

A BARN RAISING.

How the Berk County Farmers Make it a Day of Fun and Feasting.

When you see a hundred Pennsylvania Germans at an old-fashioned barn-raising, climbing in mid-air and erecting beams and joists, you will no longer wonder why it is that Berk county boys become such excellent sailors. You can comprehend why they are like cats among the mice.

A barn-raising in rural Berk county is a frolicsome event. While it does not come around often as does the old-fashioned applebutter party and the husking-bee, when it does come there is nothing that will prevent a hundred or more neighbors within a radius of three or four miles being on hand and showing their neighbor the courtesy of helping him out with his great work. Nothing short of sickness or a funeral in the immediate family will keep the neighbors away, says Virginsville, Pa., letter in the Philadelphia Record.

Barn-raising is not easy, neither is it all frolic. To erect the timber of a 100-foot structure like the Swiss barn nowadays, in those sections where "farmers make money like hay, but not quite as long," is no sinecure. The preliminary work is done by the country carpenter and a dozen journeymen, when, weeks in advance, they prepare every beam, purline and rafter, fitting them together out in an open field and marking each piece, so when the time comes to erect all the timbers, the mechanic can direct the hundred or more men expeditiously. Sockets are chiseled into the ends of the beams to fit the pieces in. Wooden pegs or pins are made so as to fit certain holes at these sockets and to hold the beams, purlines and rafters in place when erected.

By the time the carpenter and his crew have finished an acre or more is covered with all kinds of lumber for the barn-raising, and you can be sure that when the last rafter is placed there will remain not a single piece in the field.

By this time everybody is ready for the barn-raising. The farmer has even supplied a keg or two of old Berk county applejack, a gallon of good rye whiskey, and the women folks have filled the larder to overflowing. It is 6 in the morning when the carpenter boss cries out "Krick der helm" (Get the poles). The poles are picked up by willing hands and the men walk to the bearded field of lumber, where a dozen or more of these poles are placed under a 50-foot beam, and all hands get busy, as 20 or 30 men carry the first piece of lumber to the site for the new barn. The carpenter goes ahead, like a great general marching his army in victory, feeling proud that not a single neighbor is missing. The marching is kept up for half an hour, and the woodwork for the entire first floor is laid. Soon there are others carrying planks and boards, and within half an hour more the first floor is laid (temporarily, of course), so they will have room to work ahead, erecting the timbers, up, up, up, to the very rafters. The work of erecting the first band or the end framework of the barn is undertaken slowly. First the upright joists are laid on the temporary floor, then the crosswise sections are fitted into the sockets and the pins tightly driven. Then comes the first task. You hear the carpenter boss yell: "Nuf, nuf" ("up, up"), and with spearlike points, 40 men grab the entire closely-fitted framework for one end, and, as the boss keeps yelling "Nuf," the framework goes up, up, all with outstretched arms the 40 men stand on tip-toes, their brown muscles expanded to the utmost. Then comes a crash, the boss cries "Hurrah!" and they all know that every joist has slipped into the socket of the beam lying on the foundation wall. There is a click of half a dozen hammers, and twice as many wooden pins are driven, and the first real job is done.

A hundred-foot barn requires at least four or five such operations, and the

center ones are even heavier than the others, for they contain the ladders, made of heavy joists, where the farmers climb to the third story, called by them "overden." As soon as all the sides are erected the longer and heavier beams have to be placed along the length of the structure, and with farmers in mid-air, with one hand holding their balance and with the other pulling with all their might at a rope, while others below are pushing, pushing, pushing, 50-foot beams are put in position as easily as if they were laying them on the level.

The work goes on until the sun stands directly overhead, with only now and then a minute or two of rest, to tap the applejack keg or pull the cork from the rye demijohn. There is no overindulgence of drinking. Barn-raising in zero weather not only demands an appetizer, but a good stimulant, and the men know just how much to drink and drink no more than they feel they can carry and erect their neighbor's best building. It keeps them warm and it keeps them jolly. But then comes the call for dinner. Oh! such a dinner! If you would judge the art of cookery at its best on an Pennsylvania German farm, you must simply drop in on a crowd of farmers at a barn-raising. Here is everything the good housewife can think of. Her neighbors help her all the week, and, of course, those men who do not get sick from having in mid-air, or from applejack, are quite lucky if they do not carry home overloaded stomachs.

They can't help themselves, however, they just eat. There is the delicious turkey, the beefsteak, the toothsome mince pies, the smoked sausage, the leberwurst, the ponhans, tripe, and, it makes a fellow giddy to mention all the other things these farmers have to eat on such an occasion.

After a good snack from their corncob and clay pipes, the farmers and carpenters feel refreshed, and start to put in the remainder of the afternoon in completing the framework of the good fellow's barn. The hardest task is still to be accomplished. The two long pieces of timber, firmly fitted together, have to be raised along each side of the long structure, upon which the rafters must rest. The farmer calls: "Der dach stool," and upon this the entire roof will rest. It is the hardest task of the entire job, and the farmers work like sailor boys until it is in place. As it is the longest piece of timber in the entire structure, it is also one of the heaviest, and before it is in place everyone on the ground is in perspiration, and there nearly always happen minor accidents. The long timbers are in place, at last, however, and the rafters are quickly placed upon the roof stools and the long beam and before the sun sets the farmer's barn skel-

eton stands complete in mid-air.

There is no cost for the work of erecting a barn for a Pennsylvania German farmer. Every neighbor does the work willingly; but if there should be one mean enough not to be present or send his farm hand, why he can rest assured that the farmer will have "a return compliment" ready for him.

A SHIP 1,100 YEARS OLD.

An interesting communication has been made to the French Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres by M. Gabriel Gustafson, curator of the Christiania museum, concerning the recent discovery in Norway of a Viking funeral ship at least eleven hundred years old. Its mortuary chamber contained the bodies of two women who, judging from the size of the craft and the elaborateness of its appointments, evidently belonged to some noble and wealthy family. The vessel, which is 70 feet long and 16 feet 6 inches broad, was dug out of a tumulus two and one-half miles from the shore on the farm of Osseberg, near Tomteberg. The treasure was not intact. At some remote period, probably hundreds of years ago, it had been unearthed by unscrupulous visitors, who had pillaged the mortuary chamber of many of the curious relics undoubtedly deposited there in accordance with ancient Norse traditions. But in other parts of the ship which had apparently escaped the notice of the sacrilegious intruders was found a large and extremely valuable collection of historic remains, including a four-wheeled chariot, richly and quaintly decorated; four sledges, three of them curiously curved; several beds, a spinning wheel and a variety of kitchen utensils. Diligent examination of these has led to the conclusion that the funeral ship belongs to the ninth century. One theory is that the second woman was a slave, condemned to accompany her mistress to her last sleep. Many of the ornaments, mostly of carved wood, are unique. The ship and its strange cargo, constituting one of the most important archaeological finds ever made in Scandinavia, will, after being carefully restored, be placed in the Christiania museum.—Manchester Guardian.

HAS FAILED AGAIN.

For the third time the civil service commission has failed to get an eligible list for the position of inspector of food and drugs in the department of health.

An examination—the third—was held a few days ago. There were nine applicants, but only one passed, Frederick W. Koehler of 522 Broadway. At least three names are required to constitute an eligible list. The position pays \$1,000 a year.

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