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The Shingle Maker
Contributors to this Issue

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VICTOR C. DIEFFENBACH (1882-1965), of Bethel, Pennsylvania, was a frequent contributor to our predecessor, The Pennsylvania Dutchman, as well as to Pennsylvania Folklife. For many years he also wrote a dialect column under the name of “Der Oldt Bauer” in the Lebanon Daily News. His rare knowledge of Pennsylvania German traditional life was matched only by his ability to narrate it in words. His article in this issue deals with powwowing (Braucherei), the Pennsylvania German type of religious healing which makes use of charms, incantations, and spells.
Contents

2 Shingle-Making: An Aspect of Early American Carpentry
MARSHALL JOSEPH BECKER

20 Popular Black Music in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia
ROBERT F. ULLE

29 Powwowing among the Pennsylvania Germans
VICTOR C. DIEFFENBACH

47 TIME IN TRADITIONAL CULTURE: The Year Cycle. Folk-Cultural Questionnaire No. 42

Contributors to this Issue
(Inside front cover)

COVER:
Shingle-making technology as demonstrated by Dr. Marshall Joseph Becker at the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation in the Ridley Creek Park. The Plantation is a new Living Historical Farm and Open Air Museum founded to interpret the everyday life of the English population in rural Pennsylvania in the second half of the 18th Century.
SHINGLE MAKING:
An Aspect of Early American Carpentry

By MARSHALL JOSEPH BECKER

The production of shingles (from the Latin scindere: to split) was an important part of the technology of Colonial America. Together with shakes and clapboards, shingles were necessary for roofing the numerous buildings that were part of a functioning farm. The basic need for such roofing items and their constant deterioration required that they be made in fairly large quantities from wood which was locally available. Therefore, the making of shingles was but one of the numerous skills which had to be included in the successful farm community.

Not only were shingles and other wood products (e.g. staves, clapboards, etc.) an integral part of rural life in Colonial America, but the export of these items and lumber was a major American industry from the early 17th Century (see Bailyn 1955:58). Rived and shaved shingles and staves, which were produced by men and boys on farms during the winter months, formed a major American cottage industry (Fletcher 1971:328). The finished products were collected in port towns and shipped to markets in the West Indies and Europe (Fletcher 1971:327). Philadelphia, for example, served as one of the prominent transshipment ports for these products (Schoepf 1968:117). A great demand for wooden containers was generated by the export of various farm products, pickled fish, and other commodities. These were packed in barrels of a standard size bound with wooden hoops. Some of the techniques used in making shingles were used in preparing barrel staves, but shingle making appears to have been a much less complex operation.

Glassie (1968:209) notes that shingles rapidly replaced thatching, but errs in stating that this was a British import. Englishmen of the period roofed with thatching or tile since wood was too expensive for the job. Bucher (1969:56) is probably correct in inferring that wooden shingles probably were a Continental European tradition, one which probably came with the Swedes and German. The sides of buildings were generally made of sawn boards (weatherboards) although split clapboard sides were widely used in New England. Clapboards, however, were seldom used for siding in Virginia although they were used for roofs (P. Buchanan: pers com.). Board and batten sidings were not used in the colonial period, but appear to be a 19th Century form (P. Buchanan: pers. com.).

Clapboards appear to have been used as siding in northern areas during the colonial period, being replaced by milled shingles only after 1800 (Oliver 1956:29). This thesis is supported by Buchanan (pers. com.). However, the popular and probably incorrect belief is that shingled walls were common only during the early period, and that clapboards replaced shingles as house siding in the early 1700's (see Sloane 1956:42, 1965:14-15; Robinson and Robinson 1936:97, 160). Popular authors generally repeat the belief that clapboards were considered "dressy" and were used on the front of houses while shingles continued to be on the
Log splitting.
other three sides. Clapboards appear to have been the most common material in the New World for the siding of houses during the colonial period. Mercer (1968: Fig. 12) suggests that clapboards were displaced as the common siding only after the vertical saws of the mills began to produce weather board in the 1700’s. Mercer confuses the use of sawn boards with sawn shingles, which did replace clapboards. Both weatherboards and clapboards were nailed on with a small overlap (Whiffen 1960:68).

Clapboards, like shingles, originally were rived from oak in a process almost identical (see Sloane 1956:42). Clapboards were tapered, or thinned, to one long edge. Thin oak boards were also used for covering roofs, as well as walls (Whiffen 1960:5, 68). Whiffen believes this rare roofing form, using boards four feet long, may have been more common in the 17th Century (see also Arnow 1960:263).

The fine art of making shingles by hand for farm use was not significantly threatened by the early development of machinery to saw perfectly parallel sided and uniformly tapered shingles. Saw-mills initially produced these shingles largely for the urban market, and many New England shingle splitters were put out of business. However, the farm roof was still generally put on or repaired by the owner or by a local carpenter who also served as a regional specialist in roofing and presumably shingle making, for remote rural areas. Such carpenters were known until 1850, but by 1900 almost all but the most isolated regions used milled shingles or other roofing materials. There is very little recorded information regarding the process of making shingles. No mention of shingle making appears in many detailed histories of technology (see Goodman 1964; Singer, et. al. 1967) or in early works on technology (Moxon 1677-1680). However, Glassie (1968) offers many references to this craft. As numerous researchers have learned, shingle making in America sur-
vived as a hand craft only in the mountain and southern states up until the second quarter of the 20th Century, although it is still a viable manufacturing process in the Pacific northwest (see Clark 1971). The "Red Cedar Shingle and Hand Split Shake Bureau" (Seattle, Washington) serves to supply the contemporary market with products made after the traditional fashion. Modern architects concerned with accurate restorations and reconstructions of historic buildings find these commercial products a satisfactory if illusionary substitute. A list of wood shingle makers also may be found in the Thomas Register of American Manufacturers.

Despite all modern innovations in shingle technology, the hand-split shingle is still believed by most craftsmen to be superior to the sawed shingle. Sawing produces a "fuzzy" surface (see Richmond 1974). This surface absorbs more water, which retards drying and speeds rotting (Anon. 1879:223). The split shingle has a smoother and theoretically more water-repellant surface.

The actual durability of a shingled roof may be inferred from the historic data on Mount Vernon. The nucleus of the surviving mansion, built in the 1730's as a 1½ floor building, was enlarged about 1758. In raising the structure to 2½ stories, a new roof had to be added (see Washington 1783). Changes were made in the building during the Revolution and in 1785 a new roof was installed (Washington 1785). Another roof was put on in the 1860's and the next in 1912. The present roof dates from 1973. One may infer that with high maintenance a well-shingled roof might last 50 to 60 years, although Buchanan (pers. com.) estimates that most shingled roofs need replacing after 30 years. Buchanan indicated (pers. com.) that the life of a shingle roof depends on numerous factors, some of which are as follows:

1. Underlayment: If laid on solid sheathing the undersides of the shingles will rot in 5 to 20 years. If laid on shingle it may "breath" and will last longer.
2. Round butt shingles last longer in warmer climates.
3. A gable roof will last longer than a hip roof.
4. A steeply pitched roof will last longer than one of lesser pitch.
5. Nailed shingles last longer than those which are pegged.
6. Shingles with less exposure to the weather will last longer.
7. Varieties of wood influence durability, as does removal of the sapwood, etc.

In an effort to gather surviving knowledge about the skills involved in shingle making a great number of individuals were involved in carpentry or house-building in Southeastern Pennsylvania during the turn of the century were questioned. Very few practitioners of these arts, or even observers of the shingle-making process could be located in this area. Witthoft (1953) has collected extensive data on the subject from Western Pennsylvania, the Virginias, and North Carolina. Witthoft assisted the Cherokee Historical Association in the reconstruction of a Cherokee village. Local Cherokee craftsmen, using traditional skills, did the work. Witthoft and Ditchburn, who were interested in traditional wood technology, located many practitioners aged 80 and above in the Path and Horse Valleys west of the Susquehanna and west of Hagerstown, Maryland. Among these men were many who had worked at house building and roofing, inheriting not only the trades, but also the tools.

Witthoft notes (pers. com.) that the shingle making technique in the area he studied was generally similar to that of the Great Smokies. However, in the Smokies some tools differed and no break or shingle bench (Figs. 5 and 6) were used. One resident of Chester County has provided extensive information regarding the production of shingles in south-western Virginia. The mountain country of the Virginias is one area which has remained relatively isolated until well into the 20th Century. These hills were home to a great number of independent and capable farmers who maintained an 18th Century technology and tradition until well into the 20th Century. Roy Wimmer, who was raised on a subsistence farm, learned a great deal about various crafts from his grandfather, who was born in 1851. This gentleman built the family house about 1870 and ran a self-sufficient farm until his death at 84 years of age. With the exception of coffee and some sugar, everything eaten or worn by the 15 people on this farm was grown there, including the wool for clothing and hides for shoes. The original house, now incorporated into a larger unit, still stands. Many of Wimmer's recollections are incorporated in the following description. Data on shingle making in Chester County, Pa. were provided by M. Lieper Green of West Chester. Green, who was born in 1892, began an apprenticeship as a carpenter at the age of thirteen. By 1905 very few shingles were hand split in Chester County. Only a few local small farmers still produced a limited number of shingles for roof repairs, or to cover a small shed. From his past observations Green was able to supplement the information provided by Wimmer.

During the 19th Century the making of singles constituted one of the numerous tasks performed in the course of farm building and maintenance. However, this aspect of construction had numerous facets, from selecting the wood to nailing or pegging the finished product in place. These many aspects of the process were best learned as a child along with the multitudes of other complex activities which were necessary parts
Nearly finished roof.
of an adult male farmer’s repertoire. As the young men learned dozens of such tasks, the young women learned the complementary tasks of food processing (storing, preparing, etc.) and clothing manufacture. A successful adult couple could maintain an efficient operation which would provide all the needs of a family living on a farmstead. Such total technological independence was rarely required except on the frontier, but such couples continually pushed the American frontier westward until the entire country was settled.

The evidence at hand suggests that from the beginning of colonization in the late 17th and early 18th Centuries the English in Pennsylvania appear to have maintained small communities with complex technological interdependence. This technological co-operation served as an adjunct to the community social integration evidenced by the Friends Meetings. Although every farmstead appears on the surface to have been an independent economic unit, a complex and interdependent technology based on specialized skills was established long before the American Revolution. Thus William Smedley, a farmer and teacher, provided services as a scribe and educator. Hawley also left to posterity detailed notes on his daily activities (Hawley ms.). Although he did his own rough wood working, such as splitting rails, he almost certainly purchased the shingles and clapboards for which he bought nails in 1776. Both shingles and nails were the products of “specialists” who owned nearby farms and practiced both farming as well as another trade. Although the significance of production and distribution of shingles, clapboards, etc., is of ultimate concern to scholars interested in the role of carpentry within the scheme of early American life, the intent of this paper is simply to review the technological process itself. From this basic understanding of mechanical processes later scholars may be able to draw conclusions regarding the relationship between technology and culture during the 18th Century.

SHINGLE MAKING
Selecting the Wood

The preferred wood for making shingles in Chester County, Pennsylvania, was the shingle oak (Quercus imbricaria Michaux), a tree which commonly grows 20 meters tall (65 feet), but can often grow to 30 meters high (Hui-lin 1972:106). A great many local names have been noted for this important tree (Withthoft, pers. com.), and Bucher (1969:54) offers the term “laurel oak” from Pennsylvania. The preference for oak in Pennsylvania probably relates to the preference for oak shingles in England where only the rising cost of oak shingles caused stone or tile roofs to become common (Whiffen 1960:70). The great abundance of white oak (Q. alba), which is native to eastern North America, in colonial times may be one reason why shingles were commonly made from this tree in the 18th Century. White oak, more valued than red oak, was used for shingles, staves, lath, and baskets, but not for building.

White oak is most similar to the English Q. petraea, which also has a light gray to white bark. In England Q. robur is generally used. In the American West Q. garryana and Q. lobata are used in place of the preferred oaks. Red oak was used for wall logs. Witthoft had heard of red oak being used for shingles, but he never actually saw them. Bucher (1969:52) uses red oak in modern shingle making demonstrations, and has suggested that considerable differences are to be found in logs from separate locations. Chestnut (Castanea dentata) was also preferred for wall logs in Western Pennsylvania, and is reported as a good shingle wood from that area as well as in the Virginias and other areas (see Sloane 1954:17). Witthoft (1953:86) discusses the wide range of oaks used by the Cherokee of North Carolina in making shingles. Witthoft (1953:87) also discusses the testing of oaks and the scars that remain on trees found unsuitable. He has found such scars on old oaks in regions of the country where no oak shingling tradition survived. Witthoft (1953:87) reports that tulip poplar may have been used for shingles but that its value would have quickly removed it from among the commonly used woods.

Green said that the only wood he knew to be used for shingles in Chester County was that of the edible chestnut, suggesting that chestnut was generally a favored wood in the absence of oak. Witthoft (pers. com.) saw white pine, red cedar, and cypress used for milled shingles, but never for split shingles. This agrees with an early reference (Anon. 1879:223) which indicates that pine, cypress, and cedar were considered the best woods to use for shingles, but that oak, ash, chestnut, hemlock, and other woods could be used (see also Sloane 1962:31). Cedar appears to have been used where it was most available (Arnow 1960:263). Sloane (1965:15) believes that white cedar (probably Cupressus thyoides and not Thuja occidentalis) was highly valued as shingle wood, even to the extent of felled logs being “mined” from the New Jersey swamps. Both white oak and cedar split well in any direction and therefore are somewhat easier to work into shingles than other woods.

In tidewater Virginia cypress was the favored wood, but yellow pine and white cedar were also used (Whiffen 1960:5). In 1767 the specifications for the Stratton Major Poor House specify 18 inch shingles of cypress or chestnut, indicating that the latter was also used in Virginia. The preference for cypress, however, is clearly shown in an advertisement from 1772 (Gloucester County), which offers “Pine Heart Shingles—good as
any Cypress” (Whiffen 1960:204, fn. 23; see also Whiffen 1958:227, 231). No shingles of oak, which tends to warp and to rot around the nails, or of chestnut have been found at Williamsburg, although Whiffen assumes that these woods were probably used (see also Whiffen 1958:212, fn. 23). Quite possibly the trees had become rare by the early 1700’s and therefore uncommon as a source of shingles.

George Washington roofed the buildings at Mount Vernon with shingles cut from the cypress of the Dismal Swamp. Buchanan (pers. com.) believes that the swamp cypress, Taxodium distichum (generally called the bald cypress) will last while other cypress will not. Green (pers. com.) believes that cypress rotted quickly in Chester County, but he may have been familiar with only T. ascendens, the pond cypress, or some species of the genus Cupressus.

Wimmer (pers. com.) indicated that white oak was generally considered the best wood for making shingles in Western Virginia, but that “chestnut oak” (described as a scrub oak growing in the hills of western Virginia) and “water oak” could also be used. He noted that when the sap was up in the “chestnut oak” its bark was stripped for tanbark and taken to a paper mill where it was crushed to extract the tannin. The skinned tree could then be processed into shingles or other wood products. However, as noted below, the best time to cut a tree for shingle wood is in the winter.

Cutting the Tree

The ability to work the wood from many trees decreases rapidly after felling. Timing, therefore, is extremely important in the cutting and splitting of shingles. Most authors ignore this aspect of the shingle making process and those who mention it (Arnow 1960:263; Sloane 1954:17, 1962:26, 31) incorrectly believe that the seasoned wood splits better than the fresh cut timber. Bucher (1969:54) is almost alone in noting that wood should be worked while green.

The best time to fell a tree is in the winter when the sap is down. Witthoft (pers. com.) notes that in Western Pennsylvania a tree is always cut in a waning moon “or else the boards will curl up.” White oak is best done as soon after the tree is taken off the stump as possible, for both white oaks for shingles and red oaks hewn for wall logs. When green (wet) these woods are easily worked, but the more they dry the more difficult they are to work.

In order to understand better why shingles have to be made the way they are one should know something about the biology of a tree. The following list notes the layers of a tree beginning at the center and working out therefrom:

1. Duramen: Commonly called the “heartwood,” this portion consists of dead wood without living cells. Duramen is relatively stable until split, when it tends to warp. This is why it is “quarter sawed” (see below).
2. Xylem: wood with ducts transporting water from the roots, and serving as a flexible but sturdy mechanical support.
3. Phloem: a narrow band of living wood carrying nutrient from the leaves.
5. Alburnum: the newly formed wood just beneath the bark of any dicotyledonous plant (deciduous tree or shrub); “sapwood.”

In white oak two other structural details are significant. (1) Annual growth rings show a conspicuous difference between winter and summer wood. The large vessel openings of summer wood decrease and grade into winter wood, with tight openings until growth stops about December. In the spring a rapid summer growth begins. The line between winter and early summer growth is a primary cleavage line, important for making splints for baskets. (2) Bundles of vessels, called rays, pass from the center of the tree to the bark area. These numerous rays are secondary lines of weakness, permitting the riving of shingles.

As a log dries its length is stable but the diameter shrinks due to massive reduction in the summer growth. The alburnum, or sapwood, shrinks more rapidly than the heartwood, causing checking cracks to develop near the bark. During drying the heartwood is under compression, and has uneven stresses. This varies in woods,
being almost nil in the stable wild cherry, fairly stable in cedar, but extremely bad in white oak. Since all shrinkage is toward the center, boards (or planks) which are sawed on a diameter (or radius) will shrink evenly. Those boards which are not on a radius will not only shrink, but will warp (see Fig. 3). For this reason the best lumber consists of “quarter sawed planks,” which are taken from a log in two steps. The first plank is a full diameter plank, sawed from the log by cutting it with two cuts each slightly lateral to the center point. The two remaining pieces of log are each less than one-half of the original piece. Each is placed on its flat side and two cuts are made to remove the radius board. The two radius planks and the diameter plank are termed “quarter sawed” and are up to twice as valuable as the remaining wood. These planks have the growth lines passing directly across parallel with the short ends of the plank, and therefore will not twist and warp. The remainder of the wood, with growth rings on the diagonal, is common lumber.

In splitting shingles the removal of the heartwood is important. In a small log (Fig. 3) the heartwood may be quite small, but in a large oak the heartwood can be proportionally larger than is shown in Figure 4.

Cutting the Shingles

Sections of the trunk of the felled tree would be cut to the length of the shingle desired. The best of such logs (also called “blocks”; Anon. 1879:223) were straight and free from knots or warps so as to permit easy and clean riving. In New England blocks which were too knotty to split were often used as seats (Earle 1931:318). Extremely large tree trunks, up to 50 inches in diameter (Arnow 1960:263), were best. Large logs permit the various splitting operations to be undertaken so as to produce a uniform end product with minimal waste of wood, as well as permitting shingles to be riven as nearly along the rays as possible (see also Wigginton 1972:Pls. 21-38). The logs in the 18th Century, therefore, were often of considerable diameter and were sawed into lengths of 12 to 24 inches or more depending on the desired length of the finished product. Wigginton (1972:98, Pl. 130) speaks of shingles cut 24 inches long, and also of 14 to 18 inches long, indicating lack of uniformity between various makers (see also Sloane 1962:31). An anonymous author (1879:223) indicates that “proper lengths” were 14, 16, 18, or 24 inches. Earle (1931:317) states that lengths in New England varied from time to time, but were always fixed by law. She indicated that 15 inches was the “length at one time.” M. L. Green stated that shingles in Chester County around the turn of the century were generally 24 inches long.

The Cherokees of North Carolina cut their logs either 30 or 36 inches long, with 30 inches usual, but 36 inch boards the work of good rivers (Withhoff 1953:87-88). The size of shingles exported from Virginia to Madeira and the West Indies was regulated by an act of the Assembly in 1752 (Whiffen 1960:5, 204). The specified size was 18½ inches long, 5 inches broad and ¾ inch thick. Whiffen also provides other data which derive from specifications for church roofs.

A few shingles from the mansion at Washington’s Mount Vernon, which date from the roofing of the 1750’s, were preserved by being covered by additions made during the Revolution. These shingles are all approximately 18 inches long, although they varied in width from 3½ to 5½ inches. The butt ends range from ½ to ¾ inches in thickness. Each of these shingles was rounded at the butt end like a fish scale. This appears to have been the style in Colonial Virginia and is the most common form in Williamsburg. Whiffen (1960:69) notes that it not only looks good, but it does not curl (see also Whiffen 1958:132). When Washington wrote his instructions for re-roofing the building in 1783 he specified that the shingles should be 2 feet long, or that less should be left to the weather in case a shorter shingle be used.

In the 18th Century shakes were simply long shingles, produced by the same process but using a log from 36 to 50 inches long (see Sloane 1967:40). At this length the rough boards could be tapered to a long edge and used as clapboards, or trimmed and tapered into shakes. Double beveled shingles approximately 36 inches long were found to be original to the Hans Herr House in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (see below). The long shingle, usually with a double bevel, was part of the German tradition in Pennsylvania (see Bucher 1969). Bucher provides a good description of this long shingle making process, using red oak as the raw material. Most of the early examples found by Bucher (1969:51) were 26 to 32 inches long, with some as long as 39¼ inches. The shorter examples were 5 to 7 inches wide while the longer were actually narrower, being from 3 to 5 inches wide. Bucher, however, refers to a German scholar’s observation that the double lapped shingles which he saw in Pennsylvania in 1784 were “English Shingles,” suggesting that this tradition may not have originated in Germany (see Bucher 1969:55).

Today the term “shake” is generally applied to the split product before being smoothed with a drawknife; the smoothed shake being called a shingle (Clark 1971). Lengths of shingles made commercially today vary as much as the lengths have varied through history. The longer the log the more difficult the task of achieving an even split.

Modern scholars believe that every farmer produced shingles in the course of ordinary building maintenance.
However, the difficulty of producing uniform shingles in quantity may have made this a specialist's activity. Benjamin Hawley (ms.) often referred to cutting and splitting wood (e.g., 28 February and 6 March 1771) but this was certainly in the process of making firewood in almost all cases. Hawley also cut poles for peas and other uses, in addition to splitting rails for the major chore of fencing off fields (4 July 1771, 30 September 1776). On 28 January 1771 he managed to split 31 rails. However, the most complex woodworking done by Hawley (ms., 24 July 1776) even notes the purchase of shingle and clapboard nails, but never notes the making or buying of shingles. One may assume that many farmers may have made some shingles for repairs and small buildings, as noted above, but that major roofing jobs went to professional carpenters.

Once a large log had been cut to the proper length it could be split (halved) and further divided by halves (Fig. 2) by the use of steel wedges (or a large oak or hardwood wedge called a "glut"; see Witthoft 1953:83 for details) and an iron maul, or "go devil". In New England the term "beetle" was used both for small mallets (Earle 1931:316) and for very large ironwood mauls with metal and weighing up to 40 pounds (Sloane 1962:50). Bucher (1969:52) states that in Pennsylvania German areas the wedges would be driven with the butt end of a splitting ax, or "spald-ax," but most craftsmen believe that an ax would never be used for such work which might cause the butt to fracture. A small log would first be quartered and then quarter sections would be squared, using a frow (Fig. 1A), into a bolt (a block of timber to be sawed or split into shingles: Fig. 3). Sloane (1962:31) suggests that shingles could be riven directly from a small log in a radial fashion, which produced "a dozen or so fine shingles," but these would be of unequal widths.

Once halved, a large log would be rived (split radially) into quarters and then eighths (Fig. 2). If these are small they may be termed "bolts." The sapwood and the "heart" (inner rings) of each section are then removed, or shaked off (to shake: crack or split along or parallel to the annual rings or growth). In some areas, such as Western Pennsylvania, only the "heart" is removed, but not the barrel leaving a "hearted out bolt" (Witthoft 1953:84). The Cherokee remove the bark even before the log is split (Witthoft 1953:88).

Depending on the size of the tree, sections are then shaken into uniform sized bolts (see Fig. 4). In a large and more desirable log each eighth section contains a pointed "heart" which cannot be used to make shingles. This "heart" may be up to 6 inches long in a log with a radius of 24 or 25 inches. With the heart removed the remaining and useful section would be at least 19 inches wide. This remaining useful section may then be shaken into 2 bolts (sections) of 9 inches each or 3 bolts of six inches each (see Fig. 4).

The triangular section, or heart, which had been removed, has been called a "billet" by Kercheval, who said that such "billets [were] used for chinking between the logs' of a building (in Arnow 1960:264). Witthoft found this same use in Pennsylvania, noting that the hearts lock into place as they warp. Witthoft (pers. com.) also found that hearts were used for lath under plaster and for making "ribs" (the longitudinal short splints) for melon baskets.

The bolts from the outer portions of a large log would still have bark and alburnum (sapwood) on them. This could be most easily removed at this stage of the shingle-making process by a technique simply called "barking," and using a variety of tools (Sloane 1964:48). Arnow (1960:264) indicates that after bolting, both hearts and sapwood would be removed, and that the quarters of small logs would then be split to size, about 8 or 10 inches square. Some makers, however, produced a finished shingle before removing the sapwood. This process will be described below.

The next step in the operation is to take the square-ended bolts from a small log and shake off the boards (Fig. 3).
The grain in boards cut in this fashion will run across the surface, so that when shaken they tend to "run out" and when in place they tend to warp (see Arnow 1960: 264). Bolts from larger logs, with trapezoidal ends, can be riven (cut across the grain, but along the rays) with a frow into boards from which shingles can be made.

The trick in this operation is to continually "halve the bolt," so that cuts are made along the radius by riving through the center of each piece. These radial cuts along the rays yield boards which will not warp. However, they tend to be wedge shaped unless taken from a very large tree. If riven properly all shingles would be of approximately the same thickness. Some authors (e.g., Anon. 1879:223) call these unfinished boards "shakes." These boards, which are the untapered pieces the size of a shingle, are what Wigginton (1972) calls "bolts" because when cut from a small log the resultant "bolts" are as small as the boards which are cut from larger bolts.

Sloane (1962:32) called the riving of shingles "grandfather's favorite pastime" as it could be done under a roof or shelter while sitting down. Indeed, most of the shingle making process was probably carried out in an open shed or wood house. The tool used to cleave the bolts is called a frow (spelled "froe" in England). This tool is called a "throw" in North Carolina (Witthoft 1953:89) and a "spald-messer" in the German tradition (Bucher 1969:53). A frow (Mercer 1968:11-12) is a special cleaving tool consisting of a wedge-shaped rigid steel blade with thick back and dull edge and a wooden handle hafted at a right angle to the blade (Fig. 1). The blade is often made from a 12 to 15 inch long (30-40 cm) file which may be about 3.5 inches wide, but considerable variation is known.

The frow can be used for all wood-splitting operations, being faster than sawing. Shingles, shakes, laths, boards for roofs, doors, and shutters (Arnow 1960:264) as well as staves for pails/buckets, kegs, casks, and barrel staves, had a slightly different form from that of the standard frow (sloane 1962:33; 1964:31; 1963), and splits the wood along the growth rings.

Even though the sizes for containers such as barrels, pipes, tuns, etc., were standardized quite early in the colonies, the frow continued to be used to split these staves. Staves for "set ware" such as churns (see Arnow 1960:264) were often of cedar and the sapwood could be left in place to provide an ornamental stripe. One would assume, however, that the same deterioration which sapwood would be subject to would preclude its use in such items. The frow could also be used to rive slats for furniture and boards for table tops, as well as window frames, roof boards, or clapboards up to 6 feet long, and many of the shorter pieces of wood used in house construction. Fence rails and palings, boards for "ash hoppers" (used in making soap), and countless other small, rough boards could be riven with a frow. The development of saw mill technology ultimately replaced the frow in many of these tasks, but the frow continued to be used for simple board production on the farm. By 1830 to 1840 even shingles were generally sawed at a mill in Chester County rather than being hand cut (Mercer 1968: Fig. 12). This probably resulted from lowered costs of milled products as well as scarcity of the oaks and other fine grained woods which could be easily split by hand.

The term "frow" may be compared to a number of similar words including "frower," "froward," "fromward," and "fromward." This last term, meaning "away, on the off side," describes the form of the tool, whereas "froward," meaning "away, perverse" describes the peculiarity of an asymmetrically used tool which was waggled "to and frow" (Sloane 1967:34). Although most tools are used with their axis parallel to the user (saw, hammer, plane), the frow is peculiar in being held at a right angle to the user.

The frow is used by placing the blade against the sawed and flat end of the bolt and striking the blunt end of the body, or blade, with a hickory mallet (Fig. 1) or frow club. In Western Pennsylvania this club was always of dogwood. Sloane (1954:36) is alone in calling this tool a "maul."

Although the frow rarely exceeds 15 inches in length, the force of a mallet stroke on the back of the blade may be insufficient to drive it to any depth into the bolt. Therefore, several blows delivered in sequence along the length of the frow should insure an even split in the wood across the grain. The hand serves only to grip the tool and is not used in the riving process. The process is one of the more intricate of all those activities required to make shingles, and Wig-

Figure 3. Quartering a log of small diameter to produce bolts.
ginton (1972: PIs. 21-38) gives a good description of the tools and techniques involved. The bolts which have been split are taken to a “brake” in which the individual shingle boards may be riven. Wigginton describes a brake as a very narrow “Y” crotch of a black gum tree cut about 6 feet long. The two legs of the “Y” are raised slightly and mounted horizontally by the use of 2 poles wedged into an “X” between the legs which are kept horizontal (Fig. 5). A block is placed under the crotch on which to rest the bolt which is to be split. Each bolt is then seated on this block, with lateral slippage prevented by the legs of the brake. The brake is not used in all areas, being absent in the Great Smokies (Witthoft, pers. com.) and perhaps absent in the Virginia tidewater. In the Pennsylvania German regions this device is termed a “buck” (Bucher 1969: 52).

In this position the frow can be placed on the bolt and struck sharply with the mallet. The brake can be used as both a brace and a lever in prying the board (shingle) off the bolt using a wiggling motion using the short handle as a fulcrum (Mercer 1968: 11-12). Bucher (1969: 53) provides a good description of this procedure. Wigginton (1972: Pl. 31) also offers the following caution in the process:

The tendency is for the crack to move steadily toward the top of the bolt (or ‘run out’), thus making your shingles narrower at one end than at the other. To prevent this, the moment Bill sees the crack running out, he turns the whole bolt over, leaving the frow in place, and continues prying from this position.

Since shingles should have a taper Wigginton may not understand the significance of this procedure. Usually the shingle is less than one-half inch thick at the butt end. By custom the standard shingle was 4 inches wide (Anon. 1879: 223), but also appeared in sizes 6 and 8 inches wide. Whiffen (1960: 69) mentions shingles 3 to 4 inches wide. Variations in width, as well as butt thickness and surface quality, were probably considerable and continue to exist to this day (see above).

Wide boards for use as tables or shelves and narrow boards for roofs or clapboards also can be riven, but this appears to have been an earlier procedure or one used when many widths of board could be used. In order to produce a relatively standard sized product considerable effort must go into the preparation of the wood.

Shingle boards, split from bolts, can be stacked next to the brake to await the final process which will produce shingles. Wigginton (1972: Pl. 32) estimates that a single 40 foot long barn roof could require
5,000 boards. If 1760 square feet of roof space (253.440 sq. inches) and with each 4 inch shingle with 6 inches to the weather covering 24 sq. inches, the roof would require over 10,000 boards, or about 5,000 per side. Wigginton also believes that a good shingle maker could rive over 1,000 per day if he didn’t have to “bolt them up” (see also Earle 1931:316). Fletcher (1971:328) also believes that a good workman could produce 1,000 per day. However, this probably refers only to the number of unfinished boards which could be struck from previously cut bolts, and not the total number of shingles which could be made from start to finish in a single day.

William Smedley’s account book (ms.) provides some clues as to the production rate and cost of shingles in the middle of the 18th Century. On 29 May 1751 he charged a client 6 shillings 4 pence for making 425 shingles, or 1/6 per 100. Two days later he charges 3/6 “to one days work” but not specifying what kind of work. This would suggest that a carpenter at that time could complete fewer than 300 finished in a day. However, on 19 June 1753 Smedley charges William Pennell 2/3 per 100 for 650 shingles and 4/10 for “putting the same 650 hund. on.” The cost of “making 6 hundred of our shingles and putting them on” for Charles Linn (31 July 1755) was somewhat higher. Linn was charged “at 4 per hund. or hand 1/4/00.” The cost per hundred of shingles during this period is 2 shillings 3 pence (e.g. 10th mo. 24, 1759 and W. Pennell on 19 June 1753). However, earlier in 1759 (4th mo. 4th) the Meeting was charged 4/6 per hundred. This would all suggest that a professional carpenter could produce from 100 to 300 completed shingles during the equivalent of an average working day of that time. In 1773 (1 mo.? Smedley makes the entry “to half a day Drawing Shingles 1/3/0/.”

This probably refers to the process of finishing the split shingles with a draw knife, and not hauling them with a wagon.

At this point in the shingle making process the boards have a slight wedge shape in cross section. They could be lain this way, but they would produce a rough surfaced row on the roof, as well as an uneven run-off. Boards with a slight twist or high spot could be “bumped” (roughly shaved) with an ax (Wigginton 1972: Pl. 32). Each board in the example (Fig. 5), six inches wide and 12 or more inches long, is then placed in a shaving horse or shingle horse (Fig. 6) which holds it in place while it is “dressed”. In the Pennsylvania German tradition this instrument is termed a “schnitzel-bank” (Bucher 1969:53). This operation provides the shingle with a tapered thickness from top to butt end and a rectangular cross section. This finishing process, variously called “dressing,” “shaving,” or “smoothing,” consists of clamping the board under the “dumbhead,” of the shaving horse and tapering the upper end of the board with a draw knife or “tziegmesser” (Bucher 1969:53; see also Sloane 1964:35-39).

One end of the board would be “dressed” and then the other, with 2 or 3 strokes usually sufficient to produce the necessary smooth surface and taper. The dumbhead (Fig. 6A) would be locked in place by putting pressure on the foot treadle. Sloane (1964:37) notes the use of a green twig “spring” and string to automatically release the pressure of the dumbhead, or a weighted treadle (1964:35) as a counterbalance. In the Great Smokies the shaving horse was not used and shingles were finished with a sharp ax or a draw-knife. These shingles usually had a domed or rounded upper surface, although they could be cut flat. Rough edges could be cut flat. Rough edges could also be trimmed with a pocket knife.
Mercer (1968:13-14) suggests that one side of a shingle would also be thinned for overlapping. As suggested above, the long tapered shingle with a beveled side edge was believed to be a form used by the German immigrants in northern Chester County and the surrounding area. John Milner, an architect in West Chester, Pennsylvania, found such double beveled shingles when he was restoring the Hans Herr House in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. These surviving shingles were of oak and measured approximately 3 feet long. The cost to have these unusual remnants of roofing technology specially duplicated was considerable (Michael Allen: pers. com.). An outstanding commentary on this regional form has been presented by Bucher (1969), who also points out the only direct reference to double beveled shingles in the early literature. Johann Schoepf (1968, Vol. 1:125) noted, while on the way from Philadelphia to “Flower-town” in 1783 they “found many good solid stone houses, the roofs . . . are made of shingles . . . after the German manner—the shingles of one thickness throughout and laid touching each other merely at the sides. The English custom is to make the shingles thinner at one edge, so that the edge of one overlaps that of the next.”

Schoepf’s comment, therefore, would suggest that the modern shingling fashion is derived from the German, and not the English tradition.

The draw knife is an ancient tool, but the shaving horse appears to be a more recent and possibly American invention. Moxon (1677: Vol. 1) describes the “Drawknife and its use” (1677: Vol. 1:125, Plate 8E) but his description of its use indicates that no shaving horse or similar clamp was known at that time. Moxon’s treatise on “The art of House-carpentry” (1679, Vol. 1: No. VII) makes no reference in roofing at all.

Arnow (1960:265) believes that the draw knife and shaving horse did not gain use in the Cumberland area or Nashville until after 1795. She believes that shingles probably weren’t in use there until about 1800. Considering that the settlement of this area was quite late, the earliest settlers probably used board roofs, and the early farmers may have brought shingling to the area.

The final step in finishing the shingle is trimming the sap (sapwood, alburnum, splintwood) from these boards, or shingles which came from the outer blocks of the log. Being soft and uncompressed the sapwood is highly susceptible to rot and is not desirable for shingles. Wigginton (1972: Pl. 32) notes that some informants removed the “sap” after raising the board from the bolt. This is achieved by standing the shingle on end and scoring the sap with an ax before splitting it off (Wigginton 1972:97). Witthoft (pers. com.) noted that in Western Pennsylvania the butts of the shingles might be cut to round or pointed ends in a process known as “coving the board.” Roofs made of shingles with rounded ends were thus set in a “cove pattern.”

Finished shingles could be laid in tiers, with the grain of alternate layers at right angles, to store and to season (Witthoft 1953:90).

Milled shingles were once packed commercially in nominal bunches of 250 or 400 each, or 1,000 and 1,600 running inches (Anon. 1879:223). If the shingles were 8 inches wide a bunch would include 125 or 200 shingles. The bundling moulds or shingling moulds described by Earle (1931:317) were devices used in New England for tying shingles into the required size bunch for sale. Their lengths were equal to the legal standard of the period (see above).

Other specialized tools for processing shingles which are noted by Mercer (1968:14, Figs. 16, 17) appear to be late inventions which may reflect skilled roofers plying their trade. Mercer illustrates a “shingle butter” (1968: Fig. 16) which was used to trim the rough bottoms (butts) of shingles, and a “shingle punch” (1968: Fig. 17) which could be used in place of a gimlet to prepare nail holes in the corner of riven shingles.

Preparing to Lay the Shingles

Before water powered mills were common lathing was cut by hand from fresh oak (see Sloane 1958:55, 1964:32). These laths could be split with a frow to a thickness of 1 to 2 inches. They were set at intervals of up to 2 feet to save wood (Fig. 8). The wider the space, the longer the shingle (or shake) needed to cover the gap. With the availability of sawed lathing from water powered mills, planks of 1 to 2 inches thick could be cheaply purchased. This lathing would be nailed (or pinned) at close intervals, or even side by side, with handmade (or “split”) iron nails (Wigginton 1972:97). Pinned lath would always be set into notches in the trusses to form a flush surface (Witthoft 1953:122). In the case of nailed roofs the lath is usually nailed on the trusses.

Wigginton (1972:98) notes that shingles could be dipped in wood-preserving creosote before nailing, but
the antiquity of this process is not known. Creosote, an oil distillate of wood tar, could be secured easily by dry distillation of many trees, especially beechwood. Although coal tars provide most of the contemporary supply, creosote was available from the woodlots over much of the Atlantic seaboard during the Colonial period.

Shingles to be pegged in place had quarter inch holes drilled into them with an auger, which were filled with locust pegs. Wigginton's estimate of these holes as being a full inch in diameter (1972: Pl. 35) is probably incorrect. The usual technique in pegging was to make a square peg and then trim them almost to an octagonal cross-section. These were hammered into round holes, which helped hold the shingle more tightly. Arnow (1960:266) also believes that wooden pegs hold best, and suggests that the old timers preferred to use pegs even after nails became very inexpensive. The work of cutting and trimming pegs was generally given to boys or apprentices (Green: pers. com.). In 1776 Benjamin Hawley (ms., 24 July) notes that in the "PM went to Millers for Nails had of Shingle Nails 121 of Clapboard d° 154 wt 4 Lb. 2 oz." On 30 July 1776 he noted "PM I went to Town paid Benjm Miller 4/1½ for Nails." Iron was usually purchased by weight, indicating that in 1776 a pound of iron nails sold for a shilling. The small number of nails purchased suggests that Hawley is referring to a size of nail rather than to the use for which they were intended. Bucher (1969:53) believes that nails 2½ inches long were used in Pennsylvania.

Shingling hatchets (Fig. 7), which are used to split, trim, nail, and unnail roof shingles, appear to be a late development (Mercer 1968:88-89) and probably reflect complete craft specialization. Earlier farmers probably used tools at hand rather than purchasing or fabricating another expensive tool which would only be useful for roofing.

![Figure 7. Shingling hatchet (after Mercer 1968: Fig. 84). Handle is 10 to 12 inches long. Sloane (1964:21) shows variations of the nail-hammering poll and also notes that the handle had a hole, or eye, for a string.](image)

**Laying Shingles on the Lath**

Shingles must be laid on only during the dark of the moon, according to legends of Virginia (Wimmer: pers. com.). If put on during the light of the moon, they would curl up. Such beliefs also extend to other activities associated with carpentry, as well as to the planting of potatoes and other crops. Building, planting, and other farm activities had to be matched with the proper phases of the moon.

In relaying a roof all of the old shingles must be removed. No roofing paper or tight surface can lie below the shingles as this would prevent drying and increase rot.

Shingles would be nailed or pegged to boards of random width, or to shingle lath nailed on the rafters. "Roofers" are boards 6 inches wide. Between boards or roofer's a space 1 to 2 inches wide is left to allow the house to "breathe" (Whiffen 1960:69). Shingle lath, made from oak, is spaced so that each shingle spans 2. If the shingles are 24 inches long the lath is spaced 12 inches on center.

Shingles are laid on top of the lath beginning at the bottom edge of the roof. The shingles should overreach the walls to allow rain to fall clear of the structure. The pegs or nails are placed high on the shingle at a point where they will subsequently be covered by the next row. Usually only two nails are used with each shingle. Bucher (1969:52) believes that the double-beveled long shingles in upstate Pennsylvania were held in place by a single nail placed in the butt end, and thereby exposed to the weather.

The taper in the shingles allows a smooth line to be maintained (Fig. 9). Each shingle is placed by the side of the previous one, but not nailed to fit tightly.
against the last in place. A slight space (joint) allows the shingles to swell when wet without buckling. The recommended space (Anon., n. d.) is one-quarter inch. Generally, the bottom or eaves row (starter course) of shingles is doubled, with the second layer placed to cover the joints in the first (Wigginton 1972:97, Pl. 32) and extending slightly beyond the bottom layer, which is trimmed shorter. The next rows are placed so that each joint in the previous row is covered. Witthoft (1953:122-123) offers a detailed description of this method of laying shingles. Weygandt, whose various books mention odd bits of information on shingling, observed long shingles being laid bias on roofs, beginning at one bottom corner of a roof and double lapping in a diagonal pattern therefrom (Weygandt 1942).

The most general rule as to how much shingle should be exposed “to the weather” when laying a shingle roof is one-third of the length. An important factor appears to be the quality and length of the shingles which have been cut, a variable which has been noted above. The 18-inch-long shingles at Mount Vernon were laid 6 inches to the weather (see also Whiffen 1960:204). This produced a “three-ply” roof. Washington (1783) suggested that 6 inches of exposure of an 18-inch shingle would be proper and that the same proportion should be maintained with the use of 15-inch shingles. However, in the same letter he stated that only 6 inches need be exposed of a 20-inch-long shingle, and only 4 1/2 inches of a 16-inch shingle. As a rule only one third of a shingle should be exposed in good quality products, and less if the quality is reduced (see Clark 1971:14; Anon.: n. d.).

The individuals making and laying the shingles control the particular pattern, according to individual preferences. Wigginton (1972:98) suggests that the tight rows of shingles which have about 4 inches of board to the weather, are laid “shingle fashion,” while those placed with 16 inches to the weather are placed “board fashion.” Obviously considerable variation exists. Wigginton (1972: Pl. 130) notes one set of shingles cut about 2 feet long and lapped about half way, leaving 12 inches to the weather.

Wigginton (1972: Pl. 115) illustrates a typical profile view of shingles (or “boards”) in position, showing the overreach of 3 or 4 inches in the last or uppermost row put on at the ridge line. The technique is called combing, and shingles are “combed” away from the worst storms to protect the uncovered nails of the top row on the leeward side. Perhaps the 2-inch overlap suggested by Whiffen (1960:69) reflects the milder weather in Virginia, where roofs are always combed away from the north and east sides of the roof. Witthoft notes (1953:123) that the Cherokee shingles project at least 6 inches to the leeward side. Whiffen (1960: Fig. 25) illustrates the technique for “fan-tarling” shingles at a roof hip.

Wigginton (1972:98) makes a reference to shingles being held in place by a “weight-on” technique. Witthoft’s (1953:123) detailed description of a weighted roof indicates how the boards are held in place by poles and stones. The usual pegs or nails were by far more common in all situations, and neatly finished the job of shingling a roof.

Having considered various technical aspects involved in the production of shingles, attention may be directed to the limited information on this aspect of carpentry in the 18th Century. The William Smedley account book (Smedley ms.) is part of the valuable legacy of diaries and daybooks left by the highly literate population of Colonial Chester County. Smedley, a farmer and carpenter, kept accounts in this book beginning in the year 1751. After 1766 his wife, Elizabeth Taylor Smedley, and son continued to use the book for their business records. After 1800 entries are made by the son alone, who was a farmer and blacksmith. Since direct evidence for shingle making during the 18th Century is extremely rare, these few entries are of great value.

William Smedley lived on a tract of land near the intersection of Pennsylvania Routes 1 and 352. The Smedley record clearly suggests that some degree of specialization in shingle making may have existed early in the 18th Century. Quite probably many farmers made many of their own shingles, which may have been of varying quality. However, a professional carpenter was clearly acknowledged as a master of the art.

A damaged entry in the Smedley day book from March (?) 1751 records “Riveing and shaiving 500 Shingils (…) to 700 Shingles 0/10/6”. An entry to John Cox, 20 July 1752, notes “to Shinglin part of his house 1/15/0”. A more extensive entry appears to

Figure 9. Profiles of shingles in place. Note overlap at roof ridge (after Wigginton 1972: Plate 115).
record the roofing of a stone house (19 May 1756), as follows:

“Nathan Edwards—to making
575 Shingles at 2/3 per hundred and to
making one hundred (?) Clapboards
and to putting 475 shingles on
and 2 day and ½ hewing of rafters and
flats and framing the
same and making lath and
Clapboarding
two Gable Ends

Since the work of hewing and framing is billed at
3 shillings per day, one may infer that the shingles
were produced at a comparable rate of 133 per day.
The wood from which the shingles were made must
have had little value, with the buyer primarily paying
for labor. Three entries between 1769 and 1771 record
the purchase of trees. Smedley paid 9 pence each for
chestnut and oak trees. He bought 12 chestnut trees
in 1769 and 6 in 1770; and 6 oak trees in 1771.

A larger job done by Smedley was that of roofing the
Meeting House during 4th mo. 1759. Some Meeting
House work had been done 10 Sept. 1756, but in 1759
the extent of the work indicates that the structure was
being built. Since the Willistown Meeting appears to
have been built in 1767, the Meeting House noted in
the Smedley book may have been the Middletown
Meeting. The account of 4th Mo. 1759 reads as follows:
“to 1,950 Shingles at 4/6 per hundred
4/8/9
and to making 350 shingles made in the
Meeting Yard at 3/6
0/12/3
and to making the laths for the Stable
0/7/6
to mending the (plot and fluting ?) two
rafters for the stable
0/2/6

The actual tally of the first line should be 4/7/9, and
the price charged the Meeting is considerably higher
than charged to any individual. Comparative data
indicate that this high cost to the Meeting is not a
function of inflation (see Beazanson 1952). Perhaps
charging higher rates for public buildings is an old
custom. For example, the shingles for the capitol and
the goal at Williamsburg, both built about 1700, cost
200 pounds sterling (Whiffen 1958:44). Estimating
the roof area plus overhang at a generous 6,000 square
feet, and assuming 4-inch-wide shingles showing 6 inches
to the weather, the number of shingles needed would
have been about 36,000. Even if 40,000 were used,
the cost would have been 10 shillings per hundred, a
high price even including installation.

In two other entries the products of Smedley’s carpentry
are specifically designated as “lever shingles.”
On 10th Mo. 24, 1759, a lengthy and now largely
illegible list of items charged to Nathan Edwards ends
with “On 1,000 Lever Shingles at 2/3.” An entry of
11 Mo. 13th 1762, charged to James Pennell, reads,
“...To making 650 Lever Shingles and putting them on
...and slapping the house as Daniel Brumall Lives in
1/7/0.” In both these contexts Smedley probably is
referring to lever-boards or clapboards rather than
louver-boards. Since Smedley does refer to “Clapboards”
(19 May 1756) in another context one must assume
that some distinction existed in the forms which were
denoted by these terms. The “fetter shindia” noted in
Abraham Oberholtzer’s diary for 1803 (Bucher 1969:
55) may be a clapboard type, and not a long shingle
as Bucher believes.

A final note regarding shingles concerns the use of
tar or paint and oil to protect and decorate the surface.
George Washington (1783) mentions the use of paint
and oil as a means of preserving the roof at Mount
Vernon. Tar was probably more commonly used, and
would best be applied every 2 or 3 years (Whiffen
1958:45, 212). Whiffen also notes the tarring of
church roofs, recorded in their accounts, and even
weatherboards, or siding, being tarred. Indeed,
probably all the roofs in Williamsburg were shingled
with the exception of the Debtors Prisons flat roof
(Whiffen 1958:70-74). A lead and blue slate roof was planned
for the palace after the suggestion by Sir Balthazar Ger­
bier (1662) that a palace should be so roofed. The
expense and the problems involved led to the palace
ultimately receiving a shingle roof which (Whiffen
1958:57-58) was later painted at great cost (Whiffen
1958:57-58, 93, 214, fnt. 30).

Although tarred roofs were probably most common,
oil paints were also applied in Williamsburg. In 1774
the Scottish tutor John Harower, new to the colonies,
noted that the houses on the main street of Fredericks­
burg were covered with wood in the form of slats
about 4 inches wide and painted blue. “You would
not know it from a house slated with Isedel slate,”
he wrote (in Whiffen 1960:212, fnt. 20). Even fish
oils were used to protect roofs, which were painted
Spanish brown, as well as blue and other colors
(Whiffen 1960:70).

In Pennsylvania only one item records the use of
paint on a roof which may have been shingled. The
entry in Samuel Taylor’s diary (ms.) for 11 December
1798 details his day’s work, stating that “... Then
began to paint/The house roof and finish the North
side About Sun Set ... .” On the sixteenth of the
same month he wrote, “This day helping to winnow
Barley till noon then paint/The south side of the house
roof ... .” Using the Williamsburg data and Wash­
ington’s reference to paint and oil on his shingles pro­
vides an indication that Taylor may have been painting
a shingled roof, and that this procedure was not un­
common. However, tin roofs were already becoming
popular in Chester County and Taylor may have had
one. The standard shingled roof was already a de­
clining tradition by the end of the 18th Century, but
Robert C. Bucher at the Kutztown Festival demonstrating shingling with the Pennsylvania German long shingle.
one which appears to be enjoying a 20th Century
revival.

Summary of the work involved in making Shingles
and laying them on a Roof:

1. Manufacture and maintenance of tools (frow,
mallet, brake and poles, shaving horse, axe, maul,
wedges, drawknife, iron nails, shingle butter,
shingle punch, gimlet.)

2. Cutting trees and processing wood
   a. Hickory for mallet (dogwood in Western
   Pennsylvania)
   b. Oak, cedar, chestnut for shingles
   c. Oak for wedges (or “gluts”) and roof lath
   d. Persimmon for wedges in Western Pennsyl-
vania, and more rarely dogwood, ironwood
locusts, or hop hornbeam)
   e. Black gum for the “brake”
   f. Locust for pegs
   g. Beech for creosote
   h. All for firewood

3. Sawing logs, splitting the boards from sections

4. Trimming and tapering the boards, drilling peg
holes

5. Preparation of roof and laying of the lath

6. Laying of shingles

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Popular Black Music
In Nineteenth Century Philadelphia

By ROBERT F. ULLÉ

Philadelphia's black community is as old as the city itself, and the musical expressions of the community and of the individuals who have composed it have been varied and important. One early recollection of slave exuberance in the musical field was recorded by John F. Watson in 1842.

Many can still remember when the slaves were allowed the last days of the fairs for their jubilees, which they employed (lighthearted wretch) in dancing the whole afternoon in the present Washington Square, then a general burying ground—the blacks joyful above, while the sleeping dead reposed below! In that field could be seen at once more than one thousand of both sexes, divided into numerous little squads, dancing, and singing, "each in their own tongue" after the customs of their several nations in Africa.

These jubilees do not seem to have continued as such, although there are many spontaneous musical affairs recorded in the 19th Century. For example, the Public Ledger recorded that on March 30, 1836, "a negro dance was going on in St. Mary street, between seventh and eighth." When it was raided by the police, the owner of a nearby house was "ordered to find bail in $1000 for keeping a disorderly and illegoverned dance house." Instances of such community street parties could be replicated many times in the heavily black alleys and streets of the 5th, 7th and 8th wards.

Black music in 19th Century Philadelphia, as we have records to study it, is more within the bounds of institutions and occupations. The hundreds of voluntary and beneficial societies, churches, and social groups were all involved in sponsoring various public and private events featuring music. Indeed, appreciation of music was nearly universal in black society, as Joseph Willson reported in 1841.

"The "Hominy Man" singing his wares through the streets of the city. From Scharf and Westcott's "History of Philadelphia."

cultivated to some extent,—vocal or instrumental—by all; so that it is almost impossible to enter a parlour where the ear of the visitor is not, in some sort or other, greeted therewith. It is consequently made a prominent part of the amusements on all occasions of social meeting together of friends.' As a rule friends do not describe their casual social evenings in a way that we can study; but the printed handbills and programs of black societal functions reveal a varied world of music, ranging from folk to classical.

The Philadelphia Library Company was one such sponsoring group. On March 30, 1841, they offered an "Unprecedented Attraction" to the black citizens at St. Thomas' Church. The orchestra was led by the famous Frank Johnson, and selections included numbers by Haydn as well as original works by Philadelphia's A. J. Connors. The entire program had a heavily religious flavor, as the finale involved a "Grand Solo and chorus multitude of angels." In 1858 the same group offered a musical and literary entertainment featuring the local talent of David Bowser, Samuel Smith, and others.

After the Civil War the Social, Civil and Statistical Association offered a series of lectures to raise money for freedmen's relief and "to aid in breaking down prejudice." These lectures were frequently accompanied by music, as on February 27, 1865, when Mrs. F. E. W. Harper spoke and Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, the "Black Swan," sang. On this occasion the Post Band from Camp William Penn also performed.

In the last part of the century literary associations and choral union offered concerts periodically. On February 22, 1876, the Amphion Choral Society and the Philadelphia Quartette Club (a string quartette) performed a work by Rossini, but most of the titles were similar to "The Soldier's Farewell," or "Polka de Concert." On November 15, 1881, the Bethel Literary Association offered selections from the Messiah with a 40-voice "Grand Chorus."

Many concerts seem to have been given by individuals with special talents. In 1837 Mesdames Augustus and Eustace announced that "through the persuasion of many of their friends they will give a Grand Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music, at Social Reform Hall. Assisted by Johnson's Celebrated String Band, the program included works by Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, as well as more popular songs. Johnson's band performed a "Railroad Gallop" in the introduction of which was heard "the getting up of steam; trying the facet; passengers about entering the cars, moving ahead rather slow, then in full speed; bell rings; letting off steam, etc." This early exhibition of imitative music must have delighted the audience, to whom railroads were still quite a novelty.

By 1856 Dr. J. G. Anderson had taken over Johnson's Band, and they accompanied Adelaide Victoria Moore in concert with selections from "the different fashionable operas." Again imitation played a role in the program, as the concluding numbers were entitled "Sleigh Waltzes. No. 1, as an Introduction. No. 2, Bell Solo; No. 3, Blacksmith making nails and shoeing his horses; No. 4, Sleighing part in an uproar . . . ."

In 1860 nearly 60 prominent black leaders sponsored a Complimentary Concert for Mary L. Brown, at which time Elizabeth T. Greenfield and others performed. Tickets were available for 25¢ "at the principal music stores," and selections were entirely made from operas.

Philadelphia blacks were affected by southern plantation music after the war of 1861-1865, and this was not only through the migration of freedmen into the city. Various groups of ex-slaves were sponsored and sang in performances here for their northern brothers. On February 5, 1873, the seven "Carolina Singers," all former slaves, sang "the spirituelles and plantation songs of the South as only Slaves can sing them," at the Seventh Street Presbyterian Church. It was further explained what "spirituelles" were.

Spirituelles are slave songs of which neither the words nor music have ever been written, but Mothers have intuitively sung them to their children, and "Old Uncles" when wrought up to "Glory Pitch" have so impressed the younger brethren, that all joined in true camp-meeting style and thus perpetuated their old, old songs. Some of their melodies they accompany with a slight motion of the body, and beat time with their feet, which, joined to the plaintiveness of their voices, considerably heightens the effect. Only two days after this performance the Jubilee Singers were in Philadelphia, but they performed at the Academy of Music under the auspices of the American Missionary Association.

In 1894 a large concert was held by the black community at the Academy of Music. One of a series called the "Bergen Star Concerts," featured Flora Batson, W. I. Powell, the "King of Fun," I. Henry Strange, Walter Craig on violin, and many others, including the Amphion Choral Society. The content of the program was again largely classical.

This musical sophistication was evidently the target of some darts thrown in the community, as one broadside proudly announced that a "HUGAG. Renditio Plutoni Sophomorica" was to be held on "Quinto Die Kal. Sep. MDCCCLXI." The program opened with a Massive Whangdoodle, and included Defuncti by Horace and Tacitus, and a piece entitled Sacerdos Bombasticus.

Much of the black community's musical expression was, however, influenced heavily by two institutions:
BERGEN STAR CONCERT
ACADEMY OF MUSIC, COR. BROAD AND LOCUST STS., PHILADELPHIA.
THURSDAY EVENING, OCT. 18, 1894.
EVERY ARTIST A STAR
EVERY SELECTION A GEM.

MR. H. T. BURLEIGH,
OF NEW YORK,
Celebrated Baritone and Teacher in the National Conservatory of Music.

MR. WALTER F. CRAIG,
OF NEW YORK,
Violin Virtuoso,
One of the Great Masters of the World's Sweetest Instrument

MR. SIDNEY WOODWARD,
OF BOSTON,
Undoubtedly the Greatest Tenor of his Race.

MR. FLORA BATSON,
QUEEN OF SONG.

MR. R. HENRI STRANGE,
Prince of Readers.

MISS IDA CHESTNUT, Philadelphia's Favorite Contralto
MME. V. ADELE MONTGOMERY, MR. J. A. LIVELY and MR. R. H. ROBINSON, Piano and Organ

AND PHILADELPHIA'S GREAT CHORUS—THE AMPHION SINGING ASSOCIATION:

Miss Ida Chestnut, Philadelphia’s Favorite Contralto, Mme. V. Adele Montgomery, Mr. J. A. Lively and Mr. R. H. Robinson, Piano and Organ

AND PHILADELPHIA'S GREAT CHORUS—THE AMPHION SINGING ASSOCIATION:

Mr. Lewis N. Rawdon, Prof. J. H. Clifton, Dr. W. H. Bevan, Mr. M. C. Greene, Mr. Stanton H. Jones, Mr. Richard J. Warrick, Mr. Edward B. Webster, Mr. J. Alfred Williams, Mr. Joshua S. Williams, Mr. Samuel J. Ditson, Dr. Geo. B. Hillman, Mr. Wm. H. Jones, Mr. John A. Lively, Mr. Leonard G. Miller, Mr. Charles A. Moore, Dr. James A. Potter, Mr. Adolphus Riley, Mr. Guy Booth, Mr. Wm. F. Master, Mr. Wm. B. Morris, Prof. W. F. Powell, Mr. Robert H. Robinson, Dr. René F. Sayer, Mr. Levi B. Arnot, Mr. Jas. K. Augustin, Mr. Edward C. Bower, Prof. Chas. L. Moore, Mr. John De B. Morris, Mr. W. F. Miller, Capt. Andrew F. Stevens, Jr.

WHILE THE AUDIENCE IS ASSEMBLING SELECTIONS WILL BE GIVEN ON THE GREAT ORGAN, A MAGNIFICENT INSTRUMENT OF 700 PIPES.

GENERAL ADMISSION to 2000 Seats, all of house except main floor, 50 Cents Reserved Seats, Parquet and Parquet Circle, 75 Cents

Seats on Sale at Fischer's, 1127 Chestnut Street, on and after October 1st.

50 BARRELS OF FLOUR OR 50 TONS OF COAL FOR TICKET SELLERS.
A Barrel of Flour or a Ton of Coal will be given to each person selling sixty 50 Cent Tickets.

All returns on tickets will be made by Manager Bergen, at 1200 Chestnut Street, on and after October 1st.

Churches and Societies wishing tickets for this Concert will be given a liberal share of seats. All individual ticket workers also solicited.

CIRCULARS AND TICKETS NOW READY—CALL ON OR ADDRESS:
J. G. BERGEN, MANAGER, 1200 CANDY STREET, FIRST HOUSE, IN NEW ROW, ON CORNER BETWEEN WALNUT AND LOCUST. HOURS 9 TO 4 A.M., 1 TO 4 AND 8 TO 9 P.M.

Poster announcing Black Concert in 1894. From the Leon Gardiner Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
school and church. Until the early 1880's Philadelphia's public school system was officially segregated, and afterwards practically so. As a result it is possible to look at the music of the black primary schools to discover what training was occurring.

In 1876 the Roberts Vaux School offered an entertainment at the Spring Garden Institute to raise money for a piano. The program included 18 musical numbers by pupils, including "The Flag of the Free," "My Button Hole Bouquet," by R. F. Bowser, and numerous duets, trios and choruses of similar title. The "Trapeze Galop" and "The Merry Trumpeters Galop" were performed by a trio of Robinson, Brown and Bowser. The future artist Henry O. Tanner participated in a dialogue on "The Freedom of the Press." Four years later the Vaux Orchestra performed at a benefit for the school with ten adult performers, doing "The Grand Galop de Concert." "Peaceful the Morning," and "What lovely infant can this be?" The Vaux school through this period had as its principal Jacob C. White, Jr., a prominent black leader.

On June 30, 1885, Public School No. 16 held very interesting closing exercises at Institute Hall, 8th and Market. Twelve pupils performed the Motion Song "Women's Rights," while Henry Spencer delivered the recitation Revolutionary Rising. An 80-pupil burlesque band highlighted the program.

In 1895 the Octavius V. Catto School, named for a black schoolteacher shot in 1872 after he had voted, gave a concert at Equity Hall, on Lombard Street below 11th, for the benefit of the Music and Library fund. After the entire school's performance of "Columbia, My Country!", Leon Adger offered a piano solo. The primary and kindergarten levels presented Little Boy Blue, Little Robin Red Breast, Little Jack Frost, The Carpenter, The Bee, and Sleep Baby Sleep. Other songs by the entire school included The Quilting Party, Jingle Bells, and concluded with My Old Kentucky Home.

The nature of black religious expression in music was evidently different from white expression; in any event, some observers disliked it. Even though many of the hymns chosen for the A.M.E. church hymnal were from Wesley and Watts, the quality of the singing was disturbing. Elizabeth Drinker noted in her diary in 1798 that a Negro Burying Party past our door going up town, in different order from any I have ever seen before. Six men went before the coffin, one with a book in his hand, they sang aloud, psalms I suppose, in a very loud and discordant voice: a large concourse followed. Methodists I take them to be.4

Twenty years later John F. Watson voiced his objection to a related problem in the Methodist society. There was a growing evil in the practice of singing in our places of public and society worship. The songs most frequently composed and first sung by the illiterate blacks of the society . . . (at) camp meeting in the blacks quarters, the coloured people get together, and sing for hours together, short scraps of disjointed affirmations, pledges, or prayers lengthened out with long repetitions choruses. These are all sung in the merry chorus-manner of the southern harvest field, or husking frolic method of the slave blacks. With every word so sung, they have a sinking of one or the other leg of the body alternately, producing an audible sound of the feet at every step . . . If some, in the meantime sit, they strike the sounds alternately on each thigh.5

A great many of the church sponsored concerts were not, however, religious meetings for worship, but were rather entertainments. On April 17, 1879, the Young People of the Lombard Street Central Presbyterian Church presented The Sacred Cantata of Esther. It was directed by Joseph M. Randolph, the church chorister. There are other examples of semi-religious meetings, and occasionally we learn something of the music that was sung.

When the Berean Presbyterian Church erected a new building, people were asked to bring "Presbyterian Hymnals and Gospel Hymns!" to the cornerstone laying, where they would be led in singing by W. W. Still, brother-in-law of the pastor, Matthew Anderson. In 1891 when the First African Presbyterian Church installed a new organ the special services included a prayer, a sermon, and six hymns. The congregation was informed that the organ had been "built in Ohio and tuned by a German and a Swede."

Holiday services give a further glimpse into the religious music of the black churches. Zion M. E. Church printed programs for Christmas, 1887, including "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks," "Hark, Hark, My Soul!" "Jesus Shall Reign," and many other selections. At each service (10:45 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 7:30 p.m.) there were two cornets and a trumpet accompanying the organ, and in the afternoon Sunday School exercises an address on "Christmas in Germany" was given.

Beginning as early as 1808, and perhaps earlier, the custom of composing hymns for special occasions was established. In that year St. Thomas Episcopal Church printed a hymn composed by Michael Fortune as a

4All information is from the collection of broadsides at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Most of these are in the Leon Gardner Collection of the American Negro Historical Society Papers. They are catalogued chronologically, and can be found readily by consulting the year cited for each event.

New Year's Anthem, FOR 1808.
Intended to be sung in the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas.

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL FORTUNE.

I.
TO Thee, Almighty, gracious power!  
Who lift'nt, enthron'd, in radiant heaven,  
On this blest'd morn, this hallov'd hour!  
The homage of the heart be given!

II.
Lift up your souls to God on high!  
The fountain of eternal grace,  
Who with a tender father's eye  
Look'd down on Afric's helpless race!

III.
The nations heard His stern commands!  
Britannia kindly sets us free,  
Columbia tears the galling bands,  
And gives the sweets of Liberty.

IV.
Then strike the lyre:—your voices raise!  
Let gratitude inspire your song!  
Purue religion's holy ways,  
Shun sinful Pleasure's giddy throng!

V.
From Mercy's Seat may grace descend,  
To wake Contrition's heartfelt sighs!  
O! may our pious strains ascend,  
Where ne'er the fainted spirit dies!

VI.
Then, we our freedom shall retain,  
In peace and love, and cheerful toil,  
Plenty shall flow from the wide main,  
And golden harvest's from the soil.

VII.
Ye nations that to us restore  
The rights that God himfaw'd on all!  
For you His blessing we implore,  
O! listen further to His call!

VIII.
From one parental stem ye spring,  
A kindred blood your bosoms own!  
Your kindred tongues God's praises sing,  
And beg forgiveness at his throne!

IX.
O, then, your mutual wrongs forgive,  
Unlock your hearts to social love!  
So shall ye safe and happy live,  
By grace and blessings from above.

New Year's Anthem. Its concluding verse was the following.

O Then your mutual wrongs forgive  
Unlock your hearts to social love  
So shall ye safe and happy live  
By grace and blessings from above.

In 1884 the First African Presbyterian church printed a hymn composed for the installation of Albert S. May as pastor. The concluding verse here shows a different emphasis.

And may it be our Happy lot  
When we our course complete  
To join the blood-washed multitude  
That worship at Thy feet.

This same other-worldly emphasis is in a hymn written by Thomas H. Amos of First African Presbyterian slightly later.

Impart to us new life  
Remove each doubt and strife  
Us Lord revive  
Through each succeeding year  
To us, O Christ, draw near  
In heaven to live.

The secular entertainments of the church were much more varied. In 1878 the publication department of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was benefited by a concert at the Academy of Music which utilized most of the city's prominent black singers, and some from New York. It was believed that "such a combination of distinguished colored artists cannot fail to make this Concert excel in brilliancy anything of the kind ever given in this or in any other city... classic selections will be rendered from various eminent composers.

Competitions between different church choirs were fairly popular, like the one given on April 22, 1897, between the choirs of Bethel A.M.E. Germantown, Mt. Zion Baptist of Germantown, and First African Presbyterian.

In 1892 a large entertainment was offered by St. Thomas Episcopal, with dramatic readings by R. Henri Strange, a violinist and a soprano soloist, the Cecilian Quartette, and the Vesuvius Banjo and Guitar Club. In 1898 First African Presbyterian offered a concert featuring the Meteor Banjo and Guitar Club, and selections as diverse as the Torcador Song from Carmen, Plantation Echoes, and Mamma's Little Pumpkin Colored Coons.

Naturally these musicals were frequently varied with other types of entertainment. At First African's Forget-Me-Not Musicale in 1894 a Calcium Tableaux, Fan Drill, and Cane Drill were inserted between songs like the Bells of Aberdovey, In Old Madrid, and The Forest Fairies. The Musical Entertainment of Lombard Street Central Presbyterian Church on November 24, 1887, was presented with a Stereoptical exhibition, and ticket sales by the children were spurred by prizes offered by "Kris Kringle."
Come See and Hear the Talking Machine!

Rev. Matthew Anderson will give one of his unique, entertaining, and wonderful

Phonographic Exhibitions,

AT THE
FIRST AFRICAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
17th & FITZWATER STREETS.
REV. THOMAS H. LEE, Pastor.

Thursday Evening, May 31st, 1894.

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE LADIES' AUXILIARY SOCIETY,
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHURCH.

THE PROGRAMME WILL CONSIST OF

- Duets, Quartets,
- Solos
- and Choruses,
- Bands of Music
- and
- Speaking,
all of which will be distinctly heard

This wonderful Machine can Talk, Sing, Speak, Laugh, Cry, Play Bands of Music, in a word can reproduce anything that is put into it.

This is what Hon. Frederick Douglass says of the Talking Machine:

My Dear Mr. Anderson: I do not know that I ever spent an hour more profitably than the hour spent at your house in witnessing the wonders of your Phonograph. It brought me nearer to a sense of divine creative power than anything I have ever witnessed before. It raises the question as to the boundary of the human soul, the dividing line between the finite and the infinite. I was amazed and wonderstruck when I heard coming out of that trumpet the voice, and clear-cut sentences of my friend Isaiah Wears. It was not merely his words but his voice that I heard. There was something solemn in the thought that though being dead and turned to dust, a man's voice may yet live and speak. Whether trembling with emotion or cool as crystal—whether blessing or cursing—whether melting with pity or blasting with hate here it is, and here it may be for a century to come! It is something to look upon the faces and forms of our departed—but this thing enables us to hear the voices—to feel the sentiment that moved them. I feel somewhat over this instrument in your hand as a man feels when he embraces religion, I want all the world to witness what I saw and heard at your house. Should you come to Washington I will do all I can to make your exhibition a success.

I am very truly yours,

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, Cedar Hill, Anacostia, D. C.

Concert Commencing at 8 o'clock.

TICKETS OF ADMISSION.
ADULTS 25 CTS. CHILDREN 15 CTS.

R. S. JOYCE & CO., 915 Sansom St.

The Sabbath School of First Presbyterian was founded in 1835, and used a great deal of musical expression in its programs. At their 25th Anniversary program the songs sung were various. The Temperance Call preceded Come Ye Disconsolate. In the anniversary program two years later Eva's Dying Song was included. In 1880 the presentation was very sophisticated: a tenor solo from Rossini's Stabat Mater and On Mighty Wings by Haydn were sung; but in 1888 the program featured My Love's a Rover, Old Folks at Home, and Tit for Tat. Church sponsored music was obviously not restricted to a narrow band of propriety.

In 1894 a new era in music was being ushered in. On display at First Presbyterian was one of Roy Stall's Phonographs, operated by the Reverend Matthew Anderson. "Duets, Quartettes, Solos, and Choruses, Bands of Music, and Speaking, all of which will be distinctly heard in the remotest part of the house by means of the large trumpet." With an endorsement from Frederick Douglass, this unique program pointed the direction from which music would be shaped in the future.

Censuses provide us with a certain amount of information about black musicians. When the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery undertook an enumeration of the black community in 1838 only four men called themselves musicians: Augustus Edward, Joseph Burton, Joseph Seaman and Nicholas Watkins. Two others, Nathan Beard and John W. Curtis, were "waiters and musicians."

In the 1860 United States Census there were 29 people whose occupation was music-related. A third of these owned property, and 72% were born in Pennsylvania, the rest coming from Delaware, Virginia, and Louisiana. In seven instances there was more than one musician in a family group, either as a relative or a boarder.

By 1880 the number of black musicians had increased to 57. Most simply called themselves musicians, although 13 were music teachers, 2 were minstrel performers, 2 were concert singers, and one each were organist, banjo player, piano player, and brass band musician. Less than half were the major wage-earner in their households; many were daughters still living...
at home. 72% were still Pennsylvania born, and the
rest hailed from Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, New
Jersey, and the District of Columbia.

The limiting factor connected with these census list-
ings is that many occupations which were involved in
musical expression were not designated as such. The
cries of the street vendor, the songs of the boatman,
and the chants of the beggar are not recorded by the
enumerator, and it is these individual expressions which
added color and interest to the street scenes in Phila-
delphia.

An excellent illustration of the musical sounds on
Philadelphia streets is given by Scharf and Westcott in
their History of Philadelphia.

Early in the morning, in the period between 1825
and 1839, he [a visitor] would be startled by the
blasts of a horn, followed by an effort at vocal
music in which he might catch the words

Charcoal by the bushel
Charcoal by the peck
Charcoal by the frying pan
Or any way you leak.

... Scarcely would the charcoal man's song die
away, when the cry “Sweep-oh! Sweep-oh!”... the
sweeps were generally Negroes... the soap-
seller's melodious voice would respond “soft soap,
soap, soft soap.” The brick dust seller, generally
an old Negro man or woman, followed... A
frequent companion to the brick dust seller was
the sandman whose melancholic voice invited you
to “sand your kitchens, sand your floors”... About
1828 the original hominy man made his appear-
ance... he had a clear, strong resonant voice—
tenore robuste they would call it on the opera
stage—and his refrain could be heard at a great
distance... As the stranger approaches the river
a strange chorus greets his ears: Ro! Ro! Ro!
around the corner Sally! chant the voices, and
another chorus strikes out with admirable effect...
The singers are the black stevedores....

Another song of the stevedores was

Nancy Bohannan she married a barber
Shave her away. Shave her away
He shaved all he could, he could not shave harder
Shave her away. Shave her away."

“Pepperpot Tom” was a singing salesman of some
repute in late 19th Century Philadelphia. Pepperpot
has long been a Philadelphia specialty, and its produc-
tion and vending have long been in the hands of
blacks. The following article appeared in the Philadelphia
Press in 1898.

Wherever a man lives who knows anything about
Philadelphia's inner life and its character, that
man knows Pepperpot Tom... His cry and his
cheerful voice as regular as clockwork were as
familiar as the sound of Big Ben is to the Lon-

*The mastersweep in the first part of the century was Jon-
than Trusty, who lived in Trusty's Court running south from
6 Locust Street between 7th and 8th.

"H. Thomas Sharf and Thompson Westcott. History of
929-932.
doner. . . . The street arabs ate it on the corner and the people who were better off. . . . bought a quart at a time. . . . His refrain ran thus “pepperpot piping hot, it makes you strong and it makes you warm, come buy my pepperpot.” This was the yodel sounding through the streets on those early days of the war, but unfortunately it died out. . . . the cry came down into the simple cry of “pepperpot.” . . . He had a fine voice and loved to sing at Bethel church. . . . In the simple kitchen Tom lay for burial. On Saturday night, his great commercial night, he was out working industriously, singing at the top of his voice. . . . Monday his life went out. . . .

Blacks frequently performed on musical instruments, often of their own creation. Elizabeth Drinker recorded in 1802 that “Exeter, a Negro man. . . . has a musical instrument made entirely with wood, very simple, he calls it a Harp; diverts himself and others very much therewith.”14

In Frankford during the 1850’s a black man named Jim Roan accompanied the circus in the winter and frequented the harness shop of Cyrus Detweiler.

He had no home and slept in the hay mow of the Seven Stars stable. In the day time he would slip into the harness shop and cower back of the big round stove. He had a curious musical instrument called a gumbos; a brass wire stretched across a curved bow; this he would pick with his teeth making uncanny music.15

The more western instruments were of course played with great proficiency by black people. Philadelphia Bulletin reporter Caspar Souder, after visiting the groggeries of the 5th and 7th wards in 1853, described the life of the rag and bone collectors in the 7th and Shippen area.

Some gather merely enough to buy a meal, a glass of whiskey, and a night’s lodging; others, more enterprising, will hire a hand cart and extend their researches far into the country; after an absence of 8 or 10 days the collector returns to his old haunts, and disposes of his stock-in-trade for five or ten dollars. Then comes a time of high revelry, the dance houses are visited, and the old black fiddler behind the stove reaps a rich reward of six pences.16

In the War of 1812 the Washington Guards established a band of black men led by Frank Johnson, “a popular and prolific composer, and a performer on the trumpet and the Kent Bagle almost unrivalled.”17 His band was “substantially a reed band with clarionets, flutes, one or two bassoons, a serpent, cymbals, triangles, bells, one or two French horns, and bugles. . . . and a bass drum.” A tenor drum and fife filled intermissions with music, and the band “was also supplied with stringed instruments.”

During the Civil War the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments “sent to the war eleven full regiments, and the men were so musical we furnished half the regiments with full brass bands,” which also played at black social functions and at the United States Sanitary Fair in 1864.18 Camp William Penn was the camp where these black soldiers were enrolled and trained.

This survey of black music has dealt with only the more popular type of musical expression and entertainment, while the scores of truly professional black singers and performers like Thomas J. Bowers, the “American Mareo,” have not been discussed in detail at all. Undoubtedly these professional performers affected black popular music in Philadelphia, just as the southern traditions, strengthened after the arrival of freedmen in the post-war period, affected music in the city. Overall, black music in Philadelphia was extremely diverse, as would be expected, and this musical tradition added immeasurably to the richness of Philadelphia’s musical culture.

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Through the courtesy of the Philadelphia Social History Project, Theodore Hershberg, Director, I was able to consult the printouts for black Philadelphians from the various census years. Where necessary, these were cross-checked with the manuscript schedules.
POWLOWING
Among the Pennsylvania Germans

By VICTOR C. DIEFFENBACH

The present article deals with powwowing, a type of folk medicine based on charms, incantations, and spells which once was widespread among the Pennsylvania Germans and still is far from dead. The charms and techniques involved were used on animals as well as humans. Practitioners were found among both sexes, although in learning to powwow a man was supposed to learn the charms and techniques from a woman, and vice versa.

The article is presented just as Victor Dieffenbach wrote it, with all his accumulated rural wisdom, all his biases and prejudices, and all his charm as a writer. We have left the dialect quotations spelled as he spelled them. He had worked out his own system of dialect orthography for his dialect columns written under the pen-name of "Der Oldt Bauer," which ran for years in the Lebanon Daily News. Some of our readers will also remember his years of participation at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival at Kutztown. We dedicate the publication of this important article to his memory.

—EDITOR.

Powwowing was resorted to by many of the rural folks, and also by lots of town and city dwellers as far back as I can remember (approximately 75 years) and there are still, today, hundreds of folks who believe in this remedy, and practice it in a way or form. Long ago, when roads were few and far between, and the
medical profession was often so overworked and the transportation poor, folks would have recourse to home remedies, in case of sickness; hence the practice of the powwow came into usage.

Many were the practitioners of this mystic art; and various, and quaint the media they used. From the seam of the quilted petticoat that was rubbed over the cow’s swollen and inflamed udder, to relieve and/or reduce the inflammation, to the wascál’s tooth for the cure of hemorrhoids, these healers employed the entire gamut; i.e., if the proper object was available; if not, and the emergency seemed to call for it, some other thing might be used instead. Thus the efficacy of some erstwhile unknown article was discovered.

As to the source of the power of the operator that is a matter of conjecture. Some folks do claim that it is a matter of faith or of one’s believing in it. Maybe so; but how about the thousands of poor suffering dumb (?) brutes who have been helped by powwowing? The mule who gets stroked over his body by the hands of some stranger, to relieve him of a sore or of an attack of colic, does not know that the stroking is to help him in his discomfort, and can imagine that the operator is only showing him that he is friendly—he does not know of any form of powwowing and cannot believe in it in any form or way. The mule never finds out of having received any treatment whatever—yet the result is the same—he gets well, if the person doing it does the right thing.

Many folks claim that to be a successful braucher you must learn it from one of the opposite sex—a man cannot learn it from another man or he will not be able to effect a cure.1 As far as the writer is concerned, that is all bosh.

Years ago, I had a fine Kentucky driving-mare; in the spring, while plowing she stumbled over a stump—very low on one side, and at least fifteen inches high on the lower side. She had her front foot doubled up when she hit the ground. She limped; the next morning she was lame, so I sent for the horse doctor. He came and applied a blistering salve for her front leg, and bandaged it from the shoulder to the hoof. I was able to effect a cure.2 As far as the writer is concerned, this appears to be a widely accepted belief about powwowing, forming, as I termed it elsewhere, a kind of “powwow chain,” providing a succession of authority from the past. In some cases powwowing appears to run in families. Sophia Bailer of Schuylkill County, who through her participation in the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival at Kutztown was perhaps the most widely known powwow of Eastern Pennsylvania, told me that she learned powwowing from an uncle of hers who was a powwow. Sophia’s niece, Sophia Eberley, also became a powwow. 

When I got to Frystown to Swope’s Store the old Squire was outside and saw me come down the street. He was a very good horseman and did most of the doctoring himself. He admired my mare and came and petted her. He said: “It’s a pity for her to get sweeny—she’s too good for that!” I said: “Sweeny?”

“Yes—she’s got a start of it already. I have to go and do some surveying. You go in the house and tell my wife to teach you how to powwow for sweeny—I don’t tell you!”

So I told her and she wrote it on a piece of paper; she gave it to me and said: “That is all you have to do. It will cure your horse. And don’t ever ask me what it costs!”

This is what was written on the paper that she gave me. “In the waning of the moon, get up early in the morning and be sure you do not speak a word to anyone. Go out and look for a bone lying on the ground. Take the bone and stroke [it] over the mare’s leg, slowly, starting at the shoulder and down to the hoof. Silently repeat these words: ‘Sweeny, I bid you to depart from the marrow into the bone, from the bone into the flesh, from the flesh into the skin, from the skin into the hair and from the hair into the wild wood.’” Then put the bone back exactly as it had been lying; do this for three mornings in a row.

I did; and the next week the leg was decidedly better and in a few weeks she was as good as ever.

Years later my neighbor (my wife’s brother) had a mule that was very lame; he couldn’t use it and had the veterinary, all to no avail. I used to go to his place for a quart of milk each morning, since our own cow was dry at that time. They usually got up late; so one morning while waiting on them, I got the idea—why don’t I powwow for the mule? I knew what ailed him, so I hunted a bone and went through the mystic rites. The next day I went very early and gave treatment No. 2; but couldn’t get No. 3, for the moon had

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2“This charm suggests transfer of the ailment from one part of the body to another and finally to an external object, the “wild wood”. Transference of disease from person or animal to another living being or an inanimate object is a common “law” of primitive and folk medicine all over the world.”
changed. But the mule got well. When the man said he could not see what made him well, for he had run out of medicine and as it didn't seem to help anyway, so he didn't get any more from the Doctor, and he didn't do anything else and now the mule was well and sound, then I had to laugh. Claude looked at me; he knew that I could powwow, so he asked if I had done it. When I admitted it, he wanted to pay me; when I refused, he asked me to tell him how, and I did. Later on he himself tried it and it worked.

Who They Were
These “faith-healers,” as some called them, were to be found almost anywhere; and they were usually in great demand. I remember, as a kid of ten, when a family had moved from a distance, into a neighboring farm, and this woman came to my parents' home on some errand. She inquired as to the location of a reputable powwower. When my grandfather asked if she believed in it, she replied, “Oh, sure! And if I didn't, then I'd quit going to church! It was all that Jesus did—laying on of hands!” So they told her to go and see old Kitty Hertzler, or Johnnie Brown. I am not sure if old Percival Edris was still living then; he used to powwow for me for worms. I hated this, because he would strip me down to the skin and right in the room, with the whole family looking on. And he had a long round stone that he used to stroke down over my belly—it was as cold as an icicle. Then there was an old man back near the Blue Mountain by the name of Bordner; I do not remember his first name and I never met him. He was reputed to be a wizard and to be able to cast spells on people.

My grandfather was a carpenter, a fine mechanic and he had the best of tools. One day he was hewing some logs for this old Bordner, on a landing at the side of the road, close to the woods and some distance from the house. At noon, when Grandad was going to conceal his fine broad-axe under a pile of chips, old Bordner said he need not hide it—nobody would dare to take it way. When dinner was over the old chap filled his pipe and sat and smoked and talked a while.

When they got out in the road they at once saw a man with a wagon and a six-mule-team stopping in the road opposite the pile of logs. The man had a big black snake whip (en fuhr-gaischel) and he was licking the mules because they refused to pull an empty wagon. When Bordner asked him what the trouble was, the man said he didn't know; his team always were good pullers and reliable, and now they would not pull the empty wagon.

“Yes, but your wagon isn't empty!” said Bordner. “What do you have in that bag?”

“That is some grain for the mules to eat while I am loading wood up in the woods!”

Bordner said, “No, you have old Elias's axe under it. If you don't get it and put it where you got it, I'll put a spell on you and the team so you will never get away from here—you will all rot here in the middle of the road!”

“No! No! Don't do anything like that,” said the man. He reached under the bag and got the axe and handed it to my grandfather; then he drove off.

On the Schuylkill Country side, along Route 501 lives a man by name of N. N.; one day years ago,

Spells for stopping teams and wagons, as well as for returning stolen property, can be found in John George Hohman, The Long Lost Friend, any edition, the first edition of which appeared as Der lang verborgene Freund (Reading, Pennsylvania, 1820). This is the most common of the Pennsylvania German powwow books.—EDITOR.

A Harrisburg German pocket edition of Hohmann's "Long Lost Friend."
my son and I drove in to see if the farmer would buy any fruit or nut-trees. I had a hernia (rupture) at the time and could hardly do any work because of it. While we were talking I had to push this back in with my hand and it made a squawk almost like a bull-frog.

“Do you have a rupture?” he asked me.

I said I did.

“I can powwow for it, and it will go away!” he said. He said I should not come to see him until the next change of the moon; in the next few weeks my rupture hardly bothered me. When we came over I asked Mr. [——] if he could powwow without me being there.

He said, “Yes, I can; but I got to go away—leave the premises.” He never said that he had done so, or not. But we went three times and he gave me a treatment and that was the last of the trouble of the rupture. I had almost forgotten about this until tonight when I started to write this.

And then there was N. N. [another powwower in the neighborhood]. When he was giving a treatment to a lady in Mt. Aetna he said, “Un doe muss der Gott awe nuch helsa!” (And here God also must help yet.)

Prated edition of Hohmann’s powwow book, using similar title and some additional materials (1847).

As far back as I can remember, my mother was an invalid. She'd be sick in bed for weeks and when well or at least better, all she could do was a bit of mending or peel potatoes, etc. But one time while she was sick in bed she got a very sore throat, so she could hardly swallow. Old Dr. Bickel said she had mumps and that she had got it from him—he had several other patients who had it. But it got worse; her teeth came loose and her gums were full of pus. They had a hired girl, who had lived in town (Bethel), just catty-cornered from old Ketty Bashore; so why don't we get her to powwow for her? I fetched the little old woman on a Sunday morning in the cutter. She lived in a little house all by herself. When we came home to my Dad's place I tied the horse to the fence and took old Ketty to the house. She didn't say any word of greeting to anyone." She went to the cupboard and got a kitchen knife and a loaf of bread and she cut a slice from the big home-baked loaf, made the sign of the cross over it, and crumbled it back of the kitchen stove on the floor for the dog and the cats. Then she asked me where my mother was. I took her up to the sick-room. Again she greeted no one; she went to the bed, looked at my mother, and said: “What is your first name?”

“Caroline,” my mother told her. Old Ketty went with her two hands and stroked from my mother's forehead down over her body to her toes. “Moch der moul auf!” (Open your mouth). My mother did and Ketty blew in it. This she did three times. It was almost dinnertime now; so she said if she could have dinner with us, then she would give her a second treatment before I took her home. So we did. When I took her home she insisted that I go along in the house. She had a layer of long rye-straw on the floor, underneath the carpet, for extra warmth.

She gave me a couple of cookies that she had baked, and I ate them; they were good. Several days later, I met her in the store in town. She came over to me, put her tiny wrinkled hand on my shoulder, and said: “Your mother is better again now!”

I said yes, she was very much better; “but how did you know?”

“Oh,” she said, “folks like me find out about such things!”

I am still not positive as to the source of their power, but when she placed her hand on my shoulder I felt a tingling sensation going through me as though I had touched a live wire.

1Silence is a necessary part of some powwow procedures, the idea being that one can “break spells” that already exist by unauthorized speech. This is particularly true in stories of digging for buried treasure, but also apparently operates in the context of this story. See Don Yoder, “Witch Tales from Adams County,” Pennsylvania Folklife, XII:4 (Summer 62), 40-48.—EDITOR.
Old Henry Rudy was a little shrunken old man that went around among the farmers and hewed fenceposts, pointed rails, etc., etc. He was so old and feeble that he could hardly lift up the heavy broad-axe. So when he was at Rev. Hertzler's, Katty, the preacher's wife, said he should go to bed early and then she would come and powwow for his rheumatism.

When she came in his bedroom she had two wooden pails, each covered with a white cloth tied over it. She placed one pail on a chair beside the bed, reached underneath the cloth and grabbed something and then putting it underneath the cover of the bed, she released it. This she repeated about a dozen times and after the second pail had been emptied of its contents the old man had a score or more of bull-frogs and hoptoads jumping and slithering all over his body. He said that they were all ice-cold and felt slimy—she had kept them in the spring-water in the cellar and also had some water in the pails. Old Henry related this to us one night after supper, when he had been employed by Dad; he would be overnight at our place if he had some more work to do next day. He said all these cold reptiles sliding and crawling all over his anatomy tickled and scared him almost out of his wits; when a big old frog hopped up and started to snuffle around Henry's rear end he gave an imitation of an Indian war-whoop, jumped out of bed, and since he slept in his birthday suit, he naturally scared the old sister almost into hysterics. He said so complacently: "Ya, meer hen a ferdompti zeit cot his meer selly grutta un fresh witter oil in sella kivel cot hen!" (Yes, we had one helliva time till we had all of them critters back in the pails.) We almost died laughing when the poor old man told us this tale. And finally he said: "But I believe it helped me!"

I can still visualize him sitting there in our kitchen, smoking a corn-cob pipe, and stroking a bit of wispy beard; and I still think that the crux of the thing as to its value, is all of it embodied in that one word—believe. Be the treatment for any malady whatever the media employed may be—pills, liquids, salve or plaster, a whetstone or a red woolen string or a bit of cow-dung—if the patient has no faith in the efficacy of the treatment, he might as well not take it.

Kistler's "Practical Medical and Surgical Guide," (Allentown, 1894) represents academic as well as commonsense medical knowledge which stood counter to the powwowing tradition.

**PRACTICAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL FAMILY GUIDE IN EMERGENCIES.**

A MANUAL EXPLAINING THE TREATMENT OF DISEASES, ACCIDENTAL INJURIES AND CASES OF POISONING WHICH DEMAND PROMPT ACTION IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PHYSICIAN.

HINTS AND HELPS ON HEALTH. HOME NURSING AND REMEDIES. CARE OF CHILDREN. HOW TO COOK FOR THE SICK, ETC.

ALSO A COMPLETE PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY OF MEDICAL TERMS. DESIGNED FOR FAMILIES, STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND PRACTITIONERS OF MEDICINE.

BY

W. P. KISTLER, M. D.

"He that doth not know those things which are of use for him to know is but an ignorant man, whatever he may know besides."—Tillemain.
WHAT POWWOWING REALLY IS

Lots of folks have at various times asked me as to what really constitutes powwowing, or as it is generally called among the Pennsylvania Dutch—"braucherei." The name for this kind of treatment for disease really originated with the P.D. country folk. When some member of the family suffered from some ailment and no doctor or nurse could be secured to alleviate the suffering of the afflicted one, then they would fall back on home-remedies (haus-mittel) and depending on the degree of the discomfort, or the characteristic belief in things supernatural, they were apt to apply any mode of aid that was suggested by someone. But usually the process involves the stroking of the patient's body by the hands of the practitioner (laying on of hands), blowing on the patient, tapping the side or affected organ with the hand of the braucher, etc., etc.

Once when a circuit-riding preacher was at a farmer's home overnight, and offered to give a treatment to the farmer's buxom-looking wife when she complained of feeling unwell, he kept on stroking her body and always stopped at one certain place and gave her three taps with his finger before completing the stroke that ended at her feet.

The farmer sat alongside the lounge on which his wife lay, and he watched; finally he told the preacher: "I don't want to interfere, but why don't you twist her ear or tickle her toes? I don't know if it would help or not, but I would like it a lot better!"

When I told a man about using a bone to powwow for sneezy, he looked at me and smiled as he stooped and picked up a stone and as he held it out towards me, he said: "This here bit of rock would have done it too—it's one's faith in the matter—not the bone or stone or red woolen string!"

If a person ties a red string or rag to the end of a stick and then holds the stick in front of a snake, one can easily grab the snake by the neck with the bare hand. The only part that the red rag plays in this is to divert the snake's attention from what you are going to do; and the old-time braucher and the modern psychiatrist follow the same principle. Human emotions are what they are; they vary as the weather varies. Sunshine brings joy—dim and murky skies bring gloomy thoughts. So if primitive man worshiped the sun, they may have been on the right way.

Coming back to the braucher's stroking, we know that friction causes the electric spark; but the slow monotonous stroking of the hands while powwowing hardly seems to be able to cause enough current to effect a cure. Seems much like Saroyan says in the Post lately: "And people are still trying to find out!"

Science has as yet failed to find any way of registering the depth of a person's pain on a dial; neither can we gauge the effects of the stroking or tapping of a powwower on the patient's emotions. The old folks used to say: "One can just look on a person's forehead—not into his brain!" So, as a kid, I concluded that while everyone said his brain, it seemed to be an understood fact that women had no brains. So I went over in the shop where Grandad was working and I told him so; he laughed, and after a moment he said: "And a lot of 'em don't!"

But actually about one half of the powwowers that I personally knew were women. And now comes to my mind one of the greatest of all the powwowers that I ever knew, or that ever lived in this neck of the woods, N. N. of X. He was a wonderful man—part scientist, an ex-cowboy, naturalist and philosopher. He had a wonderful clientele. I saw as many as forty persons in the waiting room, waiting their turn to get his treatment. I spoke with many of them and asked them if his treatment helped them in any way. Most of them were reticent, and would not definitely admit that any bit of recovering their health was due to him or his work.

One woman, however, was very frank and she told me of her experiences as a girl and how it caused her to believe in this form of faith healing. She was from some part of Schuylkill County, up in the coal regions. She told me that the neighbors to her parents had a little girl and at night she couldn't sleep or rest. So they took the child to such a man that could powwow. He said that the girl's mother should take the family Bible and open it at random (any old place) and lay the big butcher knife in it, close the book, and put it under the child's pillow. She did, and the girl slept all night long.

Whatever carries this book with him, is safe from all his enemies, visible or invisible; and whoever has this book with him cannot die without the holy corpse of Jesus Christ, nor drowned in any water, nor burn up in any fire, nor can any unjust sentence be passed upon him. So help me.

Occult Guarantee by Hohmann which, to the folk mind, makes his book itself an amulet—a protective or apotropaic device against evil and misfortune.

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The magical use of the Bible in folk religion includes the widespread custom of opening the Bible at random and taking the first passage one's eyes light upon as a direct message for the person involved. The Romans did the same thing with copies of Virgil's Aeneid, in the so-called sortes virgilianae.—EDITOR.
Horse Doctor Book published in Reading in 1817. Veterinary medicine sometimes included powwow charms.
These folks all lived in a little town and this all happened long ago in the horse and buggy days. Late that night the girl's parents heard a horse galloping down the road on the frozen ground; still later they heard the Doctor's buggy come rattling down the valley and it stopped at the home of a little old woman who lived just across the street from the girl's home. When daylight came, so did the undertaker to get the corpse of the old woman; she had died with a big knife sticking in her breast, and the knife was missing from its place in the Bible beneath the pillow. The lady who told me this story may actually have believed all of it, but the writer begs to differ.

Johnnie Brown was a skinny old farmer who lived about a mile away from my home when I was a kid; he had the reputation of being very good as a pow­wower. Folks from distant places would come to him for treatment for various ills of man and beast; and they claimed that what he did helped a lot.

So one day Dad told me to go and fetch this man to powwow for a sick hog—a big old sow. She refused to eat or drink for several days; she was stiff—could hardly get up, and she reeled like a drunk when she tried to walk. By the time that I left for the Brown's place the hog was black and blue nearly all over. When I came up to their home John Brown was busily engaged in killing and dressing a lot of calves; he was a huckster and bought the calves from the farmers and later shipped the carcasses to the city markets. When I told him of our sick hog he very demurely told me: "Des con Ich gewiss net do" (I really cannot do this), meaning that he did not have any time to run away from his work and go with me.

"But the poor old hog will die," I said, "if you can't do something."

"Oh, I can do it all right—I know what ails her, and I know what to do; I can powwow for her at home here, but I cannot go away and neglect these," he said, pointing at the calves.

"Do you folks have any sulfur or soft coal at home?"

I said we had some left over from threshing-time.

"Well, when you get home give the sow some of the soft coal; if she don't eat that she will not eat anything else in her life."

I had gone on horseback and it did not take me long to get home. I got a lump of coal and threw it in her trough and she crushed it with her teeth so it flew all over; then she drank some slop and from there on she got well. Johnnie had different ways of pow­wowing for different ailments. He always claimed that if he did a lot of it or continuously he would get weak—it took too much power and energy out of him. Some said he was just of his own free will, lazy, and shiftless. He always said that he could go to the towel hanging on the wall in their kitchen and there at the corners of the towel, he could milk any and every cow in the entire township. He would take the corners of the towel as though they were a cow's teats; but whenever we kids would gather there to hear him discourse on such matters, and asked him to demonstrate, he said he was too tired—it was the wrong sign of the Zodiac, etc., etc." We never got him to do it and I do not think he ever could.

His son Jacob was the head butcher at my Dad's home when we were tending market in Pine Grove. One day while gutting a hog, Jake slipped on the ice, and run the point of the knife into his wrist; the red blood spurted out and melted a hole in the snow-bank. Jake just stood there—he did not move or do anything that I could see. But the jet of blood got weaker, it only dripped and finally the dripping stopped. He bled no more. I asked him what made it stop and he rolled the grid of Polar Bear in his cheek, spat, and said, "I just thought it had bled long enough!" So I found out then and there that he knew how to stop the flow of blood.

POWOWING BY TELEPHONE

Years ago there lived a man by name of Charlie Brossman in Womersdorf. He was a horse-doctor, and quite a character. When he first hung out his shingle he boarded at the hotel in a little town and every night one of the local soaks—a regular rum-hound, would be trying to ingratiate himself and sponge drinks. All got tired of this; so late one night after the rest had left, the hotel man said: "Hey, Doc! Can't you do something to get rid of this feller? I don't like it!"

So Doc went into his little office and got a small package and handed it to the bar-keeper and told him: "This contains ½ pound of Epsom salt. Put ½ of it in a beer glass and the rest in another glass. When the soak comes in tomorrow morning and I set it up, you give him a beer in the one glass and when I set it up again you give him glass No. 2. When I go off, you take over the conversation." So said, so done.

Next morning Charlie came in the barroom, and there sits this feller. Charlie asked the man: "Do you think you could drink a beer?"

"Oh well—I don't feel very well—but I'll try one!"

This is a common feeling encountered among powwowers, that "power" leaves their bodies during the powwow process, leaving them in a weakened condition. This may involve imitation of a similar condition reported in the gospels in connection with one of the healings of Jesus, the story of the healing of the woman with the "issue of blood" (Mark 5: 25-30; Luke 8:43-48; Matthew 9:20-22).—EDITOR.

"Milking a cow by remote control, by going through the motions of "milking" a towel, is a widespread idea in the world of witchcraft belief. In earlier societies when a cow's milk supply dwindled, the cause was sometimes attributed to witchcraft. The towel is conceived as a material substitute for the cow, just as a "voodoo doll" is a substitute for a person whom a witch wishes to harm or destroy, again by remote control.—EDITOR.
The barkeeper did as he had been told.  
"Give him another beer," said Charlie.  "I've got to go out to a farm to see a sick cow!" and he left.

The hotel-man asked the man about his complaint.  
"Well, most of my trouble is I am always constipated!"

"Oh, my!" said the hotel man. "That can easily be cured. I know an old woman who can powwow for it and you will be well in a jiffy!"

"Where does she live?" asked the toper. Knowing that the man was too lazy to walk the length of the town, he gave a street and number at the other end of the town.

"Oh, if it was only a few blocks away I'd go and see her," the drunk said, "but that's way too far for me!"

"Well, seeing its you, and you are a good chap, I'll call her up on the phone," said the hotel man. "She can powwow for you and don't need to see you!"

So he went to the telephone in the hall beside the barroom, leaving the door open. He knew that the toper was not well versed on the telephone part, so he just talked into the phone without ringing up any number; he called to the drunk and said, "She wants to know how old you are-date of your birth-what you eat, etc., etc." Then he hung up. He told the poor guy: "She said she will powwow for you at once; if it don't work until four o'clock in the afternoon, I shall call her up and she'll try it another time. Half an hour later the drunk got up and said: "Where is your toilet?"

"Out at the rear end of the back yard!!"

The man went out and did not come back for quite awhile; but he came and sat ten minutes when he jumped up and ran out a second time. Then he didn't show up for a long time. But finally he came holding up his pants and he hollered for the hotel man. He yelled, "For God's sake call up the old woman and tell her to stop it-she shall not powwow a second time. I think my stomach and all went down the hole!!"

Johnnie Schaeffer also was a horse doctor of sorts. One time a farmer came and told him that his cows were in such poor condition-they gave no milk and were so thin and weak. When Johnnie saw the cows he at once diagnosed the trouble-lack of feed. So he told the man he must first go home-he did not have the right medicine with him. At home he made up a mixture of wood-ashes, brick-dust and ground-up corn cobs and gave it to the farmer and said: "Be sure and give a heaping spoon-full to each cow three times a day in six quarts of corn and cob meal. We'll see if we can't get 'em on another footing."

Johnnie had a big paper bag full, so he was sure it would last for six weeks. When he came out to the farm again the cows were putting on flesh and had milk in their udders. When Johnnie told the farmer that he wanted five dollars for the powder, the farmer paid him and said, "It is not that I don't like to give it to you—it was worth that much; but I still think the corn chop also helped!" And so thinks the writer.

OLD GERBER'S COW AND THE TRAMP

Old Dan Gerber was a neighbor to my Dad when I was a little boy; he was a fine old man—a German Baptist or Dunkard, and he came from the Oley Valley. One day Dad and I went over on some errand and found the door at the cowstable open and the old man inside, looking after a sick cow. He asked Dad what he thought might all the cow and Dad said he couldn't tell. Dan said she wouldn't eat for a week and trampled back and forth and chewed and groaned.

It was raining a little, so we stayed in there till we heard Gerber's dog barking. We looked and a tramp came up the lane. He came up to the stable door and looked at the cow. He said in German, "Die coo iss grunk—sie dribbelt un grext—Die coo die iss by Gott ferhex!" (The cow is sick—she stamps and grunts. The cow is bewitched. By God.)

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**DIVINE HEALING**

**OF**

**...SOUL AND BODY...**

**ALSO HOW GOD HEALS THE SICK, AND THE CONDITIONS UPON WHICH THEY ARE RESTORED; GIVING WONDERFUL TESTIMONIES OF HIS MIRACULOUS POWER IN THESE LAST DAYS.**

**By E. E. BYRUM,**

Author of "THE SECRET OF SALVATION," and "THE BOY'S COMPANION."

**GOSPEL TRUMPET PUBLISHING COMPANY,**

Moundsville, W. Va., U. S. A.

Some of the Protestant churches began to emphasize religious healing in the late 19th Century. This book was published in West Virginia in 1892.
Old Gerber asked him if he knew what could be done for the cow.

"Yes, if you give me permission—I can cure her in a hurry!"

"Go ahead," said old Dan.
The tramp went outside underneath the fore-bay of the barn and with his hand he swept clean a spot the size of a wagon-wheel. He went into the stable and got two pieces of straw, one about six inches long and the other only 1/2 of its length; he laid them in the middle of the clean spot in the form of a cross; then he got a bit of the cow's dung and put it in the middle of the cross and then he reached into his pocket, got a match, lit it on the seat of his pants and held it to the straw.

"Hold it!" cried old Gerber, "you'll burn down my barn!"

"No, I won't burn anything but the cross; if you had kept your damned mouth closed I'd also have burned the old witch and her daughter!" Dan looked terrified. "Yes, you may not believe it; but up in your tenant-house at the road lives an old and very crafty woman and her spinster daughter; you better get rid of them!"] I remember that the old woman died later on, but do not know about the daughter.

When Rev. Luther Schaeffer was the regular preacher at Altalaha Lutheran Church at Rehersburg, he gave a sermon against this practice of powwowing, and I read part of it in a newspaper. I told my family I couldn't imagine how a man could preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ if he was opposed to faith-healing. I do not know of any other preacher speaking against it; they may have done so, but not to my knowledge."

Many common or ordinary folks were, and still are, opposed to it. Dr. George Bickel, who used to reside in Rehersburg, was one doctor that I know that believed in it and also advised patients to get it done to them, viz., to get powwowed.

I met a very old Negro in the city of Lancaster years ago—a very intelligent man, and he told me that there are many colored folks living in the city; that he was well acquainted in other cities and that he could name hundreds of folks who today were as much affected by voodoo as they ever had been since the first slaves brought the cult along from Africa.

So be it powwowing among the simple country-folk, or the Negroes' Mama-loi, or the Aztec's human sacrifices as sun-worshippers, there is or seems to be some underlying, or perhaps inborn urge to foster it.

As to the attitude of school-teachers to the practice of powwowing, I know of only one teacher who himself could do it or advocate it. He was Clarence F. Scibert of Elizabethtown, Pa., who was married to my only sister. One day while here in my home on a visit he noticed that my wife had a wart on her hand. He asked her if she believed in powwowing; she said she did. So he took her hand and lifting it up he spit on it and rubbed the wart with his finger. She never told me of it until later, when the wart had disappeared. I have heard time and again of other practitioners of the cult that rely on spit.

As to the attitude of school-teachers to the practice of powwowing, I know of only one teacher who himself could do it or advocate it. He was Clarence F. Scibert of Elizabethtown, Pa., who was married to my only sister. One day while here in my home on a visit he noticed that my wife had a wart on her hand. He asked her if she believed in powwowing; she said she did. So he took her hand and lifting it up he spit on it and rubbed the wart with his finger. She never told me of it until later, when the wart had disappeared. I have heard time and again of other practitioners of the cult that rely on spit.

The Bible tells of Jesus moistening clay with his spit, to anoint the eyes of the blind man and thus revive his sight. Likewise have I heard of some woman who was warning some of her juvenile brood about a vile old hog, supposed to be a witch, and admonishing them: to "be aware and not go near her, so she won't spit in your eyes, or you'll go blind."

While many persons in all walks of life had the gift of powwowing, only a few were so far advanced that they could cast a spell on someone; it could have been a lack of the know-how, or also it may have been due to the reticence of the would-be operator since he was afraid of the resulting consequences if he did it.

"If readers have information about attitudes of Protestant ministers, or Catholic priests, serving parishes in the Pennsylvania German areas, to powwowing and similar beliefs, please write us the details. We are particularly interested in information on sermons, or public statements by ministers; either in favor of, or, as in this case cited by Dieffenbach, against powwowing.—EDITOR.
OLD BORDNER THE WITCH DOCTOR

Long ago it was customary among rural folk to take some implement lying around loose on the outside and [as a practical joke] put it up on the roof of some building. Now old Bordner near the Hotel on the Blue Mountain had most everything out in the open. He had a monstrous barn with a thatched roof and one night a bunch of rowdies took the big six-horse farm wagon apart and piece by piece they put it on the ridge of the barn roof—two wheels on one side, and two on the other. Then they put on the planks and loaded it full of manure. They laughed and they giggled, thinking of the old man's disinfortune once he saw their prank astride the ridge pole next morning. But like the poet wrote about the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft a gleigh. Old Bordner had some special gift like what one might be called an insight, or the power of knowing of things without actually witnessing them; so he knew of what these boys were doing on the barn-roof while yet in his warm bed; so he put a spell on them so that they were unable to move hand or foot. They were as immovable as statues sculpt[ed] from rock.

Sunday morning, when the old mystic went out to the barn he stopped and looked up on the roof, pretending that it was the first that he knew of their depredation. "What are you doing up there?" he asked them. Nobody replied, because they could not speak. The old man laughed; he said: "If you will put everything you found it and promise never to do anything like it hereafter, I'll let you loose; if not, you will stay where you are until hell freezes over. I know you cannot reply in words, but I'll allow you to nod your heads if you want to!"

So they all nodded and one of them nodded so violently that from that day on his head would at certain times start to nod of its own account.

One story was that while Bordner was making a tour of his farm on a Sunday morning he met one of his neighbors, likewise employed. So while they sat on the linefence and had a friendly chat this man asked him if it was true that he had such supernatural powers as were ascribed to him.

"Well," old Bordner said, "I don't really know of all they tell of me. But I can make the devil come if I call him!"

"Call him for me," said the other fellow.

Bordner put his fingers in the corners of his mouth and gave a shrill whistle, and there came the devil, awalking on the top rail. When he was only a few rail-lengths away, his neighbor said, "That's close enough—I can smell the sulfur on his breath!"

Bordner held up his hand and the devil he squatted down on the top rail and swung his tail around to chase away the flies. The other fellow got scared and told Bordner to send him away. So Bordner told him and they heard a noise like a clap of thunder and a big cloud of black smoke blew up in the air. When the smoke cleared up they saw a big hole in the ground, but the devil was gone.

Another story about this mysterious character was that one day while Bordner and his hired boy were planting corn Bordner told the boy to go up into the top of a tall tree so that he could see to the house at home; "and then come and tell me all that you can see." When the boy came back he said: "All I could see appeared to be O.K. but all of the crows are flying in through the attic window; none come out."

"You stay here and take care of both these teams—I must go home at once!"

It was late when he returned; he said that his son who was a cripple, had been sitting on a horse's skull on the attic floor and had the old man's "hexa-buch" (witch's-book) and was reading it upside down and backwards; that caused all of the crows to enter and the boy did not know how to get them out.

Mrs. Ephraim N. told me one night of how her father Aaron N. was staying at some place over night and of a dozen men coming out of the plastered wall and going in a ring around his bed each with a sharp hatchet and all trying to chip him up while he cowered under the covers. I do not know if these folks who tell of these odd supernatural occurrences actually believe them or just blow off superfluous steam. If I could remember all of this stuff that I've heard of in the last seventy-odd years I could write a whole shelf of books like the Encyclopedia Britannica. It would take a very tiny box to contain what never has been used by someone or other for practicing pow-wowing.

"A leg-bone from a hen," I heard one woman say to another at an auction when she espied the bone in a jar full of odd buttons. "Yes," said her pal, "but it must be a wing-bone—then you can cure the worst case of suppressed menses!" (monthly). And a big metal shoe button like the one that hangs on the wall in my kitchen—if you hang up one like it above the front or main entrance of a house, no thief or robber can enter. If a child swallows by accident a bean or a button or if it lodges in the infant's nose or wind-pipe, just hold such a big key from an old Dutch lock to its mouth and say the three highest

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"Thatched barns were once to be seen in the Pennsylvania German areas. See Alfred L. Shoemaker, The Pennsylvania Barn (Kutztown, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Folklife Society, 1959).—EDITOR.

"For charms to "stop" thieves or other persons, stopping them in their tracks, so to speak, so that they cannot move forward or backward until the spell is released, see John George Hohman, The Long Lost Friend, any edition. —EDITOR
names, viz., the Trinity, [and] the offending object will pop out."

Various and countless were the articles used for the relief of the living or the suppression of the yet unborn. There are various kinds of nuts—not all are square or octagonal. Human nature is oftimes very human; and at times it is a very sharp eye that can see the line twixt the same or the insane and at times it seems to be but the shadow of a line.

So let not one condemn as fools the poor deluded mortals who have often unintentionally committed gruesome, horrible blunders in the name of some supersized ego.

And so it goes. Once in a while Fate seems to stick out her foot and trip up the unwary. How well do I recollect the chilly night in early May when we had finished planting corn. We sat around the fire, listening to grandpa telling us of the Indians and of how they would plant corn before the white man came on the stage.

“And then at night after they had planted all their corn the squaw would disrobe, and in her birthday suit, enveloped by darkness she would walk around the entire planting thus creating a magic circle to keep out the bugs and worms.”

The next day while Dad’s hired girl and I were planting beans, patty-pan-squashes, pop-corn, and what have you in the corn field, the girl told me that the magic circle intrigued her; she wouldn’t mind doing it if she had someone to go along and protect her. I readily allowed I’d do it, to please her. “But I don’t know if it would work if I had a partner?” she said, “And would you also have to strip?”

Neither of us knew; and we had no way of finding out—only we could try it, and so we decided we would. And the following night it started to rain and it rained for three days. By the time it dried off, the corn was coming up. I’ve often wondered how the worms would have fared, had we gone?

Coming back to N. N. of X for a review as it were, I will say that while his treatment for my son seemed at first to be a sort of relief, I eventually began to doubt the man’s sincerity and since there are so many would be practitioners of the cult I gave the man a test as workout. I told him a story—partly true and the rest made up of fictitious matter, a veritable cock-and-bull study, and the man fell for it. He professed to be able to see a lot of things in a big crystal gazing-globe. So in about three weeks later he showed me a big punch-bowl of genuine Stiegel-glass that he said he located in New York City at an antique shop and that it was what I had told him that had been cheated out of some poor old couple’s collection by an unscrupulous but fictitious dealer. So I am sure that the man lied, although I had lied in the first place, and thus caught him in his deceitful tale and from there on we did not patronize him any more. How many of his other patients were helped by his treatment can be imagined. But I doubt if he was the only one that wasn’t genuine since there are crooks in all professions; and I am unsure whether powwowing is classified as one.

In conclusion I would like to add a list of various objects used to powwow for different ailments of both man and beast.

A thread or string of red wool was used to cure inflammation by one man and another healer used the same sort of remedy for a bad case of gleet.

One woman claimed that a dried cock’s comb, pulverized and taken internally, would destroy a freshly conceived foetus, or if taken in time would prevent conception; and an old hag claimed that if the selfsame article was carried in the lady’s pocket, or if secured in any place on her body, it would be a guarantee of an early conception.

For a cow that lost her cud, there are so many different remedies that if all could be bound in bookform it would be quite a volume.

Years ago, while at the Auction at Bethel, I was called to the market stall of the late Calvin R. Bashore—the celery king. He introduced me to two men—strangers, and asked me to describe to them the nature of a cow’s cud. They had recently slaughtered a cow for beef, and, thinking that the cud was an internal organ like the liver or kidneys, they were unable to find it. Bashore was a lifelong friend of mine and also knew of my experience as a butcher so when I told him of this phenomenon and how it worked the two men were amazed, and one of them asked if it was true that some folks powwowed for it. It all goes to show the gullibility of the public as a whole.

The name for powwowing in the dialect of the Pennsylvania Dutch is “brauchen”; and the word “brauch” actually means to need. So when folks in the olden

“Scholars disagree about the etymology of “brauchen”. It is outwardly the same verb as the word “brauchen” (to need, to use), although some German scholars are of the opinion that it may have originated out of another word. One popular theory, now generally discredited, once derived it from the Hebrew “baruch” (blessing). Some practitioners dislike the word “powwowing” and use substitutes. Sophia Baier, for example, refused to use the term, preferring in its stead “calling a blessing” (i.e., on someone). In South Carolina among the inhabitants of the “Dutch Fork” and other colonial German settlements, the word “use” is employed in English where “brauchen” was once employed in German. Other English synonyms are “to try for” which is heard also in the South. The commonest theory on the use of the word “brauchen” for healing incantations is that it is a euphemism, or substitute word for the process. Such substitutions are common in the world of religion, magic, and witchcraft.”

—EDITOR.
times were figuratively up against it, as the saying goes—once they really needed some remedy or form of treatment for an ailment of some member of the family, they would say in the vernacular: "Ich brauch ethe" (I need something) and using anything as a remedy instead of the absent medical-practitioner, it was designated as "braucha." Whoever Anglicized it into "pawpaw" goes beyond the conceptions of the scribe. It is gradually dying out; but in the hinterlands—the backwoods of the rural area, where the folks still are human 100% and live and let live (they don't just merely exist) there are still lots of intelligent youngsters who are not ashamed of their Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry (they even speak [the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect] fluently) and among these young men and women of tomorrow you can still find a trace of such age-old rites for the alleviation of suffering.

Quite recently I was at a place several miles from home, and when one of the children had a nosebleed, a grown-up sister, employed as a graduate nurse in a hospital in the city, and home for the holiday season, grabbed the big key out of the Dutch lock on the front door, held it under the spigot at the sink and then pushed it under the child's dress, and the bleeding let up at once. When I remarked on her being a nurse and still using the age-old remedy she laughed and said, "You'd be surprised if you knew of all the old-fashioned things the girls do at certain times," and gave me a sly wink; one can imagine.

I have a tattered copy of a very old book on the subject of powwowing, etc. I will only give a few of the recipes or formulas that I can remember. If one catches a wasps and holds it in such a way that it cannot bite, and then cuts it open and feeds the heart to a strange dog, the dog will not bark at the person feeding the heart to him. It does not say what to do would the dog be a her (female).

Confucius, the Chinese prophet, and the only one who never claimed to have seen things while in a trance, said that the best way to clear muddy water is to leave it alone—it will clear of its own self, once the mud settles. And so it seems to me to be with the vagaries of faith cure or mental-healing.

If one can translate aright or really understand the writings of an ancient scribe, even Moses in some of his miraculous deeds was using similar things, but the mass of the people who did not actually perceive in detail what he did, ascribed the result as being of a miraculous gift or unseen power. But he, having been born and raised among the very shrewd Egyptians, recognized and copied many of their acts, and thus brought fame on himself as a prophet; but only the Jews considered him so—not the Egyptians—hence the saying, "a prophet is without honor in his own country!"

Barnum said, "A sucker is born every minute!" And the old showman was not talking about fish. So if any man or woman comes down the pike like a "fly-by-night," the rabble shouts and follows him; be he good or a faker; and God help the Irish if they ever change.

Talismons, or good-luck charms, date back to time immemorial. Even the Roman soldiers, gambling at the foot of the cross of the dying Jesus for possession of his robe were not interested in the dollar-and-cents value of the garment, but for its value as a charm or good-luck-piece.

I have seen a clean, suave young business man showing his wallet to a crowd of people at Dr. Shoemaker's Dutchland near Bethel, several years ago; he said he was Irish, but no Catholic; but he showed us...
where he had hid a St. Christopher's Cross and carried it continually in his pocket. So why should some folks, simply because they do not understand the ins and outs of powwowing, nor the efficacy of the procedure if it is properly conducted—why then should they assert that there is nothing to it—that it is all just mere fol-de-rol and clap-trap? I am no athletic crackpot, but I would just as soon see some of the money that I have to pay in the form of schooltax being invested in a course of powwowing or faith-healing to be taught in our schools and teach the young generation something useful and worthwhile. But like one feller said: "Now they have pushed God out of school and let the devil in!"

Eventually the time may come when we will not need any air raid shelters, nor terrorize the smaller fry into obedience by threatening them with destruction by a big K. And I am just wondering if that big celebrity also is a believer in such supernatural things.

Prost.

**ADDEENDA**

When a child has trouble at teething, rub its gums with a bat's skull. (No reference as to disease germs, nor where to get one.) If the baby while feeding at its mother's breast will bite the nipple, the mother is to give it a slap on the rear end. (The mother should know that much if she had no book.) If you shoot at a crow in the dark of the moon and it don't fall down, it is a sign that you missed it! (Just what I would think.) These are some excerpts from the writer's store of meagre knowledge and bits of humorology collected by the author in the first eighty years of his peregrinations (more will follow later).

I have just met a nice old man who lives near Schaefferstown and who does a lot of what he calls "healing." He told me that the first thing he does for a patient is to ask if he believes in the Bible; if the answer is "yes," then he will give treatment; if the answer would be "No," he will tell the patient that he cannot help him for all of the curing power, or (as he calls it) the healing will have to come from a greater supreme power from above. He don't need to touch the patient, and does not use any ointment, salve, drugs or any kind of medicine. He told of how he healed a poor boy when he had been almost scalded to death in a bath tub when the nurse turned the hot water accidentally, instead of the cold. He says the boy is now grown to manhood and does not show any scars of it any more. And now I must tell of the greatest of them all that I ever met, or heard of—Aunt Sophia Baylor.

Aunt Sophia Baylor was a native of Schuylkill County and for a long time she lived there and practiced healing. She used to be at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival at Kutztown; and she was with Dr. Shoemaker's all Dutch TV show at WEEU in Reading."

She danced all over the studio floor and she sang some songs in the dialect. When the men who operated the big camera were manipulating it back and forth and up and down, she'd skip and hop and keep time to the music on the stage, and at one time while she was skipping backward I surely thought she'd hop right up on the big camera.

She was then some eighty years of age. When she gave anyone a treatment she wrote something on a piece of paper and gave it to the one getting the treatment; this slip she would call: "a blessing," and she did not say "pwowwows". She had a wonderful clientele, and she passed on several years ago. She was always cheerful and as much as I know she did not know how a sick person feels.

One day when I talked with her she said: "If people would only live right and do right, they would not be sick; and many of them only think that they are sick; a lot of their ailments are in here (tapping her head) and some of them I cannot help—I do not like to do so. God never made anyone to be sick, so why should they be sick?"

She really was a healer, preacher and psychoanalyst in one; she was no doctor—she was far too honest to be one.

But she also asserted that if one wanted to be a healer or powwower, one must learn it from one of the opposite sex. When I asked how about it if one just read in a book and learned it that way and she replied: "That is an entirely different story," and when I said: "A cat of a different color," she said, "Cats don't have a thing to do with it."

Benjamin Krall of Schaefferstown told me that if one does not believe in powwowing he don't believe in the Bible, because the powwow-book (des hexabuch), as a lot call it, is the 7th Book of Moses, who wrote a lot of the Bible.

He said: "If they believe in the Bible then they must believe in faith-healing," because all the things that Jesus did to heal the sick was by laying on His hands; and if what folks do nowadays was of the devil as some persons keep on saying, then God and the devil must be one and the same person. He also asserted that many folks worry about past misdeeds and then they imagine some unseen mysterious power is "after them."

*For Sophia Bailer, see the *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, III:3 (June 1, 1951), 1.

*John Wesley is reported to have made much the same statement about witchcraft and the Bible in the 18th Century. For some similar statements by 19th Century Pennsylvanians, see Don Yoder, "Official Religion versus Folk Religion," *Pennsylvania Folklife*, XV:2 (Winter 1965-1966), 36-52.EDITOR.*
Patent medicines and beliefs in their efficacy often filled the gap between folk medicine and the academic medicine of the M.D.'s. This almanac, printed in New York State and for sale in country stores in Pennsylvania, is an example. It was supposed to be good for almost everything.

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**The Gargling Oil**

- Used for
- Colds
- Toothache
- Mumps
- Coughs
- Sore Throat
- Earache
- Sore Eyes
- Trachoma
- Skin Diseases
- Wounds
- Burns
- Boils
- Scalds
- Insect Bites

**Recommended Uses**

- For windfalls, frost bites, and other external injuries.
- For internal use in cases of diarrhea, dysentery, and other digestive disorders.
- For external use in cases of boils, sores, and other skin conditions.

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CREASY & BROWN
Mifflinville, Pa.

Dealer in
Staple and Fancy Dry Goods
Groceries
Hardware, Queesnware, Hats, Stys, Rugs, Shoes
Drugs, Medicines
While just a kid, I would go to my grandmother whenever I'd fall or cut a finger or stub a toe; if I went and told my mother she'd say: "Go to Granny—she will powwow for it; and you know it always helps." And so I would hunt Granny and tell her of my misfortune. Then she would blow and say; "Haila, haila hinkle-dreck. Bis marya frie is olle week." (Heal it—heal it—chicken shit. Till tomorrow morning all will be gone.) And it was.

While she did not believe in witchcraft, yet she had many other mysterious ideas and she did believe in signs of the Zodiac and hardly ever did any kind of work if the sign wasn't favorable. She would not allow her smoked meat to be removed from the smoke house except in the sign of Libra (the scales); then the meat would not shrink or lose a lot of its weight.

To remove a wart she would take a small onion and cut it through the middle, rub it on the wart, press the two pieces tight together as if it had been before it was cut, and then bury it underneath the caves of the roof where the rain drips down. By the time the onion was rotted, the wart was gone.

"If a cow is bloated (dick) cut an onion in small pieces and put it in a big bottle; add a spoonful of salt and half a cup of vinegar and pour it down the cow's throat and she will be O.K. in a jiffy." 

"If you buy a cow and bring her to her new home drive her around the barn three times counter-clockwise and she will never get homesick." 

"If a cow loses her cud, go to a neighbor's house, enter without speaking, and show, by signs, that you want a piece or a slice of bread. Leave in the same manner and feed it to the cow and she will be all right in a short time."

Never nail shingles on a roof, nor build a post-fence when the horns of the moon point up. The shingles will wrap and the post will be off at the ground, if you do."
“If a person trims or cuts the nails (hands or feet) on a Friday that person will not get toothache or any kind of dental trouble.”

My grandfather always did; we buried him at 86 years of age and he had all of his natural teeth except two that were accidentally broken when a log fell on his cheek while raising a barn.

Whenever he saw a tree that had been hit by a bolt of lightning he would get splinters of that tree and then he would whistle them and use them for toothpicks. I saw him tie the horse to the fence and go up the hill through two fields on foot to get wood from the blasted tree. When he ran out of picks then he’d use one made from a quill. He never used a tooth brush in his life.

*A * * * * *

“A woman, while having her monthly period, should not go to the vinegar barrel, or it will be sure to spoil.”

I know when I poured three big barrels (150 gallons) of it away; it was as black as ink and it stank. Someone must have made a mistake in their reckoning.

When Dad’s hired girl helped me to set a number of broody hens, she told me that if I wrote the names of my girl-friends on the eggs, those chicks would all be pullets; and from the eggs with boys’ names on them, they would be roosters. I did; and there were both sexes from the two different lots. She was an old maid; so I asked her what the result would be if I wrote the name of a bachelor on our egg; she wrinkled her nose and said: “I think that would be a capon.” And we both laughed like crazy.

*A * * * * *

“If you kill a toad the cows will give bloody milk. If a toad urinates on your hand you will get full of all kinds of worts.” (Just don’t hold out.)

Years ago while working for the Bell Telephone Co., as a ground hand, we were raising poles where the holes to put them in had been dug half a year before; we had [hadn’t] any poles. When the poles finally came we found out that most of the holes had from three to a dozen hop-toads in each. The Irish boss said: “Drop it in;” and I said: “No you don’t. There are a lot of my friends down there, and if you kill or injure one of them I’ll report you to the S.P.C.A.” So he asked how we can get them out.

I said: “if old Baldy (Frank Beidler) gets me by the ankles, I’ll show you how.”

The holes were from four to five and a half feet deep. So I got down on my belly, flat on the ground and went down with my hands; when I came up I had a toad in each hand. Frank was a big strong man and he pulled me up. So we went all along the line. Most of the time their urine ran off my hands and I have now not a single wart as the result of it. One of the Bell Co. officials almost had a fit when I told him about this.

*A * * * * *

“When hornets build one of their big nests at or near a house, [they] will bring good luck to the people who live there.” They kill thousands of flies and use the wings to make their papery home; rats will hardly ever infest a building where hornets have a nest.

*A * * * * *

“If one destroys the nest of barn-swallows, some one in the family will get sick; and if you kill a swallow some person will die.”

Old Molly Gerber used to say about an old woman in Oley Valley who insisted that if the dog howled at night, someone would die. And when the newspaper came a few days later, she said: “Old Rover knew why he howled—here it says where a man died in Reading, Pa.”

An old lady in Frystown said to me: “If you cut an apple through the middle, cross-wise you can see the ten commandments.” Then she cut one through and showed me ten brown spots, not quite as large as a match-head.

She said: “Now you can see for yourself.” And so I did—the spots were the seeds cut through.”

*A * * * * *

An old Negro in the city of Lancaster told me that he knew a woman who would make a figure or doll out of wax and if you gave her the name of your enemy and so much money, she would stick a pin in the dummy and the person you had named would have a pin, a needle or a knife in that part of that body.

*A * * * * *

“When diapers are ironed and folded and are then lying some place and a cat sleeps on them, the baby wearing them will get the hiccoughs. If it is a black cat, something serious will happen.”

*A * * * * *

“If lightning hits the clothesline where diapers are hanging on it, even if none of them are damaged, they should all be burned; whoever wears them will be an ill-mannered person, and may do unseemly things.”

*A * * * * *

“If a child urinates or wets the diaper while it is being baptized, it will be a very good singer.”

*A * * * * *

“If you nail a gall bladder from a black cow, the skull of a dog and a bat’s wing over the door of a stable, no witch or evil spirit can ever get in to do any harm to man or beast. Be sure to do it in the dark of the moon.”

*For another ingenious Pennsylvania German manner of cutting an apple, see Walter E. Borer, “Der Paffa-Schnutz,” The Pennsylvania Dutchman, V:10 (February 15, 1954), 6. —EDITOR.*
Folk-Cultural Questionnaire No. 42:
TIME: THE YEAR CYCLE

In the study of traditional culture time and space are the two coordinates over which culture spreads and to which each society and ethnic group must relate. In this questionnaire we elicit information about the ways in which our Pennsylvania ethnic groups looked at time, how they arranged their year. In the European studies of the year cycle, each peasant culture had an elaborate division of the year, into agricultural, ecclesiastical, and other cycles. These cycles were in a very real sense symbolic "years" which they placed as mental grids over the passing of nature's time.

1. The Agricultural Year. List for us the divisions of the year as seen by a Pennsylvania farmer. When does the agricultural year begin? How are the seasons divided from one another? What particular types of work are carried on in each season? How are the seasons divided? For example, Swedish farmers divided the spring into forespring, spring, and late spring, the summer into summer, late summer, etc.

2. The Ecclesiastical Year. The ecclesiastical or church year is a time grid that we place over calendar time. The historic Christian church year begins in the early winter with Advent, and moves through the various church festivals and complexes of festivals (examples, Advent, Lent, Holy Week, etc.), all of which have special names, church services, and sometimes folk customs and rituals carried out in the family and community apart from the church. Write down for us the seasons, festivals, and special times that make up the church year of your particular religious group. Particularly note for us saints' days from the old medieval Catholic church year which continue to have significance in Pennsylvania German (or other) ethnic culture down to the present time. What special customs or beliefs do you associate with these days? For example, March 17th (St. Patrick's Day) was earlier associated in Pennsylvania German culture with fertility of fruit trees—old people have informed us that on that day they whipped the orchard trees, or hung iron on them, to encourage a bountiful harvest that year.

3. The Economic Year. In business one speaks of a fiscal year. In rural Pennsylvania, as elsewhere in the agricultural world, there was a similar institution, involving the scheduling of fairs and markets, as well as the time when tenants vacated properties and moved elsewhere. In earlier days fairs were held in Spring and Fall, and were set up for trading goods, animals, and imports, as well as to provide social interaction for the entire community. If you remember your family's relation to the fairs and markets of the past, write us a list of times when they were held and describe the events involved. Describe also the tenant's year. When was "moving day"? Was it always April 1st?

4. The National Year. To the older agricultural, ecclesiastical, and economic cycles were added national holidays based on the events of the American Revolution (July 4), the Civil War (Decoration Day), the First World War (Armistice Day), birthdays of presidents (Lincoln, Washington), and eventually days in honor of the American worker (Labor Day), and days honoring various ethnic groups (Columbus Day, Pulaski Day, Steuben Day, etc.). How important are these politically and ethnically oriented days in your own calendar of events? Do any of them overlap into the religious year? For example, there is on Decoration Day, in most Pennsylvania communities, a combination of religious and political ceremonies. Is this an example of what some analysts have called "civil religion"?

5. The Children's Year. In a very real sense, some ancient holidays in the European peasant's year, have become children's holidays, with children carrying on the rituals which used to be participated in by the adults of the entire community. For example, the Halloween rituals used to be the province of courting couples, young adults—now Halloween is reduced to the "trick or treating" of very young children. What do you think is the reason for this change? Are there also other examples of holidays whose focus has shifted from adult participation to children's participation?

6. The School Year. A particular year cycle with which children and some adults in the community were involved was the school year. Can you describe for us the earlier school year that you remember from your childhood? How did it differ from the school year today? What were the holidays of the school year? What church and what national holidays were marked also by celebration within the school?

7. The Associational Year. Most Pennsylvanians belong to various associations - political, agricultural, cultural, or fraternal - which have a sense of time of their own and
have created a year cycle. One such rural organization is the Grange. Others are the various fraternal organizations such as the Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Moose, the Elks. If you belong to such organizations, describe the year of such an organization for us.

8. The Function of the Holiday. What purpose, what function, did the many holidays that our ancestors celebrated have in their lives? It may be true that our peasant ancestors in Europe worked harder than we do making a living, but also relaxed more frequently and more fully than most of us, using the holiday system, the fairs and markets, the pilgrimages to religious shrines, the folk drama of the churches, etc., as permitted channels of relaxation, of celebration, of getting out of work clothing and “dressing up” for the holiday. Was this also true of earlier generations of Pennsylvanians?

9. Sacred and Secular Time. Contemporary scholars have worked on the concept of the “sacredness” or “secularity” of time. Are there in your opinion particular days, or times in the year, which can be called “sacred”? How was the concept of the “sabbath” treated in the Pennsylvania ethnic groups with which you are associated? In perhaps a more primitive framework, what do you know about the belief of many of our ancestors in earlier stages of culture, in “lucky” and “unlucky” days and times?

10. Attitudes to Time. Some of our ancestors, particularly those influenced by Puritanism and Pietism, were very conscious of the need to “improve each hour,” to “work for the night is coming,” above all not to waste time. How do you account for this attitude? What evidences of this attitude can you cite from your own family background? Is it true that some Pennsylvania farmers used to keep their watches or clocks set one-half hour ahead so that they would not miss an appointment? Is it true on the other hand that some of Pennsylvania’s current religious groups refuse to recognize clock-advancing for “daylight saving,” preferring to mark the passage of what they call “God’s time”?

11. The Concept of Leisure. Our ancestors had a different concept of leisure and leisure time than most of us today. Can you describe for us the attitudes of older generations, say your grandparents, on leisure and its relation to the world of work?

12. The Lore of the Year Cycle. As usual, we hope that our informants will send detailed accounts of the beliefs, sayings, tales, songs, jokes or jests that they associate with the various sacred or secular days in the calendar.

Send your replies to:
Dr. Don Yoder
Logan Hall Box 13
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19174
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 12, 1970

(Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code)

Of Pennsylvania Folklife, published 5 times yearly at Lancaster, Pa., for October 1, 1975.

1. The names and addresses of publisher, editor, business manager are: Publisher — Pennsylvania Folklife Society, Lancaster, Pa., Editor — Dr. Don Yoder, Philadelphia, Pa., Business Manager — Mark R. Eaby, Jr., Lancaster, Pa.

2. The owner is: Pennsylvania Folklife Society, Box 1053 or 3 Central Plaza, Lancaster, Pa. 17602 and Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pa. 19426.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities are: None

4. Extent and Nature of Circulation

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(signed) MARK R. EABY, JR.
Business Manager
For The Folk Festival Brochure Write To:
PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE SOCIETY
College Blvd. and Vine, Kutztown, Pennsylvania 19530

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