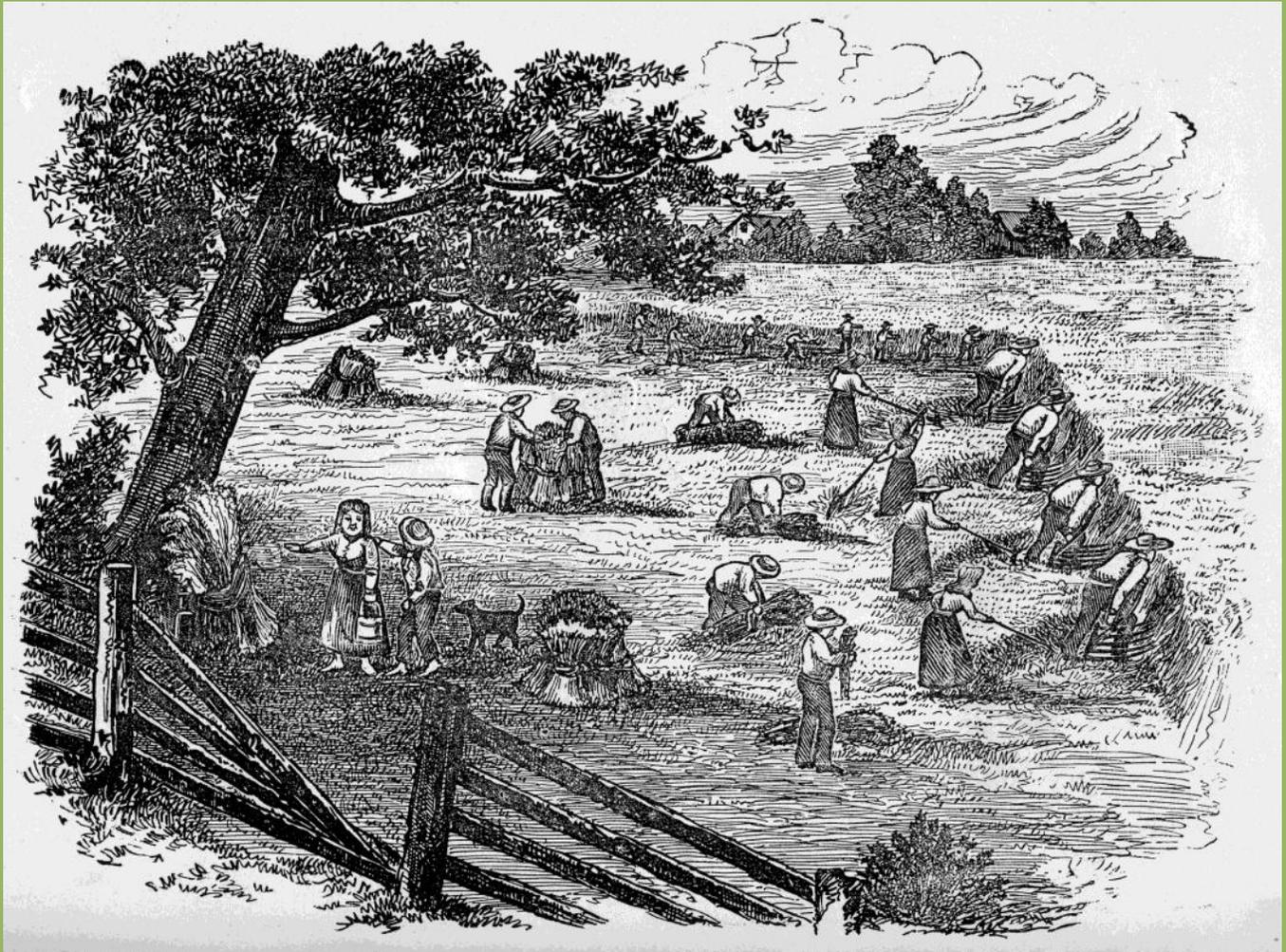


MHC Quarterly

Mennonite Heritage Center

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Summertime brings the harvest of winter wheat. Many neighbors worked together to reap this valuable cash crop, carted to Philadelphia and baked into bread by city folk. Locals made everyday bread from rye flour. This image and other interesting images and artifacts are on display in our new exhibit *Food Heritage of Eastern Pennsylvania* opened on July 6.

Illustration from H. L. Fischer's *Die Alte Zeit* (York, PA, 1879).

MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTER

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Museum & Library Hours

Tuesday - Friday
10 am to 5 pm
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Our mission is to educate, inspire and witness to the church and community by collecting, preserving and sharing the Anabaptist/Mennonite story.

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Community Harvest Home Program

Sunday October 27, 2019 7:00 pm
Mennonite Heritage Center

Join us in the Nyce Barn for a special fall program.

Harvest Home is traditionally a celebration of thanksgiving for the completion of the growing season and the harvest that

sustains us. **Nathan Stucky, Director of the Farminary Project at Princeton Theological Seminary will speak on the intersection of faith and agriculture.**

Program includes singing harvest hymns such as "Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of Harvest Home".



A Tribute to Steve Diehl

by Gerald Benner
Heritage Center Board of Trustees

Steve joined the staff at the Mennonite Heritage Center in 2015 as our full-time Director of Advancement. He died of cancer in the spring of 2019, a brief four years later. His passing echoed words recited at his memorial service from John Donne's poem "Death Be Not Proud": "...and soonest our best men with Thee do go..." Steve's death was a blow to the Center because he had so much to offer our organization and the community in which he was raised.



Steve's impressive resume listed a BA Degree in Biblical Studies and Christian Education, and an MA Degree in Theology, both from Wheaton College, Illinois. Professionally, he served in various locales as a financial advisor and Christian school administrator.

During his tenure at the Heritage Center in advancement work, Steve quickly earned a place among staff and acclimated himself to the community where he grew up attending Souderton High School and playing football and baseball. He relished meeting old friends and making new ones. He set high goals for himself and worked diligently and systematically to meet them.

Recognizing his many talents, the Board of Trustees and Executive Director Sarah Heffner recommended naming Steve the new Executive Director. He was introduced to the community in his new role in May of 2018. Showing great promise, he earned the respect and cooperation of the staff as he began moving the organization forward, while showing respect for the founding principles of MHC and its mission. One of his goals was to increase the visibility of the organization by networking with as many folks in the community as he could. He also worked hard to increase the financial undergirding of MHC with his fundraising skills and experience.

Steve sprinkled work with lots of humor, and so it was that "Harleysville Hank" was born. Hank came out of his warm winter burrow for the first time in 2016 to admiring crowd of early risers eager to hear his prognostication, to sip coffee in the cold February dawn, eat home-made scrapple covered with apple butter, and sing silly ditties. After three years of entertainment, hopefully this event has become a local tradition that will remain as one of Steve's many contributions to the community.

After residing 20 years in other regions, Steve returned to his roots in the Indian Valley, where he re-emerged as a gifted community leader. His mind was brimming with creative ideas, but he was receptive to the input of others before he put his ideas into action. Steve was a hard worker; the sound strategies that he presented to staff and board showed the extent of thought and research into ways of implementation before going public. Steve was a team player.

Acknowledgment for Steve's excellent leadership at MHC was evident to all in the closing months of his life. Each staff member contributed a week of vacation days to Steve so that he could continue on the payroll as he underwent treatment for his illness. His death came far too soon, but their mutual aid for Steve lives on in our organization's memory. Thanks to Sarah Heffner, Rose Moyer, Joel Alderfer, and Forrest Moyer for their acts of compassion for a fallen co-worker. The following quotes add words of appreciation to their deeds:

Sarah: "One of Steve's gifts to the MHC was he wanted history to be interesting and relatable to the ordinary person – not stodgy and dusty. He wanted to preserve the heritage but in new and different ways."

Rose: "Steve was very gifted at engaging persons. I would often find him spending time learning to know our volunteers, our donors, MHC staff, and the many persons in our community that he met along the way. It was obvious that persons enjoyed conversing with him and being around him. I personally enjoyed working with him and definitely miss him."

Joel: "Steve had creative ways of networking professionally and in the community. He knew how to engage persons' abilities and interests and bring them 'on board.' He knew how to encourage and engage the gifts of each staff person at MHC."

Forrest: "Steve's encouraging disposition set people at ease and instilled confidence for the work and mission of the Center and our individual tasks."

Steve is sorely missed, but once more the words of the poet bring us comfort and hope: "One short sleep past, we wake eternally, And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die."

While Death robbed MHC of one of God's gifts to us, we look to the future, assured that God is with us and will energize the mission of the Mennonite Heritage Center to "educate, inspire, and witness to the church and community by collecting, preserving, and sharing the Anabaptist/Mennonite story."



Author and historian Joyce Munro presents a study of 18th-century estate records and the light they shed on inheritance practices and foodways of the period:

Sufficient for Their Necessity by Joyce C. Munro

What was he thinking as he lay in the stove room, feverish and dry mouthed? Around him a spinning wheel whirred as his young daughter expertly fed the flax between her fingers, as another one set out spoons. His wife leaned over him, her pregnant belly touching his chin, while his oldest son, smelling of wet earth, held him up to take from her spoon the bitter medicine that would ease his pain.

It was time to order his affairs.

He would need to provision those he was leaving behind, he thought, as he heard vaguely the sounds of soup being slurped at table. Sometime later, it seemed like no time at all, the oldest, his voice cracking, read aloud the words of Scripture, and then the middle child led them in the hymn, at first haltingly and then stronger, singing themselves to rest. They were carrying on in the ways they had sought to live.

He could leave them.

His green corn in the field that God willing would yield a harvest, his steer he planned to butcher would be now be in the hands of others. There was dried beef in the garret, layered in ashes... and after the phoebe sings, gammon they could take down from the locked closet in the barn....

His mouth did not water as it used to at the thought of the first slice of fried ham. It was true what they said about dying.

Computing worth

It is easy to imagine the calm of someone dying in the 18th century on a farm in southeastern Pennsylvania, where husbandry was taking nutrients wholesale from the earth. Where families appear to have had enough to eat. Nevertheless, people died in the thick of their lives with tasks unfinished. Those called in took dictation for a will and witnessed the signature or mark of the dying one. After death they executed terms of the will. If the person died before making a will, there was still the counting task—creation of a probate inventory—to establish worth and what the law allowed his survivors.

To determine value of the estate, the assessors went everywhere on the property of the deceased. They went to the woods where the swine were snuffling acorns and roots. A heap of rye straw could become roofing, bread baskets, and bee hives. Rat trap, pidgin net, and conch shell used to summon from a far-off field did not escape notice. In the main room of the house the clothes press was emptied—the linens soberly measured, yarn weighed, and the amount of thread valued—and then all was put back. Each piece of fabric or clothing represented many hours of work and attention. Even the incidentals and debris in the stove room, not reaching the elevation of “sundries,” were recorded as “Lumber” and had a little value. It was a century that still had the problem of subsistence but was also at least 400 years into an experiment in interdependencies across the world.

What would ensure continuance of family and farm? Surely the valuing itself was action toward an answer. Food on the hoof or in the ground suggested a tomorrow. Yet the willmaker, the estate executors, and the widow had to engage this question in the hereafter of now. What could be counted on to nourish?

It's a question that is relevant today, although motivation for survival might seem more diffused because of how the question comes to us in the United States. Here's an example hidden in a current proposal: there's talk of lowering a standard that President Obama elevated, this one about what should be called

meat and vegetable. How many people will one box of Slim Jims feed? Purchased in a food desert, they could be considered “meat,” and the salty snacks hung near the checkout of a corner store will be “vegetables” if lobbyists have their way.

Counting and valuing never reach stasis. Even trash has value that waxes and wanes. It’s a positive in single stream recycling state-of-the-art if it’s clean. A positive for the trash company and landfill owner. Along the highways and in the tissues of sea animals, it is something entirely different. The questions of continuance that were so threaded through the life of a first, second or third generation southeastern Pennsylvania family in the 18th century have some parallel to the questions we face, wide awake, in this 21st century where climate change is bound to eviscerate assumptions we have about season, place, and food. And what is ours, yours, and my responsibility. What is sufficient for our use?

The exhibit *Food Heritage of Eastern Pennsylvania*, now open at the Mennonite Heritage Center, takes the viewer on the journey from native Lenape foods to the food of today. Featured here are over 200 years of foodways and objects of the Pennsylvania Dutch in a section of southeastern Pennsylvania from the Lehigh mountains to the Delaware River, roughly the counties of Northampton, Montgomery, Berks, Bucks, Chester, and Philadelphia. This exhibit is paired with *Food: Our Global Kitchen*, an exhibit that explores, among other topics, the amazingly diverse and complex paths that the food we eat today has traveled. *Food: Our Global Kitchen* was created by the American Museum of Natural History in New York; they have given MHC permission to present their graphics. Embedded in all these materials are questions about our food future.

This essay about 18th-century Pennsylvania Dutch food is based on information in selected legal papers (wills, probate inventories, and/or administration papers) housed in the MHC historical library.¹ This is a small sample of Swiss-German households in southeastern Pennsylvania from 1747-1795—only 75, among them 58 willmakers.² Here are my dropped crumbs about life then. Beware of the phenomenon of undue emphasis: you can’t always infer the cake from crumbs. Folk historian and ethnographer Alan G. Keyser, who lives on an eighteenth-century farm and tavern near Molasses Krick on one fork of the old Maxatawny Road to Kutztown lays out a much more nuanced feast of information. He has spent almost an entire lifetime in this study, but he lives in this century as a chemist and analyst. He’s read printer Christopher Saur’s praise for the medicinal value of various vegetables, eaten the dandelion greens of Maundy Thursday, and collected what an Irish traveler had to say about the warm bacon dressing accompanying them. Pick up his book, *How We Ate: Esse in die Alte Zeit*, when it comes out if you want the best understanding of the hearth cooking and foodways up to 1830 among the Pennsylvania Dutch. The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center will be publishing it.³

Back to the man dying

How to award things and afford a future? The question was enough to bring on fever and dry mouth. Henry Kolb in 1730 wants Barbara and their seven children to succeed, so he wills everything to her, including his weaver’s loom. Over in Towamencin Gerhart Schragger in 1753 wants son Goshen to have his “Weavers Tools and the Loom.” John Landis in Milford thinks Anne should get his “Still Kettle.”

A number of dying men plan new things for their widow. In 1756 Peter Keyser, tanner in Worcester, orders that his three sons build a house for their mother on ten acres that include a strip of meadow and forest. That same year John Nice of Franconia says aloud dream dimensions of a structure near the spring: “The House must be twenty Foot long and eight Broad and nine Foot high under the Joyses and to have a Stone Chimney and to be completed according to Regulation as it ought to be.” Along with a new house, Martin Grater in Upper Hanover stipulates a new “Cyder Press and Box.” Ludwig Zirkel’s estate in the late 1740s pays for a new roof to the house and a new cyder press.

The log stable that John Yellis in 1779 orders for his widow makes sense; it is to house the two cows he is leaving to her. About the cows he wants the following known: his son, inheritor of note, should have the

grass in the meadow during the day. Catharina's cows should be pastured there only at night!

Some deathbed planning sounds fraught. William Houk of Franconia in 1741 frets about his four sons under the care of Sophia and orders that the "stubborn and disobedient Son or Sons" be sent out as a servant and the money earned by that be used to hire another servant "if necessary requireth it." Thinking of his children in 1754, Jacob Oberholtzer, Jr., in Upper Salford authorizes his wife and executor to do the same if disobedience occurs. Also, Deborah should maintain the farm until the youngest, Mary, is 10; then his farm could be sold. What then?

What the law allows: For the wife still living

English common law back to the Magna Carta circumscribes the marriage unit in 18th century Pennsylvania. The woman is "covered" by her husband. She brings value through goods and sometimes a monetary dowry from her father to the marriage. In exchange, her husband provides protection, and her things become his. If he dies first, coverture entitles the wife to some of his personal and real estate property. By law the widow should get back what she brings to the marriage—her clothes and linens—and her saddle, reasons Samuel Landis in Milford. Miller John Clemens in Buckingham wills his widow the return of her iron pot and small Table. Entitling her to his personal property, he declares that she can fill his Black walnut Chest with "as much Pewterware and other Kitchen furniture as she shall See fit." Giving the widow a choice in her share of his personal effects appears common in these documents. Into that chest Catherine will place the accoutrements for making tea and coffee, the box with spices, the things to manage a fire on the hearth, the various containers for food at table, and the vinegar bottle.



Except for an iron, soap dish, and cotton cards, Catherine Clemens' chest contains things from her husband's household that have to do with food preparation and consumption. She takes the filled chest along with their bed and bed furnishings and table in the Stove Room, as well as her own tea table and iron pot, into her widowhood. Illustration by John Munro.

Writer of others' wills and witness to a few, Jacob Funk in Franconia knows precisely what is what in 1756. Ours: the "Bedstead and its Appurtenances" (curtain, featherbed, etc.). Barbara's: her pan. His: "my Large pan, my tin baking pan, my Tankard my pewter Cups, all my China, my Large stone pot, all my wool." Did he spin? He concludes his list for his widow in expansive spiritual largesse: "my new Bible, my Martyr Book, one of my new hymn books. One of my Golden Appels and one of my Psalm Books, and these books she shall have as long as she live."⁴

By law the wife is entitled to a third of the real estate. Sometimes the third is a lump sum, which ranges in this small sample from £23 to £200. Or it is doled out as interest. The average annual interest payment looks to be about £6 or 5 percent interest on £120, with one annual sum as low as £2 10 shillings and another as high as £15. Some widows get both payments. Anne Wireman receives £50 and annually £6.

The dying man's calculation of the widow's third demonstrates wide variety of attitude. Christian Overholt in Plumstead reckons Sarah's third as beginning after he has given £5 to each of his siblings or their heirs. And if she remarries, half of her legal third should be a gift to the poor, so now she's down to less than a sixth of the estate! Miller Clemens authorizes a plan to dispense with Catharine's third of the real estate by giving her the profit of "my Grist Mill and lands" for three months right after his decease. Michael Kolb wants Anna to live for two years at the place that they are under contract to make profitable, and have 5 percent on £250 in lieu of her third.

Remarriage technically nullifies coverture. If Helena remarries, turner John Godshalk of Hatfield declares that she should give back her lump sum of £60, whereas weaver Jacob Grater, who is giving his wife the interest on £100, dictates that Mary will carry £50 into a new life. If she marries again, Anna Kolb is promised the money she brought to the marriage: £125 in full, which would appear to be a better deal than the annual interest payment noted above.

Computation of the one third to the widow derives in part from a sense of what various members of the family unit will need to thrive. They will need to have food. Christian Allebach is dying even as his second wife is pregnant again, and he has the children of two unions to consider. If there are minor children, then the widow must have the means for their education and for running the farm. Martin Kindig is passing on the farm to his son, who is not yet of age, so he wants his executors to keep it in good repair! The continuance of the plantation figures heavily in what the widow is to receive. Giving interest on her share is a way to keep that share in the farm and not have to liquidate part of the estate. Sourcing her with provisions makes sense.

What if the widow is older and the children are grown and gone? One administration paper shows that Catterina Oberholtzer, wife of Jacob, Sr., is signing herself over to the care of the deacon of her congregation, and her signature is being witnessed by a minister and another deacon. The deacons are the *Vormunde* (guardians) charged to oversee care of a member when such care is needed. One scholar has suggested that the mutual aid practiced among Mennonites and Quakers was an element of their prosperity in 18th century Pennsylvania.⁵

Samuel Musselman in Hatfield in 1774 appears to have ensured Barbara's comfort with adequate personal effects in bedroom and kitchen, and liberty in all the places of the farm where she can get, grow, prepare, sit and eat food. She is also to receive annually 5 percent on £300 and £5. His are the 18th century provisions sufficient for all in the family. His son and sons-in-law have been properly vested with his land and funds. So he tenders this final desire: to give £25 to the poor children of the township, first for their schooling and then for clothes if they should need them.

Living: The small and large print

For any of these numbers to be understood, more information is necessary. What does it take to live? Henry Funk of Franconia in 1759, apparently thinking often of his daughter Esther whom he describes as "lame in all her limbs, and to this day, can neither stand nor walk alone herself" wills a sum of £12 pounds annually for her care. Besides a new suit of apparel, and a bed "well cased and covered," he sets aside a lump sum of £400 for her lifetime. She will have enough for petticoats and stockings as needed, "meat and drink, and lodging, and be kept clean, in washing and mending of clothes and bedding and be also kept clean of lice and other vermin, as well as of all other uncleanness." Her caretaker relatives spend a little more than £12 annually. A wealthy miller, Henry Funk can afford to be lavish in anticipating

Esther's expenses, so perhaps £12 is not an appropriate indicator of what it takes to live for one year in rural colonial Pennsylvania.

Geographer James T. Lemon immersed himself in the data of many, many households of the counties of Lancaster and Chester during this period. He calculates that £50 to £60 (in 1790 prices) would support a widow and four children. Looking at what the widow among Quaker families on the Lancaster Plain received (if she did not receive only goods), he concludes that the average sum of £7 7s willed to her was adequate.⁶ An average farm in his study area produced about £100 each year. Therefore, the household had approximately 40 percent (or £40) of annual farm production to sell or use in barter to pay for what they could not produce.⁷ These were the things made and repaired by artisans. And items sold in the store like brass kettles (protected by British trade policy), wire, printed calico, pigments, rum, Spanish wine, rice, coffee, tea, and spices. Or the wacholder oyl that John Vincent Myer had been selling before 1737 in the store in Sulford—a flavoring made of juniper berries and used in cordials and cakes.⁸ Then there were the services of schoolteachers, surveyors, justices of the peace, and millers.

It is easy to project onto the past a simplicity it did not have. The households of this area were not self-sufficient. A global economy existed, precipitated by the colonialism that brought Europeans to these shores. Events like a wheat crop failure in England made the wheat of Pennsylvania farmers a premium export—about one-third of the crop in 1772.⁹ Wheat was milled and baked to fill the ships' larders, exported in the rum and slave Caribbean economy, and transported to other colonies.¹⁰ Butter had value in Philadelphia and the West Indian economy.¹¹ Just about everything the farm produced was marketable, as one local store account shows—turnips, beeswax, feathers, mittens, and cherry trees. Store owners also served as middle men, arranging shipping to and from Philadelphia of grindstones, iron, linseed oil, pottery, and another Henry Funk's toll or measure of grain (1/10 of each bushel) in payment for his grinding the farmer's grain.¹²

Perhaps a still kettle or a cider press for the widow represented cash and barter power to the household left behind. The 13 stills and stuff of probate in these inventories begin to take on an economic value that is about more than self-sufficiency. In contrast, the lots of grain that the miller lent out to those who would have ordinarily been his customers suggest a local economy that also covered individual crop failure or catastrophe. Those bags were a micro-loan, essential in the human component of community.

Eating and drinking: The children and widow

Food and drink for the widow and children concern the dead man's executors. The assessors for Samuel Landis write that they have set aside "a small amount of provisions for the children." Ludwig Zirkel's executors have to carry out his wish to supply his children with "Bread Corn and Meal for one year" after his death. Provisions were an inexpensive way to endow the widow.¹³

Wills outline common food needs. The widow is to get one cow, often the "best cow," and in some cases she gets two cows. The cow is for milk and cheese, for making more cows, and at a later time, meat. Sons are often instructed to feed any of the widow's animals with their own, and if Daniel Longacre's son David does not, he owes his mother £50.

The widow should have dressed pork and beef. Weaver Jacob Grater wills 75 pounds of each and miller Conrad Keil, 100 pounds each. Valentine Kratz wants his wife to have a "fat hog to weigh 200 pounds." George Hartzel, Sr., wants his wife to have 1 quarter of beef or 75 pounds. Conrad Stam says that his wife can choose to have bacon or fresh pork. Henry Rittenhouse in Worcester thinks more holistically, willing Susanna "some salted Shad" along with half a bushel of salt. Margaret Drissell is set to get a whole bushel of "fine salt," which will come in handy when she goes to brine the pork and beef her husband has willed to her.

Only one will and four estate inventories in this sample contain references to fowl. Jacob Oberholtzer Sr. has geese and a flock of hens. Valentine Kratz wants his wife to have her third of all the hens (which his son keeps) along with a third of their eggs. Alan Keyser observes that chickens were “so little valued that they were not fed nor given shelter. Often they slept in the trees summer and winter.”¹⁴ The data in this small sample contrast to Lemon’s findings where he notes that chickens were frequently mentioned.¹⁵ Could it be also that fowl were not always counted?

The widow is to receive grains. Wheat for noodles, white sauces, and the finer baked goods of Sunday and holidays. Rye for the weekly sourdough bread (and whiskey). Indian corn for mush. A few widows are given buckwheat—perhaps for a flat cake that is cooked on top of the stove in the main room, or on a lazy back over the kitchen hearth.¹⁶ Quantities of grains vary by type, often with wheat being less than rye. Not so for Barbara Funk; she is to receive 10 bushels of wheat, 6 of rye, 2 of buckwheat, and a quarter-acre of Indian corn.

Charming specifications surround the garden, where the widow will be given “Liberty” or her portion (often one-third), which is to be “well dunged.” Margaret Drissell is to have “ground for beans” along with as many turnips as she wants. Catharine Hartzel will get a few rows of potatoes. At his death she has access to 100 head of cabbages, probably pulled and stored upside down in a trench that has been covered by straw, leaves, and soil as a root cellar handy to the kitchen.¹⁷ To keep them from freezing, miller Clemens stores his sweet potatoes in chests in the stove room, close to the ideal temperature, 55° F, that we keep them at today.

Widows are to have liberty in the orchard for fresh apples and to dry them. Valentine Kratz wants Anna to have as many apples, peaches, and pears as she wants. John Fretz wants Maria to have all the apples in the fourth row from his barn. Hans Wireman specifies “a row of the largest trees.”

A byproduct of orchard produce is the ever-present cider, which is set aside in barrel (32 gallons) or hogshead (70 gallons) for the widow. One testator specifies two quantities, one for a really good year. Mary Grater is to “Drink of Water Cyder as long as she pleaseth.” Made by pouring water over the pomace left from the first squeezing of ground apple pieces in the press, water cider was most often the base for vinegar to which a “mother” or bacterial starter was added.¹⁸ Maybe Mary has a fondness for what sounds like 18th-century kombucha!

All in all, a widow and four children in a year need about 750 pounds of meat, 295 bushels of grain of many types, which Lemon divides into three categories: 50 for human food, 215 for animal food, and 30 saved as seed.¹⁹ Additionally, they are consuming honey, wild nuts, garden and truck patch produce along with the early greens of spring, some brought from Europe and some they have learned to forage and cultivate here.

Liberty in the cellar, in kitchen and stove room, and on the plantation is granted with the full knowledge that they are living together, all of them necessary for their contributions to the family economy. Grandmother takes a turn with the infant or chops cabbage for the stew on the hearth. Grandfather is fixing a broken plough or fishing. Mother and some children, perhaps a servant, are harvesting grain or turning the flax stalks to rot them in the dewy meadow.

Last week before the tree limb fell on him, up at the store Father unloaded the horse bands and quillers he’d made. He’s a harness maker, or was. He might have been thinking about building a pig sty, for his oldest daughter saw him fingering the blade of an axe at the store. He’d brought her along to grub the storekeeper’s field for the day, for her father needed more credit on his account.

Let's go food shopping

The relative lack of detail about food in the legal documents of this sample raises several questions. Was food so plentiful, or its value so personal, that it was not accounted for because it could not be sold? Join the crowd at the sale of Michael Smell on Thursday and Friday, December 4 and 5, in 1794, in Haycock Township.²⁰ Son Michael announces the terms—ready money for everyone buying to the value of 5 shillings, and until next May on credit if you spend more than that. Looks like most people are buying on credit.

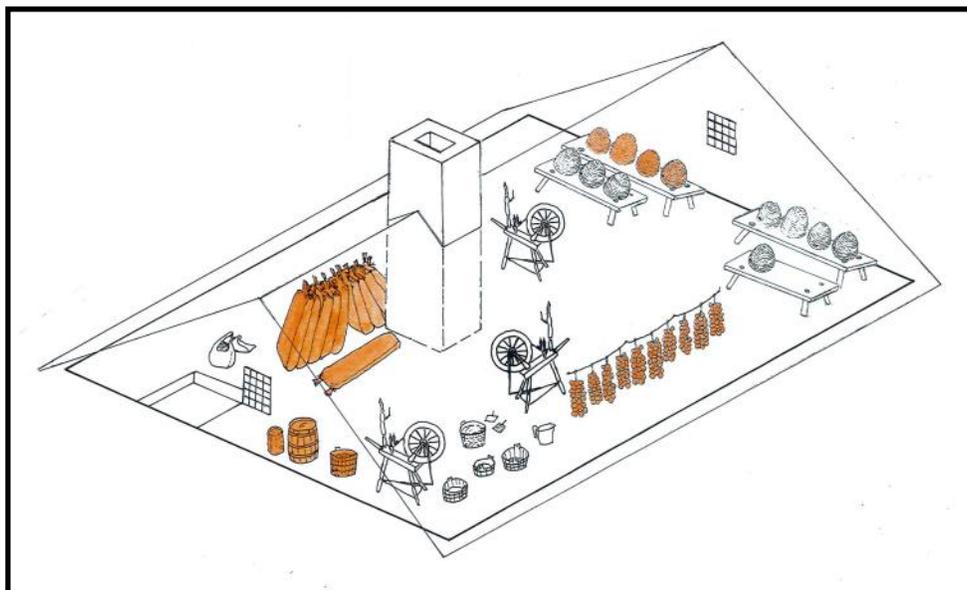
Food is being sold, and the Smell offspring are among the bidders. Fresh apples in bushels, dried apples in bags and barrels, 9 lots in all! Vegetables in quantity: two lots each of a half bushel of beets, 100 heads of cabbage in two lots of 50. Three lots of potatoes, 5 bushels in two of them. A bag of dried peaches.

The Smell boys, Michael and George, are going nose to nose with Bernhart Seip on items. George buys the clock. Mike buys a chest and the spice box; Bernhart, a chest; George, the 2 benches; then Bernhart wins a dresser! Mike scores one of last year's hams and a bag of onions. But maybe it's Bernhart who gets the prize in the "2 backs with Garding Seeds." Turner Conrad Sames—how will he do it—has to keep pots of lard, butter, and cheese stationary on their journey home from the sale. Only at dusk will the buyer of the 14 hens at large in the barnyard be able to see what he's got.

Taking food for granted, when and when not

My sample size is too small to draw solid conclusions about how much and when a family had pork or beef during the year. Also, certain items consumed immediately would not appear on an inventory—fresh fish and eels or wild game. I'd count the saffron, nutmeg, allspice, and cinnamon that my 18th-century husband purchased at the store for me! But what about the fact that among these estates, only 1 pot of apple butter appears?! Some things were probably overlooked.

My sample includes two inventories that provide interesting room by room information about food—that of miller John Clemens and farmer Hans Wireman from Buckingham. Jonathan Fell is the assessor for both of these. A Quaker along with Jesse Fell, members of Buckingham Monthly Meeting, they affirm rather than swear to the veracity of their eye and hand in Clemens' inventory in February 1782.



Someone has schlepped the following food items to miller John Clemens' house garret: bushels of wheat and a bushel of oats, a gum of salt, a cask of dried beef, a basket of dried apples, and onions. In addition, one hive of honey awaits processing. Three other hives contain swarms of bees overwintering there, with a hole to the outside. The other beehives are empty. Illustration by John Munro.

At the springhouse is where most of the food is. In the springhouse loft “Six Swarms of Bees” is the first thing they write down. Among the tools there and a chaff bed (for the hired man probably) is 1 Cask of Metheglin (spiced honey wine), and a half barrel of vinegar, etc. On the first floor of the springhouse they consider the Pork. They know what a tub holds, and there are two. Okay, 300 pounds, so that’s about £8 15. The cask with fish is 3 shillings 9 pence, and the 4 pots of lard, £1. It is winter so there is crout, and pickles there. . . Then there are the pots of honey and a cheese (in its warm cure phase) in the two bedrooms upstairs, and the swarms of bees in the garret with a hole to the outside along with one skep with honey still in comb.

Drawing inferences

Tone in the wills of this small sample suggests a people satisfied that they have had dominion over their piece of the earth. Their houses and barns and other buildings are full of stuff. The matters at hand during a passage into the hereafter are simple—to pay their debts, to pay for their burying and funeral feast—coffin, veal and other meat, bread, cakes, wine and whiskey. By law even if they are weak in body, they must be sound in mind to have in these last moments some clarifying sense of order. George Hartzel perhaps feels a warm rush of regard for his wife. Catharine can count on being authorized by will to ride at her pleasure in his “Stage wagon to see her friends and Children” and to have “a good Creature to Ride to Church or elsewhere when she wants.” All their stuff notwithstanding, the moments of making a will appear to rid their minds of clutter.

I am inclined at first to equate my clutter with theirs. Like them, I have more bowls and plates than I use in a week, keeping nicer ones for company or tea. Like them, I have a larder awaiting a meal next week or a month from now. *Und so weiter.*

On second thought, I see a difference between them and me. Perhaps worse than clutter of closet or computer is what has ensued in the last 30 years, making the choices before me and you an order of magnitude greater than their choices.

We eat concepts like wellness and prevention, and it shows up as vitamins, green drinks, and diets. Perhaps what we have on our plates does not truly satisfy or is somehow not sufficient for our necessity. Maybe our food is not like theirs. We consume the fruits of an agricultural system brainstormed and marketed by companies that own the seed, herbicide and pesticide, grain storage units, and labs where the molecular makeup of these harvested grains creates a seemingly infinite number of byproducts. Furthermore, those seeds have been patented—it’s against the law to save and plant them year to year.

Our early 18th century Pennsylvania Dutch relatives were not so smart as we are about soil amendments when their yields dropped off. On the other hand, our 21st century relatives are planting seeds engineered to resist the herbicides that have been engineered to work (and dissipate) in mineral (not organic) soils bereft of living organisms, and they produce yields! So now we can pour corn into our cars, walk on carpets made of corn, eat corn in the burger and the roll and the ketchup and relish and throw out the window its box because it too is corn.²¹ Therefore, compostable.

Consequently, I feel compelled to evaluate my choices at many points in these processes in order to decide whether or not to consume. Depending on the day, I can call this impulse to choose the cause of my cognitive overload, or I can look at it as a responsibility.

I see another way. It’s in the crickets and pig ears that the husband of my niece is cooking with glee, seriously. Born Korean, adopted and nurtured in a Mennonite home, and choosing social justice as his deepest passion, he is staying nimble in a changing world of food.²²

Meanwhile, we have the poor with us still.

Endnotes

1. Thanks to Edie Landis, Joel Alderfer, Forrest Moyer, and Sarah Heffner for the many ways you helped in the research and direction of the essay. I'm grateful. Thanks to John Munro for illustrating food contents and clutter observed in John Clemens' inventory: words cannot hold my gratitude.
2. These documents were "reaped" by Joel Alderfer, Alan Keyser, Jeff Godshall, and the author in the archives of the Register of Wills for Philadelphia in the late 1970s and early 1980s and elsewhere. Surnames used in this essay are the anglicized modern spellings. Ancestry.com has recently made some of these documents available in its section "Pennsylvania Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993" at <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/usprobatepa/>
3. Subsequent references to this manuscript work are noted as Keyser, *HWA*. Thank you for making it available to me and for reviewing the information here.
4. Jacob Funk's will is in *A Brief History of Bishop Henry Funk and other Funk Pioneers* by A. J. Fretz (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Publishing, 1899), 626-29. The emphasis is mine.
5. James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: John Hopkins U, 2002), xix. See the Jensen and Kennedy references for additions to his research.
6. Lemon, 181.
7. Lemon, 180-81.
8. Keyser, email communication, 5 June 2019.
9. Lemon, 181.
10. Lemon, 125.
11. Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women: 1750-1850* (New Haven: Yale U, 1986), 80.
12. The Salford Store Ledger, 1766-1774 at the Historical Society of Montgomery County shows that farmers brought turnips, beeswax, feathers, mittens, and cherry trees to the storekeeper there. He supervised hauling to and from Philadelphia, Flouertown, and Germantown. For example, Christian Sheid was debited for "hauling 9 barrels of cyderoyl to town," and George Michael Kolp got credit for his son's hauling a hogshead of molasses from Philadelphia. For more sourcing beyond this one local account book, see Michael V. Kennedy in "'Cash for His Turnups': Agricultural Product in Local Markets in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1725-1783" (*Agricultural History* 74:3, 2000), 587-608.
13. Carol Shammas, Marylynn Salmon, Michel Dahlin, *Inheritance in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New Brunswick: Rutgers U, 1987), 50-3.
14. Keyser, email communication, 5 June 2019.
15. Lemon, 155, 167. Table 28 is an excellent distillation of provisions for the widow and family.
16. Keyser, *HWA*; conversation AGK, John Munro, and author, 17 June 2019.
17. Keyser, *HWA*.
18. Keyser, *HWA*.
19. Lemon, 180.
20. I had forgotten about this vendue list from Keyser, *HWA*, until MHC staff reminded me of it.
21. Michael Pollan's section on Industrial Corn in *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (New York: Penguin, 2006) informs me here. In *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual* (2009), he humorously extends the ideas of the earlier book in ways that a two-year-old can understand like "Eat your colors."
22. Thanks, Jonathan Christophel. You're an inspiration.

Author Joyce Munro is professor emerita of English writing at Eastern University, St. Davids, PA. Her books include *Willing Inhabitants: A Short Account of Life in Franconia Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania* (1981) and *Time and Memory: Life in a Small Place...called Branchville, then Bergey, now nameless, in Upper Salford Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania* (2018).

Workshops



Sauerkraut Workshop, Saturday August 17, 2019, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Sheila Rhodes will teach participants the process of making sauerkraut in their home kitchens. Learn how to prep your own quart jar of cabbage to ferment into kraut. The class will discuss the fermenting process, food preservation safety issues, herb and spices that can be added to your kraut, and everything you'll need to know about turning cabbage into sauerkraut.

Preregistration is required as the class size is limited. The cost of the workshop is \$60 (\$55 members) plus a \$15 materials fee.

Sgraffito Pottery Workshop, Saturday September 21, 2019, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

This workshop will focus on the sgraffito technique used by area 19th century Pennsylvania German potters to make expressive designs in their folk art pottery. The class will be led by redware potter Denise Wilz. She will provide molded redware plates coated with clay slip and the sgraffito tools. After the class, the plates will be glazed and fired at her pottery and returned to the Mennonite Heritage Center for participants to pick up.



Preregistration required. Class fee is \$60 (\$55 members) plus a materials fee of \$25 for one 7" redware plate and \$35 for a 10" plate. Class participants can choose to sgraffito up to 3 plates (as time permits).

Apple Basket Workshop, Saturday September 28, 2019, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm



Have you ever considered weaving a nesting set of apple baskets? If so, here is your opportunity to start your own beautiful nesting set. Working over wooden molds in the methods of the Shakers, you can weave a traditional apple basket in one of three sizes: 8", 10" or 12". Artisan basket weaver Karen Wychock will instruct participants how to weave the body of the basket with reed, then finish it off

with an oak handle. Karen will also have dyed reed available for those who wish to add color to their baskets. For details, visit www.mhep.org

Preregistration required. The workshop fee is \$60 (\$55 member) plus the materials fee for the basket of your choice (\$30-\$40).

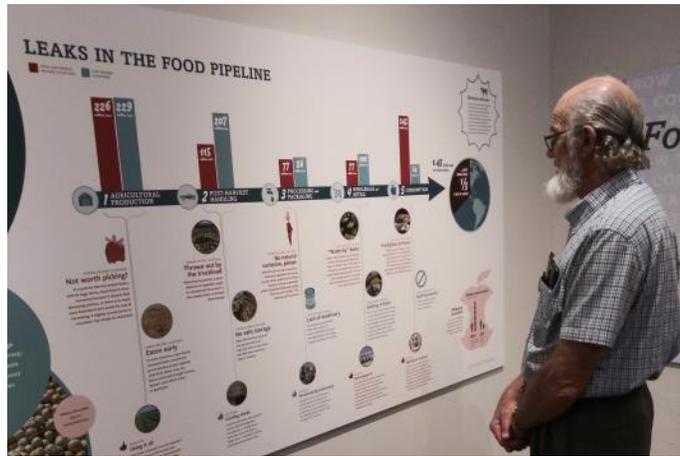
Register for these workshops at mhep.org or call 215-256-3020.

New Exhibits

Food: Our Global Kitchen July 6, 2019 – January 4, 2020

Explore the complex and intricate food system that brings what we eat from farm to fork.

Reshaping our food system to produce healthy food to feed more people, more sustainably, will be an immense, global project in the coming years—a project in which we will all take part through our daily choices about what to eat. Featuring beautiful large-format infographic panels, this exhibition explores astonishing statistics and innovative ideas about the future of food.



Exhibition Themes:

Ways of Growing | Future of Growing | Modern Markets | Food Waste | Scarcity & Abundance
Adapted from the exhibition *Food: Our Global Kitchen* organized by the American Museum of Natural History.



A companion exhibit *Food Heritage of Eastern Pennsylvania*, produced by the Mennonite Heritage Center, has panels, information and artifacts on local foodways, beginning with the 17th century Lenape and moving chronologically up to the 21st century. Learn about the foods for a Lenape Gamwing celebration, how the introduction of the wood cook stove in the 19th century meant a more diverse menu, and how we can contribute to a more sustainable food system today.

The exhibit *Work & Hope: Mennonite Life in Eastern Pennsylvania* has been moved to the gallery space.

Traditional Foods Potluck, Friday September 20, 2019, 6:30 pm Mennonite Heritage Center

You are invited to a Traditional Foods Potluck to celebrate the exhibit *Food: Our Global Kitchen*. This event is hosted in partnership with Indian Valley Public Library. **Bring a dish from ethnic cookbooks featured at the library.** The dish/recipe is your admission to the event. Preregistration required at mhpc.org or call 215-256-3020



Also, mark your calendar for a *Mennonite Community Cookbook* potluck on Friday November 8, 2019, 6:30 pm.



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Program: “Hex Signs: Myth and Meaning”

Sunday, August 18, 2019
2:00 pm
Mennonite Heritage Center

Presentation by Patrick Donmoyer, Director of the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. Learn about the history, mythology and cultural significance of the traditional barn stars from the author of *Hex Signs: Myth and Meaning in Pennsylvania Dutch Barn Stars*.

Admission by donation.

