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Pennsylvania Folklife

Winter 1991-92

Brethren Meetinghouses
WILLIAM FETTERMAN, of Allentown, has studied Pennsylvania German arts, literature, and folk theater for several years; he recently directed the premiere production of Clarence Iobst’s last play Schtarrkepp (Stubbornheads, ca. 1941-42) for the Pennsylvania German Society. Currently in the final stages of completing his doctoral dissertation at New York University, he is also working on an anthology—with translations—of Pennsylvania German plays for the Pennsylvania German Society. This article on Paul Wieand is one of a series of on-going essays, many of which have appeared in previous issues of Pennsylvania Folklife.

NANCY KETTERING FRYE was raised on a Lebanon County farm in a three-generational Brethren household. A 1960 graduate of Harrisburg Hospital School of Nursing, she earned her bachelor of science in nursing from Lebanon Valley College in 1980. She then added an English major, becoming a free-lance writer for The Daily News, Lebanon, Pa., as well as for the Brethren monthly periodical Messenger, published by the Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Illinois. Her work has also been published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, appearing in The Word in Season, The Home Altar, Lutheran Women Today, and Light for Today. In 1991, she earned her master of arts in American Studies from The Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg, receiving the Joel Sater Award for Excellence in the Humanities.

ANNETTE LOCKWOOD grew up in Lancaster County amid Amish culture and tourism. A graduate of Lycoming College, Williamsport, she began a career in advertising copywriting in Spokane, Washington. Returning to Pennsylvania, she continued copywriting and has also published articles in regional and national publications.
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COVER:
These Brethren meetinghouses stand today "as silent but eloquent expressions of the paradoxical Brethren concept of plain living in an era of extravagance; they are tangible signs of intangible values."

Layout and Special Photography
WILLIAM K. MUNRO
INTRODUCTION

As the battle-scarred American republic lurched toward the centennial of its birth, money was God and the chief aim of most Americans was to get rich quick. It was an age of hardiness and glitter; of gluttony and glory; of pomp and panic.

Author Mark Twain—its voice and sometimes conscience—one day looked deeply into his own mirror, recognized his uneasy reflection as representative of his time and place, and called it like he saw it: The Gilded Age.1

Ironically, while members of mainstream American society were experiencing an artificial Gilded Age, members of a small American religious sect were enjoying something of a genuine Golden Age. These German Baptist Brethren comprised one of the few religious groups to escape the decisive impact of the Civil War. In fact, their numbers were growing, and there had never been a better time to be Brethren. Members lived plainly, dressed plainly, and worshiped plainly. They worked hard, striving to be honest, humble, and loving in all relationships. They refused to fight, to take oaths, or to run for political office. Most were prospering, down-to-earth farmers or independent, rural craftspersons. They might easily have yielded to countless worldly temptations, yet they managed to live plainly in an age of excess.

Although in some ways the Gilded Age seems long ago, in other ways it seems closely connected to modern America.2 For during this postwar period of financial panic, political intrigues, growing industrialization, and increasingly restless living, Americans seem to have begun many changes still in progress: for example, the census of 1870 was the last to register agricultural workers as a majority; steel and steam power and electricity brought significant changes in both the landscape and values of the country;3 industrialization began to separate work from thought; individual self-interest began to separate the younger generation from the older; and cross-country rail transportation made it easier to relocate. That old-time sense of mutual obligation heretofore considered normal, indeed necessary, for survival, began a process of erosion which apparently continues today.

For the rural, uneducated, unsophisticated, and conservative Pennsylvania German Brethren of the time, America must have begun to seem an increasingly foreign country. A peculiar cultural group with its own distinctive beliefs, values, aesthetic preferences, and sensibilities, Brethren were seen by themselves and others as a people set apart from the mainstream. And if, as one Brethren scholar has observed, "every true culture group suffers from . . . external conflicts with the imposing culture,"4 these late nineteenth-century Brethren must have felt squeezed indeed by hegemonic pressures. And, adding to those pressures was their doctrine of submissiveness, which seemed to make them especially vulnerable to the encroachments of acculturation.

The Brethren fellowship, then, in almost every aspect opposed to the rising tendencies of this Gilded Age, was clearly a cultural group under attack. How were they to respond to that attack from without, considering they had been honed by centuries of conditioning to be almost incredibly submissive and deliberately pacific in thought, word, and deed? How were they to communicate with one another; clarify their position relative to the rest of American society; enclose their group within firmly established boundaries? Answers would be found in Brethren publications,5 in plain dress and other personal expressions of plain living,6 and—in an age of Gothic revival in American ecclesiastical architecture—in the practical simplicity of the meetinghouse, within whose walls Gilded-Age Brethren would enclose themselves.

Today these meetinghouses stand as silent but eloquent expressions of the paradoxical Brethren concept of plain living in an era of extravagance; they are tangible signs of intangible values. Clearly designed specifically to fit Brethren practice, a unique, hand-in-glove aspect marks these practical folk structures built of local materials by the people who used them. Here was purpose; here was plan; no walls were raised without a reason. From bench design to door placement, every visible detail signified something unseen.

The purpose of this study, in which eight Brethren meetinghouses and their sites are examined in great detail, is to gain a better understanding of the pattern beneath the surface—to connect these visible architectural examples of American material culture with the invisible spiritual and intellectual forces that shaped and maintained them. And, mindful of the late Winston Churchill's astute observation that "we shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us," this study will also show a connection between the stability of Brethren meetinghouse structures and the continuity of Brethren practices.7

BACKGROUND

While other Pennsylvania plain religious groups such as the Amish and Mennonites have been deeply examined, duly exalted, and sometimes exploited, the Brethren have
been largely overlooked and understudied. This is due at least in part to a relative dearth of extant writings available for research, for the early Brethren in America were not given to record keeping. Perhaps this seemed to them a form of pride, or a waste of time; perhaps it was an ongoing declaration of their independence from the official church establishment of their German homeland. Maybe their “free ministers” were too busy with the serious business of being both farmers and evangelists to be bothered with this sort of worldly foolishness, or maybe they were simply unaccustomed to writing in either German or English, their Pennsylvania German dialect being more a spoken than a written tongue. In general, most early Brethren leaders had no formal education, and much record keeping and the making of many books were not among their priorities.

Brethren congregations, after all, were then largely independent bodies, not required to submit statistics to some distant hierarchy.

No longer considered a sect (since their 1908 name change from German Baptist Brethren to Church of the Brethren), and no longer exclusively plain, Brethren today are neither easily detected, nor easily defined; it is virtually impossible to pin them down precisely in any area of belief or practice. Located primarily in the mid-Atlantic region with some significant scatterings into the Midwest, their numbers are declining and their members growing older. In contrast to other Americans, Brethren still tend to live in predominately rural areas, but they are no longer mainly farmers, rural craftspersons, or fulltime homemakers living within a largely Brethren neighborhood network. Brethren today may be wearing academic robes, military uniforms, surgical scrub suits, bib overalls, hard hats, or aprons; in short, diversity rather than conformity is the rule.

We have already seen that this was not always the case; that early Brethren saw themselves as a people set apart from mainstream society. As one scholar explains: “Historically, the Brethren were known as a ‘peculiar’ people—‘Dunkers’—gathering for trine-immersion baptism on the banks of an icy stream in winter, washing one another’s feet around the Lord’s Table, or greeting each other with a holy kiss. The Brethren viewed themselves as simple, obedient, even childlike subjects participating in a kingdom of saints. They emphasized oneness of faith and practice. The obligation of the church community was to discern the mind of Christ, and to follow. This applied to all spheres of daily life—work, family life, and relations with neighbors. In order to be baptized into the church, Brethren had to publicly announce their support for the doctrines of nonresistance (‘defenseless’ love), nonconformity to the world, and non-swearing.”

**BRETHREN BEGINNINGS**

Obviously these people took their Christian faith very seriously indeed; they were, in fact, radically reformed Reformists whose ancestors had been Roman Catholics, seeing the church as “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.” Before Martin Luther (1483-1546) this concept seemed a fact of life, a given. But with the Lutheran Reformation in Germany emerged the concept that the church is present “wherever the Word of God is properly preached and the sacraments properly administered.” The Calvinist Reformation advocated “proper discipline,” hoping to insure a church uncorrupted. Two scholarly Catholic priests, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) of Switzerland and Menno Simons (1496-1561) of Holland, converted to the Protestant faith. Zwingli stressed scriptural authority; Simons, the need to strive for holy living and brotherly love.

Radical reformers like Simons moved well beyond the reforms of Luther and Zwingli, stressing three crucial points: the separation of church and state; baptism only for believers (and thus the name “Anabaptists,” or “rebaptizers,” since those baptized as infants had to be baptized again with church membership voluntary, the result of a conscious decision made after counting the costs, which were considerable; and the restitution of the New Testament church which they looked to as their congregational model. As did those earliest Christians, these believers practiced mutual aid, believing service to their brothers and sisters within (and even beyond) the church family to be central to the heart of Christianity. This unsophisticated theology held strong appeal for farmers, weavers, millers, and other craftpersons; in many respects it was an archetypal grass-roots way of life not unfamiliar to European peasants whose community living had long been based on similar patterns for purely practical reasons. Despite poverty and adversity it was comforting to know that “any ill fortune, hardship, illness, or persecution would not be suffered alone but rather as part of the larger community.”

Persecution soon became part and parcel of everyday life for these quietly courageous believers. They lived out their days in a state of constant tension resulting from the tug of war between their interpretation of God’s laws and the laws of man. Since the hierarchy of the established churches (both Catholic and Protestant) worked hand in glove with the civil authorities, the sword hanging over these dissenters was double-edged. Ironically, this seemed only to increase their patient faith. They gathered in private homes, in mountain caves, or wherever and whenever they could worship in relative safety. Although many died as non-resisting martyrs, others simply endured all lesser persecutions with patience and humility.

Menno Simons, the Dutch priest who became an Anabaptist elder and spiritual father of the Mennonites, vividly captured the harsh realities of the time:

> For how many pious children of God have we not seen during the space of a few years deprived of their homes and possessions for the testimony of God and their conscience; their property and sustenance written off to the emperor’s insatiable coffers. How many have they betrayed, driven out of city and country,
Brethren beginnings in Europe: Schwarzenau in Wittgenstein, 1708

put to the stocks and torture? Some they have hanged, some they have punished with inhuman tyranny and afterward garroted them with cords, tied to a post. Some they have roasted and burned alive. Some, holding their own entrails in their hands, have powerfully confessed the Word of God still. Some they beheaded and gave as food to the fowls of the air. Some have they consigned to the fish. They have torn down the houses of some. Some have they thrust into muddy bogs. They have cut off the feet of some, one of whom I have seen and spoken to. Others wander aimlessly hither and yon in want, misery, and discomfort, in the mountains, in deserts, holes, and clefts of the earth, as Paul says. They must take to their heels and flee away with their wives and little children, from one city to another—hated by all men, abused, slandered, mocked, defamed, trampled upon, styled “heretics.”\textsuperscript{12}
This shocking passage helps to explain the seemingly ingrained Anabaptist preference for withdrawal from the world, for that policy seemed to offer practical protection from very real dangers. Their characteristic lifestyle may thus be seen to be legitimately rooted in an instinctive desire for self-preservation, rather than in an innate dislike for others, or in any inherent distaste for material comforts and joys.13

Brethren beliefs would embrace Anabaptist convictions softened by strains of Pietist theology. Begun as a reform movement within the German Lutheran Church led by Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705) and August Hermann Francke (1623-1727), Pietism emphasized the heart rather than the head. It was “experiential, emotional, individual, biblically centered, and ethically minded”;14 it encouraged Bible study with particular emphasis on the New Testament, emphasizing union with both God and neighbor. Fellowship was deemed more important than solitude; individual response was important, but “the individual was very much part of a group.”15 Pietism also taught that while God’s creation was good, one should not desire worldly things. “At issue was not the goodness of the world, but the ease with which the things of the world can be abused.”16

The Brethren, in a sense, began as something of a small-scale ecumenical movement, uniting elements of Reformed Protestantism, evangelical Anabaptism, and Radical Pietism. Most of the original Brethren came from the German Reformed (Calvinist) tradition, the established faith of the Palatinate. Some felt this tradition had become sterile and too institutional, with its clergy having to be reprimanded by superiors for such behavior as drunkenness at funerals. As a result, devout parishioners whose spiritual needs were not being met began housemeetings for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. In 1706, a Radical Pietist leader named Ernest Hochmann von Hochenau (1670-1721) was invited to Schriesheim, north of Heidelberg, where he held Bible study and prayer meetings in a mill owned by Alexander Mack.

Mack (1679-1735), a man of property, a community leader, and a member of the established Reformed tradition, became one of Hochmann’s closest associates. When Hochmann was arrested in nearby Mannheim and sentenced to hard labor, Mack sold his property and with his wife and children left his home community for he knew not where. Hearing that in Wittgenstein, between the Eder and Lahn rivers, a greater measure of freedom seemed possible, Mack and his family settled there, in the little village of Schwarzenau on the Eder. Other, like-minded, religious refugees had also gravitated to Schwarzenau; some lived in the village, others in the surrounding hills; they met secretly for intense, soul-searching sessions about the nature and practice of their Christian faith. Some became hermits; others, discouraged, returned to their former churches and familiar homes; still others, deeply concerned about their unbaptized state (having rejected as invalid their baptism as infants), began to think a congregation essential.

Through their serious study of the New Testament and the practices of the early Christians, baptism emerged as a major concern. After much prayer and fasting, a decision was made that changed many lives in many ways; it was a decision that would ultimately lead to the building of the meetinghouses examined in this study.17 Writing in 1774 in Pennsylvania, Alexander Mack, Jr. describes the birth of the Brethren through the decision to practice trine-immersion baptism:

Finally, in the year 1708, eight persons agreed together to establish a covenant of good conscience with God, to accept all ordinances of Jesus Christ as an easy yoke, and thus to follow after their Lord Jesus—their good and loyal shepherd—as true sheep in joy or sorrow until the blessed end. These eight persons were five brethren and three sisters. . . . In their trust in God’s dear and certain promise they drew lots with fasting and praying, to see which of the four brethren should baptize that brother who so ardently desired to be baptized by the church of Christ. They promised one another never to reveal who the first baptizer among them was, so that no one might have cause to call them by someone’s name. They found such folly reprimanded already by Paul in his writings to the Corinthians.
The practice of baptism by trine immersion begun here on the Eder led to the nickname “Dunkers” from the German tunken (to immerse).

After they were thus prepared, the said eight went out to the water called the Eder in the solitude of the morning. The brother upon whom the lot had fallen, first baptized that brother who wished to be baptized by the church of Christ. When the latter was baptized, he baptized him who had first baptized, and then the other three brethren and the three sisters. Thus all eight were baptized in an early morning hour. . . . This happened in the said year, 1708. However, they have left no record of the month, or of the day of the month, or of the week.

Typically, this fledgling congregation hesitated to give itself a name, simply calling themselves “brethren,” a term that in German referred equally to men and women. Others began to call them Schwarzenau Baptists or Neue Tauler, meaning New Baptists, setting them apart from the Mennonites or Alte Tauler. Their practice of baptism by trine immersion led to the nickname “Dunkers” or “Dunkards” from the German tunken, meaning “to immerse.”

Almost immediately following their immersion in the waters of baptism these peaceful Brethren found themselves immersed in controversies, both with civil authorities and with Radical Pietists including Hochmann himself. Undaunted, Mack penned two defensive treatises: Basic Questions (1713); and Rights and Ordinances (1715). Others, too, did their part: “They immediately began to witness to their newfound faith and gained converts among the inhabitants of Wittgenstein. Meetings in Schwarzenau grew so large that no house there could hold them; they then held meetings on the lawn.”

The movement spread rapidly, into Switzerland, the Netherlands, the Palatinate, and the Marienborn area from where, in 1715, a strong branch of Brethren was forced to move to Krefeld on the lower Rhine. From this Krefeld congregation came the first group to emigrate to Pennsylvania in 1719. The original Schwarzenau Brethren left Wittgenstein in 1720, settling in a marsh colony called Surhuisterveen. In 1729, at the urging of the Krefeld group, Mack (the first minister of the Brethren), led a large party of believers to Pennsylvania. Others left the Old World in the 1730s, with most having gone by 1740. No definite records tell precisely how many Brethren there once were in Europe, but scholars estimate “hardly more than several hundred.”

EARLY YEARS IN PENNSYLVANIA

For almost five decades after their arrival in the New World the Brethren continued to gather in house meetings as they had done in Germany; people were deemed more important than place. On December 25, 1723, six converts had been baptized by trine immersion in the icy waters of the Wissahickon Creek, and that night the first Love Feast held by the Germantown Brethren took place in the house of one John Gumrie. The scene was described by Brethren historian Martin G. Brumbaugh: “The old-time tallow-dips are lighted. They gather about a long table, a hymn is sung, and in the silent evening hour, with no witness but God, and curious children, these people begin the observance of the ordinances of God’s house on Christmas evening, 1723. The sisters on one side, the brethren on the other, arise and wash one another’s feet. Then they eat the Lord’s Supper, pass the kiss of charity with the right hand of fellowship, partake of the holy communion, sing a hymn, and go out.”

It was a scene that would be repeated over the years in many Brethren meetinghouses.

This fifty-year period was for the Brethren, as for other religious bodies in America, a time of growing renewal or revival; a remarkable era in history known as the Great Awakening. It was a time when, from north to south in the colonies, the open-air preaching of George Whitefield, “The Grand Itinerant,” moved not only the Anglicans but the masses. Since Whitefield did preach in the Philadelphia area on several occasions, it seems possible that some Brethren may have heard him, or at least have heard enthusiastic reports about him. Brethren were not unaware...
of what was happening around them, and, as immigrants struggling to learn at least some English as a second language, Whitefield’s eloquence and spiritual fervor may well have caught their attention as they went about their business in the city.

At the time all churches, it seemed, were hearing the call to mission, and the Brethren were no exception. Peter Becker (1687-1758), born in Germany and educated a Presbyterian, was chosen as the first Brethren minister in America. A hardworking, devout believer, Becker became known for his great piety and for the fervency of his prayers. Other Brethren leaders were Alexander Mack Jr., ordained son of the Brethren’s “founding father” who arrived in America in 1729; and Christopher Sauer Jr., son of the famous Philadelphia-area printer who, in addition to taking over his father’s business, also became a Brethren elder and one of the wealthiest men in Pennsylvania.

These early German Brethren soon began to echo the beliefs and practices of their already established neighbors, especially the plain and peace-oriented English Quakers who communicated the essence of their identity—“ . . . distinct, practical, and reflective of their spiritual position”—through the visible grammar of vernacular architecture. Perhaps without consciously realizing it, these early Pennsylvanians German Brethren began to absorb the idea that this sort of cognitive control was indeed an option in America; that even they might one day hope to transform basic Brethren ideas into visible, tangible things. That house-meetings might translate into the architectural form commonly called meetinghouses.

Quakers, Brethren observed, built their steepleless meetinghouses (of wood, brick, or stone) rectangular and rather barnlike, communicating their emphases of simplicity, disciplined control, humility, and peacefulness. Symmetrical fenestration, utilizing clear-glass panes, made optimum use of natural light, encouraging, as they believed, the Inner Light within each individual to shine. Twin entrances proclaimed the sexes separate and distinct, but denoted also a surprisingly egalitarian attitude. Indeed, Quaker women conducted their own business meetings, using a sliding partition to separate themselves from the men. Plain, unpadded, wooden benches, arranged on the horizontal axis, promoted a sense of closer community than did the vertical axis arrangement commonly used in liturgical settings. The Quaker meetinghouse had no altar and no pulpit, only a floor-level facing bench or table for elders or gifted speakers. The paneled shutters and projecting door hoods frequently seen on these meetinghouse exteriors were two minor embellishments borrowed from Quaker housing.

The burgeoning bodies of German Baptist Brethren would soon embrace this plain-style religious architectural form as their own. Meetinghouses built by nineteenth-century Brethren, or Dunkards, clearly manifest the sturdy, humble faith and plain yet practical value system of those who raised their walls. They do not fit the popular image of a church; they have no steeples, bells, towers, gargoyles, flying buttresses, or arched windows; there are no pipe organs, stained glass, raised pulpits, baptismal fonts, rood screens, cushioned pews, or carpeting. Brethren chose not to conform to popular trends, for while others espoused the holiness of beauty, they believed in the beauty of holiness.

As ecclesiastical structures, Brethren meetinghouses were literally large houses where the family of believers gathered for worship and fellowship. As folk structures, they were built of native materials by and for the people who used them. All of the buildings examined in this study appear similar in style, and, despite the century or more span in construction dates, are more alike than most other houses of worship built in the same place and time.

II THE MEETINGHOUSES

During 1770, the year of Whitefield’s death, the Brethren built their first meetinghouse eight miles northwest of Philadelphia in an area of Germantown known as Beggarstown. The thirty-foot-square stone building was built on a lot donated by one Peter Shilbert. The same contemporary account which gives us that information also says that on the same site stood “their old building, erected by one John Pettikoffer for his dwelling house in 1731; and because it was the first house in the place, and erected by a beggar, the village assumed the name of Beggarstown. The families [of the congregation] . . . are about thirty, whereof fifty-seven persons are baptized and in the communion of the church.”

The original building had three levels: a basement, a street-level worship room, and an attic loft to accommodate overnight guests coming to Love Feast. A kitchen for the preparation of this semi-annual congregational fellowship meal and Communion was considered a Brethren meeting-
The Gemeinschaftswesen, or Brother's Corporation, is an early German institution that played a role in the development of the Quaker movement in America. It was established in 1688 and was designed to help support the Quaker community and its members in times of need. The Gemeinschaftswesen was based on the belief that all members of the community should be equal, and that everyone should contribute to the well-being of the group. This was a significant departure from the traditional religious institutions of the time, which were often hierarchical and based on social status.

The Gemeinschaftswesen was successful in helping to establish a sense of community among the Quakers, and it helped to ensure that the community was able to thrive. However, it was not without its challenges. The Gemeinschaftswesen was often criticized for being too rigid and for not allowing for individual freedom. Despite these challenges, the Gemeinschaftswesen remained an important part of the Quaker community until the early 19th century, when it was gradually replaced by more modern forms of religious organization.

The Gemeinschaftswesen was a significant development in the history of the Quaker movement in America, and it helped to shape the way that Quakers think about and organize their communities today.
become identified with the Oley congregation, and twenty people were in communion; they dreamed of having a meeting place for worship and Love Feast observances. In 1775, Brethren minister Martin Gaube and his wife purchased a number of acres in Ruscombmanor Township from Conrad Price and built a spacious stone and stucco house. Here the Brethren met for worship, gathering under a large oak tree in summer, or in the house or barn in other seasons.

Two years later, Gaube raised the sturdy walls of the Pricetown structure. This oldest unaltered Brethren meetinghouse is a thirty by twenty-five foot one-story building with attic space and a sixteen by sixteen foot kitchen extension, reminiscent of an early seventeenth-century English Hall Cottage design. Both sections are of rough native fieldstone with wide expanses of mortar; the walls are nearly two feet thick. Large, fairly rectangular corner stones give an irregular, quoin-like effect, and there is no cellar; no other foundation than fieldstone. Neither are there interior or exterior stairways, so a gable-end opening into the attic space now has no apparent means of access; perhaps a ladder was once used to reach it. On the entrance side, which faces the road, are four double-hung, six-over-nine symmetrically placed windows and the men's entrance, a single recessed door centered on this horizontal axis. Women entered through the less recessed but similar kitchen door.

The interior is severely plain, with unornamented windows and white plaster walls. There is no pulpit, pulpit furniture, or raised platform; only long, unstained wooden tables placed before the elders' backless benches. There is an exposed beam ceiling and a simple, unstained wooden chair rail. Hung on square-cut, unstained support posts along the central aisle, a pegboard arrangement provides a rudimentary cloakroom. An interior door offers direct access to the kitchen where the women probably retired at times to nurse or otherwise tend to infants during the long services.

The pews are plain unstained wooden benches, backless for the first century of their use; there are eight rows

Rear view of Pricetown Meetinghouse showing kitchen addition. Martin Gaube's simple memorial stone stands alone in the burying ground.

Front view of Pricetown showing quoin-like cornerstones, symmetrical fenestration, paneled shutters, and recessed entrance.

Interior view of Pricetown Meetinghouse showing plain white plaster walls, door to kitchen, square-cut posts, and pegs for cloaks and hats.

This shows Pricetown's exposed-beam ceiling, unstained benches, chair rail, and elders' tables. Hymnals and rag rug are recent additions.
for men, and eight for women, all facing forward, on the unstained wood floor. Elders took their places on backless benches against the wall, facing the congregation and on the same level. The central table has a finely crafted trestle-leg arrangement. There are no pew racks for hymnals, for these—scarce, precious, and privately owned—were used at home for family worship and private devotions and were not kept in the meetinghouse. And there were no musical instruments; singing was unaccompanied. A leader "lined" the hymns which, like the preaching, were in German.

Artificial illumination in post-Civil War years was provided by simple kerosene lamps raised and lowered by slender suspension ropes. The present roof is of wooden shingles, as was the original. There is no source of water within or directly adjacent to the building; perhaps it came from the Gaube home across the road. If used during regular services, the kitchen fireplace would have given minimal heat beyond that immediate area; worshipers were warmed by a small cast-iron potbellied stove. Stove-pipe holes give evidence of this arrangement for heating the meeting room.
Women entered Pricetown Meetinghouse through this kitchen door.

Finely crafted trestle leg on Pricetown's central elders' table.

Pricetown Meetinghouse window detail; closed shutters, hardware painted white.

Close-up view of Pricetown six-over-nine clear glass window.

Underside of massive lintel showing tool marks; note protruding handmade nails.

Close-up of Pricetown's fireplace/front wall corner.

Looking out of one of Pricetown's large windows with its wide sill and thick wall; note kerosene lamp with suspension rope.

Men entered Pricetown Meetinghouse through this central door. Transom gives added light and ventilation.

Pricetown's unstained floor was replaced in 1974; bench backs were added in 1877.

Pricetown's central aisle, unstained wood floor, and pegboard with traditional black bonnet.

Small cast-iron pot bellied stove provided minimal heat for Pricetown Meetinghouse.
Blooming Grove Meetinghouse (1828) with its white weatherboards, fieldstone foundation, gable-end chimneys, and doorway with two stairs.

**BLOOMING GROVE MEETINGHOUSE**

Another Brethren meetinghouse perhaps even more difficult to warm in wintery weather was that of the Blooming Grove settlement, located in Lycoming County, six to seven miles north of Williamsport. Hidden away in the hills of north-central Pennsylvania in a delightfully scenic oasis still known as Dunkard Valley, the Blooming Grove Meetinghouse was constructed in 1828 of massive logs from virgin timber. While the German-style fieldstone foundation is still visible, the original log exterior has been covered with white weatherboarding. The single entrance, of a type also found in some areas of Germany, has two sets of roofed, six-rise stairs leading to a common, covered porch with double doors. Also, rather than the single, central chimney typical of Rhine Valley folk-house design, this meetinghouse (which, for approximately two decades, doubled as a schoolhouse) has interior, gable-end chimneys similar to the seventeenth century French Huguenot homes of not-too-distant New Paltz, New York.

The Blooming Grove site also includes a museum which houses authentic folk artifacts that clearly demonstrate the ingenious material culture of these hardy German settlers, so abruptly transplanted into a genuine wilderness setting. The name itself probably derives from the German Blumengrofe, a reference to how the valley must have looked to those pioneering Brethren in May, 1805, with dogwood, rhododendron, and mountain laurel in full bloom. What separated these down-to-earth Germans from the fertile soil of the Fatherland, drew them down the Rhine to Holland, across the stormy Atlantic to the welcoming fellowship of the already-flourishing Dunkard community in Germantown, on through the established early settlements of Reading, Pottsville, Mount Carmel, Bear Gap, Danville, across the Susquehanna, up the Indian trail to Mahoning Creek, across the Muncy Hills to Loyalsock Hill and, finally, along the Sheshequin path to this remote and rugged region of Penn's Woods?

Their story began in Württemberg where, dissatisfied with a perceived lack of piety in the lives of some of their...
Lutheran pastors and fellow parishioners, they began to hold private house-meetings. The established church, joined by the civil authorities, attempted forcefully to suppress these peaceful gatherings. On the heels of this persecution came the Napoleonic conscriptions; refusing to fight, some of these pacifists were imprisoned. This particular group, desiring religious freedom above all else, set sail for Pennsylvania.

No longer truly Lutheran but not yet Brethren, they spent much of their time during the crossing discussing religious matters. A division resulted, and the original party separated upon landing. Those favoring celibacy followed Johann Georg Rapp, an uneducated but charismatic vinedresser/weaver from Iptingen in Württemberg. This group evolved into the famous (and financially successful) communitarian Harmony Society. Leading the other estranged Lutherans was Rapp's former associate, the erudite physician Dr. Friedrich Haller, who had been a high government official in Stuttgart. The two had visited America together in 1803, separating after their arrival to search for land suitable for settlement. During that period of separation Haller was converted to the German Baptist Brethren (Dunkard) way of belief and practice through the influence of the Pipe Creek Congregation near Union Bridge, Maryland.

After his trine-immersion baptism, Haller went to Pennsylvania to enjoy fellowship with the Brethren in Germantown; it was there, in September, 1804, that he met the Württemburg Separatists. Those who chose to follow him, in addition to refuting the need for celibacy, also did not believe in the complete sharing of all goods held in common. And it may be, too, that this group included many of the better educated who perhaps preferred to follow the more cultured Haller, rather than the self-taught Rapp. We do know that among these immigrants were farmers and many skilled workers: a tailor, a printer, a musician, a stone cutter, an architect, a cooper, a carpenter, a miller, a blacksmith, a butcher, a baker, and a bookbinder, just to name a few. True gratitude for the warm hospitality of the Germantown Brethren undoubtedly also helped incline their hearts and minds to accept Brethren teachings, and it was from this nucleus the Blooming Glen Colony of German Dunkards evolved.

When this hardy group decided to purchase ground from...
Quaker speculators they were given a choice of either river bottom or hill land. Accustomed as they were to the hills of Germany, they considered the unfamiliar lowlands to be unhealthful, and so selected hill land covered then with dense stands of white pine, some towering to heights of 150 feet. In addition to clearing this land for cultivation, they also constructed a large log cabin used to house several families during that first winter in the wilds of Penn's Woods. A high degree of German craftmanship, both in carpentry and in hardware, is apparent in their still-extant construction.

As they had done in Germany, these deeply religious people began to meet for worship services in their own modest homes. They had no desire to duplicate the church structures in Germany from which they had separated. Hardships notwithstanding, they seem never to have lost their religious zeal nor their devotion to Haller, their chosen leader, who farmed, in addition to attending to the medical needs of the little flock he served in the dual roles of preacher and teacher. Fluent in French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, as well as in German and English, Haller was highly respected and loved, despite the fact that he was a severe disciplinarian. The meetinghouse was built in 1828, the year of his death at age seventy-four.

The architecture of this log meetinghouse speaks with simple clarity and silent eloquence of the men and women who believed the structure into being. The actual construction must have seemed, for them, an act of worship; certainly it was a labor of love. Thirty feet wide, forty feet long, and twelve feet high, this classically proportioned rectangle was built of "flat-hewn logs, with joints chinked and daubed, with huge girders counter-hewn, and the lumber [white pine] all worked out by hand." Wall construction inside shows the immensity of the towering native pines, hand hewn into huge logs stretching from end to end. Carrying infants and toddlers, many walked from as far as six miles away to attend services which were usually held here Sunday afternoon; evening services were rare. Women sat to the speaker's left; men to the right. Benches were plain, hard, and backless, but small children were allowed to sleep beneath them. Clear-glass window panes, nine lights over six, admitted soft, natural light, while candles in holders gave flickering illumination; a cast-iron stove with a stove pipe offered some heat. A simple table for the preacher, on the same level as the congregation, still holds only a large Bible, symbol of the beliefs and practices of the creedless, non-liturgical, Bible-centered Brethren. No pulpit here, no altar, no cross, no candles, no musical instruments, no stained glass, no statues, no steeple, no bell; only the unified witness of the wood, the light, and the Word. Truly, it has been said that "architecture is the most revealing of the arts. Its forms reflect, with unique direction, the manners, mores, and happenings of an era. A building mirrors ... the mental processes of its creator."
frontier Brethren were singing and writing hymns in German and English, but as practical pioneers they strongly encouraged preachers fluent in English to hike the twenty miles from the Johnstown area to preach in this hegemonic tongue.59

Influences of the region upon the German Brethren and of the Brethren on the region were many, rich, and varied. Yet, Brethren here, as elsewhere, continued as Die Stillen in Lande ("the Quiet Ones in the Land"), for "Brethren in frontier days were not evangelistic in the sense of going out and recruiting. The Brethren tended to attract by their simple, quiet life and so . . . missionary effort on the frontier consisted of going out in remote areas . . . and nurturing the Brethren . . . keeping them informed of what was going on elsewhere."60

Mock's new central gable-end door, central brick chimney, and six-over-six windows.

Corner doors (now sealed) on each gable end at Mock once provided separate entrances for men and women.

Details of Mock's beautifully simple symmetrical fenestration with wooden "hardware;" iron was a scarce commodity on the frontier.

Detail of corner notching at Mock with oak logs showing marks of hand cutting.

Close-up view of Mock's handcrafted wooden window "hardware."
Mock's new, central gable-end door was cut to accommodate caskets; interior walls are bare but whitewashed, wooden floor is unstained.

**KLEIN MEETINGHOUSE**

Elsewhere in Pennsylvania in 1843 another group of Brethren also erected a meetinghouse; it was in Montgomery County, in a place called Franconia, less than two miles from Indian Creek. A small, white frame structure not large enough for Love Feast observances, the Klein Meetinghouse stands on land taken from the Isaac Klein farm. When the newly raised building was dedicated on Christmas that year, the adjoining burying ground had already been sacred to the Brethren for almost a century, for it is buried Peter Becker who, as already noted, was chosen the first Brethren minister in America. Born in Dilsheim, Germany, Becker emigrated to America in 1719, served as the leader of the Germantown Brethren for many years, and moved to Indian Creek to the home of his son-in-law, Rudolph Harley, Jr., in 1746 when his wife died; he died in 1758.61

Appearing sorely in need of repair, the unaltered Klein Meetinghouse today seems to be standing guard on the periphery of a modern retirement village and nursing home named for Becker. Its once whitewashed clapboard has begun to weather gray; the shingle roof needs replacing; and the stone foundation appears to be crumbling. Still, the old architecture speaks its lines, communicating a sense of living history impossible to gain from textbooks alone. For example, the building's two separate but equal entrances on the horizontal axis, both with projecting door hoods, quietly bespeak the Quaker influence so strong in this area.62

Mock's benches are backless, its elders' tables on the same level as the congregation.
As this shows, Klein’s black iron hardware was once painted white.

On-site grave marker for Peter Becker, first elder of the Brethren in America.

Grave marker for Becker’s great-great-grandson, Abraham Harley Cassel, who single-handedly preserved much of Brethren history.

**KREIDER MEETINGHOUSE**

On a green hill one-half mile south of Manheim—seemingly impervious to the ravages of wind, weather, and “the world”—stands the Kreider Meetinghouse. Built in 1859 by the White Oak congregation and once the hub of a vital, rural Brethren community, this plain but sturdy house of worship is the oldest of its kind in Lancaster County today. Although a mid-nineteenth century site, it has direct links to the Brethren of colonial America. The first organized Lancaster County Brethren congregation dates from 1724; it was the Conestoga congregation which, in time, became the mother church of all the congregations in Lancaster, Dauphin, Lebanon, Berks, and Schuylkill Counties. The White Oak congregation separated from Conestoga in 1772, but no meetinghouses were built by these conservative rural Brethren until 1859.63

On June 18 of that year Cornelius Kreider deeded one acre and fifty perches of land to the White Oak trustees for the sum of $91.88. On this site the meetinghouse walls were raised. In 1877, John Kreider, son of Cornelius, deeded 117 perches to be added to the original tract, for $125. In May of 1877 the congregation decided to build a twenty-foot addition to the east side of the original forty by fifty foot structure, making it into a Love Feast house; the first such observance was held on October 12 and 13, 1877.64 According to one of the church’s current trustees, “The most wonderful thing about building this addition . . . was that it was completed without missing a single regular meeting.”65 As meetings were held every six weeks, the work must have proceeded with great efficiency and cooperation.

The 1877 addition uses the bank-barn building techniques so expertly employed by local craftsmen;66 nails with blunt ends found on site appear to be hand wrought. Included in this utilitarian alteration was a basement kitchen designed for the preparation of Love Feast meals.67 The substantial walls of locally made brick stand on a foundation of carefully cut-to-fit limestone.68 The fairly porous bricks are laid in common-bond style, with overlapping ends, six or seven rows of stretchers, and then a row of headers. The basement walls become progressively thicker.
West-gable end view of Kreider; the central window necessitated interior structural maneuvering to keep the chimneys symmetrical.

A cross section of fairly porous brick and blunt-end nails found at the Kreider site.

A twenty-foot addition (1877) made Kreider Meetinghouse a Love Feast House complete with basement kitchen.

East end of Kreider Meetinghouse showing limestone foundation, bricks laid in common-bond style, and symmetrical fenestration.

as the excavation deepens, with the native limestone foundation reinforced by a single course of brick extending from window sills to the cement floor.

The building's cedar shingle roof has a pitch similar to that of the Pricetown Meetinghouse, and some thoughtful interior maneuvering has allowed for the construction of symmetrical gable-end chimneys. On the east gable end is a white downspout; on the west, an electric meter. Each gable end also has two window-size openings; an interior stairway gives access to the attic space. Originally there were two entrances along the roadside horizontal axis; a central door was added "about fifty years ago . . . to relieve congestion of the center aisle." All of the white-painted doors, which face south, have simple black iron handles and a transom for added light and ventilation. A black iron boot scraper, conveniently located on a small slab of concrete, stands just outside the men's entrance.

Windows are clear-glass, double-hung, six-over-six, with wooden paneled shutters painted white. Plain roller-blinds are used, dark green on all sides except the north, where a more translucent creamy beige material allows better illumination for the elders' bench section from which the Bible was read. Blinds have been hung several inches below the window tops, providing additional transom-like illumination without direct glare. Wall-hung kerosene lamps added more light when needed, and heat, supplied by two fairly large basement furnaces, rose through iron registers located in the side aisles. Coat hooks on a beige-painted wooden strip provided on most walls a place for the men's black hats and the women's black shawls and bonnets.

The interior is light, relatively spacious, and comfortable, yet quite plain; only the support posts, also painted beige, with their simple pointed arch carving give the slightest indication that this was the age of Gothic Revival in American ecclesiastical architecture. The floor is bare wood, except for long strips of black rubber matting on the aisles and across the front. A simple wall clock hangs above the door to a small nursery on the women's side; attic access is through a stairway entrance here.

The furniture, too, is unpretentious. Elders' tables of
In 1859 Cornelius Kreider deeded land to the White Oak trustees.

unstained wood have plain rectangular tops and lathe­ turned legs. There is no raised platform to elevate clergy above laity.71 Seating here is on wooden plank benches, ingeniously constructed with hinged backs allowing every third bench back to be reversed and transformed into a table for Love Feasts; when all the benches were turned, seating surrounded the tables. Nonmembers, invited to observe what must have seemed like scenes from a parochial Passion Play,72 were seated on side benches called "raisings" because they were raised slightly for better visibility. Every third row of benches here has hymnal racks, another small sign of the changing times.73

The attic provided overnight accommodation for those attending who had come from a distance. A wooden partition divided the men from the women; cradles and rope beds, feather ticks and pillows were provided as, of course, were outdoor toilet facilities. Water, pumped by children eager to participate in the action, came from the pump house, through an underground pipe, and into a large wooden tub in the basement. Horses were fed by the kindly host Brethren, and sheltered in a buggy shed which once stood on the grounds.74 The grounds are well kept, including the cemetery to the east, enclosed by a black wrought-iron fence which adds a touch of American Victoriana.75 A red­ brick retaining wall in front of the church protects this naturally raised site from erosion.76

In Kreider Cemetery tombstones more typically American Victorian than Brethren include photographs of the deceased.

Black iron fence around Kreider Cemetery adds a touch of American Victoriana.

Heat rose through iron registers located in Kreider's side aisles.

Cornelius Kreider's son John deeded additional land to the Kreider site in 1877.

Kreider Meetinghouse was heated by two Bengal furnaces made in Royersford, Pa.

Kreider Meetinghouse interior basement wall showing thickening of limestone foundation.
Brethren hospitality also extended to the children attending the one-room school just across the road; they were all invited to share in the Second Day meal. This fellowship meal, which followed a long morning of preaching, was served in the basement, and traditionally included “cold, sliced meat, buns called ‘rusks,’ pickled beets and varied cookies and pies (often raisin and ‘schnitz’ [dried apple slices]), washed down with plenty of hot coffee.” Often the long tables had to be set two or three times to accommodate the members and nonmembers who attended this extension of the Love Feast observance. Water was heated and cooking was done in three large iron kettles on the gable-end brick fireplace-stove. There was no sink arrangement as such; dishes were washed at a long, zinc-covered table. A basement pantry provided storage for food used in these semi-annual spring and fall gatherings; these homecomings, these family reunions.

The vernacular structure of this modest, utilitarian meetinghouse “spoke” to Brethren and non-Brethren alike; here was a house where regular fellowship meetings became family memories. Here was authentic community, wherein “even the casual visitor might begin to sense a ‘plus factor’ that he can neither escape nor define, something ‘there’ which begins to stir in him a sense of awe and fascination and represents an embryonic apprehension of the numinous.” Neither architecturally impressive nor oppressive, Kreider Meetinghouse seems human in scale and hospitable in spirit. It represents the quiet appeal of plain living in the Gilded Age; of being in, but not of, the world.
View of Kreider from elders’ bench. Portable pulpit, offering basket, pillow, fan, and hymnals are more recent additions.

A wooden partition divided the men’s and women’s sleeping areas in Kreider’s attic.

"Bench marks" of a long morning’s preaching and copy of The Brethren Hymnal (1901), sometimes called “The Old Black Book.”

Zinc table where dishes were washed and brick fireplace in Kreider basement.

Kreider Meetinghouse floor plan
Kreider's interior chimney has been plastered; note segmented arches above openings. White wooden wall divides pantry area.

Long tables once used for Kreider's Second Day meal, a time of community fellowship; note heavy wooden support posts and brick reinforcing.

Pantry shelves along Kreider's east wall; note exposed beams and thick limestone foundation.

Detail of post carvings; these Kreider Brethren were not unaware of popular trends.

LONG MEETINGHOUSE

Located in South Annville Township in Lebanon County, Long Meetinghouse was built in 1869 on farm land belonging to one Jacob Long. In addition to the meetinghouse, today the site has a well-maintained cemetery (still sometimes used for summer vespers and Easter Sunrise services); a recently constructed enclosed picnic pavilion with modern kitchen facilities; and a baseball field and volleyball court, meant to encourage families to gather here for annual reunions. Here, too, fund-raising events such as peach festivals and chicken barbecues are held, inviting community participation. Now children in colorful modern dress play where their plain ancestors once gathered in dark clusters before and after services to discuss the weather, their crops, local news, and the concerns of the Brethren fellowship.

Unfortunately, the meetinghouse itself—in marked contrast to the Kreider site—seems not to be greatly valued by the current generation of Brethren, either for its historical or spiritual aspects. Except for the recent addition of a tin roof, little or nothing appears to have been done to preserve this architectural gem. Built of locally made red brick laid in common-bond style, this simple, sturdy structure connects directly with the old German Baptist Brethren who, following the Civil War, closed ranks against the encroachments of modernity. The original foundation...
Cream-painted embossed tin ceiling in Long Meetinghouse suggests the subtle influence of a worldly aesthetic.

Meticulously crafted stained oak folding doors along both sides of central aisle provide rooms for two Sunday School classes at Long Meetinghouse.

Long's two-step raised platform with stained oak pulpit, an architectural response to the revival movement. Preaching was emphasized.

Long's severely plain, backless, unstained bench testifies to an earlier conscious choice for plain living in the Gilded Age.
Long's bare wood floors show marks of former pew placement.

Original rough log beams and heating pipes (a later addition) in Long basement.

Inside Long Meetinghouse two oak doors with large windows separate vestibule from worship room.

Basement furnace in Long Meetinghouse.

Marks of two original entrances visible below Long Meetinghouse’s second and fifth windows; orientation changed in 1917. Note old date-stone (1869) and new tin roof.

is of gray limestone, native to this rich agricultural area. The shutterless windows are clear glass, six-over-six lights; the exterior framing and the very simple hardware are painted white.

Two original and rather narrow entrances on the horizontal axis facing the road once served to separate the sexes during worship. In 1917 alterations were made (at a cost of $2,600, or thirty-two cents an hour) and these were closed and one wide entrance opened on the east gable end, facing the cemetery. At the same time, the now more evangelically motivated Brethren added a small extension to the west gable end to house a two-step, raised platform with a simple, stained oak pulpit. This architectural change was their response to the revival movement then affecting many denominations, including the Brethren. Another twentieth-century religious trend that touched even these conservative folk was the Sunday School movement. As a result of it, meticulously crafted, accordion-folding stained oak doors were installed along both sides of the central aisle at the entrance, to create two separate areas for Sunday School classes. They also designed a vestibule, separated from the worship room by two oak doors with large windows, an innovative addition intended to offer some protection from the elements, thus saving on fuel costs.

Ever practical, their renovations included installing electricity and a basement furnace, but since this particular meetinghouse was never used for Love Feast observances, these frugal farmers did not include a kitchen. The spacious attic was used primarily for storage. The bare wood floor still bears marks showing the former placement of stationary, stained oak pews similar to the one remaining behind the pulpit. This generation of Brethren has marked the floor with white lines for recreational purposes, a seemingly incongruous change deemed necessary prior to the pavilion construction. Cream-colored walls and an embossed tin ceiling painted cream suggest the influence of a subtle, turn-of-the-century “worldly” aesthetic, while several plain, unstained backless benches mutely testify to nineteenth-century plain living; a conscious choice continued well into the present century by many economically comfortable Lebanon County Brethren.
BUCHER MEETINGHOUSE

While most of the rural nineteenth-century Brethren in fertile Lebanon County were prosperous farmers, other residents of the Lebanon Valley were extremely wealthy. One of the wealthiest families in America, the iron-making Colemans—considered "Lebanon's Royal Family"—were among those who gave glitter to the Gilded Age, maintaining great estates, entertaining high government officials, and building roads and churches. One religious group that benefited from their philanthropy was the Tulpehocken congregation of Brethren, organized in 1844. This yeasty group came to have three meetinghouses, one of which was the simple, white frame structure at the Bucher site, built with a generous gift received from the beneficent Colemans.

The Coleman gift apparently prompted a response from the Brethren themselves; land and the remaining money needed were quickly forthcoming, and the simple forty-by sixty-foot structure was erected in 1871 at a cost of $2,957.29. It filled a need for a meetinghouse in the Cornwall area to be used for funerals and worship services. It was used regularly until 1933, when the unaltered structure was judged too small to accommodate the con-
Bucher Meetinghouse floor plan

gregation. Since then it has only been used for special afternoon activities such as harvest home, homecoming, and German-language services. Young families are encouraged to attend these by the inclusion of a small nursery area in the right rear corner of the worship room. Except for this and for the evidence of temporary electric lights (installed in 1950 when the Midway congregation met here while their own facility was being renovated), the Bucher Meetinghouse remains as originally built. Even a portion of its once large and busy horse shed still stands intact.

Two separate, roofed entrances, both on the south-facing horizontal axis, provide equal access for men and women. Both have large slabs of limestone to serve as porches; the men’s entrance has a black iron boot scraper. Symmetrical fenestration—clear-glass double-hung six-over-six lights—admits light, air, and an idyllic view of the surrounding fields and the gentle slopes of nearby South Mountain. Worshipers hung their black hats and shawls on white-painted hooks fastened to a white-painted strip of wood that encompasses most of the meeting room. This was heated by a large cast-iron furnace with a stove pipe located in the room’s southwest (rear) corner. The plaster walls have been painted a very pale shade of green; white blinds blend with the white window frames and doors; and a simple wall clock hangs on the side wall in a spot visible both to preachers and to most of the congregation.

The plain, straight-back benches are stationary; some have squared-off straight ends, others, curved. These and the long rectangular tables used by elders and deacons have been stained in what seems an attempt to achieve a marble-like effect. The central bench facing the congregation has

Large cast-iron furnace with stovepipe located in rear corner of Bucher Meetinghouse.

Bucher’s central elders’ bench has a high back and worn black padding. Also shown: congregational-level table with portable pulpit.
a higher-than-usual back and a worn black pad on the seat, perhaps an indication of growing respect for the church elders. Although a small, portable pulpit-like stand has been added to the central table, seating for elders and deacons remains on the same level as that for the congregation. Old hymnals are stacked in various places; all are in English; some have printed notation, others do not. In the attic, mortise-and-tenon construction echoes a technique used in barn building in this area. Access is by way of an interior, winding, corner stairway. The attic windows are full size but do not have shutters. The roof is of wood shakes; nails found on site appear to have been hand wrought. Interior maneuvering by some resourceful nineteenth-century craftsmen has allowed for central-end placement of the red brick chimney. A limestone foundation includes ventilating grates of black wrought iron, each one different. Just to the south of the meetinghouse entrances is an unenclosed burying ground whose use is open to all, provided they have died a natural death. And, still standing inside the meetinghouse and always ready for service is a hand-made wooden bier, embodying the values of those Brethren craftsmen who made it so well, so long ago.

Handmade wooden bier stands ready inside Bucher Meetinghouse.

Bucher's limestone foundation has black iron ventilating grates, each of a different design.

Brethren Hymn Book printed in English but without musical notation.

Interior maneuvering in Bucher attic allows for central gable-end chimney placement.
CONCLUSION

In any analysis of these Brethren meetinghouses—distinctively American folk structures—several general observations seem in order. To begin with, there is the “theology of space” to be considered. In all architecture, but most especially in ecclesiastical works, both time and space are important, for “all space is organized and oriented by the sacred place, itself regarded as the centre of man’s life, the point of reference around which his world is built. . . .” Here human beings converge, coming together from chaos to establish a system of meaning, a unifying central point in some traditions called “the navel of the world.” The sacred place also has “the capacity to mirror or to represent on earth a more perfect realm which reflects the ordered strengths of the heavenly realm.” Then, too, the sacred place is the meeting point between heaven and earth; a point of intersection between two realms. And, finally, the sacred place may contain the object that symbolizes and embodies divine presence.

Another consideration is the common division of houses of worship into two main types: the domus dei, or temple, and the domus ecclesiae, or meetinghouse. The first type may be seen as a house of God; the second, as a house for the people of God; a meeting-for-worship house. That the children of Israel long ago recognized this may be seen in their ecclesiastical structures, including both temple and meeting-for-worship house (synagogue). Within the Christian tradition, the domus ecclesiae seems the “authentic norm.” Brethren have always believed that the people of God do not “go to church”; rather, they are the church, the Body of Christ at work in the world.

A third and final consideration is the need for some understanding of the ground rules of folk architecture. Brethren meetinghouses were buildings of the people, by the people, and for the people; democracy embodied in masonry and wood. Built on a human scale, they were simple structures in which individuals were not dwarfed by architecture. These buildings had no architects, no scaled drawings, no blueprints. Their builders need not have had the ability to read, write, or even to count; if the rules were followed the parts would fit together harmoniously. The applied geometry used in these constructions was no esoteric secret, but rather was “entirely within the body of lore common to those who practiced the building trades.”

Uncluttered by architectural flourishes and built predominately of local materials, most of these classically simple Brethren meetinghouses appear at peace with their surroundings. Their basic rectangular form embodies the concept, so cherished in the nineteenth century, that human beings had a right, indeed, had a God-given obligation to dominate the natural world. Most of their roofs are ten-pitch; that is, the length of the rafters is precisely half the width of the structure, a choice both aesthetically pleasing to Pennsylvania Germans and practical for the region’s climate and geography.

Invariably, original orientation for these meetinghouses was on the horizontal axis. Brethren men and women passed through separate but equal entrances. They sat separately, but sang harmoniously, each secure in the knowledge of roles both defined and distinct. All worshipers were intended to participate actively, not to observe passively. Those entering came armed with personal hymnals and well-marked Bibles. Ministers and members of the congregation sat on the same level; all wore the same plain garb. Gone were the clerical robes, the elevated altar, the ecclesiastical music and liturgical mystery, and the sensual stimulation of incense, candles, flowers, statues, stained glass, intricate carvings, bells and musical instruments. These Brethren were consciously choosing to emphasize the beauty of holiness rather than the holiness of beauty.

Lighting was natural; for the most part sunlight through clear glass sufficed. Here individuals could see and be seen by all others in the group; group identity overshadowed individual identity. Consensus was crucial. Each individual was important, but primarily as a necessary cog in a larger Brethren social structure. If individual deviations in dress and demeanor were quickly spotted, so too was emotional distress or obvious illness. For good or for ill, being Brethren meant being inextricably bound together.

Their unstained, simple, straight-back wooden pews still
symbolize the plain, unvarnished “gospel truth” these Brethren gathered to hear. The creative pacifist craftsmen who fashioned them believed that if swords could be turned into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, surely benches could be turned into tables for use at the all-important spring and fall Love Feasts. The kitchens incorporated into those meetinghouses considered Love Feast houses were utilitarian, yet innovative by the very fact of their existence.

These down-to-earth Brethren seem always to have seen themselves as very human beings with very human needs. Attic lodging, nursery areas, outdoor areas conducive to informal fellowship before and after meetings, even their carefully constructed outdoor toilet facilities attest to this view. Horses too were treated with respect, being provided with shelter in special sheds; hay, oats, and water were also supplied as needed. Children were encouraged to help in very real ways, particularly during Love Feast observances when they might pump water, carry wood, or tend infants and younger children. Thus, Brethren children came to be integrated into the caring community of the church family at a tender, impressionable age.

The Brethren meetinghouse matched its name perfectly, serving as a home where extended family could meet for worship and study, work and prayer, fellowship and mutual aid, and sometimes even for eating and sleeping. Here those with no formal education were schooled in the wisdom of humility, economy, and common sense. At its best, the religion of these Brethren offered reconciliation and healing, and a sense of wholeness, integration, and peace. In short, being Brethren in the Gilded Age offered a sense of shalom in the midst of shallowness; a sense of internal order in the midst of increasing external chaos.

The need for making order of chaos seems inherent in human beings. Ever since the Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras described the relationship between a musical tone and the length of the string plucked to produce it, the concept of perfect harmony has been seen in the 1:2 ratio. During medieval times, while the pragmatic origin of ratio was forgotten, an aesthetic reverence (rooted in theological and philosophical thought) developed. This reverence for geometric order, so basic to human being, continued in the architecture of high culture, determining the proportions of buildings in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

This orientation is ubiquitous at the folk cultural register, particularly in European-American tradition. So began the “practice of laying out the lines of the building on the ground where it was to be constructed.” Within the folk cultural world-view, use of the 1:2 ratio has been deemed pragmatic. It employs two basic units in easily measurable references. It stresses human control, incorporating straight lines akin to the human body. It emphasizes the possibility of technological growth, facilitating both addition and expansion in ways not possible with circular units. Consequently, just how to accomplish this basic building task became part of common oral lore, not included in written manuals as late as the second half of the nineteenth century.

St. Augustine had come to view the 1:2 ratio of the perfect harmony of an octave as “redemption made audible.” This sense of order, translated in other ways, influenced the concepts of knighthood and monastic orders, giving folks the sense of “God himself ordering the events of His world.” The word “order” has always been crucial for understanding the Brethren. They believed that “what they were in their church was what God wanted them to be.”

From the first, Brethren were known by their orderly lives: neat, clean, well-organized homes, straightforward business dealings, and simple worship services without excessive emotion. The form of their meetinghouses embodied the functions of their faith.

The plain-living ideas which empowered Gilded Age Brethren live on in their meetinghouse architecture, which connects past to present, present to future. This meetinghouse connection is a tie consisting of many complex simplicities, some of its elements visible, some not. But it is a tie so binding that the influence of someone raised in the meetinghouse tradition may be strong enough to change the way even younger Brethren, familiar only with current church architecture, and non-Brethren converts, live.

So, although built over a century apart, these Pennsylvania Brethren meetinghouses reflect the values of those nameless individuals who built them and worshiped within their walls. And, within the context of Brethren history, beliefs, and practices, they may be “read” as three-dimensional texts. Fitting indeed, since for a German-speaking people in an English-speaking world, masonry and mortar might communicate much more than pen, press, or tongue. Not one of them is an architectural wonder; all are easily passed by. But for anyone who stops to look and reflect, there is much to learn. Of each site it may be truly said: “Here stands a structure uniquely American; one ‘built without unnecessary ornaments and only for the worship of God.’”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the encouragement and assistance of two very special persons: my academic advisor, Simon J. Bronner, Distinguished Professor of Folklore and American Studies at Penn State Harrisburg, who pointed me in the right direction and, unfailingly, kept me encouraged and "on track" at all times; and, my dear husband, Tilman R. Frye, faithful traveling companion, expert photographer, and patient "computer advisor" who also cheerfully contributed the meetinghouse floor plans. In addition to all those cited in my notes, I am grateful to the many Brethren individuals and congregations who freely gave time, hospitality, information, and invaluable insights.

ENDNOTES

1Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910) used "Mark Twain" as his pen name, While not a professing Christian (but grounded in the frontier Presbyterian church), Twain both wrote and spoke out critically against many practices of organized religion. Despite this antipathy, he loved to discuss religion with thoughtful persons like his friend, John T. Lewis,
an uprooted southern black freeman and a faithful member of the Brethren. Much about the way Lewis spoke and lived impressed Twain, who eventually became a pacifist and anti-war writer. During the years in Eltingville, N.Y., while he was writing The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, the two men became close friends. In Twain's autobiography, he confesses that "Jim," the only fully developed black character in the novel, was actually a composite of four black men known and loved by him. One was John T. Lewis, with whom he walked, talked, and refreshed his creative spirit when, as he put it, his "tank ran dry" during the penning of that other black American novel, according to the Georgia 

Hemingway, "all modern American literature comes." Twain described this humble poor, black Brethren as his "conscientious and honest friend," one whom he respected for carrying his "stubborn, helpless load year in and year out," who in Christ-like humility "forgot himself" that others might live. (Lewis had once saved the lives of some of Twain's relatives by being a less heroic action to stop a runaway horse.) For Mark Twain, his association with John T. Lewis provided an influential "meetinghouse connection." Kermon Thomasson, "Mark Twain and his Dunker Friend," Messenger 134:10 (1985): 16-21.

4For an excellent overview of the economic, social, cultural, and political changes and challenges that were rooted in this period in American history see William L. Barney, The Passage of the Republic: An Interdisciplinary History of Nineteenth-Century America (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1987). Part III ("Gilded Age America," pp. 267-249), is particularly valuable.


6Even before the Civil War the denomination had developed an influential church paper which greatly unified the geographically scattered Brethren through a division in America life. (This first paper, The Gospel Visitor, was published in 1851 by Henry Kurtz in the loft of his springhouse in Poland, Ohio. Originally it had 204 subscribers to its monthly edition. A weekly paper was begun 13 years later by Henry Holsinger from Tyrone, Pa. Following the Civil War, Brethren published a flurry of publications—books, tracts, periodicals, and hymnals. Roger E. Sappington, ed., The Brethren in Industrial America: A Source Book on the Development of the Church of the Brethren, 1869-1915 (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1985), pp. 249-250.) As the industrial revolution continued to break down community barriers, allowing the outside world to invade their homes some Brethren, slowly but surely, began to glimpse the possible educational values to be gained through reading Brethren publications, and they came to be seen as one helpful means of coping with change.

7Brethren had long looked to their Quaker friends and neighbors as knowledgeable guides to plain living. Nineteenth-century Quaker dress was a readily recognizable group boundary, setting aside those who belonged to the group from those who did not. In short, most nineteenth-century Pennsylvania Brethren—conservative in dress as in most other matters (varying degrees of liberalism seem to have marked many of those moving westward)—consciously chose to conform to Brethren-set standards, not to the standards of the world. In a world of constantly changing fashions, Brethren in "plain dress" (still Die Stilten im Lande) found themselves unwilling to "go with the flow." Their natural frugality mitigated against change for the sake of change. Their idealized life style, long internalized, now gained expression through their ideologically chosen "plain" garb. In the very act of standing still and looking backward, their outer appearance rigidified without many changes. As an added reinforcement to this chosen behavior, Brethren now found themselves able to clarify the essence of their beliefs to other Americans without having to say a single word.

In addition to examining meetinghouse architecture and researching written materials, I communicated with Brethren persons of both sexes and all ages. I visited in Brethren homes and attended a variety of Brethren functions from regular Sunday morning worship services to annual conferences—part business meeting, part "family" reunion. I volunteered three weeks of time at the Brethren-run New Windsor Service Center in Maryland, spent time on a Brethren college campus, visited the only

\[\text{plain}\] seminary of the denomination in Oak Brook, Illinois, and journeyed to Schwarzenau, Germany, site of those first baptisms by trine immersion in the Elder River. I subscribed to the official Brethren magazine, Messenger. I visited the old burying grounds to feel closer to the old Brethren ways names have become familiar through my readings. I attended the Brethren-sponsored Disaster Relief Auction, visited Brethren nursing homes, ate Brethren-barbecued chicken and bought Brethren-made crafts at a variety of Brethren fund-raisers. I attended baptismal services, weddings, funeral services and meals, Sunday School class meetings and Mother-Daughter banquets. I tried to "go home again," looking with love but with wide-open eyes.


9Luther's translation of the scriptures into the language of the people allowed Germans for the first time to read and to interpret independently what they had read. This German translation, long used by Pennsylvania Brethren, is still being used today by the Pennsylvania Amish.


13In addition to the early concern for individual self-preservation came a later concern for preservation of sectarian group-integrity; withdrawal became a synonym of life. "Separately existing sects may differ in their teaching and discipline, and in its growth by training their children in the values and customs of the past; by emphasis on the community of believers; by controlling education of the children; by using excommunication as a disciplinary tool and as a means of weeding out non-conformers; . . . These were used, in part, to indoctrinate the children so that survival of the sect by endogenous growth would occur as well as to preserve the cultural integrity of the sect." Alvin E. Comer, M.D., Sectarian Childrearing: The Dunkers 1708-1900 (Gettysburg, PA: Brethren Heritage P. n.d.), p. 6.

14Durnbaugh, Believers' Church: p. 119.

15Ibid.


17Before making a final decision, Alexander Mack and George Grebe (a gunsmith) wrote to Hochmann, then imprisoned for preaching in Nurnberg. Hochmann gave cautious encouragement, warning in words that would be repeated by Brethren for centuries before administering trine-immersion baptism to what would be members of the fellowship: "count the cost." (Durnbaugh, European Origins of the Brethren (1958; Elgin, IL: Brethren P, 1986) p. 110.


19In 1836, the Brethren adopted the legal name of Fraternity of German Baptists, changed in 1871 to German Baptist Brethren. "Since 1908 the official denominational designation for the largest branch of the movement has been the Church of the Brethren." Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Early History," Church of the Brethren: Yesterday and Today, Durnbaugh, ed. (Elgin, IL: Brethren P, 1986), p. 2.


22In 1847 Samuel Davison witnessed a baptism by trine immersion at the Snow Hill Nunnery, just north of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. His description, preserved by Dr. John Frederick Hochmann, Brethren minister, paints a scene which was recreated again and again by Brethren across the centuries: "We sang a hymn and [had] prayer, and Elder [Andrew] Fahnstock went into the water; the candidates assisted by by-standing brethren and sisters descended after him. They were females. As each reached the lower step, he took her by the left arm, and led her to a suitable depth, where she knelt down. It was a hot sunny day, but that pure water was cold, and at first made respiration short and labored. She applied water to the face, and he to the back of the head, waiting for a moment for her to recover, and acquire a devout frame of mind. Then, laying his left hand upon the forepart of the head, and his right hand upon the back, between the shoulders, he said, 'Ich taufe euch in nomen des Vaters,' and immersed
the candidate, face foremost, then raising her up to her former position, and adding in an audible voice, "und des Sohnes," he immersed her in the same manner a second time; then giving her a like time for recovery, he added, "und des Heiligen Geistes," and proceeded as before, raising her up to the circuit of Creed, that is, still kneeling, and giving time for the candidate to recover; while she was yet kneeling he laid both hands upon her head, and offered a short invitation for the Spirit of God to seal this obedient handmaid as a child of God." Samuel Davison, undocumented quote, Freeman Ankrum, *Sidelines on Brethren History* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren F, 1962) 47-48. My own December baptism by trine immersion, although conducted over a century later, in an in-church baptismal pool, and in English, was virtually identical in every other respect.

"During the autumn of 1724, all male members of the Germantown congregation left on an evangelistic expedition, forming two new Brethren congregations at Coventry and at Conestoga. Conrad Beisell (1691-1768), one of those baptized at Conestoga, later split with the Brethren; by the late 1730s he had established an impressive Protestant monastic and cultural community at Ephrata. At its height, the Ephrata Cloister community numbered as many as 350 members."

"The Sauer's published the first successful German-language newspaper and almanac, the first religious magazine, and cast the first type in the American colonies. Although the elder Sauer was not Brethren, he was sympathetic to the Brethren point of view. Because of his nonresistant stance during the Revolutionary War, the younger Sauer was imprisoned and lost all of his property."

"The word "plain," as a concept of dress and living, is believed to have been introduced by the Quakers. Brethren also adopted some parts of church polity from the Quakers, including "Annual Meeting" and "query" (item of business brought before the meeting). Dumbaugh, "Early History," p. 11.


"Moore, p. 121.

"When Holland Dutch Mennonites (who came about thirty years before the Dunkards) first settled on this site five miles west of Philadelphia, it was called Crefeld. English, Welsh, and Irish called it Germantown. Isaac Clarence Kulpr, Jr., "The Voyage of Bishop Naas," *Pennsylvania Folklore*, 30:1 (1980), p. 29.


"Moore, p. 127.

"Fry, p. 48.

"The source of this information is a one-sheet, anonymously prepared flyer circulated by the Germantown congregation.

"The Oley Valley, a thirty-square-mile segment in the central part of eastern Berks County, was the first to be settled by a diversity of European immigrants. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there came "German and Swedish Lutherans; French, Swiss, and German Reformed; English and Welsh Quakers; and German Dunkards, Mennonite, Amish, New Born, and Roman Catholics." Karen Guenther, "A Garden for the Friends of God: Religious Diversity in the Oley Valley to 1750," *Pennsylvania Folklore* 33:3 (Spring 1984), p. 138.


"Typically, those Brethren were slow to build a meetinghouse; perhaps the desire for a schoolhouse pushed the project. In 1828 the Annual Meeting of the Brethren considered the meetinghouse issue. It was decided to "leave it over to every church to do as they deem best.""


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early history of rural
in some areas and became predominant during the Victorian
that place. "Although stone farmhouses were most common during the
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were trying to follow the procedure of the Last
A single cup of grape juice was then passed, from which everyone took
songs because the price of salvation had been paid at Calvary. The
broken by the communicant into a small piece to serve the person beside
them. At this time, the area was still alive with panthers, bears and wolves.
This fascinating man is said to have spent many nights bedded down
by a campfire, sleeping on boughs of trees...” Kaylor B. John Mineley, an
Irish Presbyterian who found Brethren pacifism to his liking, farmed
in the Johnstown area. Crippled, he made monthly trips to the Meeting house
on horseback, also to preach in English. Having fled the Northern Counties of Ireland to avoid conscription into the army during the Civil
War there, he refused to carry a gun. He is remembered as “a short man
that had a great big voice.” Kaylor, p. 3.

Also buried here is Becker’s great-great-grandson, Abraham Harley Cassel
(1820-1908), the first of the Cassel family to become a member of the
congregation. He was a teacher/ preacher/bibliographer/antiquarian, the
exceptional Brethren layman responsible for preserving thousands of
valuable, old books (both German and English), as well as many papers
related to Brethren history.

Abraham Harley Cassel’s wife was a Quaker. Quaker influences were
both personal and direct, as well as impersonal and subtly pervasive.

Guy R. Saylor, ed., History of the Church of the Brethren, Eastern
20-21. As already mentioned, Brethren consciously chose not to conform
to popular trends, and their struggle was first to ascertain whether even
the simple meetinghouse style was to be utilized. Finally, at the 1855
Annual Conference, this exchange gave the all clear: Article 14 Is: it
conforming with the world to build meetinghouses? Answer: No, if built
without unnecessary ornaments, and only for the worship of God.

Martha Hess, "Kreider Meetinghouse," Disaster Relief Auction Pro-


Brethren began by rejecting the liturgical traditions (Lutheran and
Reformed) from which they had come in Europe. In so doing, they
rejected the ecclesiastical structures in which these liturgical services were
held. The social pressures to "special place" to meet for worship; for them, 
"sacred space" was wherever they gathered for worship. At first, houses
sufficed; later, barns were used for Love Feast observances.

To begin the Service [Love Feast], a hymn was sung, followed
by prayer and then feasting. Then they shared the Lord’s Supper,
a meal of rice soup, muton, and bread, served in bowls into which four
people dipped. The Kiss of Charity was then passed—a symbol of a Circle
of Love. The Communion Service of the bread and cup followed. The
unleavened bread, baked by the Sisters and cut into long strips, was
broken by the communicant into a small piece to serve the person beside
him. The bread was eaten in silence in memory of Christ’s sacrifice.
A single cup of grape juice was then passed, from which everyone took
a sip, signifying Christ’s shed blood. At this time, songs of redemption
were sung because the price of salvation had been paid at Calvary. The
service concluded with a hymn, and then the congregation went out into the
night.” Hess 25. (This description illustrates how closely the Brethren
were trying to follow the procedure of the Last Supper, actually a
Passover meal, shared by Christ and his disciples. See Matthew 26:17-

Construction techniques used in this meetinghouse were common
to those being used in farmhouse construction during that time and in
that place. “Although stone farmhouses were most common during the
early history of rural Pennsylvania, brick houses soon were more prevalent in
some areas and became predominant during the Victorian era.” Long,
p. 86.

The last Love Feast at this site was held in June 1948. Several
weddings have been held here in recent years. During summer months
each year, a preaching service and a congregational hymn sing are
scheduled. Hess, pp. 24-25.

"Hence, until well into the twentieth century, did not have paid,
professional, seminary-educated clergy. Ministers were called from within
the ranks of membership. They continued to support themselves and their
families as before: most were farmers. Some had a great natural gift for
preaching; others did not. All were devout and well-versed in the Bible.

“Love feast was a community highlight and a time for fellowship
with surrounding Churches of the Brethren. It was held in the middle
of the week and began at noon of the first day. Visiting ministers were
invited to preach, and as many as 8-10 ministers gave a 5 to 10 minute

“All Brethren hymn books were purchased and owned by individuals
until the late nineteenth century, when some churches began making
purchases of hymn books for congregational use.” Donald R. Hinks,
Brethren Hymn Books and Hymn Books and Hymnals 1720-1894

"Old records show that on a bill for Lovefeast expenses, in addition
to food, straw, hay, and grain were also an item.” Hess, p. 25.

"Victorian landscaping made great use of fences, especially the ornate
vandal-proof variety made of cast iron. This emphasized the Victorian
"control-over-nature" ideal, then being applied both to domestic landscaping
and to rural cemeteries. Designed "to fulfill the same kind of sanctuary
function the home was traditionally to serve," the rural cemetery was
intended to be "pre-industrial, uncrowded, privatized," a home-like oasis,
a place of refuge, retrospection, and reverence. Ann Douglas, "Heaven
Our Home: Consolations Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-

“"This retaining wall protects a grass strip used for out-of-doors visiting.
Brethren looked forward to arriving early, so there would be time to visit
before worship.”

"Cassel, personal interview.

"Hess, p. 25.

"Ibid.

Harold W. Turner, From Temple to Meetinghouse: The Phenom-
ology and Theology of Places of Worship (The Hague: Mouton, 1979),
p. 343.

"My own feelings of interest and reverence drew me to the site, scene
of so many Brethren-related childhood memories. My father, my paternal
grandparents, and my maternal great-grandparents are buried here, along
with assorted uncles, aunts, cousins, family friends, and neighbors.

The use of locally made brick bespeaks the pervasive mid-nine-
teenth-century ideal of "civilized" mankind as having ultimate control
over the "uncivilized" natural world. This fertile Pennsylvania farmland,
now tamed and trimmed, had once been dense woodland, wild and
completely natural, inhabited only by creatures of nature and "uncivilized"
Indians.

"Translucent, frosted glass was used in west-facing windows (at the
pulpit end) presumably to cut down on glare during early-evening
services. There are no blinds.


"Until the mid-nineteenth century, Brethren avoided emotion-charged
revival meetings, emphasizing the Brethren way of life as one requiring
a soberly conscious, carefully examined, deliberate choice to be made
by a mature individual. Gradually, however, Brethren began to join in
this form of encouraging Christian commitments. Those on the frontier
seem to have changed more readily than the very conservative Brethren
of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties. Rufus P. Bucher, one of the first
six students to have enrolled at Elizabethtown College, was one of the
half dozen evangelists who furthered the movement at the grass roots
level of local Brethren congregations. For 45 years he gave himself
without stint to this exacting ministry. While he carried on his farm work
and the responsibilities as elder of his home congregation, he managed
to hold evangelistic meetings [revivals] for as many as eight weeks out
of each year.” Saylor, p. 269. A father of ten who was comfortable with
children, “Brother Rufus” certainly left an indelible imprint on my young
life.

"Along with the mission and revival movements, the Sunday School
movement in American Protestantism paved the way for a growing
sense of ecumenism. In the early days, Brethren were advised not to
participate. However, since the decisions made at Annual Meeting were
not considered binding, individuals and congregations were free to rely
on their own judgments, responding as they deemed best. Consequently,
..."
Sunday School classes were held in Long Meetinghouse for more than 35 years. On 24 October 1949, this South Annville school merged with that of the Annville Church of the Brethren (which I attended). Saylor, p. 52.

"Lebanon County farmers prospered during the Civil War. "At the outset, wheat and flour prices jumped to a near-record, wheat to $1.30 a bushel." Although price fluctuations depended on war news, Lebanon County farmers seem to have been "financially secure enough to ride out the market slumps and wait for higher prices. The prices at Lebanon always seemed to be higher than those at Philadelphia." Edna J. Carmean, ed. Lebanon County, Pennsylvania—History (n.p.: Lebanon County Historical Society, 1976), p. 177.

Robert and George Dawson Coleman, grandsons of the first Robert Coleman, originally "owned almost one-third of the Cornwall ore deposit. Together they built the North Lebanon Furnaces, the first anthracite furnaces in the country." In 1832, Robert sold out to his brother and moved to Paris. Carmean 218. George Dawson Coleman married Deborah Norris Brown of Philadelphia; the couple had five sons and six daughters. "Although they travelled extensively, they considered Lebanon their home and they were popular and respected . . ." Carmean 219. Coleman did much to equip the 93rd Regiment during the Civil War, taking a personal interest in the well-being of these men. When times were bad economically, he kept his furnace men working; he contributed thousands of dollars to make work for the unemployed, building roads, churches, and supporting colleges. President U.S. Grant, wanting to tour the forges, furnaces and mills of the area, along with his wife and daughter, visited the Coleman in Lebanon. Grant named Coleman Commissioner for the Vienna World's Fair (1873), representing the iron industry. During the Centennial of 1876, Coleman hosted many distinguished visitors from China, England, and Germany. He refused a post in Grant's cabinet, as well as the Republican nomination for governor. In keeping Coleman apparently disliked politics, he did serve in the Pennsylvania Legislature for several years, "considering it his duty," in keeping with the attitudes of Victorian America. Carmean 220-221. Coleman seems Victorian virtue personified, an individual "who would no longer need reminding of his duties, who would have internalized a powerful sense of obligation-liberal, social, moral, religious, patriotic." Daniel Walker Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," American Quarterly 27 (Dec. 1975), p. 528.

The other two meetinghouses were Royer's, near Myerstown, and Heidelberg, near Schaefferstown.

*Saylor, p. 100.

"The last German language service was held in July 1981 with Clarence Kulp [see endnote 30] leading singing and preaching in German and special music by the Gosenhopen Sing-Group." John Harbold and Ann Carper, "Bacher Meeting House-Cornwall, PA" Dias­ter Relief Auction Program, 23-24. Sept. 1988, p. 35.

"Time was highly valued among American Victorians, Brethren included. Generally speaking, waiting time was of more concern than wasting resources. Standard time zones were established in the United States in 1883, at the impetus of the railroads. Howe, p. 523.

"A single [such as one milled wood] were first recognized as art forms around the 16th century, when European artisans used paint to imitate such costly materials as marble and tortoise shell. Since then, false finishes have lapsed in and out of fashion in both architecture and furniture." Beau Belajonas, "Marbleizing Wood: Trick the Eye With Paints and Glazes," Fine Woodworking, July/August 1987: 48. That this technique has long been appreciated by Pennsylvania Germans may be seen in the interior of Bindnagel Evangelical Lutheran Church, two miles north of Palmyra, Pennsylvania. Although this congregation was organized in the mid-1700s, the present church was built in 1803. On the National Register of Historic Places, it offers an excellent example of this technique (here, skillfully executed) used to model after classic Greek design.

"The first Brethren hymn book with full musical notation was published in 1872. The seven-shape note system, standard with rural song book publishers of the day, was used in this edition, hoping the use of shaped notes (rather than the round notes associated with secular music) would prove acceptable to the more conservative Brethren. Prior to this, all hymnals had been "word editions." Those in German might note the name of a suggested melody; those in English indicated only a proper meter, but might include a "melody index" with suggested tunes. Commonly, a deacon or other leader would announce a tune and give the pitch. He would then recite the first two to four lines (called "lining"), which the congregation would then sing; he would again recite the next two to four lines, whereupon the congregation would again sing, etc. This practice of "lining" was used because not everyone in the congregation owned a hymn book. Hinks, pp. 67-69.


"From the start, the burial ground here was open for use by all persons, no matter what religious persuasion, providing they had died a natural death. At all other times except funerals, this meetinghouse was to be used for Brethren worship services. The Committee 500.

"Turner p. 6.

"Turner p. 9.

*Ibid.

"Ibid., p. 10.

"Ibid. For Brethren the "symbolic object," if any, would have been the Holy Bible.

"Turner, p. 12.


Brethren may have unconsciously seen this 1:2 ratio, then, as one symbolic of the basics of life. Further, the bilateral symmetry, so often characteristic of Brethren meetinghouses, seems to mirror the human form with its two equal, opposite limbs. That Brethren valued this symmetry (viewed as a God-given, therefore necessarily good, pattern worthy of emulation) may be seen in their deliberate internal architectural maneuverings to achieve externally balanced chimneys, such as seen in the attics at the Kreider and Bucher sites. Further, Simon Bronner claims that the so-called aba pattern (bilateral symmetry) so pervasive in Western culture "can be related to that culture's preoccupation with directing attention to the human body by indirect visual symbols." Simon J. Bronner, Grasping Things: Folk Material Culture and Mass Society in America (Lexington, KY: UP of KY, 1986), p. 16.

Evidence for this statement is the builders' manual Baukunst Cursus I, published in German in the second half of the nineteenth century. "While this very comprehensive and thorough architectural notebook contains detailed drawings and notes regarding every manner of folk architectural method and material in common use prior to 1800, it does not deal with any aspect of the method of laying out a building. Similarly, the builders' manuals of the 17th, 18th and 19th Century do not contain reference to the method of laying out the plan." Lawton 15.

*Lawton 15.

*Lehman 139.

*Ibid.

According to recent statistics, while 85% of Brethren age sixty-five and older believe they "feel called to a life of humility, simplicity, and nonviolence," so do 63% of Brethren younger than sixty-five. Bowman, p. 21.

Brethren in America, at least through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were indeed a "folk society," defined as "a homogeneous, sacred, self-perpetuating, largely self-sufficient group isolated by any of many means, such as language, or topography, from the larger society with which it moderately interacts." Henry Glassie, Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States (Philadelphia: U of PA P, 1968), p. 3. Clearly then, these Brethren meetinghouses are valid folk constructions: they vary across space, remain stable over time, and display local conditions and local materials.

Response to Article 14 at the 1855 Annual Conference of the Brethren, quoted in full in endnote 63.
Paul Wieand in a photograph taken around 1980

Paul Richard Wieand was born on March 3, 1907 at Guth's Station (just north of Allentown) in Lehigh County and, except for living in neighboring Guthsville from 1915 to 1924 when his father was a tenant farmer on the Charles O. Hunsicker farm, has lived most of his life there. He graduated from Allentown High School (now William Allen High School) in 1926, and after attending Muhlenberg College for several summer sessions, transferred to Kutztown State College, where he received his B.A. degree in art in 1941. From 1926 until 1954 he was a school teacher, at first teaching all subjects in one-room country schools, and later teaching arts and crafts at William Allen High School in Allentown. In 1929 he married Mabel Schraden (1904-1976), their union being blessed with three daughters — Kathryn, Phyllis, and Isabel.

Four of Paul Wieand's block-print greeting card designs
Originally Wieand wanted to become an undertaker, an occupation that he regrets not pursuing, "because it's a great art taking care of people when they are dead, making them look good." Instead, his interests turned to more lively forms of artistic expression, and he became one of the most extraordinary and versatile creative figures in the entire history of twentieth-century Pennsylvania German folk culture. He has painted in oils, decorated furniture, modeled clay, fashioned jewelry, and made block prints and greeting cards. During the late 1930s he helped Thomas Brendle and William Troxell collect Pennsylvania German folk songs and his own research with folklore resulted in three major publications: Outdoor Games of the Pennsylvania Germans; Folk Medicine Plants Used in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country; and a local, anecdotal history of Lehigh County which he edited and partially authored titled South Whitehall Then And Now. Several of his articles were also published sporadically over the years in the various incarnations of Pennsylvania Folklife.

Wieand's versatility as an artist, combined with his dual role as a folklorist, is most concretely summarized and exemplified by his work in folk theater. For over fifty years Wieand has been influential as a playwright; as an actor, director, and pageant producer; and as a businessman in the Pennsylvania German community. In a true sense he is a legendary figure in the folk culture, and his name has become synonymous with the Pennsylvania German folk theater itself.

When Paul Wieand was growing up in the 1910s and 1920s, there was already a vibrant folk-performance tradition of singing songs, playing games, and creating short improvised skits in order to help fill out the program when local Sunday schools or Grange Halls sponsored an evening of entertainment. However, Pennsylvania German folk plays would only become an important social and artistic movement in the late 1920s with the production of Clarence Lobst's En Gwart Millich un en Halb Beint Rahm (A Quart of Milk and a Half Pint of Cream); it was performed some 250 times from 1928 through 1942. Wieand recalls seeing this play first in 1930, and altogether he saw it about six times during the early 1930s.

The popular and critical success of Lobst's work encouraged several other people—including Edith Fink, Preston Barba, and John Birmelin—to try their hand at writing and producing their own plays. But it would be Wieand who would work within this tradition of folk performance and contribute something new and individual to it. For in the estimation of the first scholar of Pennsylvania-German literature and theater, Harry Hess Reichard, "Wieand's work is different from that of any other dialect writer." Wieand's first formal exposure to the theater was as a member of the chorus in Allentown High School's 1926 senior class production of the once-popular amateur play, Captain Applejack. His first dialect play was a short, improvised skit made to help fill up a program given at Jordan Reformed Church at Walberts, Lehigh County, in 1929. In 1931 he wrote the short skit Der Pap Is Net Fertungd, but his first success was with his second—and first full-length—play, Der Greitzweg Schtor, in 1933; it was produced some sixty times during the early 1930s and was followed, in 1936, by a sequel, Die Huchzich um Greitzweg Schtor, which was produced some forty times. Both plays are loosely structured situation comedies which take place in a typical turn-of-the-century country store.

The most important aspect of these early plays is not the plot, but the large number of characters portrayed. Both have parts for ten males and ten females as well as a chorus. This wide range of parts makes good use of the various levels of talent and performance skills to be found among a group of amateur actors in the local community. Both plays also feature twelve songs, all of which have original lyrics set to then-contemporary tunes such as "Red Sails in the Sunset," "You're the Cream in my Coffee," "Smiles," and "When It's Springtime in the Rockies." The novelty of hearing such familiar popular music entirely remade into original songs in the dialect certainly contributed to the success of these plays in the 1930s, and they continue to charm; since 1975 when the Huff's Church Group in

*Titles are translated in the "Checklist" which follows.
Berks County began producing the plays they have had a decidedly emotional effect on contemporary audiences. The hallmark of Wieand’s songs is that, although they can be enjoyed in isolation, they are not “set-pieces,” but are directly related to character and plot.

By the late 1930s Wieand’s interest in the musical-comedy format waned, and he began to explore a more naturalistic and intimate form of production. Der Parre Kumm (1939), a one-act play for four males and three females, relates the comic goings-on amongst a farm family preparing for a visit by the local pastor and his wife who are coming for dinner. In the excitement the pastor is mistaken for a lazy hired hand and is accidentally hit with a broom. The original production, with Wieand making a brief appearance at the end in the role of the minister, was commended for its realism. There was a vast array of actual utensils and farm tools used as props, and a live rooster completed the authentic environment.

In 1941 the city of Allentown sponsored a dialect play contest in recognition of the great vitality of the Pennsylvania German folk-play tradition within the community. There were six entries, but it was Wieand’s play Tzu Forwitzich that won first prize. Again the plot concerns the everyday activities of a Pennsylvania German family, this one centered around an all-wise and all-loving grandmother. And again the emphasis is on character interactions rather than plot. This play was most recently performed at Huff’s Church in the fall of 1987 with Doris Lesher in the leading role. It is from just such a production that one sees why Paul Wieand’s plays have continued to hold the stage for so long.

Wieand’s best plays allow individuals to exhibit their personal talents and to express their own best selves. While the emphasis is on entertainment and nostalgia, Wieand’s plays are also about sharing and about community; ultimately they are expressions of the realization that “unser leewe iss siess” (“our life is sweet”). Wieand’s original cast was a closely knit ensemble whose style reflected the communal ideal revealed in his plays. In Tzu Forwitzich, for instance, the entire ending is an expression of communal wisdom: the grandmother soothes the aching finger of a little girl, saying “Haelie, Haelie, bussie dreck, bis moriah frie is alles weg” (“Holy, Holy, kitty shit, by tomorrow all is gone”). When Lesher recited this well-known bit of folklore during the Huff’s Church performance the majority of the audience joined in, almost as though they were accompanying her in the refrain of a song. And speaking of songs, the typical Wieand play concludes with a curtain call where the entire cast steps out of character and sings a farewell song to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne.” (The Huff’s Church Group continues this and the ensemble-acting tradition today.)

Wieand’s use of a playscript as folklike documentation culminated in a program given at the Allentown Women’s Club in January, 1943, when three short skits were performed. The first, Oweds Vor Grischidaag, relates Christ-
The radio series Asseba un Sabina was so extraordinarily popular people were invited to give their own depictions of the characters. This photograph from the mid-1940s shows the entries judged best at the annual Halloween parade in Allentown. In the center, in costume and make-up, are Harry Hess Reichard (left, Asseba) and Paul Wieand (right, Sabina). Behind Wieand is series producer Art Mickle.

played Davie Nexer, the Mumbauer’s neighbor, who was the complete opposite of Sabina in voice and temperament.17

The ability to switch voices so quickly and effectively clearly establishes Wieand as the most versatile actor in the entire history of Pennsylvania German folk theater. Even today he is often remembered for his portrayal of “die Sabina,” and perhaps his greatest triumph as an actor came in September, 1983, in his reprise of that role which he had not played in thirty years. Then, with the Reverend Phares O. Reitz as Asseba, he was Sabina once more as the main attraction of a dialect plays program sponsored by the Lehigh County German-American Tricentennial Committee.18 In March, 1988, he made his last acting appearance in a skit written by Francis Laudenslager for Groundhog Lodge No. 16 at Orefield, Lehigh County.

In addition to being a prolific playwright and a versatile actor, Wieand was also the producer of many folklife pageants, and these, perhaps, are his unique contribution to Pennsylvania German folk theater. It was Wieand’s group of performers who presented the first Pennsylvania German folklife pageant, sponsored by the Allentown Recreation Commission, on May 3, 1935. This was an improvised entertainment revolving around a birthday party for the neighborhood squire; it included songs, dances, and games. Similar pageants, based on general themes such as schnitzing (making dried apple slices) or quilting parties, continued to be given in Allentown through 1939.

The highlights of this phase of Paul Wieand’s entertainment career include pageants produced at Bucknell University in 1936; at the New York World’s Fair in 1940; at the National Folk Festival in St. Louis in 1951, and the National Folk Festival in Washington, D.C. in 1961; at Waterloo-Kitchener, Ontario, in 1968 for Canadians of Pennsylvania German descent; at the folk festival in
Pageant of Pa. Dutch Folk Life

Arranged and Directed by Paul R. Wieand

A. Der Taucher (Moving Day)
Narrator: Mrs. William Rogg
Moving day, which didn't happen too often, was a neighborhood affair. All helped willingly for the fun, the social gathering and the rite that accompanied it.
2. Der Beller Brau (Pep Tree)
3. Ring Game
4. N' Geburtstagsarte (A Birthday Party)
5. Farmer's Market

1958 FOLK FESTIVAL SOUVENIR PROGRAM

3. Food served a. Calf, chicken, etc. b. Dead meats and vegetables c. Peas and beans d. Fancy cakes e. Sausages f. Kraut pie g. Lesson cards
4. The meal a. Family served first b. Underkeeper reads the will

Participants


SPECIAL FEATURES

EVENINGS, daily—square dancing on the common.
FRIDAY at 1:30—shoo-fly bake-off in Navy Tent.
FRIDAY at 1:30—sheep shearing demonstration by Ray Ruppert of Kempton, Pa.

Pageant of Pa. Dutch Folk Life

The Wieand Folk Group (with Paul Wieand in the center) doing a folk dance at the Kutztown Folk Festival.

Billichim in the Palatinate in 1984; and at the annual conference of the Society for German-American Studies held at Millersville University (Lancaster County) in April, 1988. This last event was Wieand's final major pageant appearance.

Wieand's pageants were known for their highly realistic representations of social life, and for their professional structure and high performance standards. They had their greatest exposure within the Pennsylvania German community and won high praise from the audience.

After one of his folklife group’s presentations a woman from New York complimented Wieand on the excellence of the performance, saying that they must have rehearsed for several months. He replied that they never rehearsed, because they all knew the material without having to be taught. Wieand’s method was to get the group together to discuss what they would do; the material and structure of the pageants came entirely from the collaborative efforts of the group itself. As Wieand explained, “I simply had the knack of finding the right people.”

With this knack the group was able to maintain its commitment to detail and authenticity, and to retain an element of spontaneity in presentation, even with changes in personnel through the years. The pageant itself was changed too, in the late 1960s, when a non-thematic, anthological format was adopted. The Wieand Folk Group continues in existence today, although its founder is no...
longer involved either as a performer or as a creative consultant; he relinquished control in 1988. But the Group, the oldest of its type still in existence, continues to be guided by Paul Wieand’s original principles, and it remains the standard by which other Pennsylvania German folk groups are judged.

Paul Wieand’s final contribution to Pennsylvania German folk theater came as a businessman. In the late 1940s, on the second floor of Leh’s Department Store in Allentown, he set up a display which re-created a typical, turn-of-the-century country store. And during his years at the Kutztown Folk Festival he also operated a small booth fashioned as a general store, but on a small scale; primarily he sold calico cloth by the yard and licorice candy.

Then, in the early 1960s, Wieand began operating “Der Greitzweg Schtor” at the Allentown Farmer’s Market. I was a regular visitor there from the early years until the very last day of business on December 24, 1981. With its shelves stocked with jars of herbs, antique tools, candy, cloth, books on folklore, toys, and, of course, Wieand’s own block-print greeting cards, this was a marvelous place to visit. There was even a pot-bellied stove, a checkerboard, and, next to this, a cracker barrel with a sign on the lid which read: “Look Once In.” Lifting the lid, one saw a real cat stuffed by a taxidermist, its glass eyes staring directly up at the observer. For many years I would loiter in the shop for an hour or more, talking with Mr. Wieand, losing myself in contemplation of the vast and ever-changing array of items either on display or for sale, gazing at the antique posters advertising horse liniment or a 1904 hotel dance, and simply waiting to see someone else discover the cat in the cracker barrel for the first time.

Wieand’s stand at the Allentown Farmer’s Market of course had theatrical connotations from his popular 1933 musical comedy Der Greitzweg Schtor. However, this environment was also theatrical in a more literal sense. Here was a setting that created, in realistic detail, the rural, turn-of-the-century general store. Walking over the threshold, one was transported into a world of history and a world of fantasy. It was a good place to hear or speak the Pennsylvania German dialect, or to find out news of upcoming folk programs and other events of interest. Without trying to stretch the point too far, one could say that Wieand’s store was very much a theatrical environment that influenced and inspired everyday behavior, flavoring it with a rich awareness of folk traditions and heritage, much in the theoretical manner of Erving Goffman’s aesthetic/social conception of everyday life as performance itself. Wieand, however, did not create his store environment from any theory; rather, he instinctively realized just how intangible the boundary between art and life really is, however unobvious this may seem to be.

After retiring from business, Paul Wieand was finally able to relax and enjoy some leisure time, a luxury he did not have for much of his life. But in his eightieth year, when he was still very youthful and vibrant and working on his autobiography, he was involved in a near-fatal automobile accident that was not his fault. The following year he was well on the mend, but his general health continued to decline. He is now inactive in an Allentown retirement home.

While it is difficult to detail all of Paul Wieand’s long career in just a few pages, it can be made clear that he was one of the most significant figures in the entire history of Pennsylvania German folk theater. In his early plays he relied on stock characters and overly theatrical plots; gradually, though, his plays, and particularly his pageants, moved toward a formal presentation of everyday life. And, in his last work at the farmer’s market stand, he was finally able to transcend the formal, obvious presentation of theater and truly blur the distinction between life and art.
Once, when I asked him to define art, Paul Wieand told me that “anything and everything can be art”; that is, if one chooses to experience it as such or to make it so. This ability to simply look in one’s own backyard and see the world with fresh eyes is, perhaps, Paul Wieand’s greatest achievement, as well as his greatest challenge and legacy to future generations.

**PAUL R. WIEAND’S PLAYS: A CHECKLIST**

My first checklist of Paul Wieand’s plays was published in 1980 in two issues of the *Historic Schaefferstown Record.* After that appeared he asked why it did not include his pageants, so this new list has the first five. It also includes his last play, which is not well known in the Pennsylvania German community, as well as a play “lost” (even the author did not have a copy) until I was able to recover it in 1981.

The plays are listed in approximately chronological order, although this dating is not to be taken as definitive. In the case of plays with a single-year identification, the date used is the earliest found on programs, handbills, or posters. In several cases only approximate dates are given. Wieand never formally dated his plays when he finished them, and when asked about a specific work was often unable to remember in which year it was written.

As already noted, at the author’s request I list his first five pageants, and these can be considered representative of his later work in the genre as well. I have not listed all of his group’s pageant performances over the years; none of the pageants were scripted, and a list of places and dates would not be especially illuminating. And, when I was a member of the group in the late 1970s and early 1980s none of the performances were recorded, nor were there any printed programs. So it is unlikely that any such list of performances—either of the plays or pageants—will ever be made.

Since Wieand’s original productions of his plays were so very successful they became well known in the community, and other performers wanted access to the scripts. In response Wieand sold or rented mimeographed copies of sixteen of his play scripts. These are still in circulation and can also be found housed in the Pennsylvania German Archive in the Muhlenberg College Library.

Many of his most interesting plays, however, were never circulated and await contemporary revival. The quality of their language and characterizations make them worthy candidates for such an undertaking, and it is to be hoped that interested production groups may some day take up the challenge. These uncirculated plays can be found among Paul Wieand’s papers, in the possession of his family, and in my script collection.

Speaking of his papers, I want to thank Paul Wieand for allowing me unlimited access to his manuscripts, clippings, and programs; and most especially for discussions which took place over many years and which have made this study possible.

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* Der Pap Is Net Ferlungd (Pop is Not Denied), 1931. One act; two males; two females; two songs. Scene: A simple living room. A young married couple do not want father to live with them and make all kinds of excuses not to keep him; not until he helps them out of a difficult situation is he asked to stay. Playing time: About twenty minutes. Circulated in mimeograph.

* Der Greitzeweg Schtor (The Crossroad Store), 1933. Two acts; ten males; ten females; chorus; twelve songs. Scene: Interior of a country store. Cornelius Schmalzkopp, the storekeeper, does not have too much business, but has a good time waiting on his customers. His girlfriend, Matilda Lieblich, commiserates, and Helena Schnawwelgans and Fila Schnubbernaas spread the “news.” It turns out that a surprise find makes the storekeeper a rich man. Playing time: About two hours. Circulated in mimeograph.

* ’S Fohra Uff Der Train (The Trip on the Train), 1934. Two acts; eight males, fourteen females. Scene: Interior of a railroad coach. Clint Petzer is the conductor on this passenger train which runs from the place of playing to Philadelphia. The Sensewetzer family is along for most of the trip, and funny incidents occur as passengers board and leave the train. These are a varied lot: Some are old and feeble; some are hard-of-hearing; some are simply afraid. Others are young, mischievous, and festive; while others are dirty or overweight. There are also newlyweds aboard, and one passenger who is a walking drugstore. Playing time: About one hour and twenty minutes. Circulated in mimeograph.

* Der Faun KaZda (Taken for a Fool), 1934. Three acts; four males; four females; nine songs. Scene: An old-fashioned kitchen/living room. Amanda Heiergar, an old widow, has much trouble running her farm. Her neighbor, bashful bachelor Dallas Notgleech, is trying to ask her to marry him, but is always interrupted. He does, however, prevent a quick sale of her property to Pete Blotzkopp, a city slicker. Humorous situations are caused by Stella Faulenze, the maid, and Solly Schtiwwel, the hired man. And much excitement results when neighbors Amanda and Maria Schnapper both want to iron Pastor Kanzel’s shirt. Playing time: About two hours. Circulated in mimeograph.

* Die Maed Hen’s Geduh (The Girls Did It), 1935. Three acts; nine males; eight females; opening and closing songs and a few songs for individuals. More songs and novelty numbers can be added during the lawn party scene. Scene: Rear yard of a farmhouse. Silas Fuderschneider and his wife Maria are on the verge of losing their farm, so their daughters, Molly, Polly, and Dolly, decide to take in summer boarders. A lawn party is arranged to entertain the guests, who all develop stomach trouble when the girls have an accident with the milk taken from the ground cellar. The boarders are also the cause of other interesting situations, but the income pays part of the mortgage and the farm can be retained. Playing time: About two hours. Circulated in mimeograph, this is perhaps the best of Wieand’s full...
length musical comedies.

‘M Alta Shquire Sei Gabutzdawg Party (The Old Squire's Birthday Party), 1935. Arranged by William S. Troxell and Paul Wieand, this was the first Pennsylvania German folklife pageant; it was performed on May 3, 1935, at the First Annual Pennsylvania Folk Festival under the sponsorship of the Allentown Recreation Commission at West Park, Allentown. Only the printed program, which gives the outline of the songs, games, and dances, survives. Apparently there was also some improvised dialogue included in the performance, and the program gives some indication of this in a prefatory note: "It is the old squire’s birthday and his neighbors have come from their farms in the surrounding country to help him celebrate it. Their call was a surprise to him, and though it is past seven o’clock—he readily enters into the evening’s fun. The setting is that of a kitchen in a farm house.” Apart from the patently theatrical plot, the material and structure of this pageant are very much like that which Wieand would use twenty years later at the Kutztown Folk Festival.

Wer Sucht Dar Findt (He Who Searches, Finds), 1936. One act; five males; five females; six songs. Scene: Outside, on the adjoining lawns of Minnie Schnellfinger, “en aidi Greitz” (“an old pest”), and Darius Dengelschock, a bachelor. These two are always good at picking fights. A “Heffer” is lost in the neighborhood, but is found in time to clear up matters. Playing time: One hour. Circulated in mimeograph.

Die Huchzich Um Greitzweg Schtor (The Wedding at the Crossroad Store), 1936. Three acts; ten males; ten females; children (non-speaking parts) for wedding scene; twelve songs. Scene: Interior of a country store of a
Cast of the early Wieand pageants. Front row, left to right: George Miller, Ernest Stephens, Phyllis Wieand, Betty Stephens, Kathryn Wieand; seated (center), Mr. and Mrs. Paul Wieand and three-month-old daughter Isabel; standing are Mr. and Mrs. William Gensler, Mr. and Mrs. Allen generation ago. (A sequel to Der Greitzweg Schtor, this can be produced as a separate play.) The storekeeper Cornelius has competition on the other side of the crossroads, so his girlfriend Matilda offers to marry him when he wins his business back from his competitors. He succeeds after he stops checker playing, buying on credit, and the handing out of free samples. The wedding which follows includes a "bull band" arranged for by Sylvester Hawwersack, Susie Daubohr, and Emily Schussel. Playing time: About two hours. Circulated in mimeograph, this play is included in The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays, ed. Albert F. Buffington (Lancaster, Pa.: The Pennsylvania German Society, 1962), pp. 266-305.

'Sis Weg Gelaind (It's Loaned Out), 1936. One-act skit with three men and four women. Scene: Simple interior of a house. The members of a family find it inconvenient to do almost anything because most of their household utensils have been borrowed by a neighbor who subsequently returns them with many complaints. Playing time: About ten minutes. Circulated in mimeograph.

A Pennsylvania German Folklore Program in Three Acts, 1936. Arranged by Willian S. Troxell and Paul Wieand, this was the most elaborate of all the early pageants. It was performed on June 27, 1936, at Allentown High School at the Second Annual Pennsylvania Folk Festival under the sponsorship of the Allentown Recreation Commission. Again there was some improvised dialogue, and a printed program which lists the outline of songs, games, and dances, but no other notes with further details survive. In the first act a bride and groom enter their new home and are serenaded by a "bull band" of friends with pots and pans; more songs, games, and dances follow. The second act takes place fifteen years later, and in it children are practicing at the singing school; this, too, is followed by more songs and games. The last act takes place sixty years after the first; now the father is holding an auction and, in a nice use of audience participation, several real-life auctioneers actually sell items to the assembled crowd.

Pennsylvania German Radio Broadcasts, 1937. Presented April 12, 19, and 26; and May 3 and 10, from 9:30-10:00 p.m. on WCBA, Allentown. All but the first program were a serialized version of Wieand's earlier play, Wer Sucht Dar Findt. The first broadcast was of a newly written script which introduced the later installments by staging a mock rehearsal; this is a well-written, behind-the-scenes look at folk acting. The other broadcasts consisted of the actual play, with beginning and ending announcements and fan letters read on the air. The mock-rehearsal script was performed only once, and was not circulated in the community.

Die Schnitzer Party (The Schnitzing Party), 1937. Arranged by William S. Troxell and Paul Wieand; performed June 26, at the Third Annual Pennsylvania Folk Festival under the sponsorship of the Allentown Recreation Commission at Allentown High School. This pageant had two acts: The first was about making schnitz (dried apple slices); the second, apple butter. According to the program, most of the performance consisted of songs and games.

So En G'Fecht (Such an Argument), late 1930s–early 1940s. One act; four males; four females. Scene: Comfortable living room. Those present argue about a lowly farm animal, with each presenting a different version of how and why the mule received its peculiarly shaped tail.
Playing time: Twenty minutes. Circulated in mimeograph.

_So En Gemall (Such a Scolding)_ , late 1930s–early 1940s. One-act skit; four males; four females. Scene: Simple interior with small table and chairs. The men and women argue over whether a neat, saucy woman is more desirable than a sloppy, good-natured one. The matter is not settled, but many laugh-provoking situations arise until a peddler almost makes a commitment which would not be to his benefit. Playing time: About twelve minutes. Circulated in mimeograph.

_N G'wilder Party (A Quilting Party)_ , 1938. Arranged by William S. Troxell, Paul Wieand, and Mrs. George Laubach; performed June 10, at the Fourth Annual Pennsylvania Folk Festival under the sponsorship of the Allentown Recreation Commission at Allentown High School. The program outlines a one-act pageant of songs, games, and dances centered around “an old time quilting party at a farm house about fifty years ago.” No notes with more specific details survive, although again there was probably some improvised dialogue to set the scene.

_Der Mutter Ihra Owed Drauss (Mother's Night Out)_ , 1939. Written for Ziegels Church in Weisenberg Township, Lehigh County. Wieand worked so fast on this play that he did not have a copy in his own files, and it was considered lost until I was able to obtain a script in 1981 from a member of the original cast. The story concerns a typical Pennsylvania German housewife who feels taken for granted. In order to reassert herself and win back her family’s affection, she disguises herself at a masquerade party. Playing time: Approximately ninety minutes. Never circulated.

_Der Porra Kummt (The Pastor Comes)_ , 1939. One act; four males; three females. Scene: Outside, near the kitchen cellar. A family is preparing for the arrival of their minister who comes sooner than expected. However, he and his wife fit right in as the family goes about its regular chores, preparing for their visit. There is much fun and excitement created while they are getting ready as, for example, when the minister dons the lazy hired man’s jacket and is mistaken for him. Playing time: Eighteen minutes. Circulated in mimeograph and published in _The Reichard Collection of Early Pennsylvania German Dialogues and Plays_, pp. 306-311.

_Der Shule Maisder Kumt (The School Master Comes)_ , 1939. The last of William S. Troxell and Paul Wieand’s pageant collaborations, this was performed on June 15 at the Fifth Annual Pennsylvania Folk Festival under the sponsorship of the Allentown Recreation Commission at Allentown High School. Again there are games, songs, and dances, with these revolving around the theme of a new schoolteacher who boards in the home of a local carpet weaver. This affords an opportunity to demonstrate that craft in the course of the program. As with the first four pageants, no documentation other than the printed program survives.

_Schnitt Duhns Aw (Schnitt Also Works)_ , 1940. Two acts; five males; three females; two songs. Scene: Simple interior. Maria Gutschuttt is forced to sell her hotel, but is helped by her maid and the “Hassler.” When these last two are ready to marry they find they have no money because they gave it all to Maria; so they give the preacher a bag of schnitz instead. Playing time: One hour. Circulated in mimeograph.

_Oh, Weibseit! (Oh, Women!),_ 1940. One-act skit; three men; four women. Scene: Simple interior. A group of women are very brave until their husbands leave; then every little sound disturbs them, and one noise in particular leaves them almost frantic. They think it was made by a burglar, but it turns out to be only a cat. Playing time: Twelve minutes. Circulated in mimeograph.

_En Owed Im Grundsow Loch (An Evening in the Groundhog Hole)_ , 1940. Charming one-act skit performed only once, at Grundsdow Lodge Nummer Ains (Number One), on February 2. Animal friends come to visit Mr. and Mrs. Grundsdow in their den, only to be interrupted by the census taker. The relaxed humor is very much a slice of life, and it, along with good characterizations and several songs, make this one of Wieand’s best efforts. Playing time: Twenty minutes. Never circulated.

_Der Census Enumerator_, 1940. Short skit with one man and one woman. Scene: Simple setting. In this revised excerpt from _En Owed Im Grundsow Loch_, a census taker calls on a woman with a snappy disposition. Playing time: About eight minutes. Circulated in mimeograph.

_Yaeders Heird (Everyone Married)_ , 1941. Three acts; seven males; seven females; opening and closing songs. Scene: A living room that has been converted to an office. Eddie Puschdermacher has been willed a large sum of money if he can find husbands for several “ladies in waiting.” When trouble develops because time is short, lawyer Rich Schtreitverhieder comes to the rescue, locating suitable men and making them attractive propositions. He even finds mates for Verna Pillbox and Ellen Sauermilch, an old maid. In the weddings which follow, Rich himself is one of the bridegrooms. Playing time: About two hours. Circulated in mimeograph.

_Die Grubs Hiwewl Schul (The Rough Hill School)_ , 1941. Scene: The interior of a one-room country school. Based on a popular American vaudeville “schoolroom routine” of the 1910s and 1920s, this one-act skit includes jokes, recitations, songs, and some folklore. Originally performed on February 2, 1941, at Grundsdow Lodge No. One, it was revived at Grundsdow Lodge No. Sixteen at Siegersville, Lehigh County, on March 14, 1974. Playing time: About fifteen minutes. Never circulated in mimeograph, but published in _The Historic Schaefferstown Record_, Vol. 14, Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 23-32.

_Tzu Forwitzich (Too Forward)_ , 1941. One act; three males; five females; two children. Scene: An old-fashioned kitchen. Full of the folklore of the Pennsylvania Germans, this play won first prize in the dialect play contest sponsored by the Allentown Recreation Commission in the spring of 1941. Playing time: About forty minutes. Circulated in mimeograph and published in _The Reichard_
The cast of Die Grubbs Hiwwel Schul at Groundhog Lodge #1 on February 2, 1941. Pictured in Wieand's animal masks are Irwin Franz, Roy Brunner, Sam Haas, Harold Mantz, Arthur Henry, Milton Herber, Martin Fink, Moulton Delong, George Beil, Paul Wieand, Robert George, Frank Forgan, Sam Brader, and Patsy Balliet. (From The Morning Call, Allentown, February 3, 1941; reprinted with permission.)


Alles Dreht Zum Beschde (Everything Turns Out for the Best), 1941. One-act play originally given as part of a "Community Chest Review" under the direction of Clarence Bernhardt, its purpose was to explain the work of various community service organizations. The plot concerns the adoption of a small orphan girl and it is Wieand's most serious work, although there are enough light moments so that it is not depressing. Playing time: About fifteen minutes. Performed only once, on November 7, and never circulated.

Leckshen Owed in Hecke Daal (Election Night in Brushwood Valley), 1942. This one-act skit is a very fine spoof of traditional weather prophecies and the electoral process. The goose wants to be elected the official Pennsylvania German weather prophet, but the other animals draft the reluctant groundhog as a candidate. The almanac lady also insists on being included on the ballot, but the groundhog wins in a landslide. Playing time: About twenty minutes. Performed only once, at the February 2, 1942 meeting of Grundsow Lodge No. One, and never circulated, this is perhaps Wieand's finest Grundsow Lodge skit, and arguably his finest overall in both characterization and inclusion of folklore material.

Oweds Vor Grischtdaag (The Night Before Christmas), 1943. Scene: Simple interior. This one-act skit shows a family getting ready for Christmas when the Belsnickel appears, and the children must sing or recite in order to receive treats. Playing time: About twelve minutes. Performed only once, at the Allentown Women's Club in January, 1943, it was never circulated, but was published in "S Pennyslfawnish Deitsch Eck," ed. Preston A. Barba, in the Allentown Morning Call, on December 21, 1957.

Oweds Vor Nei Yaahr (The Night Before New Year), 1943. Scene: A simple interior. A one-act skit with introductory conversation in preparation for those who will make a New Year's wish; after the wishes are recited, a game is played. Playing time: About ten minutes. Performed only once, at the same time and place as its companion piece, Oweds Vor Grischtdaag, and never circulated.

Asseba un Sabina No. 5, 1944. Left unfinished when series creator Lloyd Moll died in early 1944, this script was completed by Paul Wieand. Its theme is Valentine's Day in Owl Valley, and it features good naturalistic dialogue. From the sixth to the last broadcast ten years later, the scripts were written by the Reverend Clarence R. Rahn (1898-1977), and it was he who fully developed the characters in this beloved series of short plays. Broadcast from 1:00-1:30 p.m. on February 13, on WSAN, Allentown, this Moll-Wieand script was never circulated and has more historical than dramatic importance.

Heess Wasser, Weibsleit! (Hot Water, Women!), 1986. A prize-winning entry in a dialect writing contest, this is the only Wieand play not yet performed. It is based on an actual historical event, the "Hot Water Rebellion" of 1799 in Lehigh County when "Grandy" Miller led a tax revolt by dousing the collectors with boiling water. The Miller character has echoes of Wieand's portrayal of Sabina Mumbauer, and had it been produced he would probably have played her role. Playing time: About fifteen minutes. Never circulated but published in Da Ausauga, Vol. 27, No. 4. After he finished Heess Wasser, Weibsleit!, Wieand expressed an interest in writing a full-length musical which would incorporate the folklore material of his pageants. Although never begun, this was to represent the summation of his theatrical work.
The Wieand group re-creating a nineteenth-century “Strouse Dance,” also near Crackersport. In the dance, a candle and key are tied in the middle of a string that is lit at both ends. Tickets are sold to the participants who circle around the burning candle, passing a stick from person to person. When the candle burns the string so the key falls, the dancer with the stick wins the women’s clothing hung on a fir tree as the prize.

Harry Reichard and Paul Wieand on the set of a production of Wieand’s play Der Greitzweg Schtor, performed by an unidentified group in the early 1950s.

ENDNOTES

1Interview with Paul R. Wieand, Guth’s Station, Pa., June 1980.

2For more information on Wieand’s visual artwork, see William Fetterman, “Paul R. Wieand, Lehigh County Folk Artist,” Pennsylvania Folklife, Winter 1980-81, pp. 87-93.


4Paul R. Wieand, Outdoor Games of the Pennsylvania Germans (Plymouth Meeting, Pa.: Mrs. C. Naaman Keyser, 1950).


7Interview with Paul R. Wieand, Guth’s Station, Pa., June 1981.


10Interview with Paul R. Wieand, June 1981.


12For a good selection of Paul Wieand’s song lyrics, see Harry Hess Reichard’s Pennsylvania German Verse, pp. 271-274.

13For more information, see my article on the Pennsylvania German play contests published in Pennsylvania Folklife, Spring 1989.

14The Belsnickel rewarded the good children and punished the bad.

15Groundhog Lodge No. One.


17For more information on this truly wonderful series of dialect plays, see my essay on Aszeba un Sabina in Pennsylvania Folklife, Winter 1988-89.

18For more information on this historic performance anthology of traditional and contemporary dialect plays, see my “A Pennsylvania German Folk Theatre Sampler,” program notes published by the Lehigh County German-American Tricentennial Committee for performances on September 24 and 26, 1983.

19The complete outline of the 1958 pageant appears in the program The 9th Annual Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival held at Kutztown, Pa., July 2-6, 1958, pp. 10-11.


21Vol. 14, nos. 3 and 4, July-October, 1980.

22Sponsored by the Vereinicht Pennsylvania Fulk, Inc., centered in the Lehigh-Northampton-Berks-Bucks Counties area.

23The play was written by Wieand in part because I had been prodding him for several years to return to writing plays, and because I was editor of Da Ausauga at the time he agreed to write something new.
AMISH COTTAGE INDUSTRIES
by Annette Lockwood

If it weren’t for the Amish, many of the skills valued by our forefathers would be all but forgotten today, except as hobbies or as part of historical demonstrations. Practicing crafts that may be obsolete in the “English” world is serious business to many Amish people who have undertaken this work out of economic necessity. In fact, those living in heavily populated areas of eastern Pennsylvania have turned to various cottage industries for added income, because their preferred method of making a living, farming, is slowly diminishing in returns.

One of the basic tenets of the Amish faith—separation from the outside world—depends on a lifestyle based on agriculture. According to John A. Hostetler in his book Amish Society, “Amish continuity has been attributed to social and geographic isolation, agrarianism, distinctive dress and language and religious devotion.”

The problem is, there is no longer land to farm, especially in that Amish stronghold, Lancaster County. The tourist industry and the visitors it attracts have not only stripped away the isolation so dear to the Amish heart, they are also competing for available land in the county. As one Amish source put it: “The tourist business has out-priced the land. Too many people are coming here for their vacations, then moving here, and [bringing] too many industries.” Another said: “With the population the way it is here [in Lancaster County], we can’t go back to the land. . . . we have to make a connection with outside trade or we couldn’t live.”

To survive, then, the Amish are increasingly being forced to give up their agrarian way of life and modify their traditional practice of excluding or avoiding the larger society. The work many men find acceptable outside their communities is often in carpentry, construction, or the mobile-home industry, while sewing factories and domestic work provide employment for young, unmarried women. Some Amish people are even taking advantage of the tourist trade by working at the county’s Pennsylvania “Dutch” attractions.

This working outside the culture requires more bending of Amish beliefs than simply not following the edict to farm. In order to hold outside jobs, Amish employees must usually use the telephone and transportation other than the horse and buggy. This is a problem for those seriously trying to follow the church’s ban on such present-day conveniences. One way to reconcile necessity with beliefs is to hire drivers to take them where they must go. Using telephones in buildings separate from their houses and barns is another way the Amish try to sever any direct link between their homes and the outside world.

There is, however, a happy medium between the ideal—

*Article based on interviews with Dr. Hostetler and Amish people who do not want to be named.

but many times unobtainable—goal of farming for a living, and the fancy footwork necessary to “work out” in the larger society while upholding Amish doctrine. A third alternative for today’s Amish is to manage non-agricultural businesses—cottage industries—on their own land. Since it is seen as strengthening for the Amish community to provide employment for its own people, cottage industries have become respected professions in their own right.

According to one Amish businessman, these community-based places of employment often consist of small groups providing labor-intensive services at or near the farm. Having these small shops in their communities allows non-farming Amish to work at home, a real benefit. Not only can a family support itself without contending with the outside world, but Amish customers can also remain among their own to shop. It seems the large numbers of tourists, who now visit during practically every season of the year, have made going into towns something to be avoided whenever possible.

Isolation is not the only advantage of operating cottage industries. As Hostetler noted, at-home employment involves the family, requires no big investment, allows people to do business with their neighbors, and enables workers and employees alike to put their religious values to work. Making money is of course a goal, but not the primary goal.

What kinds of work are pursued in Amish homes and communities? According to Hostetler, “Quite a few things are passing as acceptable—repair shops, wagon shops, and places where specialty pieces that can’t be bought elsewhere are available.” Furniture and cabinet-making shops, and consumer businesses such as grocery and dry goods stores are also found on the land of individual Amish families. Blacksmith, diesel engine, and welding shops are often seen, too.

Selling homemade crafts also brings in needed income, and Amish women contribute their cooking, needleworking, sewing, and quilt-making skills. Even such “frivolous” crafts as making wooden toy animals are now many times deemed permissible, said an Amish source, while building children’s furniture and wagons has been added to the Amish repertoire as well.
Each settlement makes its own rules about what is and isn’t acceptable in business. While the practice of shunning (widespread avoidance of any transgressor) acts to prevent too much modernization, said Hostetler, those innovations that are accompanied by economic reward have the most chance of being accepted by the community. Today, there is more variety than ever in church-approved occupations and lifestyles.

Even so, as Hostetler notes, the use of electric lights, telephones, and rubber-tired implements is still forbidden. Amish mechanics, however, can work around the ban on electricity by using generators and batteries to run their tools. Air and hydraulics are also strong enough power sources to make such large pieces of equipment as wagons.

In addition, the windmills so characteristic of Amish farms use the energy of the wind to produce power primarily for pumping water. The old steam engines are still in use as well, to drive belts (or in farming, to steam tobacco beds in an effort to purify the soil).

The limitations imposed by their non-electric power sources may be one reason the Amish have retained skills from another era. But meeting their people’s own simple needs is just as important. Because they require horse-drawn farm equipment, for example, the Amish had to take over production when they could no longer find old implements such as manure spreaders and hay tools at farm sales. And they made a major commitment to the manufacturing business. “It’s amazing what they’re doing in some of these shops,” said the Amish businessman already quoted above. “There’s one that makes farm equipment that’s the biggest operation I ever saw.”

Amish entrepreneurs likewise took on carriage-making and blacksmithing when these crafts became virtually obsolete in mainstream America, he added. And, when they were no longer available on the “outside,” these resourceful people began manufacturing gas and kerosene lanterns, too.

While these shops and cottage industries were begun to fill a need in the Amish community, it turns out that outsiders are some of their best customers. Amish-made clocks, extension tables, cabinets, and other hand-crafted pieces are usually in big demand by tourists and the general public. According to the Amish businessman, people from New York and New Jersey will buy on the sect’s reputation alone, without even asking prices. This same man remarked on how much city people enjoy coming to Lancaster County to shop at farm markets. “It’s the pleasure of going on the farm to get their food,” was the way he explained it.

One reason Amish products are in such demand outside their own communities is their quality for the price. Again, “The primary goal is not making money, but maintaining the solidarity of the community,” according to Hostetler. And hard work is part of the Amish community ethic. Craftsmen characteristically specialize in one item, and work on each chair or cabinet from start to finish. They can often just look at a piece of furniture and know how to make it, said the Amish businessman. This know-how has been handed down from generation to generation, along with pride in craftsmanship.

Performing good work for its own sake is wrapped up in the culture’s perception of status as well. Hostetler pointed out, “Status is based on what the individual can produce, on how well he accepts responsibility, and on the sense of being needed.” Factory managers know this and have located in the area because of its hard-working, non-unionized “plain people,” said the Amish businessman. “The best worker a builder can hire is a sixteen-year-old farm boy,” he went on, “because most people who were raised on a farm can work.”

* * *

Sadly, the goal of the hard work put into cottage industries and outside employment is often to earn enough money to someday own a farm, and this may never materialize for a good many Amish families. With less land available all the time, the temporary cottage industry could easily (and, in reality, often does) become the permanent means of support in more and more Amish households.

Yet, with unique skills valued in their own communities and beyond, the Amish have the wherewithal to survive on their terms, even if they do not actually attain the ideal of farming. As a by-product, they are helping to preserve age-old work traditions and skills that seem to have lost much of their everyday usefulness in the rest of society. With their one-of-a-kind blend of quaintness and practicality, it seems likely the Amish can remain as self-sufficient as they are now well into the future.
BOOK REVIEW


Richard S. Machmer, a Berks County resident and a member of the board of directors and the museum commission of the Historical Society of Berks County, was the driving force behind the Society’s 1991 exhibition entitled “Just for Nice: Carving and Whittling magic of Southeastern Pennsylvania.” The book of the same name, with text by Machmer and his wife Rosemarie, is an outgrowth of that exhibition and preserves a record of it.

As the book’s jacket explains, “Just for Nice, a Pennsylvania German colloquialism, means that an object exists, not for any utilitarian purpose, but simply for one’s pleasure.” Even a cursory examination of the book’s contents confirms that the title is well chosen, and indeed, it is a work which is easily able to repay several hours of study without exhausting all the joys it has to offer, and without diminishing the sense of awe and wonderment produced when contemplating the skill and expertise of these largely untutored craftsmen.

Richard (a carver himself) and Rosemarie Machmer are knowledgeable and discriminating collectors, and many of the objects shown are their own. The rest were gathered by them, lent by private collectors as well as by various museums and historical societies. In all, the book has 115 illustrations of 275 carvings, all beautifully laid out and skillfully photographed—the colors are exceptionally true and vivid. In addition there is the Machmers’ account of how they became collectors; pertinent observations about the carvings themselves; biographical sketches of the carvers represented; and an index and bibliography.

Apart from the pleasure it affords, the book makes a very real contribution to an interesting but understudied art; in fact, about eighty percent of the objects displayed have never before been shown publicly. Truly, as Charles F. Hummel, deputy director at Winterthur Museum, points out in the introduction, this is “the very first serious examination of this important and fascinating subject: The Carving and Whittling Magic of Southeastern Pennsylvania.” Readers will not be disappointed.
The Festival and its Sponsorship

The Kutztown Folk Festival is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Folklife Society, a nonprofit educational corporation affiliated with URSINUS COLLEGE, Collegeville, Pennsylvania. The Society's purposes are threefold: First, the demonstrating and displaying of the lore and folkways of the Pennsylvania Dutch through the annual Kutztown Folk Festival; second, the collecting, studying, archiving and publishing the lore of the Dutch Country and Pennsylvania through the publication of PENNSYLVANIA FOLKLIFE Magazine; and third, using the proceeds for scholarships and general educational purposes at URSINUS COLLEGE.