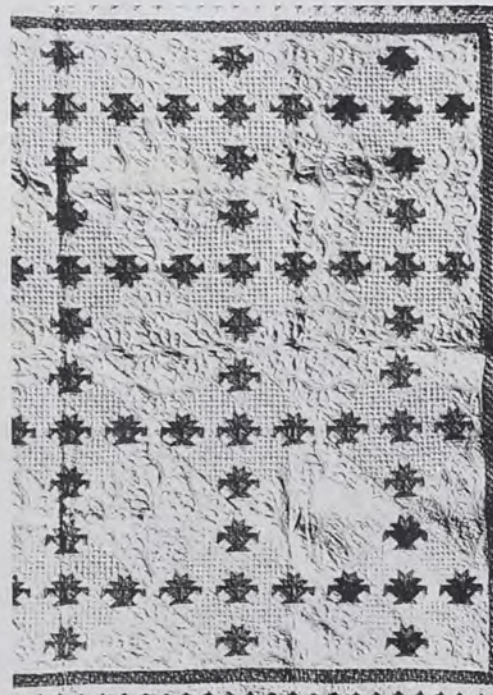
Quilt-making is an old art. No one knows how far back it goes. It would seem reasonable that in the cooler latitudes there were bed covers of some kind wherever there were beds. Animal pelts undoubtedly came before quilts, and perhaps the feather-filled ticks once so prevalent through-



Feathered Star in red patchwork against a white background. The quality of the quilting is exceptional.



The Rising Star patterns in tones of soft pink and green.



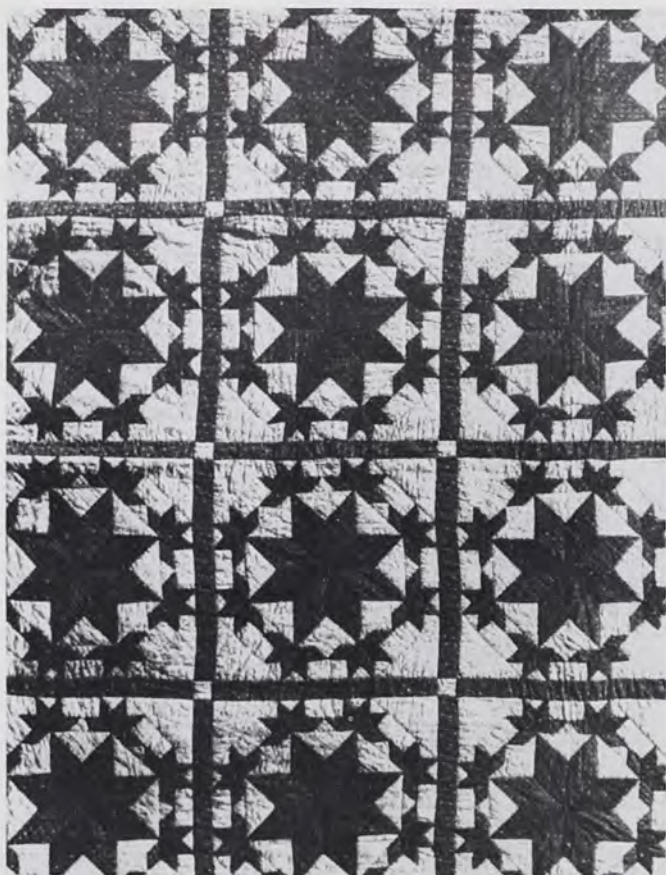
The Flower Basket in pink and green patchwork against white; the quilting is unusually fine.

out Germany did, too. American quilt-making, though, started when the first bed coverings of whatever kind, brought from the homeland, had reached the point at which they had to be retired from use simply because they would no longer hold together.

One of two factors indubitably influenced the earliest quilt-making in the country—poverty or economy. (We are not talking now of elaborate bed dressings imported from Europe for use in the homes of early wealthy plantation owners; we are speaking only of those made by hand, natively.) In colonial times, woven fabrics of all kinds had to come from abroad and were scarce and expensive. Even the tiniest scraps were saved when new cloth was being cut into for making garments. Moreover, even articles of clothing which would appear to be completely worn out still had some areas which could be salvaged. While women in later years would hesitate to mix old fabrics with new in a quilting operation, our early foremothers could not afford to be persnickety; they utilized absolutely everything that could be used.

The wonder is that, under the adverse conditions often obtaining, so many quilts of superlative charm have survived the years. While it would be fruitless even to try to mention many of the famous specimens which have become cherished treasures in museums throughout the land, a few should perhaps be noted, though in the very act one risks censure for omitting others equally meritorious: Mary Totten of Staten Island, born in 1781, created an often-mentioned Rising Sun quilt with pieced 8-point

stars and lavish appliqué in corners and angles. We do not know for sure the year in which she made it. A "Tree of Life" quilt, made in Charleston, South Carolina, by Sarah F. C. H. Miller in 1830 is four yards wide, and has an almost unbelievably elaborate chintz decoration of peacocks, bouquets, bird groups, and butterflies. Eliza Conklin, of Claverack, New York, in 1849 depicted General



A striking patchwork quilt in figured red and black against white; *Blazing Star* design.



Patchwork in Cube or Block pattern. (Photographs by Stephen A. Karas, Hartsdale, N.Y.; except as noted, quilts are from the Robacker Collection)



A very old quilt (the person credited with making it was born in 1799) in the *Sunflower* design. The sharp points suggest those of the more elaborate pattern known as *Mariner's Compass*.

Washington on horseback, saluting Miss Liberty, under a protective eagle and 13 stars. This specimen was both appliquéd and embroidered.

Elizabeth Riley, of Hopewell, New Jersey, in 1850 made a heavily padded appliquéd quilt featuring a great garland of red, pink, yellow, and white roses surrounding an urn. Then, too, there is the famous Lincoln Spread of

1865 in the Shelburne Museum—19 squares, each signed, of homespun, appliquéd in wool and cotton. And in our own time there are those who believe that Maggie Oberholtzer, of Denver, Pennsylvania, and Ella Mae Kieffer, of Saylorsburg, are quilters without peer in either the past or the present.

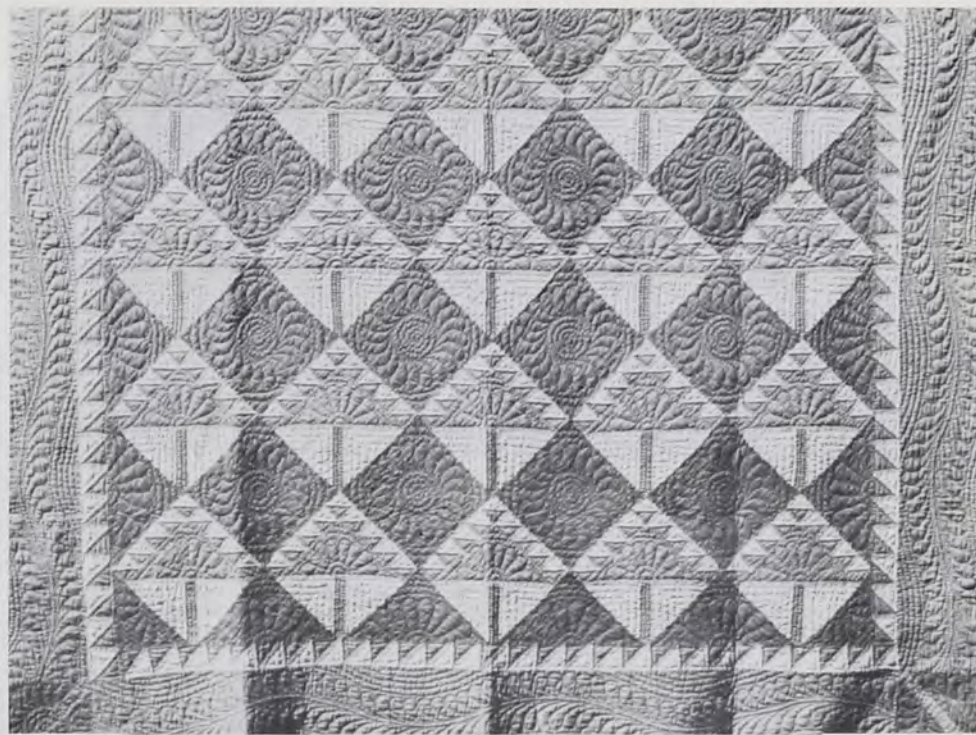
A quilt normally has three component parts: the top, the back, and the filler or lining. It is the top which places the total product in the category of an art object—or keeps it out—no matter how adequate the back and the lining may be. For many women, the design of the top would depend upon the size of the scraps they had accumulated—the size, first of all, but also the color, the shape, the fabric—and perhaps what could be secured from a relative or neighbor by trading.

If only small pieces were available, the chances are that the crazy-quilt method would be used, and the object would fall in the category of pieced—or, as many women would have expressed it—"piece-patch" work. Even in the seemingly random method of assembling bits of cloth, however, there was an opportunity for a considerable display of talent. A woman might be an excellent cook, a fine house-keeper, an exemplary mother, and a strong right arm to her husband—but it was normally only in her talented use of the needle that she achieved whatever artistic recognition she would ever enjoy. She can hardly be blamed for making the most of the opportunity.

One does not make a crazy-quilt simply by joining one fragment to another until the resultant object is big enough



The Hand of Friendship—also known as Indiana Puzzle—in dark blue on white.



Superlative quilting in the Pine Tree pattern. Tones are predominately orange and green.



A single block for a friendship quilt. Colors are red and yellow on a white background.

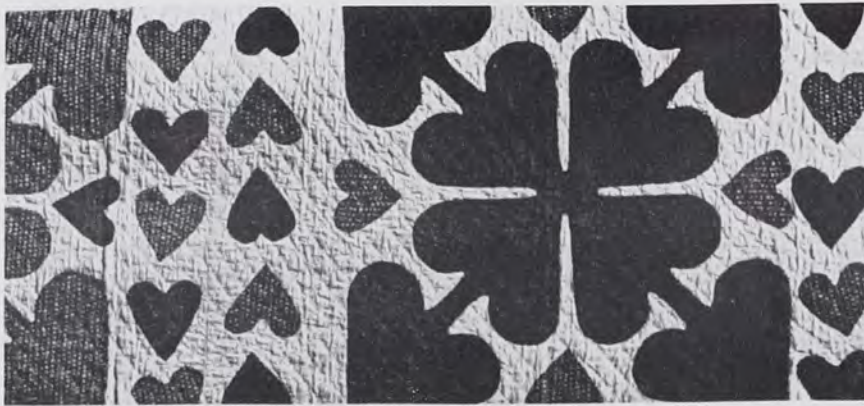
to cover a bed. Dark patches are placed in a studied juxtaposition with light; materials of comparable weight and substance are kept together; patches are sewed into blocks of matching size, or into geometrically matching strips which are then assembled with a careful eye toward the hoped-for appearance of the whole. Finally, if time is available, the gamut of fancy stitches known to the quilter

is employed in lending character to the assembled top. Every little patch is gone over with sewing floss in a variety of stitches ranging from simple chain or feather stitch to complicated embroidery and elaborate arrangements of French knots.

The fortunate possessor of a great many scraps of fabric, some of good size, had an almost unlimited number of named patterns on which she could draw—or from which she could work out her own special variations. The Log Cabin design was probably found in almost every home; it was a pattern which could utilize long, narrow bits of fabric which might otherwise be lost. The Irish Chain seems always to have been popular, and is hard to beat today for sheer charm when the colors have been carefully chosen. The Delectable Mountains, once commonly found, seems to be scarce now. Indiana Puzzle is effective but tricky to put together; star designs have long been popular, and there are dozens of variations, with the Le Moyne (locally, “Lemon”) and Bethlehem stars way out ahead.

Some patterns, as one might expect, were known by different names in different places. Kansas Trouble, for instance, was known outside Kansas as Rocky Glen and Little Lost Ship! Indiana Puzzle, mentioned above, is usually known in Pennsylvania as Hand of Friendship.

An exhibition at the Whitney Museum in New York, late in the summer of 1971, featured a display of “piece-patch” quilts, made between 1820 and 1930, in design arrangements which could be considered abstract. The quilts shown, according to the catalogue, were chosen for visual content, with color, pattern, and line taking precedence



Hearts galore—in pink and green appliquéd on white muslin.



Effective appliqué—yellow-centered red flowers and green leaves in the Dahlia Wreath pattern.



An Album or Friendship block, seemingly made for a special occasion as indicated by the embroidered word "Souvenir" at the center. The numerals in the corner signify 1899, not 1866.

over other considerations. It is not until a number of pieced quilts selected with a given theme in mind appear together in a single context that one realizes how subtly ingenious some of the designs are.

Perhaps the quilt designer can best give her creative bent free rein in appliquéd work—not that there are not "standard" patterns in appliqué, too; there may be as many designs in this applied patchwork as there are in pieced quilts. Many of them are of somewhat later provenance, however, and for the very good reason that fabric in rather large pieces and sizable quantities is often called for. The appliquéd quilt can not ordinarily be considered a work of "salvage" art, as the piece-patch arrangement might. In cutting out the irregularly shaped pieces which will go together to form the design, there is likely to be more waste than most pioneer women would have tolerated.

The designer in appliqué might plan her quilt to fit the old-fashioned full-size or three-quarter-size bed, and lay out her all-over design—or plan the number of blocks she wished to use—accordingly. However, as times changed, and king-size beds and twin beds came on the scene, to say nothing of the fact that some women wanted their quilts to fall almost to the floor on either side of the bed while others did not, quilts came to take on more and more variations in size.

Appliquéd quilts which are built up of individual blocks often feature floral wreaths, baskets of flowers, and arrangements which may utilize curved lines instead of the



Something of a rarity; a pieced pillow case with strings at the bottom for tying. One of a pair.

strictly geometrical angles called for in most piece-patch artistry. Curved arcs or swags and "ribbon" bows, carefully cut out of the desired fabric and then stitched to the larger background in all-over designs, are especially popular as borders for appliquéd block quilts. Patterns which enjoyed wide popularity were Oak Leaf, Feather Crown, Pride of the Forest, Charter Oak, Prince's Feather—and a bewildering variety of roses, among which Whig Rose, Missouri Rose, and Prairie Rose were especially well liked.

Purely individual creations in all-over appliqué may depict whatever the designer has in mind and can achieve—a free adaptation of the ancient Tree of Life motif, a landscape, one's own garden—the possibilities seeming to be endless. Seen in recent years have been an elaborate arrangement of cherries and leaves on the bough; Amish

horses and carriages; an obviously representational home-stead; an asymmetrical arrangement of maple leaves; and Adam and Eve, modestly standing behind some lush flora in the Garden.

In the assembling of the three parts of the usual quilt—top, backing, lining—the essential skill of the seamstress becomes evident. Ideally, she will use an arrangement of arabesques, interlacing curves, or favored geometrical motifs on an appliquéd quilt, placing them where the tiny shadows created by the stitching will throw the appliquéd patterns into relief against the background. In a pieced quilt, the chosen designs tend to be simpler, and one has to turn the quilt over, in many cases, to see the pattern used. As any good quilter knows, it is quite possible for the needlework design and the colorful patchwork design to be in unwelcome competition.

Since the needlework is, after all, the essential art in the making of quilts, it is not surprising that a third category came into being—the "plain" or all-quilted type. In the great majority of cases these are white quilts with white stitching; now and then, however, other colors are found—lavender, pink, yellow . . . in fact, any tint or shade needed for a particular room or color scheme. The designs on good all-white, all-quilted coverlets often utilize doves, eagles, hearts, pineapples, and floral groupings, frequently in an elaborately worked out over-all arrangement. There are experts in the Dutch Country who make a specialty of "marking"—that is, laying out patterns for those who do not quite trust their own skill. Some quilters prefer a slightly puffy or "blistered" effect in white coverlets; others do not. In earlier times, the quilter actually worked tiny bits of wool, like that of the lining, under the top with the eye-end of her needle as she went along. Only a handful of quilters will take such pains today.

There is often a doubling-up or an overlapping in the techniques used in making a single quilt, and the judges in a competition sometimes feel hesitant about making a rating in the category in which a specimen is registered because of the wealth of detail it displays in a different technique. This condition is especially true of quilts entered simply as "embroidered." We have noted that quilters sometimes lavished fine and fancy stitchery on crazy quilts not inconceivably as a kind of compensation for the lack of a formal pattern, but it is not only the hit-and-miss design which is so favored. Appliquéd block quilts sometimes have an elaborately embroidered central motif—and if this motif is that of human figures the embroidery may be even further embellished with hand-painted faces.

The cross-stitch quilt seems to have become well enough established to merit a category of its own. A variation or offshoot of an earlier type of needlework in which representational motifs were outlined in red against a white background, it has taken on an increasingly elaborate quality. Although it would seem to be an "easy" type of quilting because only one kind of stitch is involved even though many colors may be used, a comparison of a dozen quilts

may reveal almost a dozen degrees of competence in the needlework. One should note that there is greater appeal for many in the early red-on-white chainstitching—very frequently with original designs—than in the later more or less stereotyped patterns commonly used.

A very special category in the quilting world is that of the “bride’s” quilt, so called—the thirteenth in the pile the bride would take to her new home when she married. This was the only one on which she herself did no work. It was ordinarily an appliquéd block quilt, each block the work of one of her friends, from the design through the execution, including the embroidered signature. While her mother would probably assume the major onus of quilting the usual twelve in the dowry, and would be assisted by the prospective bride, the friends of the bride were expected to complete the quilt which would constitute their special gift to the newly married couple.

It is not at all unnatural that some bride’s quilts became very famous, eventually making their way into museums. Baltimore appears to have been the seat of some very special quilting, and the term “Baltimore bride’s quilt” must be articulated in a tone of awe. A fine example now and then goes to auction—one notable specimen in the fall of 1971, for instance—and the buyer who secures one for less than a five-digit figure may congratulate himself on having secured a bargain.

Similar in some respects to the bride’s quilt, but usually on a more modest scale, is the presentation piece known as an “album” or “friendship” quilt. Separate blocks were the work of different individuals, and the signature of the donor sometimes assumed a prominent place, as was the case with the bride’s quilt. (Just the opposite was also true in a few instances; the signature was so adroitly concealed that the needleworker herself had to reveal its whereabouts!) Occasionally one or two persons with unusually neat handwriting were chosen to do the actual writing and stitching for all the names involved; more appealing are those in which real autographs were first outlined in pencil, with the needlework following. Yet another variation on the friendship theme was the “freedom” quilt, made by the mother of a young man and presented to him on the occasion of his twenty-first birthday.

Quilting paraphernalia today lacks some of the picturesque quality it once had. Quilting frames take up as much room in a house as they ever did, the prime space-saver in this regard being the four metal rings placed in the ceiling so that the quilt, frames and all, could be raised out of harm’s way when quilting was not actually going on. (“Granny’s room” in the house at Slateford Farm, in the National Park Service restoration near the Delaware Water Gap, is one of a very few remaining rooms having all four ceiling rings intact.)

The strawberry-shaped emery bags of the 1890s, used to keep needles sharp, are almost a casualty, even in antique shops; sewing birds, used to clamp fabric to a wooden frame, have become astronomical in price. “Trees”

to hold spools of thread have just about disappeared. The old-time quilting bee, an eagerly anticipated social occasion, has almost vanished from the scene. And, of course, the sewing machine has minimized the interminable hand-stitching which used to go into the piece-patch operation.

Today’s quilt makers use some of the same kinds of fabrics their forebears did, a century ago. A typical country store ledger of 1868 indicates purchases of bleached muslin, calico, gingham, cashmere (“casimir”), flannel, chintz, chambray—and even velvet. Probably not used for quilt-making were coarse and heavy goods like ticking, drilling, panting, crash, and canvas, which were also sold in considerable quantity. Unfamiliar to today’s shopper would be delaine (a light woolen dress fabric), silesia (a twilled cotton cloth), Italian cloth (a cotton-and-worsted mixture), lady’s cloth (a lightweight wool broadcloth), and perhaps nankin or nankeen (a firm-textured and durable cotton).

Perhaps the biggest change in quilt-making lies in what someone has called “quilts by quick-freeze.” Kits with ready-made designs, pre-cut patches, pre-printed guide lines, and explicit directions for each step of the process are aimed at taking all—well, nearly all—the drudgery out of quilting. Ordinarily these kits are put on the market by women’s magazines, particularly those specializing in needlework, and any new design released for sale has behind it a long period of research and analysis. While quilts made from kit materials and by kit processes often show expert needlework, in competition they inevitably suffer a loss of credit under the heading of originality.

All of this brings us down to a set of questions: What is the special, unique appeal in quilting? Why do women—and occasionally men—spend in quilting the unconscionable number of hours called for? (One Charles Pratt of Philadelphia made 93 Biblical picture quilts, each of which contained more than *thirty thousand* half-inch squares. Some women have made more than 150 quilts in their lifetime, and it is all but a commonplace that a grandmother in the Dutch Country will make a quilt for each grandchild, whatever the number may be.)

Perhaps it is the Dutch Country air, although in all fairness one needs to state that quilt-making, anachronism or no, is going on all over these United States. Perhaps it is an urge toward beauty which has thus far resisted the eccentricities of the “do-your-own-thing” school of thought. Perhaps it is one more illustration of the fact that phases of human behavior go in cycles—and it is time once more for making quilts.

Perhaps, just perhaps, the questioner will have to take refuge in the phrase used by the little boy hard put to explain to his mother why he had dropped a dozen eggs, one by one, on the sidewalk. Giving the matter careful thought, he raised his eyes candidly to hers and said solemnly, “Just for because.”

—Abridged from an article in Pennsylvania Folklife, Vol. 21, Folk Festival Supplement (1972)



Festival

Focus



Welcome to the 48th Annual

2



*Everyone is invited to dance
at all the shows!*

Hoe-down Stage

★ Old Time Clogging

11:00AM, 12:30PM, 2:30PM, 6:00PM

The East Country Cloggers

Music by Glenn Eckert and the Hayseeds

★ Square Dancing

Noon, 2:00PM, 3:30PM, 5:30PM

Performed by local award winning dance groups

★ Yodelin - Fiddle Farmer Band at 4:00PM

Ed, Geraldine, Elwin, & Beverly get together for a musical treat

★ Heidelberg Polka Band 6:00PM

3

Childrens Stage

Play in the Band with Ed &
Geraldine Berbaum as they bring
their Old Tyme Music to
children of all ages.

11:30AM, 1:30PM,
5:30PM

4



Petting Zoo

10:00AM to 8:00PM

5

Der Kindergarden

Preschool play area
Help the farmer with his chores
but don't get lost in the Hay Maze

10:00AM to 8:00PM

6



Doc Huxley Medicine Man Show

12:30PM, 2:30PM,
4:30PM, 6:30PM

7

Nature Center and Trails

10:00 AM to 8:00PM

Guided Tours

11:00AM, 1:00PM,
3:00PM, 5:00PM

8



Quilting

33rd Annual Contest & Sale
Demonstrations by
Schuylkill Co. Quilters Guild
10:00AM to 8:00PM

9



Pennsylvania Long Rifle Shooting

11:00AM, 1:00PM,
3:00PM, 5:00PM

10

Smoke House

10:00AM to 8:00PM

Ax Throwing Demonstration

Throughout the day

11



Glass Blowing

NOON, 2:00PM,
4:00PM, 6:00PM

Strolling Musicians

★ Fiddler John Koester

★ Heidelberg Polka Band

★ Folk Music with Elwin and Beverly Fiske

Can be seen and heard throughout the grounds all day

1

Mai

★ 10:30AM Heidelberg

★ 11:00AM Folk Song

★ 11:30AM Accent on

★ 12:30PM Life among

★ 1:00PM "The Pen

★ 2:00PM Leroy He

★ 3:00PM Mel Hors

★ 4:00PM Quilts of

★ 4:30PM Gutta Ess

★ 5:00PM "The Pen

★ 6:00PM Country /

★ 6:30PM Folk Song



June 28 through July 6, 1997
Open 10 AM to 8PM Daily

12



Garden Tours

11:30 AM, 2:00PM,
5:00PM

13

Flax Demonstration

18th Century
Flax processing
presented by
Johannes Zizendorf

10:00AM to 8:00PM

14

PA Dutch Pow-Wow Folk Remedies

Medical Historian, Herbal
Remedies
Dying Lore
presented by Fred Wiggins

10:00AM to 8:00PM

15

Wheat Threshing and Machinery Demonstration

See working antique engines
as they were used in
yesteryear

10:00AM to 8:00PM

16



The Hanging

NOON, 3:00PM,
6:00PM

17



Farm Animal Lore

Goat milking, cow milking, and
feedings periodically
throughout the day.

10:00AM to 8:00PM

18

"The Flight of the Honey Bee"

An audience participation play
performed by Middle Earth
Players and YOU

11:00AM, 1:30PM,
4:00PM, 5:30PM

19



Amish Wedding

12:30PM, 3:30PM,
6:30PM

20



Church

10:00 AM to 8:00PM
Join Jess and Pat for Hymns
2:00PM & 4:00PM

21



Country Kitchen

10:00AM to 8:00PM

22



The Wolfe School

One room school house
10:00AM to 8:00PM

23

Antique Farm Machinery Museum

10:00AM to 8:00PM

Stage

Band

Jess and Pat

our favorite Folk Songs

men

the Crafts that can be found at the

Amish

unt of the Plain Dutch, The Amish.

el Horst

"Dutch Story"

heater Junction

r Pennsylvania Dutch

followed by:

ey Budderschnip

h Humorist

sylvania Dutch

quilts and quilting techniques

ylvania Dutch Foods

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"Dutch Story"

heater Junction

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m Auctioneers CAI AU228L

Jess and Pat

our favorite Folk Songs

★ Scheier Donnz Barn Dance

7:00PM at the Hoedown Stage

Everyone is invited to take part in a toe-tapping good old fashioned Barn Dance.



Welcome to the 48th Annual Pennsylvania Dutch Kutztown Folk Festival. *Aushlaunders* will step back in time to experience the unique lifestyle of both the plain and fancy Pennsylvania Dutch through entertainment, education, and pageantry. Since 1950, Fourth of July week has been set aside to celebrate this American way-of-life based on good living, trust in God, love of country, and devotion to the land and family. The Festival's commitment is to keep alive this culture inherited from pioneer forefathers. The Schuylkill County Fairgrounds, Summit Station, is nestled in the foothills of the Blue Mountains on 70 acres of woods, streams, and lakes. There is easy access off interstate highways and plenty of free, on-site parking. *Komm rei, huck dich un essa* (Come in, sit down and eat) funnel cakes, sausage sandwiches, corn on the cob, waffles and ice cream, chicken dinners, and ox roast buffet. Enjoy the celebration; it promises to be the *bescht Fest noch* (best Festival yet)!!

The 48th Annual Pennsylvania Dutch Kutztown Folk Festival is brought to you through the efforts of Festival Associates, Ursinus College, and FARM (Foundation for Agriculture Resource Management). Festival Associates is our management team that will present an authentic and theatrical re-enactment of 18th- and 19th-century Pennsylvania Dutch life for the public to enjoy.

Ursinus College of Collegeville, Pennsylvania supervises cultural aspects of the festival. The college uses their portion of the proceeds for scholarship and general educational purposes.

FARM, a non-profit organization, is the proud owner of the festival site, Schuylkill County Fairgrounds. FARM receives a portion of the proceeds to maintain and update the grounds.



"The Pennsylvania Dutch Story"

Developed by Theatre Junction; directed by Sasha Mascovit; featuring Dan Roth, Grisha Eidinov, and Ruth May Hicks.

"The Pennsylvania Dutch Story" is a dramatized celebration of the stories of the Pennsylvania Germans. This patchwork collection of sketches reflects the love which the Pennsylvania Dutch have for a story with a hearty joke in it—even at their own expense—as well as for a story which can move the heart. "The Pennsylvania Dutch Story" is developed and performed by Theatre Junction, a Schuylkill County-based developing professional theatre company dedicated to bringing the theatre back to where it began and to where it belongs, the community. The members of Theatre Junction are professionally trained actors who have studied and performed in a wide variety of places including, Moscow, Leningrad, Amsterdam, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and, of course, locally. Theatre Junction is a non-profit organization, operating under the umbrella of Schuylkill Haven Conservation Association.



LITITZ

by Herbert H. Beck



Lititz, Lancaster County, Pa., from a painting in the Bethlehem Archives called "die Gemein Häuser in Pensylvanien."

Lititz, Pennsylvania, . . . was founded [in 1756] on a 491 acre tract in Warwick Township, Lancaster County, which John George Klein (a native of the Palatinate) donated to Count Zinzendorf's plan of a Moravian community. Zinzendorf, the reorganizer and leader of the modern Moravian Church, preached at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in December of 1742, and won Klein over to his search for a site similar to those of the Moravian communities which he established at Bethlehem and Nazareth, Pennsylvania.

The majority of the community's first congregation,

which owned 491 acres of Lancaster County's choice land, came to America from Germany. In 1756 word came from Zinzendorf that the Moravian community was to be named Lititz; this to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the year (1456) when King Podiebrad befriended the persecuted followers of John Hus (early Moravians, then known as the Unitas Fratrum) at his castle of Lidice (pronounced Lititz) in what is now western Czechoslovakia.

The charter of the Lititz Moravian Church, granted by an agent of the Crown of England, allowed the congre-



The Moravian Church in Lititz.

A group of Lititz Moravians, in 18th-century garb, reenact a Christmas love feast with streisslers (buns), coffee, and wax candles.





The pent roof was added when this house was renovated in the 1950s.



Good example of a one-and-a-half-story stone house in Lititz.



The finest example of a weatherboarded, one-and-a-half-story house in Lititz.

gation to conduct business interests, which it did under the direction of an "Aufseher Collegium." Land was leased to house builders. The congregation owned and conducted a general store, an inn (the Zum Anker), a pharmacy (the first in Lancaster County), a potash factory, a grist and sawmill, a wool-carding mill, and several farms. All the religious, social and economic life of the village was under the rigid control of the town regulations of 1759, which everyone had to sign. Education of the young was conducted in the Sister's House (1758) and the Brethren's House (1759). Both offered vocational training: the former in dressmaking and embroidery, stocking-making, and household work; the latter in the trades of carpenter, hatter, chandler, tailor, weaver, nailsmith, shoemaker and butcher. Both were "economies" of their own, and both did much business outside of the community. The account books of the Brethren's House Economy show that Heinrich Wilhelm Stiegel, glassmaker of nearby Manheim, regularly had his weaving and bootmaking done at the Brethren's House; often, doubtless, in exchange for glassware, some of which is still in the Brethren's House.

In the community, where everything was under divine guidance (marriage up to 1819 was by divine lot), ordinary amusements like chess, fig-mill, and even skating were banned. Music was the only diversion of youth. Into these conditions came Bernhard Adam Grubé, educated at Jena, who as a versatile musician could teach the use of all of the instruments. In 1765 he organized the Brethren's House Orchestra with full sections of string, woodwind and brass.

(There was no percussion section. Drums were too military for the religious leaders.) For about fifty years this orchestra flourished and, playing the leading symphonic works of its day, really came to fame across the nation. Over twenty of the instruments of this Brethren's House Orchestra, recently restored to their original condition, are now in the Lititz Moravian Archive Museum, which occupies two rooms in the Brethren's House.

The most momentous event the Lititz community ever knew was Washington's commandeering of the Brethren's House as a military hospital on December 19, 1777. Nearly a thousand wounded soldiers, from Brandywine and Germantown battlefields, came there. Camp fever broke out and spread over the village; 120 died and were buried "in the corner of our lowermost field." On this long lost site, their skeletons were found during the process of excavating for a cellar in 1931. Dr. Allison and Dr. William Brown had charge of the military hospital. Dr. Brown, lodging at the home of David Tanneberger, organ-builder, compiled the first American pharmacopoeia. It was written in Latin, printed by Cist in Philadelphia, and dated "Lititz, March 18, 1778."

In 1855 the charter of the Lititz Moravian Church was changed, business interests were withdrawn, and the lease system abolished. For a century Lititz had been an exclusive Moravian Community.

—From The Pennsylvania Dutchman, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Summer, 1956)

LITITZ SPECIALTIES

by Edna Eby Heller



Women dieners serving buns and handing out candles at a love feast in the Moravian Church in Lititz in the 1950s.

In Lititz . . . you will find the same Pennsylvania Dutch foods that are typical of the rest of Lancaster County. There are shoofly pies galore and saffron to spare. Great crowds gather at the firehouse for chicken corn soup suppers and sauerkraut dinners. But there are other foods that belong in a very special way to the Moravians who founded . . . [the town more than] two hundred years ago.

PRETZELS

Consider the pretzel—that “salt-besprinkled twist of dough” as Dr. Preston Barba calls it. On the Main Street of Lititz stands the oldest pretzel factory in the new world, the N. D. Sturgis plant. On the front of this stone building a bronze plaque honors the production of the first commercial pretzel. It reads:

On this site in 1861
Julius Sturgis
Established the first pretzel bakery
In the New World.
This tablet is dedicated by
The National Pretzel Bakers Institute
May 1951

The Lititz pretzel can truly be called Moravian in origin. The original recipe itself belonged to Moravians. Throughout . . . [the] years since Julius Sturgis began manufacturing pretzels from the formula received from an itinerant baker, many pretzel bakeries have operated in Lititz.

Have you wondered where the pretzel came from? The word itself, though German, was taken from the Latin *pretiola*, meaning “little gift.” In the Palatinate they were once given as rewards to children who learned their prayers. The shape of the pretzel suggested a pair of folded arms, an attitude of supplication. What a significant beginning for the lowly pretzel. From this grew our present multi-million dollar industry.



STRUSSEL BUNS

Now let us take a look at two foods which are connected more definitely with the personal life and have a religious significance: namely, Moravian strussel buns and Moravian sugar cake. Both are served in the Lititz church as a part of the love feasts, of which there are nine throughout the year. These are times set aside for fellowship in the Lord, when members of the congregation (and visiting Christians of other denominations) eat and drink together the love feast buns and coffee.

Wherever you find Moravians there will be love feast buns. The type of bun served differs with each congregation, but at the same time, each kind seems to be traditional with its congregation. To the Lititz Moravians, this bun is the strussel bun, also called streisler. It is a round bun about four inches in diameter. The dough is sweet as in other buns but the distinction lies in the topping. A sort of glaze, made by a cinnamon-sugar-and-butter mixture, covers the whole bun. At the church, before serving, they are sprinkled with powdered sugar.

Strussel buns are a delicacy that have been enjoyed by thousands of persons, yet no one in the congregation seems to know how to make them. As long as anyone can remember they have been supplied by a bakery that bakes them only for this one church. For the Christmas love feasts alone (of which there are three), they supplied fifteen hundred buns.

The present shape is round but strussel buns were not always so. Originally they were in the shape of pretzels. As recently as fifty years ago (perhaps a few years more or less) they were still shaped thus for the children's love feast and then were called sugar pretzels.

The strussel buns are served at all love feasts of the Lititz church excepting that for *dieners*, which is the one given by and for all the workers of the church. For this love feast the Moravian sugar cake is used. The reason for the substitution seems logical when one realizes that years ago, when the *dieners* themselves make the streislars for all love feasts, they chose to make a simpler one for their own.

MORAVIAN SUGAR CAKES

This sugar cake is a delicacy known to the Moravians of Winston-Salem as well as to the Moravian churches in Pennsylvania. Unlike the streislers which seem almost sacred in that they are reserved for love feasts, the sugar cake is baked in many homes even by non-Moravians who have borrowed the recipe. It is a raised cake made with yeast and baked in large sheets, about eight inches by eleven. This, too, has a scrumptious topping. When the cakes are raised, light brown sugar is copiously spread on top with a sprinkling of cinnamon added. Now here comes the good part! Indentations are made about an inch apart over the top and these are filled with butter. Of course, the more butter the better!

There are differences in sugar cakes just as there are in shoofly pies, but basically they are the same. Some cooks let the dough rise overnight, while others use a shorter raising dough. Although comparatively few women bake with yeast today, I venture to say that wherever there is a King's Daughters' bake sale you will still find Moravian sugar cake.

The following recipe comes from a sugar cake baker with twenty years of experience. She is Mrs. Joseph Eidson, a member of the Lancaster congregation but formerly from Lititz. She is well-known as a sugar cake baker since she sold them at the Arcade Farmers' Market in Lancaster for the past eight years. Although she discontinued her market baking several months ago, Mrs. Eidson still fills home orders. Rest assured that her recipe is fully tested, for with it she sometimes baked two hundred cakes in a week! Here is her recipe:

Place in a large bowl

2/3 cup vegetable shortening

1/2 cup granulated sugar

2 tsp. salt

1 cup hot riced potatoes

Beat well. Add

2 beaten eggs

1 pk. yeast dissolved in 1/2 cup warm water

7 cups enriched flour

1 cup warm milk

Mix and knead for ten minutes. Grease top with shortening. Cover with a cloth and set in warm place to rise until doubled in bulk. Punch down and spread on greased pans to 1/3 inch thickness. Cover with a dry cloth and cover the dry cloth with a wet or damp cloth. Let raise to 3/4 inch thickness. With a pastry brush, paint the top with melted butter. Sprinkle with sugar mixture: 1 tbsp. flour to 2 cups med. brown sugar. With fingers punch holes about an inch apart. Place 1/4 pat of butter in each hole. Sprinkle top with melted butter, using pastry brush. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. When baked, remove from pans to a thick cloth until cooled.

GINGER COOKIES

There are two more recipes that are definitely associated with Lititz Moravians: ginger cookies and Moravian mints. The ginger cookies are almost identical with what is known in Bethlehem as Moravian brown Christmas cakes. Of the similar Moravian white Christmas cakes there seems to be no likeness in Lititz.

The ginger snaps, as they are sometimes called, are wafer-thin and made in the shapes of stars, men, women, and trees. If you would visit the home of the town historian, Mary Augusta Huebener, at Christmastime, Miss Huebener and her brother Louis would know that you dropped in to see their Christmas Putz. Undoubtedly they would pass their homemade cookies which will probably include shrewsberries, scotch, sandtarts, cocoanut macaroons, and kisses as well as the ginger cookies. Among the gingers will be camel-shaped ones that have been cut with a camel cookie cutter that Louis himself made. This is Miss Huebener's recipe for ginger cookies:

1 qt. New Orleans molasses

1 lb. soft brown sugar

1 lb. lard and butter mixed, or all Crisco

3 3/4 lb. flour (more if necessary)

1 1/2 tbsp. ginger (no more)

2 or 3 tbsp. cinnamon

1/2 tbsp. cloves

1 heaping tsp. soda, dissolved in 1/4 cup hot water

1 cup milk

Mix together the flour, sugar, and spices. Rub in the shortening as for pie dough. Add molasses and soda and mix thoroughly. Chill overnight or longer. Roll out very thin on a floured cloth. Cut out and place on tins. Wash with the milk; one cup, to which has been added one tsp. molasses. Bake in a 315 degree oven.

-From The Dutchman, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Spring, 1955)



AMISH FUNERALS

by Vincent R. Tortora



The Amish gathering for a funeral at a Lancaster County farmstead.



An Amish funeral procession led by a horse-drawn hearse.

As with their weddings and church meetings, the Old-Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, derive their present-day funeral practices from half a millennium of tradition and custom. In their detached, semi-monastic existence, they have escaped the winds and tides of fashion which have all but swept personal and family involvement and self-sacrifice at the time of death from the contemporary scene. For the Amish, death is not shrouded by euphemisms and evasions, nor are responsibilities to the deceased facilely delegated to disinterested parties.

A death among the Amish literally sets up shock waves that reach into every corner of the community. Though the deceased may not be known by everyone, one or more members of his extensively ramified family will be.

At the moment of death, relatives living in or near the home of the deceased and many of the neighbors seem

to spring into action by a pre-arranged plan. One of the relatives quickly gets to a telephone to call the funeral director — a non-Amishman who, once accepted by the community, is engaged by nearly every Amish family as long as he stays in business.

Almost immediately, the family and neighbors mobilize to perform a dozen or more chores such as preparing the room in which the deceased will lie, cleaning up the house and farm buildings, gathering up the food and utensils which will be needed to feed the many guests who are expected, and so forth. If it is still early in the day, one of the family goes to the store to buy white muslin or poplin which will be sewn into cerements on the following morning. If it is late in the day, the materials are bought early the following morning.

When the undertaker arrives he brings with him a



The tying lot of an Amish cemetery.

folding stretcher or "cooling board." He either does the embalming at the home or takes the body to his establishment. If he does the latter, which is increasingly the case nowadays, he returns the body immediately after embalment, irrespective of the hour. It is then brought into the downstairs bedroom, laid on the cooling board with the trunk and head slightly raised and covered with sheets

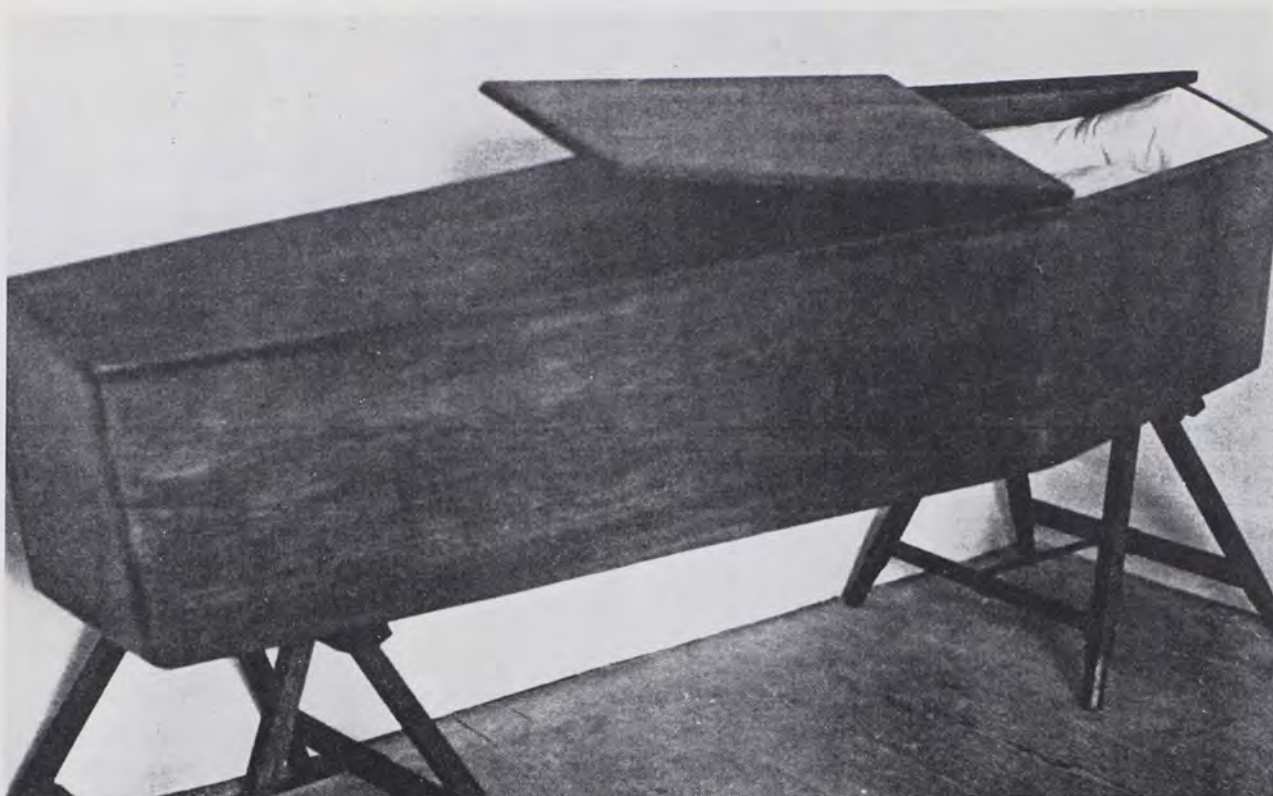
supplied by the family, but no blankets. Use of cosmetics on the body is strictly prohibited. In preparing the bedroom to receive the bier, the women clean its every nook and cranny and divest it of rugs, decorative objects and most of the furniture. The furniture which remains is usually pushed into a corner and covered with a cloth.

The funeral director subsequently returns to his place of business to insert the death notice and the funeral invitations in the newspapers, to telegraph relatives who live at a distance, and to pick a coffin and over-box the size of the body. He brings the rough unpainted white pine over-box to the home of the deceased from whence it is taken to the cemetery by some of the younger relatives who will dig the grave. Since the over-box is shaped like the coffin, six sided with tapered ends, the grave is dug to conforming dimensions, about 5 feet deep. The dirt is piled up nearby. The digging and other tools are kept handy in a small toolshed in the corner of the cemetery. When the over-box has been lowered into the grave, a wooden canopy is placed over the opening to keep out animals and water. The functions of the funeral director end for the time being after he has supplied the over-box and dispatched notices and telegrams. He does not usually return to the home until the following day, when he brings the coffin.

For the rest of the day of the death, the men and women relatives and the neighbors combine forces to clean up the house and farm buildings. Many persons drop in to offer their help. Some of the women begin to bake and cook. Some of the men go to surrounding farms in quest of benches on which to accommodate the throngs who will come to the viewing and the funeral. Necessary work on the farm or in the barn is performed by the neighbors. So similar is one Amish home to the next or one Amish farm to the next that neighbors can move in and take over with ease.



The Amish use farm sleighs for funerals in the winter when there is snow.



Typical six-sided Amish coffin made of walnut-stained poplar.

The period intervening between the return of the embalmed body to the home and the funeral on the third day is devoted to viewing the body and offering sincere condolences to the bereaved. Crying and wailing while viewing is considered a sign of respect to the dead and it will continue until after the burial ceremony. Those who come on the first day and on the morning of the second day view the body on the cooling board by gently lifting the sheet. During the afternoon of the second day, the body is dressed and placed in the coffin. No flowers grace the viewing room or the home. In the rest of the house the assembled friends and relatives cluster about in the various rooms, engaging in cordial conversations. It is not at all uncommon to hear someone suddenly laugh above the low murmur of voices. Indeed, the atmosphere among the guests outside the viewing room somewhat suggests levity. Moreover, everyone who comes to the viewing is expected to eat a substantial meal before leaving.

Close relatives who have left the Amish communion usually come to the viewing and to the funeral, but do not eat at the same table with the faithful. If they were to proffer money to help pay expenses, it would not be passed from hand to hand; rather, it would be placed on a table and then picked up by the Amishman.

During the morning of the second day, several of the close women relatives detach themselves from the activities to sew with a good deal of tender care the cerements with which they will clothe the body later in the day. For a woman, a white poplin or muslin dress is made in the

typical Amish pattern. It is usually designed to slip over the front of the body and to remain open in back or to be loosely closed with cloth straps. A white organdy prayer covering is also made for the head. The apron and the prayer cape (*holsdooch*) placed on the body are those which the deceased, as a young girl, wore at her wedding and at no other time. This practice is thought to symbolize the constancy of the young wife's wedding vows. The feet are clad only in white socks.

For the man, the white muslin or poplin is made into white trousers and a vest in the same pattern as his "going to meeting" suit. An ordinary white shirt and white socks complete the burial dress.

By the time the funeral director returns to the house with the coffin during the afternoon of the second day, the body has been washed and fully clothed and is ready to be placed inside. The six-sided coffin is traditionally made of black walnut wood finished with a turpentine and oil mixture, or of walnut-stained poplar. Plain cloth makes up the lining of the coffin as well as the casing of the cotton-stuffed pillow which is carefully fitted into the tapered head end. It bears no decorations or handles. The screws are blue and rounded at the top.

The coffin is placed on view standing on a pair of portable stools. The two hinged wooden flaps at the head end, which are about one-third the length of the coffin, are laid back along the top to reveal the body from the waist up. In sealing the coffin, the two flaps are closed and screwed down.

Members of the immediate family take turns maintaining a silent and sorrowful vigil at the coffin. They sit upright in a virtual trance with their legs as close to the coffin as possible. Since it is considered bad taste for them to depart from the house during the viewing, they leave the farm work to their neighbors. Furthermore, if church meeting should fall during the viewing period, they do not go.

On the third day, the funeral service is held. In the case of a morning service, the guests begin to arrive at about 8 o'clock. Several of the young men relatives act as hostlers and take care of the horses and carriages. Before unhitching the horses, however, they chalk corresponding numbers on the carriage and on the horse's blinder in order that they might quickly match them up when the service is over and the procession starts for the cemetery. Interspersed among the buggies are several rented cars in which hired drivers have brought friends and relatives to the funeral from distant areas.

The funeral service begins at approximately 8:30 a.m. Hinged partitions ordinarily separating the rooms are folded back to convert the downstairs part of the house into a large open area. The guests, dressed in their Sunday best, sit on backless benches arranged throughout the rooms. The bier is placed between the downstairs bedroom and the living room, in the area previously occupied by the partition, so that it can be viewed by the majority of those on the benches. Members of the immediate family sit quite close to the coffin.

The two to two-and-a-half-hour long service consists of silent prayers, spoken hymn texts (in contrast to the chanted hymns of the church service) and sermons intended to offer comfort (*droasht*) to the bereaved. At a child's funeral the sermons begin with the biblical passage, "Suffer little children to come unto me . . ." If a relative of the deceased

is a minister or bishop in the church, it is he who gives the main sermon. Each speaker is assigned a given period to sermonize and a clock on a close-by wall reminds him of the time.

At the close of the service, the coffin is screwed shut, lifted from the bottom by the pallbearers and carried out into the director's black buggy-hearse. Only twenty years ago the coffin was transported in an open spring-wagon. It took an adamant stand by the undertaker to convert the Amish elders to the closed "Black Maria." The driver is usually an Amishman hired by the director.

As quickly as the horses are matched up and hitched up to the buggies, the funeral procession to the cemetery begins. In the buggy immediately behind the hearse rides the widow or widower of the deceased and the oldest child. Next come the children in order of their age, accompanied by their families; then, the parents, if they survive; and then, the brothers and sisters, in order of their age. Behind the immediate family are the ministers, the more distant relatives and the friends. The hearse sets the pace for the procession, usually at five to six miles per hour. If the trip to the cemetery is a long one or over rough or snow-covered roads, a two-horse team pulls the hearse.

Remaining at the house are a few friends who prepare for the big meal scheduled after the burial. They convert the benches to tables by placing them on sawhorses and arrange them so as to get the maximum number in each room. One of the friends is assigned to making mashed potatoes in large kettles. The others make ready the numerous other foods which have been prepared by family and neighbors on the two preceding days.

The funeral procession heads for the cemetery that is traditional with the family. There are about a dozen active Amish cemeteries in Southeastern Pennsylvania, ranging from those with as many as a thousand stones to those



After burial wooden pegs are put up until the stones are finished.

with as few as half a dozen. The land for the cemetery is donated to the community by an Amish farmer for an indefinite period and is improved and maintained by all the families who will be using it. No money changes hands for the plot of ground, for the gravedigging, or for perpetual care.

If the deceased comes to his fate by his own hand, the funeral procedure remains essentially the same as that described above. In an earlier day, however, suicides were buried outside the cemetery fence. Today, they are buried inside. There are reports that Amish who meet their death while committing grievous sin are buried in sackcloth, facing downward.

Arriving at the cemetery, the buggies drive into the parking area and tie up at the hitching posts and along the fences. The hearse drives to the entrance of the cemetery itself. As soon as everyone has left his buggy and gathered around the hearse, the pallbearers take out the coffin, carry it close to the open grave and place it on portable stools. The funeral director, who has come to the cemetery in his own car, then unscrews the two upper flaps of the coffin for the final viewing. Slowly, all those present file past. Sobs and wails punctuate the solemnity. The men and boys keep their hats on as they pay their final tribute.

Once again, the coffin is screwed shut. It is now the task of the pallbearers to lower the coffin into the over-box at the bottom of the grave by means of webbed straps. As the slow lowering process begins, the men and boys remove their hats. Once the lid has been placed on the over-box, the pallbearers begin the slow and solemn process of shoveling back the dirt. With the first shovelful of earth, the last service begins. This consists of spoken hymn texts and silent prayers. The final act of the offi-

ciating minister is to give a chanted benediction.

No one leaves the grave until the last shovelful of dirt is put on. The fresh dirt over the grave is mounded on top to compensate for the settling. Small wooden pegs are placed at the ends of the grave to mark it until the ordered gravestone arrives. A few weeks later members of the family return to the grave to put up the gravestone and to shovel more dirt into the cavity created by settling. Amish gravestones have a uniform and elemental shape; rectangular with a rounded top. The epitaph is as brief as possible: name of person, date of birth, date of death, and age at death to the year, month and day.

The Amish never return to the cemetery after the funeral to pray over the grave. Each week during the summer, however, several families from the community take their turns mowing and trimming the grass and generally tidying up the premises.

Most of those who go to the cemetery return to the house for a big noon meal. The tables and food will have been readied by those who stayed behind. Traditionally served at this convivial repast are mashed potatoes and gravy, cold beef and gravy, cole slaw, pepper cabbage, prunes, applesauce, cheese, bread, buns, and raisin pie or "funeral pie" (also known as *leicht-boi*).

The number of persons who attend the viewing and funeral can be astoundingly high. In one case, an 89-year-old woman who died in 1957 left 9 children, 84 grandchildren, 247 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great grandchildren. She also had hundreds of nieces, nephews and friends.

—*From Pennsylvania Folklife, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Summer 1961)*



A typical tombstone, in German, in an Amish cemetery.

PENNSYLVANIA REDWARE

by Earl F. Robacker



An eight-inch sgraffito jar attributed to Georg Hübner. Made originally for Elizabetha Sisholz, it was long in the possession of Mrs. David Mosser. Mr. Mosser conducted the Buck Horn Hotel in the northern part of Lehigh County. One of the most important pieces of American sgraffito, it is now in the Winterthur Museum.



A best in redware. The light and dark brown mottling under the glaze, the expertly applied handles, and the regularly incised lines are noteworthy; the gold-flecked glaze is exceptional. (Except as noted, illustrations are from the Robacker Collection; photography by Charles Bahr.)

Pottery made of local clay was in common use all along the Eastern seaboard in Colonial days. There were probably few flourishing settlements in which at least one kiln was not in operation at some time or other, but a person who looks back from the present concludes that Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina were among the leaders both in the total quantity produced and in the quality of the product.

In Dutch Pennsylvania, a high proportion of the output was in what is now included in the general term of redware—individually made pieces of local clay which burned to a brick red in the kiln and slowly darkened to various tones of deeper red with use and the passing of time Redware falls into two broad categories: the once vast territory embracing roof tiles, chimney collars, “plain” jugs, jars, crocks, bowls, plates, and other utilitarian forms—glazed, unglazed, or partly glazed; and the smaller field of “fancy” glazed and decorated ware.

The details of pottery making have so often been described that it seems unnecessary to go into them here. Generally speaking, however, flat pieces like plates and platters were shaped over molds or patterns and the edges trimmed much as a pastry cook might trim the edges of a pie crust. Tall, hollow pieces were usually built up on a potter’s wheel. In both cases, the shaped “green” clay was set aside to dry, and later, often during the winter or a slack season, the kiln would be fired and the product of weeks’ or months’ work would be baked at one time.

Objects intended only for dry use would require no glazing at all, and would come out of the kiln in porous or “biscuit” form. Pieces which were to hold liquids, however, had to be glazed. The usual process was either to brush the thin glazing mixture on the interior surface or to place a quantity inside and swirl it about. Pieces which were to take on an ornamental quality were sometimes glazed inside and outside.



A sgraffito pie plate in tones of green and brown, by Jacob Medinger, last of the old-time potters. He operated his establishment up to 1931, perishing in the flames of his own kiln.

Slipware is the general term used for glazed pieces in which an element of design has been added. This design may range from simple waved or "squiggly" lines to drawings of birds or dates or names or initials. First names of women, incidentally, seem more often to be found on New England or Southern pottery than on Pennsylvania pieces. Designs were applied by means of a quill cup, a vessel with from one to as many as six or seven openings at the bottom. Hollow quills fitted to the openings led the thin "slip" to the surface to be decorated, and the operation called for considerable dexterity.

The slip mixture, made with a light-colored clay, was sometimes allowed to stand in relief against the surface adorned, but oftener was beaten flat before it had entirely dried. In pieces which had not been so beaten, the surface decoration often wore away in use.

To lend variety to severely plain objects, coloring agents were sometimes employed before the glazing operation. In general, no great care was taken, and the decorations appear as patches or splotches. Chemicals commonly used for this purpose were copper oxide and verdigris. While the glaze itself was usually clear or a pale yellow, the red lead which was its basic ingredient was sometimes darkened with manganese. Too great a quantity of manganese would turn the glaze black.

Most elaborate, most beautiful, hardest to find—and by far the most expensive—of all Pennsylvania pottery is the type known as sgraffito. The word "sgraffito," a term of Italian origin, means "scratched," and pottery to which the name is correctly applied has a neatly scratched or incised decoration. Probably most sgraffito pieces—like much of the best slip-decorated ware—were intended less to be used than to show the skill of the potter. Certainly, some of them were used as presentation pieces; others were put on display at country stores or in the home of the potter. That some were actually used, and used hard, is evident from the marks of wear they display.

Identifying bona fide pieces of American sgraffito is a job for the expert rather than for the amateur. Sgraffito and slip decoration were common to most Old World countries, and motifs and decorations showed a considerable degree of overlapping there, so that positive differentiation is frequently difficult. Many such pieces came



Slipware pie plates range in size from three-inch "tasters" to twelve-inch sizes—and sometimes larger. Applied designs are usually in yellow, but occasionally in green or black.



The inkwell and the two-handled pitchers are expertly made and glazed, and show signs of use. Perhaps, ironically, the unglazed penny bank shows little indication of wear! The redware cookie mold, deer pattern, is a rarity—perhaps unique.



Colanders were of various sizes, with or without handles and feet. Flower pots, too, existed in great variety; pot and base here are one piece. Few chamber pots survived.

to America in family emigrations, and many more have come over by recent importation—with some of the same elements of design used on articles of known American provenance. It is to be feared that some pieces in well-known museum collections, while purporting to be American, are actually of foreign birth. To confuse the picture even further, some American potters consciously or unconsciously imitated known or remembered European prototypes, and did not bother to affix their names to their products.

The total result is an interesting collection of American

and foreign, good and less-good, genuine and spurious pottery, with the expert sometimes at a loss and the amateur completely bewildered. Is a newly discovered article a "find" and worth considerably more than the modest asking price? Is it actually South German—or English or Austrian or Flemish—and therefore not worth the asking price to the collector of things Pennsylvania Dutch? Any investment in good sgraffito is likely to run into three figures and perhaps into four; so it behooves the would-be collector to utilize all the scraps of information available.

Much sgraffito ware is dated. The earliest date known



Apple butter crocks may hold anywhere from a quart to more than two gallons, and have been in almost continuous production from early times. Following a slump in the first quarter of the century, they are again in popular demand.



Bowls are found in a great variety of sizes, but usually less elaborately decorated than the nine-inch specimen shown here. Milk bowls (for use in cooling milk in large quantities) were sometimes as much as twenty inches across.



Sgraffito plate dated 1769, with no added color in or under the clear glaze. Potter unknown.

personally to the writer is 1769, though prior recordings have not infrequently been noted. The period from 1810 to 1840 is probably most frequently represented. Sgraffito seems to have passed out of favor shortly thereafter, although dated pieces of slipware are found up to the 1870's. However, the date, while desirable, is not a vitally necessary attribute of good sgraffito.

Sometimes the shape of the article provides a clue to provenance. The most commonly found piece is the concave pie plate, frequently about 12 inches in diameter, decorated and glazed only on the inside. The edge may be coggled or plain—but is seldom turned or rolled under. Further, American plates seldom had sides and a bottom: oftener, they were "all of a piece"—a sliced-off section



The whorled baking dish at the left, thin and fragile, is something of an anomaly in Pennsylvania redware. More common is its much-later successor, the Turk's head dish, proto-type of like vessels in tin and copper.



A deep platter in slipware in the most familiar of designs.



Left, a Pennsylvania pitcher of characteristic shape in chocolate-brown and black. Right, a pitcher signed "S. Bell," sometimes assumed to be Pennsylvanian but almost certainly made in Virginia. Bell pieces are noted for the bold use of green in the glaze.



Two superior sgraffito pie plates. The one at the left is marked "Andrew U."; the one at right is attributed to Samuel Troxel.



Roof tiles, curved over the potter's fore-thigh when they were made, were laid side by side on the roof, where they hooked over heavy lath. Tiers or courses did not overlap as is the case with shingles; the separate rows were as distinct vertically as they were horizontally. Each tile was so grooved that rain water ran to the center of the tile next below it—and we are told that redware tile roofs never leaked.

of a hollow globe, so to speak.

Aside from plates, articles in sgraffito include mugs, tall vases or jugs, flower pots, and a very few miscellaneous pieces, mostly one of a kind, such as sugar bowls, fan-shaped flower holders, and covered jars. A moot object is the puzzle jug, an elaborate contrivance which empties its contents through an opening other than the one apparently intended. Puzzle jugs, old and new, are not uncommonly found abroad, but one of documented Pennsylvania origin is a rarity among rarities.

Very highly desired are pieces of sgraffito which are also slip decorated, usually in light colors. Sometimes this color was applied over-all in the liquid glaze, the design

being scratched through to the red clay before it dried completely. In other cases, more than one color was used.

The elements of design are often helpful in identifying sgraffito, but are not infallible. Pieces of attested American origin display tulips; more or less conventionalized flowers and leaves; tapering trees often called the "tree of life"; birds, including the pelican; deer; fish; mounted horsemen or horsewomen; and unmounted figures. Many of these pieces are so well known historically that when one changes hands, the transaction becomes news. It is with lesser-known specimens, however, that the average collector will have to deal.

Inscriptions used as borders, usually in faulty German



Potter Thomas Stahl (1863-1942) of Powder Valley, Pa., holding a ring vase or Scots Hogmanay bottle. (Pennsylvania Folklife Archives, Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pa.)

but rarely also in English, sometimes furnish part of the decoration in large plates or platters, or in flower pots. The sentiments expressed range from the humorously earthy to the moral or philosophical.

Extremely desirable, of course, is a piece which bears the potter's name. Sometimes the potter alone was the artisan; sometimes several members of the family were involved. Pieces were signed by or known to have been made by persons with such surnames as Bergey, Haring, Headman, Hildebrand, Hubner, Medinger, Nase (or Neesz), Roudebuth, Scholl, Spinner, Stahl, Stofflet, Troxel, and Weaver—but only a few pieces of signed work by any of them have survived. Occasionally it is possible to make a reasonably safe attribution by comparing unsigned pieces with strikingly similar signed ones.

—*Abridged from an article in The Pennsylvania Dutchman, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Fall-Winter, 1956-57)*

SCRATCH-CARVED EASTER EGGS

by Alfred L. Shoemaker

The earliest reference thus far located to the custom of scratch-carving Easter eggs in the Dutch Country is in Thomas Anburey's *Travels Through the Interior Parts of America*, London, 1789. The author speaks of boys and girls scratching all sorts of shapes and figures on dyed Easter eggs with needles. We learn nothing about the designs, however, that were scratched on the eggs.

Judging from everything else that was ever decorated in the early period, it is quite likely that there were tulips, hearts and distelfinks. The very next reference, chronologically, does mention scratching tulips on Easter eggs. A Moravian, in a letter to the publisher of the *Allentown Republikaner* of April 23, 1829, writes that on a trip from Nazareth to Sumnytown he saw old folks scratching tulips on Easter eggs. ("Die alten kritzelten Tullpanen darauf.")

In an article on "Easter Lore" I wrote in the Easter 1953 *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, I published the materials I had gathered up to that time on scratch-carved eggs. In the meantime I have located several other items on the subject.

From the Reading Times and Dispatch of April 8, 1874.

Last evening we were shown by Mr. Lewis H. Neider, residing at No. 25 North Second street, an Easter Egg of the year 1840. Inscribed on it is the year 1840, a log cabin, hard cider barrel, buckeye tree, the American flag, a sheaf of wheat, and mountain tulips. It is a veritable Old Line Whig egg, and was inscribed by the late Abraham Neider, the father of Mr. Neider, who prizes it as an old family relic.

From the Lancaster Intelligencer of March 18, 1880.

Amos Miley, saddler, showed us this morning an old Easter egg which has a history. The egg was decorated fifty-five years ago by David Miley, Amos Miley's father, who was a wheelwright and then resided in Washington Borough. On one side of the egg is drawn a mill with two large arches under it through which the tailrace water is supposed to pass. The mill is surmounted by a spire, the weather-vane of which is a fish, very like a shad. The mill is flanked on either side by Lombardy poplars, trees that were held in high esteem in the olden time. To the rear of the mill, on the opposite side of the egg is a garden in which flowers are growing—one of them being a good representation of a tulip, and the leaves of another looking like tobacco leaves, a plant that was cultivated to some extent in Washington, even at that early day. On the centre of the larger end of the egg is scratched a double white star, and surrounding the star are the following letters and figures: "D.M.B.S., 1825." "D.M." are the initials of David Miley, and 1825 is the year when the egg was scratched. The "B.S." is supposed to be the initials of some other person's name.

This egg was found about a dozen years ago in a secret drawer in an old-fashioned desk, and from that time until

about two years ago was carefully preserved in his safe. Two days ago, Mr. Miley took it from the safe and put it in his coat pocket for the purpose of showing it to some friends. Forgetting that it was in his pocket he "sat down on it" crushing it into fragments. Gathering together the pieces, he placed them in the hands of Charles R. Frailey, esq., with a request that he should mend the egg if he could. Mr. Frailey took a large cork and cut it down to the shape and size of the broken egg, as nearly as he could judge its proportions, and then piece by piece placed the fragments on the surface of the cork. There were 56 fragments and Mr. Frailey, with much labor and skill, succeeded in getting each one in its place, restoring the egg to its original appearance.

From the Lancaster Intelligencer of March 20, 1880.

We were today shown by Abe Miller, four colored eggs which have been scratched by him, and which will be shipped to Brooklyn, a party from that city having ordered them some time ago. One of the eggs has a correct likeness of Horace Greeley on one side, while on the other is a coat-of-arms of Pennsylvania. On a large goose egg Mr. Miller has scratched pictures of Wilhelmj, the violinist, and Miss Anna Teresa Berger, the cornetist. Another goose egg contains an excellent picture of Henry Ward Beecher on one side, while on the other is a picture representing a tobacco packer and his boss. On the fourth egg is scratched a picture of the Berger family of musicians as they appear on the stage. The work is remarkably well done, and it shows that Mr. Miller is quite an artist in that line.

From the Lancaster Intelligencer of March 27, 1882.

Abe Miller, the well-known egg scratcher, has just completed two good jobs for Dr. H. H. Gerhart, of Canandaigua, New York. On the side of one there is an excellent likeness of President Garfield and on the reverse is a cross entwined with flowers. The other egg has a very good picture of Washington on one side and an Easter scene, with a rabbit, a small boy and an egg on the other. Mr. Miller has left at this office an egg containing a picture of Garfield on one side and one of the catafalque, on which his body rested in the Washington depot, on the other.

From the Lebanon Daily Times of March 24, 1883.

Mr. Lyman Hess, barber, of this place, last week forwarded to Gov. Pattison an Easter egg which is artistically engraved with representations of the Goddess of Liberty, the American eagle with a streamer in its mouth, with the words "Democratic victory"; a rooster, crowing the words, "40,000 for Pattison"; and a rose, encircled by stars. The egg is very much admired by Gov. Pattison and he has returned his thanks to Mr. Hess for the present.

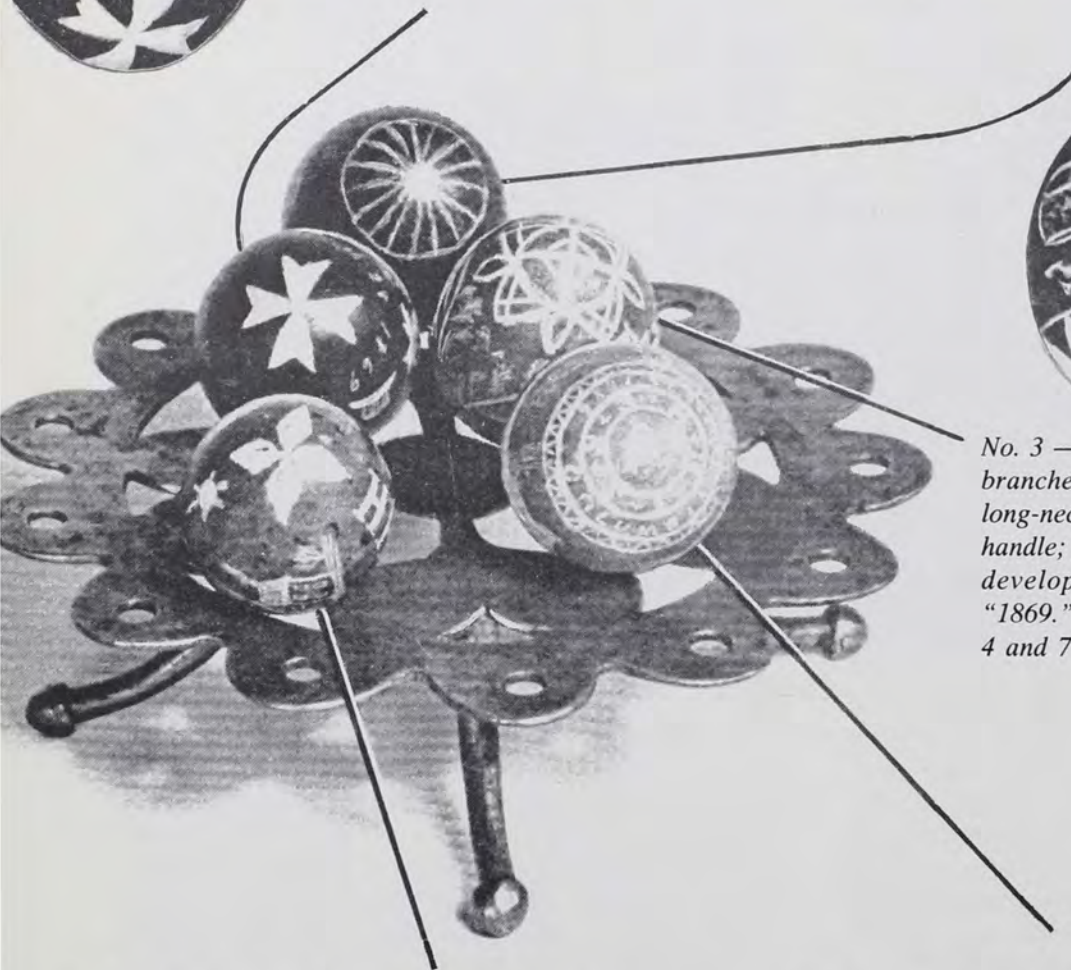
—From *The Dutchman*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Spring, 1955)



No. 2 — Hen's egg, brown; a gull-like bird; small animal; three turtles; decorative branch and leaves; bird on a branch; small bird's nest with eggs; a fly or bee. Ends highly geometricized.



No. 1 — Hen's egg, brown; a house, decorative trees; initials "E A F"; birds on a branch; ends highly geometricized. (All specimens from the egg collection of Fred Wichmann, photography by Samuel Cooper)



No. 3 — Hen's egg, brown; a box with a two-branched decorative tree with bird on top; a long-necked bird; nest with eggs; ark; cup with handle; gull-like bird; small bird. Ends highly developed geometric designs; inscription, "1869." Note: this probably belongs with Nos. 4 and 7 as it has the same style and subjects



No. 5 — Hen's egg, yellowish brown; a large house with large and small trees; an ark; tulip and leaf; inscription, "MAMA AND PAPAS GIFT TO THEIR BABY." The one end reads "OUR BESSIE" "COLUMBIA APRIL 24 1886" in a circle.

No. 4 — Hen's egg, reddish; a tree, a decorative branch and leaves; pig; nest with eggs; decorative tree; two turtles; small animal; house with a large and small tree; cup with handle. The ends are geometric designs. Inscription — "E H H 1874." (This was probably the son of the No. 9; see also Nos. 3 and 4.)





No. 9 — Turkey's egg, dark brown; a nest surrounded by two large fowl and six small ones; a palm-like tree; a box containing a decorative plant with a bird sitting on top; geometric designs on ends. Inscription, "A M H MADE BY HIS PAPA 1843"; see Nos. 2,3,4.



No. 8 — Hen's egg, yellowish brown; decorative flowers and leaves; a pair of flying birds. The end says "C O L A" (for Columbia, perhaps?). Most of the space is taken up by the inscription "BESSIES GIFT FROM MAMA APRIL 18 1890"; see No. 5.

No. 7 — Hen's egg, brownish purple; the ends are spotted with lighter dots resembling a wax-resist treatment. The inscription — "EMMA LOUISE 1855" — is scratch carved.

No. 6 — Hen's egg, dark reddish purple; the side area is divided into five equal parts: a tree; a fish; a bird on a branch; the date, "1897"; the inscription "Lizzie." The ends are five-pointed stars.



FRACTUR FROM THE HOSTETTER COLLECTION

by Frances Lichten



This fractur, a *Vorschrift*, reads: "This copybook belongs to Peter Huh, industrious scholar in penmanship in the Earl School in Lancaster County, Oct. 30, 1792." (Photos by Clifford Yeich)



Unusually good Fraktur piece for so recent a date. Note the eagles with "E PLURIBUS UNUM" streamers in their beak.

The Fraktur drawing and/or illuminated manuscript record is the outstanding contribution of the Pennsylvania Dutch to the folk art of this country. The ancient art of manuscript illumination—for that is what Fraktur is—was practiced on this side of the Atlantic long after the printing press in the homeland had supplanted the work of the scribes. A peasant art, Fraktur was much admired by the folk, who, following their custom, kept their own records in this fashion until officialdom and the state took over this task. And as long as they followed this custom, how striking their records were!

While the *Taufschein* or birth-and-baptismal certificate contains all the necessary information, every inch of the paper not occupied with the records is covered with colorful decoration, drawn with quill pen and painted with water-color. As these birth records were prepared for members of Protestant sects, they carry no specific religious symbols

such as crosses, but with this exception, the range of decorative motifs is fairly wide, with the tulip and heart dominating, as they do in other fields of Pennsylvania Dutch decoration.

These papers were made for their communities by the schoolmaster or the clergyman, but as time passed, itinerant scribes entered the field. In schools, writing was taught by copying handwritten examples, called *Vorschriften*, prepared by the schoolmaster for this purpose. If the pupil liked to draw, he learned that, too, in addition to writing, by copying the decorations on the Fraktur drawings and *Vorschriften*.

The Fraktur writer, after establishing the style of certificate, generally adhered to the motifs of his choice. That is the reason many Fraktur pieces bear a close resemblance to each other, plus the fact that the scribe, in preparing subsequent copies, traced the main features of the design.



This fractur, a birth record, reads: "Jacob Waidman is my name and Heaven is my Fatherland. I was born in Leacock Township, Lancaster County, Nov. 21, 1789."

Even so, there are no exact duplicates and one can see that the scribe added variations to the basic design from sheer pleasure in his craft.

As birth certificates were valued records, they were usually preserved between the pages of the Bible, or framed as wall decorations, or even occasionally pasted inside the lids of dower chests. Some disappeared entirely from view, because certain folk followed an odd custom of interring them with the dead.

The examples shown here from the Hostetter Collection in the Rothman Gallery at Franklin and Marshall College are particularly fine and fully display the elaborate surface patterning characteristic of early illuminated manuscripts. When human figures were introduced, they always bore the earmark of the primitive artist. Nevertheless, these quaintly drawn figures help us to visualize the time when these handsome documents were produced.

—From *The Dutchman*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (June, 1954)

John Gahman's religious guide in German and English. Note the sampler influence in the letters at the bottom of the fractur.





This fraktur, a birth record, reads: "Anna Gerw[b]er is my name and Heaven is my Fatherland. I was born in Leacock Township, Lancaster County, Oct. 2, 1788.



Vorschrift of John Zimmerman (carpenter), industrious scholar, in Earl Township, Lancaster County, March 12, 1823.



Map of the Folk Festival Grounds



Key

1

Number Corresponds to Events Schedule Inside



First Aid



Pennsylvania Dutch Food Specialties



Crafts and Folk Art Buildings



Rest Rooms



Crafts and Folk Art Tents



Parking



Parking