

**EDUCATION IN PARADISE:  
LEARNING FOR PROFITABLE EMPLOYMENT  
AMONG THE OLD ORDER AMISH  
OF LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, USA**

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**Heidelberg**

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*Live to learn — Learn to live*

*School motto  
of the former  
Shillington High School*

## **FOREWARD**

This dissertation was conceived as a bridge between my place of origin and my current residence near Heidelberg. Until high-school graduation I lived in a small town located in Berks County in southeastern Pennsylvania; since my marriage I have made my permanent home in Germany. After moving to the region close to the Palatinate I heard German-dialect words that carried me back to my roots.

At Christmas and birthday times when secrets were very important my maternal grandparents spoke "Pennsylvania Dutch", a distorted form of German. Having heard too little of the language, I never learned to understand and speak it. Nevertheless, I do remember a few single words. It was not until I moved to Heidelberg that I once again heard potatoes called *Grummbiere* rather than *Kartoffeln* in German. If one so will, that was the ignition for my curiosity concerning the Amish. Being an educator, I thought it impossible that people willingly choose to limit their education. How are they able to survive in a modern world?

And so I had my topic, but there were many hurdles still to be traversed. Family demands had to be balanced with academic ambitions, and serious illness had to be overcome before the final copy was complete. The challenges were met, and the experience was very rewarding. To all who made this undertaking of mine possible I wish to say thank you.

Thanking the Amish by name would be incongruous with their habits, for they generally rebuff being singled out for special attention. Nevertheless, I wish to express a very special *Denki* to all my Amish confidants and their extended families and friends who shared their daily routines with me and sacrificed their time to assist me in learning about their culture. Without their cooperation my efforts would have been unsuccessful.

A particular thank-you goes to the Ebys, a Mennonite family who were my hosts during my stay at the Pequea Tourist Farm near Intercourse in Lancaster County. They gave me many practical tips about the Amish way of doing things, and they graciously introduced me to their Amish neighbors. From them I was taught much about accepting life as it is and death when it comes. Having never had close contact with handicapped people, it was an enriching learning experience for me to be associated with Melody, who was severely physically disabled and learning impaired, during the last six months of her twenty-year life.

Another thank-you is extended to my cousin Sue and her husband Tim for all their help in getting me set up in the area and especially for finding an old car for me to drive during my six-month stay. Even though it repeatedly left me stuck on a country road, the car turned out to be an asset: the Amish loved it because it had "character". In fact, they even named the car Freddy after their old horse that was balky and cantankerous too.

In addition I thank my immediate family for their ceaseless support, encouragement, and coercion as needed and for their practical help in producing the final manuscript.

I am greatly indebted to Prof. Dr. Fletcher DuBois for his continual interest and support. I wish to thank all the faculty members in the department of *Erziehungswissenschaft*; I profited greatly from their lectures and seminars. Last but not least I say *Danke schön* to my advisor, Prof. Dr. J. Kaltschmid, for his understanding, his patience, and his generosity in accepting my unusual topic which truly does not have a commonplace theme.

*One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.*

– Carl Jung  
*The Gifted Child*

## DEDICATION

The importance of the teacher's role in learning is undeniable. Doing this study gave me cause to reflect on my own student career from kindergarten through elementary and high schools to the university level.

I had the good fortune of having been instructed and inspired by countless women and men who were outstanding in their field.

They are too numerous to be named individually; hence I wish to acknowledge them in general for each *alma mater*.

I dedicate this dissertation to my

**Mother,**

who was my very first teacher,

and to my

**Former Teachers and Professors**

at

Shillington Elementary School  
Governor Mifflin Junior High School  
Governor Mifflin Senior High School  
Elizabethtown College  
National Louis University – Heidelberg

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and  
when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

*Proverbs 22:6*

*The Holy Bible*

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*It contributes greatly towards a man's moral and intellectual health, to be brought into habits of companionship with individuals unlike himself, who care little for his pursuits, and whose sphere and abilities he must go out of himself to appreciate.*

– Nathaniel Hawthorne  
*The Customs House*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**A**mish – the word elicits images of a peaceful, bucolic folk who forgo a variety of modern conveniences and eschew the lifestyle of the general American population. These unique people, who still travel with horse-drawn buggies, dress in plain, dark-colored clothes, and procreate at an average rate of seven children per family, cultivate their own way of life in which hard work and thrift are highly esteemed. Often perceived by the rest of the populace as a relic of times past, they have unwillingly become a tourist attraction in the United States, especially in Lancaster Country, Pennsylvania.

The uniqueness of the Amish has also made them an appealing theme for mass media: the film industry and advertising agencies, as well as international print media, have used them as a means for creating interest among the consuming public. Indeed, before the turn of the last century the Amish even became much sought after experts for advice on how to survive should utilities fail to function at the beginning of the new millennium in the year 2000.

The Amish are a denomination of pacifists with special values: humility is regarded more highly than pride and loving kindness is more revered than alienation. In a world where violence abounds and is becoming ever more a problem even in schools – one recalls the mass murder of schoolmates by two youths in Littleton, Colorado and a student's running amok in Erfurt, Germany in recent years – life among a mild, peace-loving people such as the Amish becomes a point of interest for scholars of the social sciences.

Very interesting moreover for educators is the Amish rejection of all formal education beyond the eighth-grade level. American parents spend

thousands of dollars to secure a college education for their offspring,<sup>i/1</sup> hoping to ensure a higher social status, *i.e.* better, higher-paying job opportunities for their children; and in Germany the rate of students attending the German *Gymnasien*<sup>ii/2</sup> continues to increase for similar reasons. The Amish, in striking contrast, have preserved their one-room schools with grades one to eight. For Amish students, attending public schools beyond eighth grade generally means expulsion from Amish society.

In fact, during the early decades of the second half of the twentieth century when in the wake of school-district consolidations various states ordered that Amish children adhere to the law of compulsory education until the age of sixteen, Amish parents chose to serve jail sentences rather than send their sons and daughters to district high schools where they would be exposed to teaching and learning contrary to their Amish ways.

### 1.1. Research Subjects

The Old Order Amish constitute a religious group of Anabaptists who can trace their roots to Switzerland and the Protestant Reformation of Huldrych Zwingli. The Amish, led by the church elder Jakob Ammann, emerged from a schism among the Anabaptists in the year 1693. Thus the correct pronunciation of the word Amish leans on the German rendering of Ammann's name with a short initial vowel (Ä'-mish) rather than the more popularly used long first-vowel form (Ā'-mish). They themselves use the former pronunciation. The term Old Order Amish was first introduced in America to differentiate them as traditionalists from other more liberal groups. Originally they were known as Amish Mennonites. Occasionally they are also referred to as the House Amish, a designation that derives from their place of worship, which is in their homes or in their barns, but never in specially constructed church buildings.

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<sup>i</sup>In the United States college and university enrollment increased from 8.6 million students in 1970 to 15.2 million in 1994. In 1994 enrollment was 75 percent for whites (non-Hispanic), 10 percent for blacks, 8 percent for Hispanics, 6 percent for Asians and Pacific Islanders, 1 percent for Native Americans.

<sup>ii</sup>In Germany about 25 percent of the pupils transfer from the *Grundschule* to the *Gymnasium*.

The Amish, along with the Brethren, the Mennonites, and other diverse conservative denominations that trace their traditional roots to Europe, are often referred to as the Plain People of Pennsylvania because of their subdued, simple dress as it was in 1900. A century later most of these religious groups – though not the Amish – have replaced their traditional garb with modern clothing. Hostetler<sup>3</sup> defines the Amish as "a church, a community, a spiritual union, a conservative branch of Christianity, a religion, a community whose member practice simple and austere living, a familistic entrepreneuring system, and an adaptive human community." However, they are not a group living together in communes or compounds but rather often in close neighborhood to one another interspersed among the non-Amish population. They live on farms, in remote country homes, in rural neighborhoods with Amish friends and family nearby or in small boroughs among non-Amish or "English" neighbors. Amish usually refer to those outside the circle of plain people as the "English".

The Amish consider themselves to be "in the world but not of the world" (John 17:16). Immediately noticeable is the symbolic separation from the rest of the world: they dress in unadorned, somber-colored clothing; they drive horse-drawn buggies; and among themselves they speak a German dialect commonly known by the misnomer "Pennsylvania Dutch" – from the English mispronunciation of the German word *Deutsch*.

Another distinction of the Amish is their typical one-room school, where an average of thirty children from grades one to eight are generally taught by an unmarried Amish woman who herself has not attended school beyond the eighth-grade level. Also characteristic of the Amish is their *Gelassenheit*. It is a term that is difficult to explain with just one word. Kraybill<sup>4</sup> translates it as meaning submission. Submissiveness would be a better single word, but it can also mean self-possession, calmness, composure, resignation, even temper, patience, or deliberateness.<sup>5</sup> For the Amish *Gelassenheit* means the acceptance of circumstances which cannot be changed, acquiescence to their fate, and obedience to a higher power.

In previous generations, people of southeastern Pennsylvania descended from German immigrants were often referred to as the Pennsylvania Dutch, for

many of them also communicated with each other in the German dialect. Those who were not members of the plain sects were dubbed the "fancy Dutch", for their culture was not as simple and modest as that of the Plain People. As the mobility of society increased, countless people of non-German lineage relocated in the area and thus the culture of the so-called fancy Dutch has faded as they have slowly been absorbed into the mainstream culture.

## 1.2. Research Objectives

Amish farmers, considered to be some of the best in the nation, profitably work their 60-acre farms without the help of government subsidies. A small, struggling Amish business ends not in bankruptcy but more likely expands slowly and is eventually divided to create two firms with new job opportunities for others. An Amish cottage industry has more customer orders than it is able to fill.

Are the never-ending successful Amish endeavors simply evidence of the Protestant work ethic comprised of industry, thrift, ascetic living, and commercial enterprise as theorized by Max Weber?<sup>6</sup> What educational background enables the Amish to become such successful entrepreneurs? Their traditional schooling embodies eight years of rudimentary education. How are the Amish able to compensate for their apparent lack of book knowledge and still maintain a creative learning atmosphere which spawns all the achievements and accomplishments they evidence? The Amish tenaciously cling to their one-room country schools although, by modern criteria, the schools are inadequate and outdated. Nonetheless, they play a prominent role in the socialization of the Amish children and provide them with a fundamental preparation for life within the Amish community. The evolution of these schools as they exist today will be traced through their historical background.

The immense importance the Amish attach to keeping their parochial schools rigidly confined to eight years of formal learning is apostasy to modern educators who steadfastly advocate increased educational opportunities for all children. Recorded will be the resolve with which the Amish pursued their goal in keeping their schooling limited. During the middle of the twentieth century

it became a national topic of debate as Amish heads of families paid fines and uncompromising fathers suffered imprisonment until in a *cause célèbre* the Supreme Court of the United States rendered a judgment on the issue.

The world of the Amish child will be described with emphasis being placed on the educational aspects within the family and congregation, in the school and at the work place. The deficiencies of the schools will be presented concurrent with the advantages, including the values encountered in the implicit curricula<sup>i</sup> of Amish schools.

It is one of multifarious Amish dichotomies that these people who willingly use the services of well-educated experts such as doctors, dentists, certified public accountants, *et cetera*, are opposed to having their own children educated for one of these professions. Of primary concern in this study are the boundaries placed on the occupational scope for Amish youth through a seemingly insufficient school education and how the Amish community deals with this obstacle. The implementation of the social skills they have acquired in their unique society will be traced from the family to the school and on to the workplace.

Problems created by modern society are tangent on the agrarian Amish culture as well. An ever dwindling supply of arable land in Lancaster County and a steadily multiplying Amish population make it nearly impossible for farming families to purchase additional acreage for their sons to cultivate. Although farming is considered to be the chosen vocation among the Amish, more and more young people are being forced to earn a livelihood otherwise. Different job opportunities require added qualifications, diverse talent, and further training. The procedures the Amish implement to acquire post-school education will be noted.

### 1.3. Literature

Most of the literature concerning the Amish people can be found in the fields of sociology/anthropology, history, and theology. The starting point for

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<sup>i</sup> Goodlad favors the term "implicit curriculum"; the term "hidden curriculum", a phrase which he terms a misnomer, is also applied in educational literature.

studies on the Amish is John A. Hostetler's *Amish Society*, an extensive report on the Amish way of life. First published in 1963, it is now in its fourth printing. Hostetler, who was born into an Amish family, is an internationally recognized expert on the Amish, having published numerous articles and books. He is professor emeritus of anthropology and sociology at Temple University in Philadelphia and is the former director of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania.

Donald B. Kraybill, professor of sociology and Hostetler's successor at the Young Center, has also researched the Amish culture extensively. His *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (1989) helps explain the ambiguities within the Amish culture. *A History of the Amish* by Steven M. Nolt (1992) is a thorough chronological account tracing the Amish from their beginnings in Europe to the present day and includes a presentation of the problems they now are facing. Kraybill and Nolt have co-authored *Amish Enterprise – From Plows to Profits*, a study on the problems facing the Amish in their search for alternate forms to provide for their families as their culture is being gradually transformed from a traditional agrarian society to a community of entrepreneurs.

Especially useful for research on Amish education is *Amish Children: Their Education in Family, School, and Community* (1992), which Hostetler published together with Gertrude Enders Huntington. *Pennsylvania School History 1690 – 1990* was compiled by Isaac Z. Lapp and published 1991 by his son Christ S. Lapp, both Amishmen. Its purpose is to serve as a testimony for future generations by providing a record of the challenges and the struggles the Amish endured in order to establish their parochial schools as they exist today. In *The Amish and the State* (1993), edited by Kraybill, Thomas J. Meyers reports on the legal struggles involved in Amish schooling.

Articles about the Amish found in newspapers and magazines may be of a lighter version and meant to entertain more than inform; others of a more serious nature familiarize the public with the current problems facing the Amish communities today. Manifold publications dealing with the denomination can be discovered in book stores and souvenir shops in Amish-



inhabited areas which are frequented by tourists. Often the writings are superficial and abundant in inaccuracies and clichés about the Amish.

The Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, has a growing collection of printed material relating to the Amish as well as to other Anabaptist groups. A broad selection of materials from those meant for curious tourists to those intended for more serious students can be found at the Mennonite Information Center in Lancaster.

Putting abstract thoughts into written words is alien to Amish habit. Conceptions and reflections are not composed for publication. Writing is generally limited to an exchange of letters among friends and family or to drafting an article for printing in one of the Amish news journals. Authors among the Amish are rare. Less unusual are works from erstwhile members of the Amish community who have left their persuasion and, thus unfettered, have authored publications ranging from the academic to the short story. Examples are Joseph W. Yoder's biographical narrative *Rosanna of the Amish*, which relates the story of his Irish mother who was reared by the Amish and who later married within the faith and John Hostetler's manifold publications in the social sciences. He also edited the anthology *Amish Roots – A Treasury of History, Wisdom, and Lore*, which is a collection of writings about the Amish, some of which were penned by the ethnics themselves.

In Germany the dissertations found having the Amish as the subjects of research are Heide Tank's inquiry into the development of an economic structure among the Amish, Kurt-Peter Merk's exploration of an alternative form of living, and Joachim Vossen's study of the religious and economic-geographic significance of the Amish within the American society.

Volker Lenhart considered early educational tracts for indications of the Protestant work ethic. In his book from 1998 *Protestantische Pädagogik und der 'Geist' des Kapitalismus* Lenhart examined essays from the German Lutheran Pietists, the Dutch Calvinistic Pietists, and various English groups (the Puritans, Puritan contemporaries, the Quakers, and Hartlib Circle – the followers of Comenius).

#### 1.4. Research Procedure

The most significant challenge regarding research on the Amish is attaining their willingness to cooperate and participate in the intended studies. It is their way to remain to themselves. They are polite but not overly friendly to strangers. Initial questions might be answered briefly, but silence often ensues as a reaction to further probing.

Because the Amish have often been misused by non-ethnics, especially by representatives of mass media, they are reluctant to grant interviews to strangers. Tank and Merk were confronted with the insurmountable obstacle of Amish people indifferent to their purposes, and both were unable to achieve their results with the collaboration of their subjects. Vossen, in comparison, was accepted by the Amish, living and working with them during various seasons and years for a total period of thirteen months.

Nonetheless, the evolving world of the Amish necessitates more contacts with outsiders. A better awareness of another sphere outside that of their own culture sometimes leads to a greater willingness to cooperate with investigators. It becomes evident that those Amish who have previously participated in research are more inclined to do so again after the seriousness of purpose of the questioner and the intended use of the material to be obtained have been determined. The interviewer can usually procure the cooperation of the interviewee through an introduction by an Amish friend.

Amish religious beliefs do not permit researchers' utilization of technical devices such as cameras for taking photographs or camcorders for making video recordings. The employment of tape recorders for the chronicling of interviews is also generally rejected. Numerous sources of data were used for this study: interviews, ethnographic observations, primary source documents, and demographic information for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Half-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted personally by this researcher with 51 members of the Amish community in Lancaster County. The informants represent a cross-section of the Amish living in that area: males and females; married and single people; teenagers and great-grandparents; teachers and housewives, some of whom had formerly been teachers; church

leaders and people who have left the faith; farmers, workers in cottage-trade industries, and owners of small businesses. In addition, as a participating observer this researcher shared great portions of day-to-day living among Amish acquaintances, becoming fully involved in their daily routines. She helped with daily chores and shared countless meals with Amish families; she was also extended one of the seldom invitations offered to non-ethnics to attend Amish church services.

In the case of this study, the German residency, age, gender, and command of the German language by the interviewer proved to be greatly advantageous for gaining the confidence of the Amish and securing their readiness to participate in interviews. The conversational topics *Kinder*, *Küche*, and *Kirche* opened doors, hearts, and minds especially among families with school-aged children. Providing motorized transportation for family visits was another means for earning cooperation in obtaining interviews. This researcher obtained both a college degree and a high-school teaching position in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, after having been born and reared in neighboring Berks County. Therefore she was familiar with the perceptible customs of the Amish to a limited extent – although no personal contacts with them existed – before the six-month field research was begun in October 1997. Following an initial period of time used for organizational purposes, about one third of a year was spent living amongst the Amish in the serendipitously chosen locale between Paradise and Intercourse, two very small towns located in the middle of the Amish settlement in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. During those four months a total of ten schools were visited, classrooms observed and teachers questioned. Also interviewed were six housewives who had previously been teachers, and one district meeting of approximately 95 current Amish teachers was attended.

### 1.5. Geography and Demography

Although the Amish initially immigrated to Pennsylvania, they later also settled in other areas of the United States and Canada. Amish settlements are located in 22 states and in the Canadian province of Ontario. The largest Amish

territory is in Holmes County, Ohio, but in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the Amish settlement is more densely populated. Approximately 70 percent of the total Amish population can be found in three states: Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana. A settlement contains the band of Amish families living in a common geographical area. The size may vary from a few households to thousands of families. Via films and television Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has become the best known of the Amish settlements. A district is the designation for a local congregation of Amish denomination.

Table 1.1.: Old Order Amish Population Estimates by Settlement Areas<sup>7</sup>

	North America	Pennsylvania	Lancaster
Settlements	175	40	1
Districts	661	165	82
Adults (18+)	50,500	12,606	6,250
Adults and Children	107,743	26,895	13,400

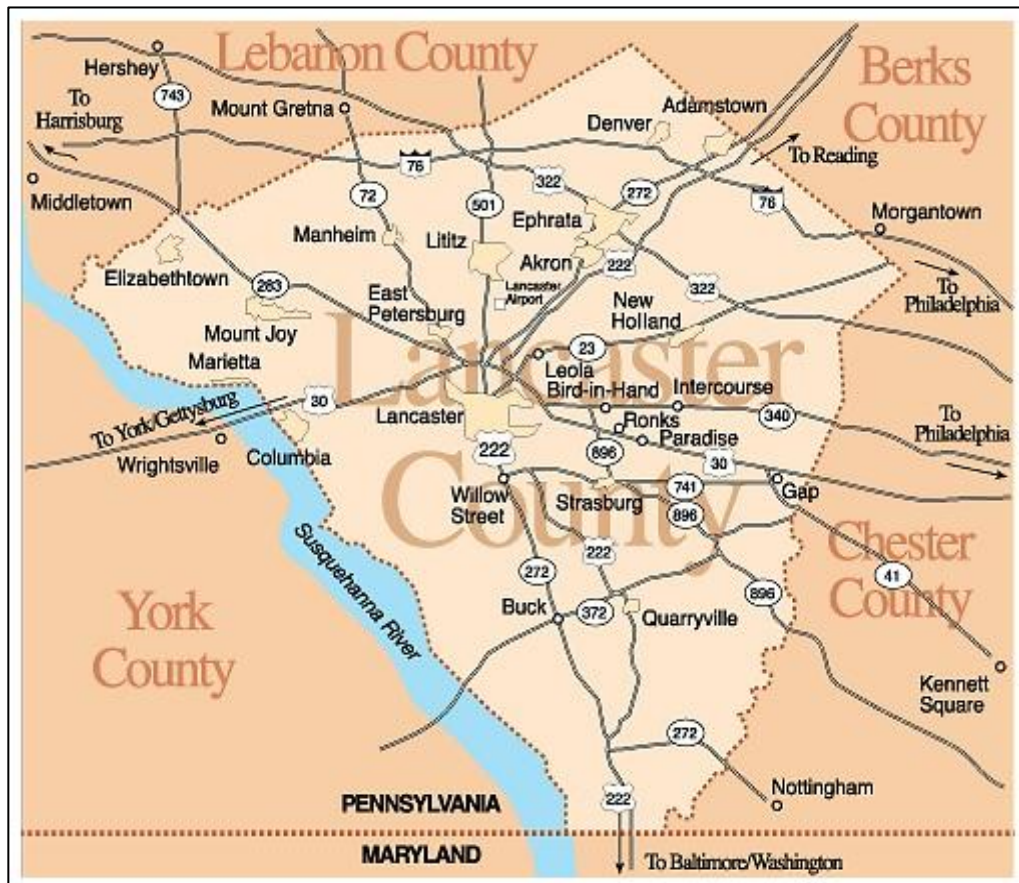
Pennsylvania is one of the Middle Atlantic States. Lancaster County, located in the southeastern part of the state, lies on the edge of the American megalopolis extending along the east coast from Boston to Washington, D.C. The county seat of Lancaster County is the city of Lancaster which is 71 miles from Philadelphia, 38 miles from the state capital Harrisburg, 165 miles from New York City, and 135 miles from the national capital in Washington, D.C.

Figure 1.1: Map of the State of Pennsylvania<sup>8</sup>



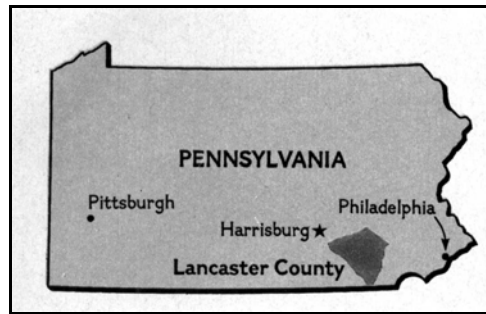
Lancaster County – with a total surface area of 943.3 square miles – is bordered in the west by York County, in the north by Dauphin County, Lebanon County, and Berks County, in the east by Chester County, and in the south by the state of Maryland.

Figure 1.2.: Map of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania<sup>9</sup>



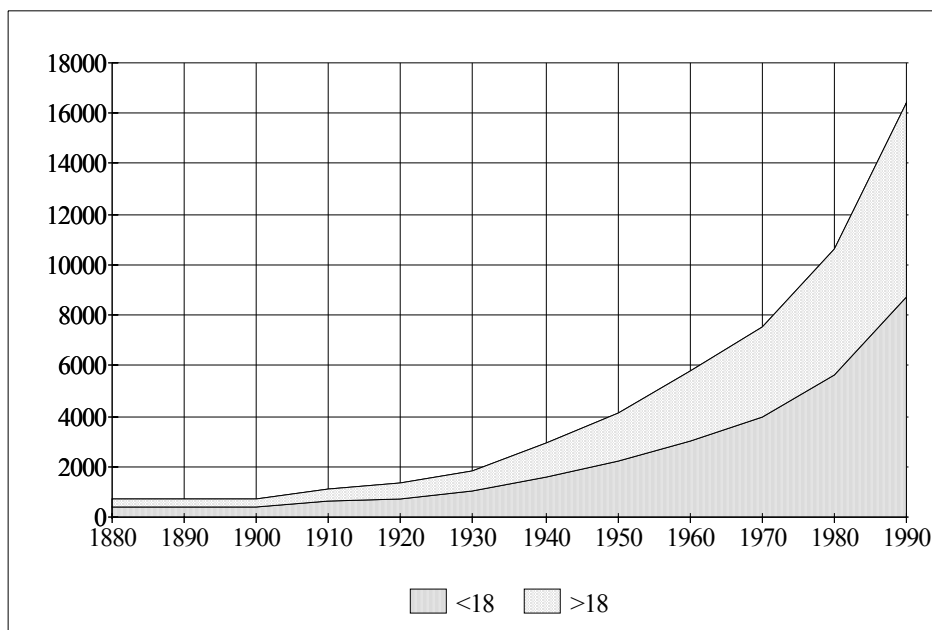
Lancaster County lies on the Piedmont Plateau which ranges from the Atlantic coastal plain to the South Mountain, a prong of the Blue Mountain. Low elevations from ninety to one thousand feet and gently rolling uplands dominate the topography of the region; the Susquehanna River flows south along the western border of Lancaster County and empties into the Chesapeake Bay at Havre de Grace, Maryland. The Pequea and the Cocalico Creeks as well as the Conestoga River are the main streams within the county.

Figure 1.3.: Map with Lancaster County Location in Pennsylvania<sup>10</sup>



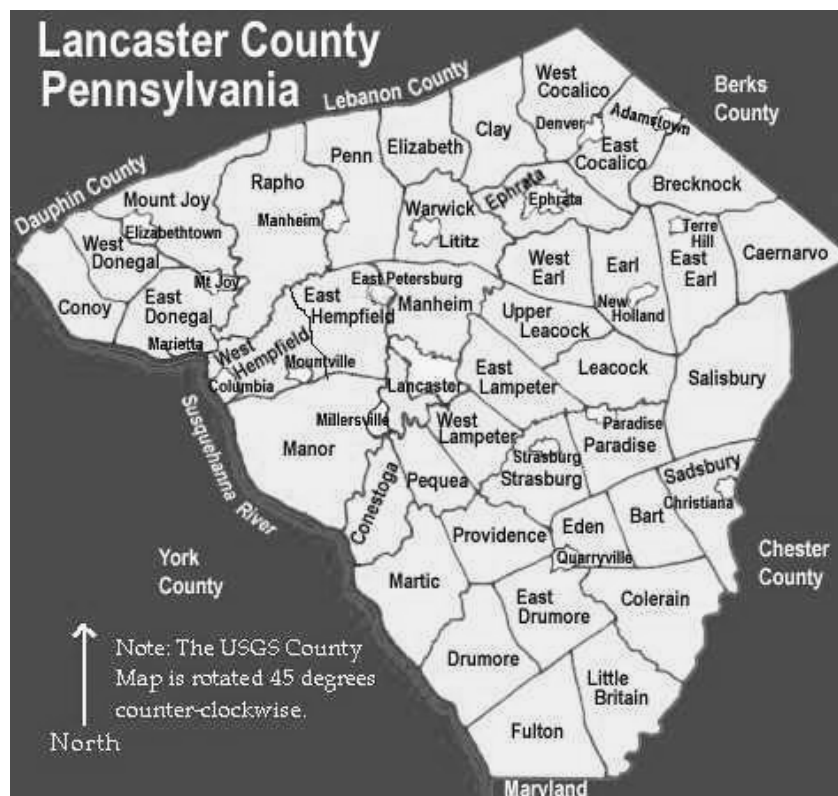
Lancaster County's proximity to the metropolitan sprawl of greater Philadelphia has proven to be consequential for the Amish as the urbanization of farmland in recent decades has effected enormous price increases for acreage which is convertible into suburban subdivisions. As the sum total of the Amish population increases, a solution for the dilemma is not likely to be found in the near future. The official census from 2000 recorded 470,658 as the total population for Lancaster County – an average of nearly 500 persons per square mile. The average family size in Lancaster County is 3.14, whereas Amish parents have an average of seven children. Their population growth in Lancaster County has been estimated by Kraybill:

Figure 1.4.: Amish Population Growth in Lancaster County<sup>11</sup>



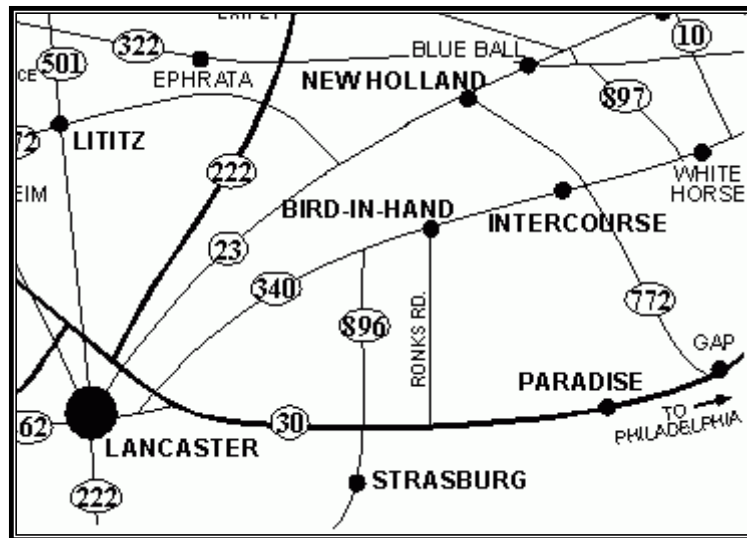
While the Amish comprise roughly only four percent of Lancaster County's total population, over half the townships in Lancaster County have Amish inhabitants. However, the Amish settlement is concentrated mainly in the townships east and southeast of the city of Lancaster along Route 340. Leacock Township and Salisbury Township have the greatest number of Amish residents; Upper Leacock, East Lampeter, Paradise, Bart, and Colerain Townships are also heavily populated by the Amish. They constitute over thirty percent of the population in Bart, Colerain, and Leacock Townships.

Figure 1.5.: Map of Lancaster County showing Townships and Boroughs<sup>12</sup>



The greatest density of the Amish population is found along Route 340 in Leacock Township where there are more than seventy Amish people per square mile. Both Route 340 and the heavily traveled state highway 30, which merge near the gateway to the city of Lancaster, dissect the Lancaster-County settlement from east to west.

Figure 1.6.: Map of the Area with High Amish Population<sup>13</sup>



Amish settlements are found scattered throughout farming regions of the United States and Canada. Although the various Amish communities may employ divergent practices and display varying rigidity in their faith, they all adhere to the same basic tenets. The Lancaster-County settlement is especially interesting because it is at the forefront in having to cope with encroachments from the non-ethnic society. Compromises have to be made as this settlement is forced to move away from its purely agrarian culture to one interspersed with modest entrepreneurs.



*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

*I Peter 2:9  
The Holy Bible*

## 2. THE HISTORY OF THE ANABAPTISTS

To understand the Amish and their valuation of education one has to be familiar with their history and with their religious belief, which have coalesced to determine their way of preparing Amish children for life in their society today. Early persecution of the Amish led to their mistrust of the state and its authority over matters of religious conscience. Centuries later in the USA their heavily ingrained wariness of government resurfaced in their disagreement with authorities over the right to determine the education deemed adequate for Amish children.

### 2.1. Roots in the Protestant Reformation

The Church was a major determining factor in society during the early sixteenth century. Power struggles caused life to be turbulent then. The papacy was a political as well as a religious authority. As a middle class of wealthy merchants and craftsmen emerged in towns and cities, the noblemen's right to hereditary rule was questioned. At the same time land-owning peasants were being driven into poverty.

Amid the turmoil of the times Martin Luther (1483-1546), a German monk and professor of theology at the university in Wittenberg, challenged the Church of Rome. Although Luther was preceded by earlier reformers such as Waldo, Wycliffe and Huss, it is Luther who became the catalyst of the Protestant Reformation when his ninety-five theses objecting to the Church's practice of the sale of indulgences were circulated among the population. As Luther's views were disseminated throughout Europe, others joined him in his

attempts at reform within the Church or debated points of issue they took with his tenets. One of these co-reformers was Huldrych Zwingli.

## 2.2. Beginnings in Zurich

All Mennonite and Amish groups trace their beginnings to the Swiss Reformation of Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531). It was Zwingli who brought the ideas of Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation to Zurich, where he was preacher in the Great Minster. Zwingli was well educated, having studied in Vienna and in Basel.

Both Luther and Zwingli came to the conclusion that salvation could be obtained by grace through faith alone, and both rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Whereas Luther saw the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (consubstantiation), Zwingli regarded the wafer and wine as symbols. Despite the Marburg Colloquy in 1529, they were unable to resolve their differences on this matter. They agreed, however, that believers should partake of the wine as well as the bread. Both emphasized the Holy Writ rather than the church as the source of all religious authority, and they chose German over Latin as the language of worship, thus making the divine service comprehensible to the common people. Zwingli also wanted more sobriety and simplicity in the church. Wenger states that

Zwingli, however, saw no place for the fine arts in the worship services of God. Although he was an excellent musician, he did not want any music – instrumental or vocal – in the church.... He wished to keep only what was taught in the New Testament. He therefore changed cathedrals into meeting houses, even painting over valuable works of art on the walls of the Great Minster in Zurich.<sup>14</sup>

Both Luther and Zwingli were reliant on the government. Luther was supported by diverse German princes for political as well as for religious reasons; Zwingli was dependent on the officials of Zurich for installing his reforms. The City Council agreed with Zwingli when he questioned the power of Rome over civil authority; however, when he tried to eliminate parts of the Catholic mass, the City Council desisted.

In a circle of young radicals which had sprouted up around Zwingli, study of the Holy Scripture provided the guiding principles for daily life. Many of the extremists came from prominent families and most were versed in Latin, as was common for the well-educated of the day. While Zwingli favored cooperation with the City Council in order to provide a slow transition to the changes he wished to initiate, the zealots surrounding him wanted to create a Church completely unconstrained by secular powers. Zwingli and the spokesperson for the radical group, Conrad Grebel, were unable to reconcile their dispute so that in early 1525 it came to an irreparable rupture.

Along with other dissenters, Conrad Grebel (1498-1526) as well as his friends Felix Mantz and William Reublin had come to the conclusion that baptism – the sign of church membership – could willingly be received only by adults. They also believed in nonviolence and nonresistance as taught by Christ. On January 21, 1525 the group met and rebaptized each other, thus breaking with the official Church and becoming the first "free" church or sect. Because they referred to each other as "Brother" or "Sister", they were originally known as the Swiss Brethren but commonly called *Wiedertäufer* (Anabaptists) in reference to their second adult baptism. Their act of rebaptism was an affront to Zwingli as well as a challenge to the unity of the Church and the authority of the state.

Grebel and his friends spread their beliefs beyond the city walls of Zurich. Congregations of new believers were formed not only in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, but also in the Alsace, Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, Hesse, Thuringia, Franconia, in the Palatinate and in Tyrol, as more and more people were rebaptized. Even the threat of the penalty of death did not stop people from accepting the new ideas and being baptized a second time as adults. Swiss authorities reacted by incarcerating Grebel and other leaders of the movement, but the nonconformists were able to escape from prison. They continued to preach – an anathema to state and Church.

The Anabaptists were first forbidden at local levels and sentenced by local authorities, but in 1529 they were outlawed throughout the empire. Accused of sedition and heresy, the Anabaptists had to fear for their lives. The first well-

known martyr for the cause was Felix Mantz, who was bound hand and foot and cast into the Limmat River in Zurich to drown.<sup>i</sup> The persecution continued; others were also drowned or burned at the stake, beheaded or racked, buried alive, imprisoned, sold to be used as galley slaves, tortured or exiled. No longer safe in cities, where they could readily be captured, large numbers fled to caves and to the mountains of Switzerland, where they eked out a living by working the soil.

### 2.3. The Schleitheim Confession

Michael Sattler from Staufen in Breisgau was a Catholic priest turned Anabaptist who joined the Swiss Brethren in Zurich, where he was twice imprisoned. After he was banned from the city, he moved to southern Württemberg, where he missioned for the Anabaptist cause. Sattler became aware of the increasingly diverse issues within the new movement. Hoping to organize the various Anabaptist groups, he called for a meeting of the Brethren in Schleitheim near Schaffhausen. Here on February 24, 1527, the Anabaptists agreed to seven articles of faith, abridged below:

1. Baptism – A Christian is not born into a congregation of believers; he has to promise to change his life through the power of God and to follow Christ. Infant baptism is not accepted.
2. The Ban – Baptized members who fall into sin shall be banned if they do not confess and mend their ways. They shall be warned twice in private and then once again before the congregation. This is to be done before the breaking of the bread so that all are in unity for the Lord's Supper.
3. Breaking of the Bread – Baptized believers must be united in faith before partaking of the bread and wine.
4. Separation from the World – Christians are to lead a holy life and have no fellowship with those who have succumbed to the evils of the world.

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<sup>i</sup>By sentencing Mantz to die by drowning – the penalty normally reserved for women – authorities humiliated him in the face of death by denying him the martyrdom associated with burning at the stake – the form of execution which was customary for men at the time.

5. The Pastor – The congregation is to be guided by a shepherd who is a man of good reputation. If he is exiled or martyred, another shall be called immediately to take his place.
6. The Sword – Christians are to suffer as Christ did; never shall they use force or violence nor shall they engage in warfare.
7. Oaths – Members are not to take oaths of any kind, for it is forbidden in the teachings of Christ.

The meeting served to prevent a splintering of the Brethren, and the Schleithem Articles of Faith became the basis for formulating their beliefs.

In May of the same year Sattler was put to trial in Rottenburg, where he was found guilty and then put to a martyr's death by burning at the stake. His wife was drowned a few days later.

#### 2.4. Mennonites

Strasbourg had become a center of humanistic ideas, and the debate of new denominations was tolerated there. Amid the diverse religious currents within the city, Melchior Hofmann attracted a large following with his preaching. Although not a member of a Swiss Brethren congregation, his beliefs were similar to those of the Anabaptists. It was Hofmann who spread these ideas in the region of the Lower Rhine. He was the most successful lay preacher of the Reformation Period. The form of Anabaptism Hofmann carried to the Netherlands and East Friesland placed emphasis on the Second Coming of Christ, and predictions concerning the circumstances leading up to the day of His Coming abounded.

Two extremely divergent groups emerged from Hofmann's teachings. One was the cataclysm of Münster with all its excesses. John of Leiden (Jan Beuckelsz) established himself as the King of New Zion, a theocracy where polygamy was condoned and goods were held in common. Adults who refused to be baptized a second time were persecuted. After a one-year siege of the city, his reign of terror was brought to an end; the radical Beuckelsz and his associates were executed.

Those belonging to the peaceful branch of the Melchiorites, as Hofmann's followers were commonly known, were appalled by the events in Münster, and, filled with fear, many of them left their newly-found faith. Others sought to consolidate the myriad groups of less radical Anabaptists.

Menno Simons (1496-1561), a priest from Witmarsum in Friesland, was at first uninterested in the religious mayhem surrounding him; he himself wrote that he spent his days playing cards and drinking. The deaths of Anabaptists close to him gave him cause to read the Bible and to study the teachings of Luther. Ultimately he was rebaptized as an Anabaptist and gave up his position as a parish priest. Menno Simons was a prolific writer and a frequent traveler who carried the new gospel with him as he journeyed throughout Friesland and the lower Rhine Valley. During his work of twenty-five years he was able to unify the Anabaptist groups in the northern German states and the Netherlands. His peaceful followers were referred to as Mennists, thus differentiating them from the more radical groups. Later the term Mennonites became the general name used for the Anabaptists in the German states and the Netherlands.

## 2.5. The Dordrecht Confession of Faith

The creed of the Anabaptists placed emphasis on living a righteous life by following the words of the Bible. They saw no need to formulate their beliefs in expansive treatises and pamphlets, although it was a practice common at the time. However, as the Anabaptist movement spread throughout Switzerland and along the German-speaking regions of the Rhine, slight divergences from the original practices often emerged. Stating their basic principles in written form became necessary in order to preserve the cohesiveness and solidarity of the broadening movement.

In the Schleithem Articles the ban had already been established as fundamental to the Anabaptist belief. Later *Meidung* (shunning) was a practice that came into being among various Anabaptist groups. Those who had been excommunicated were to be shunned by all other members in good standing. While the Mennonites of the Lower Rhine favored a strict form of social avoidance – severing all relationships with members who were under the ban –

the Swiss preferred limiting the shunning to the exclusion from participation in the Lord's Supper. Eventually the disagreement over shunning played an important role when the Amish disjoined from the main group of Mennonites.

In 1632 Anabaptist leaders met in Dordrecht (also known as Dort), where they formulated their belief in eighteen articles known as the Dordrecht Confession of Faith. The practice of shunning those who had been expelled from the Church was anchored as a basic principle in Article XVII. The custom of foot-washing was established in Article XI.

Article I	Concerning God and the Creation of all Things
Article II	The Fall of Man
Article III	The Restoration of Man through the Promise of the Coming of Christ
Article IV	The Advent of Christ into this World, and the Reason of His Coming
Article V	The Law of Christ, which is the Holy Gospel, or the New Testament
Article VI	Repentance and Amendment of Life
Article VII	Holy Baptism
Article VIII	The Church of Christ
Article IX	The Office of Teachers and Ministers – Male and Female – in the Church
Article X	The Lord's Supper
Article XI	The Washing of the Saints' Feet
Article XII	Matrimony
Article XIII	The Office of Civil Government
Article XIV	Defense by Force
Article XV	Swearing of Oaths
Article XVI	Excommunication or Expulsion from the Church
Article XVII	The Shunning of those who are expelled
Article XVIII	The Resurrection <sup>15</sup>

## 2.6. Founding of the Amish

The martyrdom of the Anabaptists continued. Any number resigned and left their newly found faith; others were more concerned with surviving amid a war-torn Europe. In some areas more than half the population had lost their

lives, and the land was ravaged. Sovereigns desperate to find people able to work their barren soil sometimes even considered the Anabaptists.

By at least 1653, persecuted Swiss Brethren began to move down the Rhine River into the devastated lands on its west bank known as the Palatinate. Eleven years later one of the Palatinate's dukes issued a special offer of toleration to the Swiss Brethren (he called them "Mennisten", correctly associating them with their fellow Mennonites in the North). The Mennonites would receive full religious freedom for themselves, the duke promised, but they could not proselytize, meet in large groups nor construct church buildings. Despite these restrictions and heavier taxes, some Mennonites saw the offer as better than the harassment and threat of deportation they faced in Switzerland.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time Swiss Anabaptists were moving into the Alsace in France. As a result, the Mennonite groups in Switzerland and those along the Rhine were closely linked. The dispersion of the Anabaptist groups elicited a move for stricter adherence to the basic tenets of their faith. Smaller numbers spread out over larger areas made it more difficult to remain in this world without being of it. The call for reform was widely proclaimed by the Swiss preacher Jakob Ammann, who advocated observing communion twice a year to strengthen church life and who upheld the practice of the total shunning of recalcitrant transgressors. Other church elders were against these changes, but with his perseverance and his strong personality Ammann was able to proselytize numberless congregations.

The controversy came to a head in 1693 when Hans Reist, the representative for the opposition, refused to convene with Ammann. As a result, Ammann excommunicated Reist and his followers. The discord resulted in a schism; most of the Anabaptist groups in the Alsace and the Palatinate were supporters of Ammann. His followers became known as the Amish, the name which is still in general use today.

## 2.7. The Reformation and Education

During the Middle Ages formal education was a matter of the Church. Schooling was primarily for clerics and for the privileged who attended Latin



schools run by religious orders. Most of the people, however, lived in serfdom and were illiterate. Training for knights was introduced as chivalry established itself within the feudalistic system of the High Middle Ages. Also during this period the rise of guilds as a component part of society encouraged masters of the craft to provide instruction in the various trades for boys and young men who served them as apprentices. The extent of formal education for girls was minimal, practically non-existent; in convents run by the Church they were uncommonly provided with limited opportunities to learn. Latin was the language of the educated; discussion, disputation, and debates were conducted in the traditional language at the newly founded centers of learning, the universities.

In the medieval times books were few and costly. Monks often spent a lifetime in the scriptoria of convents, meticulously copying commentaries or liturgical writings along with the Bible for use by other churchmen. Johann Gutenberg made a major contribution to civilization in the mid-fifteenth century with his invention of a printing press with moveable type. Concurrently the socio-economic structure of society was changing: with the demise of feudalism and the decline of the power of the guilds, capitalism arose. A small, emerging middle-class sought at least an elementary education.

After Luther wrote his Ninety-Five Theses (1517) to protest against practices within the Roman Catholic Church, his writings were in great demand and circulated widely within the German populace.

The printing press with moveable metal type, invented over half a century before Luther's time, facilitated the spread of his revolutionary ideas. The majority of the people being uneducated, the latest information was read aloud in the vernacular in public places to those who were unable to read themselves. With an oral-aural approach, commoners who had acquired some literacy in German were instrumental in spreading the new ideas and dissent among the illiterate masses.<sup>17</sup>

Luther propagated the use of the common idiom for the liturgical service in the church. The clerics' Latin, incomprehensible to the uneducated faithful, was replaced by the language of the people. Luther even composed hymns to be

sung in German. His doctrine of the priesthood of all believers implied that the individual would have to read the Bible himself in order to learn and interpret its true meaning.

Extending literacy to the masses became an important factor in the Reformation. Luther considered the family important for the shaping of a child's mind and character and urged parents to teach their children reading along with religion. He advocated that the government aid schools in order to acquire literate citizens who would benefit the state.

Other reformers followed Luther in his advancement of education. Melancthon, one of Luther's supporters, was especially concerned with the education of children, while in Geneva Calvin laid the groundwork for teaching elementary skills to all citizens, thus enabling them to read and understand the Bible.

Anabaptist beliefs were particularly attractive to underprivileged people of the lower classes. The lack of an Anabaptist church hierarchy provided the poor and often illiterate with a feeling of equality otherwise unknown to them. Their lack of learning, however, often rendered them incapable of withstanding the censure and denouncement by the dignitaries of church and state. Seeking a safe haven, they withdrew to the mountains where the likelihood of obtaining an education was even smaller.

Nevertheless, their belief also included strict adherence to the written Word, so obtaining basic reading skills was desired. Since any male member of the congregation could be selected to be the lay preacher and because so many Anabaptist leaders were persecuted, imprisoned and even executed, it was important for the survival of their church that qualified men be able to replace those who were no longer there to serve.

Little is known of Jacob Ammann before he became active as a preacher. Researchers are uncertain as to where he was born and how widely he was educated. Hostetler<sup>18</sup> presents a list with a variety of marks followed by inserts from a scribe ("He did not know how to write.") and disparate signatures attributed to Ammann. It is not certain if Ammann was able to write or to read,

but it does appear to be clear that he was a man of determination and persuasion.

## 2.8. Amish Yesterday and Today

The Amish have retained not only their name but also many of their customs which originated hundreds of years ago. Shunning is still practiced with various degrees of severity, depending on the conservatism of the individual family and the church district in which they reside. Twice a year the Holy Communion is celebrated as it was in 1700 with the ritual foot-washing following the service for the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine. Some Amish feel they are still suffering the hardships and ordeals of their forebears when government officials force adherence to laws that are contrary to the convictions of the Amish. In the 1970's nation-wide attention was drawn to their plight as state governments in the USA battled to enforce Amish compliance to school laws dictating compulsory attendance. In nearly every Amish home a copy of *Martyrs Mirror* can be found on the bookshelf. Even though the Anabaptists today are able to pursue their beliefs in freedom from persecution, their children are taught to appreciate the misery and torture their forefathers endured. They are reminded that if their ancestors had not been willing to make extreme sacrifices, the faith would not have survived.

The Amish continue to abide by the provisions of the Schleitheim Confession as it was formulated in 1527 as well as to the articles of the Dordrecht Confession of Faith from 1632. Most obvious to non-Anabaptists is the Amish separation from the world. Although Amish are polite to outsiders, they do not readily intermingle with non-Amish and generally they avoid contact with them other than for business purposes. In addition, all Anabaptists traditionally refuse to bear arms, thus creating a situation which gave rise to difficulties during periods of warfare prior to the time when the military draft in the United States was eliminated in favor of voluntary armed forces. Their refusal to swear oaths practically excludes the utilization of the legal system in the United States by the Amish.

Within the congregation the practices of professing one's faith to join the group through adult baptism remains unchanged as does the procedure for choosing the pastors and the bishops by lot. Emphasis on harmony within the congregation means that communion can only take place if there is no unsettled discord among the members.

Worship services take place in the homes of members of the congregation as was the practice during Anabaptist beginnings. Even today there are no church buildings. Zwingli's influence is still felt among the Amish. No altar, no cross or crucifix adorns the dwelling where the worship service is held and no musical instruments are used to accompany the singing. Hymns which are vocalized often are those written by early martyrs while they were imprisoned in a castle in Passau. These hymns form the nucleus of the *Ausbund*, the Amish hymnal. There are, however, no printed notes included; all tunes have been passed on orally. Hymns from the sixteenth century are sung *a cappella* to melodies not unlike those of mid-millennium chants.

The oral approach is still the favored method of communication. Face to face contact is most important. Telephones find limited use; on-line communication via computer is practically unheard of among the Amish.

All these Amish practices can be witnessed today in America; in Europe the Amish have ceased to exist. Continued oppression, persecution, assimilation with other church groups, and emigration – especially emigration to America – reduced their numbers in Europe continually. The last Amish congregation still practicing distinctive Amish customs was in Ixheim/Zweibrücken in the Palatinate. This congregation merged with a Mennonite group in Ernstweiler in 1937.

*Learn and teach your children fair writing,  
and the most useful part of mathematicks, and  
some business when young, what ever else they  
are taught.*

– William Penn  
*The Advice of William Penn to His Children*

### 3. EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

During the seventeenth century permanent settlement of the North American continent began. William Penn, an English Quaker, founded the colony of Pennsylvania as a haven for the oppressed in Europe who were being persecuted because of their religious convictions. As believers of all persuasions were welcome in this newly-founded commonwealth, the first European Anabaptist emigrants soon embarked for the New World. Education there was primarily determined by the needs of the colonists. Initially formal education was generally limited; practical learning was essential for survival.

#### 3.1. William Penn and the Quakers

William Penn, the son of an affluent and influential English admiral, was born in 1644 in London; his childhood, however, he spent in Essex, a stronghold of the Puritans during that era. Graeff<sup>19</sup> writes that Penn's mother was "low Dutch", so it can be assumed that she was familiar with the convictions of the Mennonites living in her homeland. Thus young William was exposed to unconventional religious beliefs at an early age. As was the procedure during the seventeenth century for young males of the gentry, Penn was educated by private tutors and then enrolled at Christ Church in Oxford at the age of sixteen. Here he first heard discourses by Thomas Loe, a famous Quaker of the day. Penn was dismissed from Oxford for "nonconformity", an indication that he had become a dissenter and no longer adhered to the tenets of the Anglican Church. Thereafter, sent abroad by his father, he first enjoyed life at the French royal court in Paris; further he traveled to Saumur where he studied under Moyse Amyraut, a theologian of the reformed church. Following Penn's return to England he read law at Lincoln's Inn.

Family business matters took him to Dublin where he encountered the Quaker Thomas Loe once again. Penn's propensity for divergent religious ideologies led to a concrete resolve on his part. To the dismay of his father, William Penn became a Quaker in "creed, costume, and conduct", as he himself expressed it. The Quakers adopted myriad beliefs from earlier religious groups, including the Anabaptists, who propagated the complete separation of church and state, lay church leadership, and a non-hierarchical church. Quaker creed followed that something of God existed in everyone. Their meetings had no liturgical ritual; the inner light – a basic principle of the Society of Friends, the official name for Quakerism – guided their meditations. The congregation reflected inwardly and spoke up as they were moved by the spirit. The Scriptures were interpreted literally; they refused to swear oaths and were against war, declining to bear arms and resist attack – all similar to Anabaptist views. In fact, they have even been referred to as the "English Mennonites."

The Quakers emphasized simplicity in behavior, speech, and dress. For well over two centuries in speech they favored the use of "thee" and "thou" rather than the more formal "you". Not unlike the Amish, their apparel was plain and without frills. Quaker conduct often brought them into conflict with the law. Believing that all mankind is equal, they refused to doff their hats to those in authority, including the king.

Penn defended the rights of the Quakers and authored a number of treatises on religion and religious toleration. In 1681 in payment for a debt the crown owed to his deceased father, Penn was awarded the charter for a proprietary colony in North America. The territory included much of present-day Pennsylvania. King Charles II made the propitious grant, hoping to be free of the debt and the Quakers at the same time.

### 3.2. Beginnings in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania, the euphonious designation for the new province, was chosen to honor Admiral Penn. William Penn planned the unique American colony as a refuge not only for the Friends, who had been harassed in England ever since the time of their inception, but for all those who were seeking

religious freedom. He referred to it as his "Holy Experiment." There would be liberation from persecution and freedom of worship as well as economic opportunity for those who chose to emigrate.

Quaker emigration to Pennsylvania commenced immediately. In 1682 William Penn drew up the Frame of Government as a written contract between the settlers, who were to participate in the lawmaking of the province, and Penn, as proprietor of the colony. The first bill passed by the General Assembly made a guarantee of religious freedom as envisioned by Penn:

§ Be it enacted...That no person now, or at anytime hereafter, living in this Province, who shall confess and acknowledge one Almighty God to be the Creator, upholder and Ruler of the world, And who professes, him or herself Obliged in Conscience to live peaceably and quietly under the civil government, shall in any case be molested or prejudiced for his, or her Conscientious persuasion or practice....

At the confluence of the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers Penn laid out the city of Philadelphia, "the city of brotherly love," with streets running in a grid-like pattern. Ships were easily able to navigate the Delaware to and beyond Philadelphia, and the city became the focus of colonial culture and commerce. Pennsylvania, still often referred to as the Keystone State, was not only the geographical middle of the original thirteen colonies but also became the political center for the newly emerging nation.

However, the early city dwellers needed suppliers from the hinterland. Penn, after returning to Europe, advertised for settlers interested in populating his province. He traveled up the Rhine, possibly as far as the city of Worms, to promote emigration to his colony. Penn was impressed by the agricultural expertise of the Mennonites and Amish who were successfully farming in the Palatine region. Western Europe had been devastated by religious wars: the land had been laid to waste and the population decimated.<sup>i</sup> Anabaptists, who were still suffering discrimination for their religious belief, were attracted by

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<sup>i</sup>The Palatinate especially suffered. The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) was followed by the Palatine-Orlean War of Succession (1688-1697) when French troops invaded, once again ravaging the Palatinate and surrounding areas.

the opportunities of religious freedom and land ownership offered in the New World.

The first group to emigrate to Pennsylvania from German provinces was a flock of Mennonites under the leadership of Franz Daniel Pastorius who settled near Philadelphia in 1683. The settlement, which became known as Germantown, is today a part of the city of Philadelphia. It has not been documented as to when the first Amish reached the shores of Pennsylvania. The passenger list of the ship *Adventure*, which arrived in Philadelphia on October 2, 1727, contained several typical Amish names. In 1737 various families whose genealogy established them as Amish disembarked from the *Charming Nancy* in Philadelphia.<sup>20</sup>

While some of the early immigrants moved into the Appalachian valleys, most preferred to settle in and around the eastern harbors. The mercantile inclinations of the Quakers held them in the economic centers in the port cities. The Amish moved on beyond Philadelphia to an area "rich with limestone soil, where black walnut trees grew".<sup>21</sup> Here they farmed the land as they had in their European homelands, believing that their toil had heavenly consent. With the successful homesteading and agricultural prosperity of the German-speaking immigrants, southeastern Pennsylvania emerged as the region's breadbasket. Lancaster County is still referred to as the "Garden Spot of the Nation".

### 3.3. Education in Colonial Times

The colonists in the New World brought with them the cultures from their homelands, including the practices for the training of the rising generations. In seventeenth century Europe the greatest burden for the education of children was born by the family, generally resulting in a pedagogy of apprenticeships. In England, the motherland of the majority of the early settlers, there was no prevailing belief in the necessity and merit of a literary education for the greater portion of the people.

In the original thirteen colonies education basically followed three different patterns according to the origins of the pioneers in the respective



regions and to the geographical location of the colony along the eastern seaboard. Throughout all the colonies, however, religious instruction was the stated motive of education.

New England, settled mainly by English Puritans, was an area where the population adhered to strict religious principles and revealed little toleration for faiths other than their own. The Puritans, whose conviction had been influenced by the teachings of Calvin, determined that a state-supported primary education should be available for every child. All able children were expected to learn a trade pleasing to God and perhaps develop marginal skills in arithmetic as well as to attain a proficiency in reading great enough to be able to understand the Holy Scriptures. In their society, which was dominated by religious authorities, the need for church leaders was consequential. Graduates of the Latin grammar schools provided a pool of potential political and religious authorities. Within two decades after the earliest settlers reached the shores of Massachusetts the colony established the first institution of higher learning on American soil. Harvard University (1636) was founded primarily for the training of competent youth who would assume roles as religious leaders in the increasingly flourishing territory.

The population of the southern colonies was also chiefly English in origin. However, the religious beliefs of these English settlers, who were predominantly members of the Anglican Church, had not been swayed by the tenets of Calvin. Here religion was not the dominating force of society as it was in New England. Education in the South, where no single educational type developed, remained much as it was in England. Children of the wealthy plantation families were commonly tutored at home, the distances between the vast land holdings often being too great for the establishing of common schools to be feasible.

Sons destined for influential roles in society were frequently sent to England to acquire a university education or they attended the newly established College of William and Mary (1693) in Virginia. Schools for those children not of the gentry class were limited in number and were located primarily in cities. Indentured servants and black slaves, both male and female,

who tilled the soil and supplied the manpower for the functioning of the large plantations were dependent on the benevolence of their owners for any meager education they might obtain.

The Middle Colonies were unique with their potpourri of languages, religions, and ethnic groups. New York was the Dutch colony New Netherland until the English acquired control over it in 1664. The Dutch had settled New Netherland for economic, not religious, reasons; they were not fleeing their mother country as a form of religious protest. The schools in the Dutch colony were similar to those they had known in Europe. Pennsylvania's early settlers, English Quakers, were soon joined by Welsh and Scotch-Irish from the British Isles, by Swedes, French Huguenots, and German-speaking Lutherans, Calvinists, Mennonites, Dunkards, Moravians and countless other minor sects. Pennsylvania with its large number of divergent nationalities and multifarious religious faiths was unique among the colonies in America. Here education was not uniform; numerous kinds of schools developed to serve the needs of the manifold groups of settlers.

#### 3.4. Early Pennsylvania Schools

After the founding of the new colony Pennsylvania, skilled workers were needed there. Indispensable for the successful growth of the territory was the development of a pool of accomplished handworkers in the commonwealth. In his writings William Penn placed an emphasis on practical learning. Quaker persuasion had no employ for ministers. Originally there was small call for academics among the steadily expanding population. However, the Quakers wished to have schooling for their youth to learn "the three R's" (reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic).

Penn's Frame of Government stipulated that the children in the province be instructed in reading and writing as well as in "some useful trade or skill". Nevertheless, it was 1834 before the passing of the Free School Act made provision for a statewide system of free elementary schools. Until then, education in Pennsylvania had been primarily the responsibility of the churches and private individuals.

### 3.4.1. Quaker (English) Schools

Early on, during the period of settlement in the province, the Quakers began establishing church schools, mainly in connection with their meetinghouses, for the primary education of their sons and daughters. In these elementary reading schools not only were girls taught alongside boys, but, conforming to the Friends' policy with regard to the equality of the sexes, innumerable women were retained as teachers. Children of the poor were admitted to all the schools with little if any charge; the schools were sustained by tuition and subscriptions. Since Quakers, in general, had the economic means for supporting the education of the young, their schools were well financed. Quaker schools were of excellent quality and were often able to attract well-educated pedagogues to teach in their classrooms.

Penn believed an educated citizenry would help to promote effective government. Some children in their teens arrived in America without families. These children, as well as those whose parents had died, were known as orphans and treated so by law. Giving adolescents the opportunity to learn a trade was believed to thwart vagrancy, idleness and begging among the settlers. Education promoted not only the welfare of the individual children but also of the commonwealth as a whole.

The apprentice system established in the colony under the stimulus of William Penn provided an opportunity for children to obtain vocational training in a trade or skill. The master was also expected to take heed that the young man in his care be given basic instruction in reading, writing, and perhaps in spelling and "ciphering" (arithmetic). The master was also responsible for the moral and religious development of his charge.

People of all ages seeking their fortunes in the New World sometimes came as redemptioners, paying for their passage by allowing the captain of the sailing vessel to sell their talents upon arrival. Thus they plied their crafts as indentured servants for four years or more. They too worked for a master until their passage was paid for and they became freemen who had been educated in a trade.

Night schools made it possible for young people, especially those of the middle class, who were unable to attend school during the day to obtain practical knowledge in subjects such as navigation, surveying, accounting, and modern languages in the evening. Night schools were also frequented by students too old to attend the day schools.

The academy as a school form came into prominence during the National Period, but during the Colonial Era it already served as a terminal secondary school for vocational training. In 1751 Benjamin Franklin opened an academy which was intended especially for the training of teachers for rural schools and for the educating of future government officials.

The first "public school" in Pennsylvania was actually a church charter school. The Friends' Public School of Philadelphia, now the Penn Charter School, was opened in 1689 and chartered by William Penn himself in the year 1692. From the beginning it was a Latin grammar school where not only Quaker students but those of other faiths as well were taught. Grammar schools, both Latin and English, trained the students in academic subjects as preparation for college.

Nearly all the traditional colonial colleges were denominational.<sup>i/22</sup> The one exception was the University of Pennsylvania. Although church influence was not intended, it could nevertheless not be completely avoided even there, as three-fourths of its trustees were members of the Anglican Church. Founded in 1740 by Benjamin Franklin and originally known as the Charity School, it was renamed the Academy of Philadelphia in 1750. The academy's name was

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University	Former Name	Colony	Charter	Affiliation
Harvard *	Harvard College	Massachusetts	1636	Congregationalist
William and Mary	William and Mary College	Virginia	1693	Anglican
Yale*	Collegiate School Yale College	Connecticut	1701	Congregationalist
Princeton *	College of New Jersey	New Jersey	1746	Presbyterian
Columbia *	King's College	New York	1754	Anglican
Pennsylvania *	College of Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	1755	(Anglican influence)
Brown *	College of Rhode Island	Rhode Island	1764	Baptist
Rutgers	Queen's College	New Jersey	1766	Dutch Reformed
Dartmouth *	Dartmouth College	New Hampshire	1769	Congregationalist

\* Ivy League university

changed once again in 1755 to the College of Pennsylvania. Finally the current name – the University of Pennsylvania – was adopted in 1779.

### 3.4.2. Sectarian (German) Schools

Churches other than the Society of Friends, especially the German denominations – Lutherans, Mennonites, Baptists – likewise established schools of their own. Between the years 1740 and 1783 German immigrants constituted approximately one-third to one-half of the population in Pennsylvania. It was essentially they who had settled the areas north, northwest, and west of Philadelphia – primarily five counties: Montgomery, Lehigh, Berks, Lebanon, and Lancaster. The Germans brought with them a tradition of schools, but, distrustful of a state church, they were correspondingly opposed to state-controlled schools. Fearful of losing their cultural identity and their right to worship as they chose, the Germans tended to resist attempts of the English to educate them.

The Moravians, active in education since the days of Comenius, came, in general, from a cultivated class of society and placed a high value on learning. From their stronghold in Bethlehem they moved westward into additional areas already inhabited by other Germans, founding schools, which were likewise open to the public, as they progressed. The Moravians also established nursery schools and higher boarding schools. The caliber of their educational institutions set high standards for Pennsylvania as well as for the remainder of the colonies along the eastern coast of America. In 1745 the Moravians founded their first school in Lancaster County – in Reamstown. Within the next half century others followed. Lititz grew to be the largest Moravian settlement within the county. Linden Hall, a celebrated school for girls which is still in existence today, was erected there under the auspices of the Moravian church in 1794.

The Ephrata Cloister was the site of another Lancaster-County school of renown, founded by the German Conrad Beissel, who was born in Eberbach in 1691. Beissel was a convert to the radical pietistic Community of True Inspiration. In 1720 he immigrated to Pennsylvania in order to join a religious

group known as Society of the Woman in the Wilderness, but, upon arriving there, he discovered that the Society had disbanded. Four years later he was baptized into the Church of the Brethren,<sup>i</sup> which was under the leadership of Alexander Mack. Beissel advocated observing the Sabbath on Saturday rather than on Sunday. He also tried to introduce dietary restrictions and celibacy. His strong personality and obvious spiritual gifts gave rise to conflict with members of the congregation, causing him to leave the Brethren. He formed his own group, the Society of Seventh Day Baptists, and retreated with them to the wilderness along the Cocalico Creek where they founded a unique celibate communal society, now known as the Ephrata Cloister.<sup>ii</sup>

Beissel's proselytizing among the Brethren drew new converts to his community at Ephrata, where spirituality and mysticism were emphasized and hard work was highly esteemed. When the society reached its pinnacle around 1750, there were approximately 300 members. Life in the cloister was austere; members adhered to a rigid life of spiritual purification. Dormitories were built to house the celibate orders of the brotherhood and the sisterhood. The sleeping cells in both houses were furnished with bare benches serving as beds and blocks of wood as pillows. Hallways were narrow and doorjambs low, forcing the brethren to bend in humility when passing through the portals. Married householders, considered to be in an inferior state, were mainly farmers and craftsmen who lived nearby.

The cloister grew in prestige as it made numerous contributions to the cultural life of colonial America. Countless hand-illuminated books and texts were decorated in the calligraphic art of *Frakturschriften*. From the printing press of the community came multifarious books and tracts which were widely distributed and read beyond the borders of Pennsylvania. One of the most ambitious projects was the printing of *Martyrs Mirror*, which contained 1200 pages, for the Mennonites and Amish of Pennsylvania. Beissel and his followers were avid singers and wrote many hymns; at length the community

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<sup>i</sup>The Brethren are also known as the Tunkers, Dunkers, or Dunkards – more derisive terms – because total immersion is their mode of baptism.

<sup>ii</sup>Today an official Pennsylvania Historical Site, the restored buildings are open to visitors.

became famous for its music. The cloister choir followed strict dietary rules to purify the voice in order to be able to sing the special music, which was intoned in a very unusual falsetto.<sup>i</sup>

Also of importance was the school, which began operation probably as early as 1733. Because of the cloister school's excellent reputation for good teaching and the cultivation of the fine arts, even parents from Philadelphia and Baltimore sent their children there to obtain an education. Ludwig Hacker, who had joined Beissel as a teacher at the cloister classical school, established a second, new kind of school at Ephrata: the first Sabbath School. In keeping with the beliefs of the Seventh Day Baptists, the school was held on a Saturday rather than on a Sunday. Poor children, forced by necessity to work during the week, were able to attend school on the Sabbath and receive at least a rudimentary education. At this school religious instruction was also given to those children with parents of better means.

In 1777 the Sabbath School was turned into a hospital to treat soldiers who had been wounded at the Battle of Brandywine during the Revolutionary War. Eventually, as the membership in the cloister dwindled, the prominent classical school was closed too.

During the eighteenth century English leaders of Pennsylvania grew concerned over the vast immigration of Germans to the colony; they felt that the Germans were not being assimilated – that is, becoming English. – quickly enough. A large percentage of the German populace was unable to speak the English language.<sup>ii</sup> However, Stine reports that examination of immigrant landing lists in the port of Philadelphia revealed that 75 per cent of the Germans were literate, being able to sign their names rather than making their mark.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, the first generation of German pioneers in Pennsylvania

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<sup>i</sup> Thomas Mann immortalized Beissel and his music in the novel *"Doktor Faustus - Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn, erzählt von einem Freunde"*, Chapter VIII.

<sup>ii</sup> Well into the twentieth century the derogatory designation "Dumb Dutch" was used to refer disparagingly to eastern Pennsylvanians of German stock. Since many of them did not have a command of the English language, they were erroneously considered by the English-speaking community to be lacking in intelligence.

most likely obtained less education than their fathers had been given in Europe. In Pennsylvania illiteracy was at its highest among the Germans.

Dr. William Smith, the first provost of the University of Pennsylvania, and Benjamin Franklin were among those who were most apprehensive about the Germanization of Pennsylvania. "Franklin deplored the fact that the Germans read German books, had German newspapers and preserved their own language. Dr. William Smith accused them ... of being Popish emissaries and tools of the French."<sup>24</sup> Wishing to secure aid for their integration via educational means, Smith petitioned the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" in England.

It is quite evident that the religious and political motives were not the only ones which determined Provost Smith's course of action. He reasoned that the masters for the charity schools should not be imported, but that they should be educated and trained in Pennsylvania. The only institution in the state where it was possible for that to be done was in the College of Philadelphia, of which Dr. Smith was the head....<sup>25</sup>

As a result of Smith's plea, the "Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge among the Germans in America" was organized. Eight schools were formed in Pennsylvania counties which had been settled by Germans, and assistance was extended to Lutheran and Reformed ministers who instructed German children in religion and secular subjects. The Synod of Halle sent more than twenty schoolmasters to teach in the schools of Pennsylvania.

Christopher Sauer, who was at times affiliated with the Ephrata Cloister, attained eminence, influence, and power through the sheer number of publications emerging from his printing press in Germantown. Sauer perceived the motives of the charity school program as being religious and political; he therefore vehemently opposed the scheme. "He also saw in the movement a project to array the forces of organized religion against those groups of sects that had no formal ecclesiastical organization. Likewise he further regarded it as an attempt to promote the interests of the war-party in the state."<sup>26</sup> The program ended for lack of funding. After only four years, backing for the schools ceased in 1763 and all instruction was taken over by German churches.



### 3.4.3. Secular (Rural) Schools

In more sparsely settled areas it was impractical to establish church schools; many times the church itself was inadequate. A neighborhood school held in a private home proved to be more effective. The teacher was often a mother who taught children of the neighbors along with her own offspring. These early secular neighborhood schools were democratic and not controlled by religious intentions. The communities where they existed were reasonably well-served by them, even if the quality of the teaching was often inferior. The modern school system evolved out of this early school form.

Small communities were able to organize subscription schools where parents united to hire a schoolmaster for the teaching of their children. Lessons were often taught in a home or in a church, if one was present in the neighborhood. Existing schoolhouses were Spartan, one-room buildings, most often simple round log cabins which were dark, drafty, and drab. Windows were openings filled with greased newspapers. Desks were made by attaching planks of lumber to the walls; the seats were benches made from split logs.

Older pupils who were learning to write and do arithmetic sat around the perimeter of the room with their backs to the teacher. Their desk was a plank which ran around the walls of the building. Younger children who were learning to read sat on benches in the middle of the classroom.

The school building was heated by a wood fire ablaze in a huge fireplace at one end of the room. Since school was in session mainly during the winter months when the children were not needed to work on the farms, an adequate supply of wood was necessary to keep the hearth fire burning. Families of the students supplied the firewood for heating the school building. For the scholars sitting in the room, however, the atmosphere was uncomfortable. They were either too warm or too cold, depending on the distance they sat from the fireplace.

During the colonial period teachers were customarily referred to as schoolmasters. Except for Quaker educators, the instructors were always men – and masters in the true sense of the word. They governed the classroom, often with the rod. An ample supply of hickory switches or cat-o-nine tails was kept

on hand for the whipping of unruly students. Corporal punishment was the rule of the day. The main qualification for a teacher was often his ability to mete out penalties and enforce discipline.

At the church schools the majority of the teaching was done by ministers or their assistants. Many young clergymen taught school until they received a call to a pastorate of their own. In the secular schools, however, qualified teachers were seldom found. Fletcher describes the majority of colonial teachers as being "poorly educated, incompetent ne'er-do-wells, who taught school only to keep from starving. The pay was so small that they were perennially poverty-stricken."<sup>27</sup>

Ambitious young boys who learned their lessons well and aspired to attend an academy for further learning became teachers in rural primary schools, hoping thereby to earn money which would finance their higher education. In learning they themselves were frequently only a few assignments ahead of their students.

The country teacher was expected live on the fees paid by the parents for the instruction of their children. The anticipated income was an uncertain amount, as the master was paid for the number of days and children he taught. Parents were dependent upon their sons and daughters for help on the farm, so the children were repeatedly absent from school, even though the term was often only two to four months per year. Most schoolteachers were forced by their pecuniary circumstances to engage in a second occupation, which frequently was farming. Many a teacher who didn't collect the teaching fees in advance was suddenly left without pay at the end of the term and had to struggle to survive.

It was customary for the schoolmaster to board with parents whose children were in his classroom. A few teachers were provided with living quarters as part of their stipend. It was also their job to build the fire in the schoolhouse stove and to sweep the floor there. They were well acclaimed if they could play the flute or fiddle at community festivities. The masters of church schools regularly played the organ and led the singing at worship services on Sundays. Nonetheless, teachers were not held in very high esteem.

Having to wander about in search of employment, they were generally unmarried and footloose, ranking low in the social order.

There was no certification required for teachers in the country. The qualifications required of a schoolmaster were the ability to read and write, to cipher, to make quill pens and to enforce discipline. In the cities there appears to have been a given governmental control exerted over the qualification of schoolmasters. Monroe writes about a teacher in Pennsylvania: "As early as 1689 a private school teacher was told (by governor and council) that he must not teach school without a license. But a certificate of his ability, learning, and diligence from the inhabitants of note of this town was sufficient to obtain such permission."<sup>28</sup>

The competence of the teacher determined the curriculum of the school. Reading and writing along with spelling were considered to be the most necessary subjects; arithmetic was accorded less attention. The ages and the accomplishments of the students deviated widely. Eight-year-olds and eighteen-year-olds were schooled together in one room; there was no classification of the pupils according to age or achievement.

Most rural schools remained ungraded until after the middle of the nineteenth century; instruction was largely of an individual nature. The atmosphere in the classroom was noisy as the pupils studied aloud. Memorization was the method of learning; the majority of the teacher's time was taken up with listening to individual recitations from the pupils who marched to the front of the room to be heard. During the colonial period there were neither blackboards nor common textbooks found in the schools; students used whatever books were available to them. The Bible was the most regularly used text for learning to read. Almanacs were also frequently found as reading books in schools. A spelling book by Thomas Dilworth, published in Philadelphia in 1757, became very popular, with nine editions being printed within twenty-one years.

Girls and boys were taught together, but the education of girls was expected not to extend beyond the basics of reading, writing, and spelling. In country towns there were sometimes girls' schools for furthering female

education, which was then primarily vocational training as preparation for their subsequent responsibilities as housewives.

Gradually the emphasis in colonial life shifted "from religion to shipping, commerce, and agriculture; civil town governments became more important in education."<sup>29</sup> As the necessity of an educated population became more significant, endeavors by the government to provide schools in which pauper children could obtain rudimentary instruction grew more numerous. After the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, the struggle for freedom curtailed schooling; many institutions of learning were closed or teaching was periodically interrupted. Older boys left school to become soldiers in the Continental Army. Throughout the colonies in areas where military hostilities occurred, school buildings were at times used as hospitals, as depots for war materials, or as barracks for the troops. Teachers frequently joined the fighting forces, leaving the children without a mentor for the war period. Even the colleges suffered a setback, as many of the educators there were conservative Loyalists who chose to flee the country at the onset of the war.

In the post-war era many schools lacked the monetary means to remain in operation. Financial support from England had ceased, and residents of the dawning nation were more concerned with developing a functioning society and a working economy than with maintaining schools. As the emerging republic sought to establish a functioning government and to frame a constitution, establishing a system for educating the young was one of the topics for reflection. The new democracy was saddled with war debts which had to be paid, so universal free education which would have to be financed with public funding did not have top priority among the deliberations of the architects of the new nation.

As the new government was being created, a great controversy regarding the sovereignty of the individual states arose: a strong federal government or states' rights was the topic of the heated debate which split the country's founders into two factions. Although a national school system with free instruction for all children was favored by some, education was ultimately relegated to the jurisdiction of the states. Each state was responsible for setting

up and sustaining its own scheme for educating the children within its borders. Moreover, in the Bill of Rights the newly-created government established a clear separation of state and church, which was especially detrimental for the many church-supported schools in Pennsylvania.

There was, however, early national legislation which provided funding for the erection and maintenance of public schools. The Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 proscribed that the sixteenth section (equal to one square mile or 259 hectares) of each township be used to provide for schools in that district. These ordinances applied to the territory north of the Ohio River between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River, an area being settled by trailblazers from the eastern seaboard which was overflowing with an on-going tide of new immigrants from Europe.

The majority of these immigrants were from countries other than England. The tenfold increase in the nation's population within the century following the American Revolution presented a challenge to the states to provide the immigrants with an education as a means for their integration into the American society. Inhabitants of the coastal regions now placed more value on schooling for their children, viewing it as "a mark of achievement and a step up the social ladder".<sup>30</sup>

In 1790 the majority of the population were located outside of the cities; "nine out of every ten persons engaged in gainful occupations were concerned with agriculture."<sup>31</sup> Since people were scattered on farms throughout the countryside, it was more difficult to establish and maintain schools in the sparsely populated regions. Although provisions for public schools had been anchored in the code of law at the founding of Pennsylvania in the seventeenth century, education had been primarily a duty assumed by the divers denominations in the state; church schools were the basis of the colonial educational system in the commonwealth. Pennsylvania's first post-Revolutionary legislative efforts in education were directed at making existing private and church schools available for poor children.

The state constitution of 1776 stated in Section 44 that "a school or schools shall be established in every county by the legislature, for the convenient

instruction of youth with such salaries to the masters, paid by the public, as may enable them to instruct youth at low prices; and all useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more universities."<sup>32</sup> There were, however, no provisions for actually establishing schools nor were there any regulations for supplying the funds to pay for the employment of teachers. The new state constitution of 1790 directed the government to provide schools for the free education of the poor, but details were unspecified. A bill serving to install a county system of free schools was submitted to the legislature in 1794, but bickering over details prevented its becoming law.

### 3.5. Pennsylvania Schools During the National and Reconstruction Periods

The National Period in the United States was a time of expansion and nationalization. Education was seen as a means of social and economic advancement and as an instrument for transferring the American culture to the many new immigrants arriving on the shores of the developing nation. After the two wars with England it was also a period of awakening nationalism and pride in American ways. New educational forms and systems developed as schools gradually loosened the historical bonds that connected them to their European traditions and heritage.

The Civil War interrupted the unfolding of the nation as well as the progress of the educational systems. During the following Reconstruction Period a renewal of efforts for mass education resurged. Frontiers moved westward as the nation expanded. At the same time industrial growth and a great increase in the population made additional demands on the educational system of the day. Common elementary schooling became mandatory while the number of children attending secondary schools and colleges continued to mount.

Legislation passed in Pennsylvania during the early years of the nineteenth century was meant to furnish the underprivileged with a better system of charity schools. In 1802 and 1804 laws were ratified to provide a primary education for the poor. All teachers were to accept impoverished pupils recommended to them by the authorities and to instruct these students along

with all other pupils in the classroom. Payment for the teaching of the indigent students was made by the authorities for the poor.

In 1809 the legislature approved a law which was the first step towards establishing a common school system. It mandated a census of the school-age children in each county to determine those pupils who were indigent and thereby eligible to receive a free education. The law was disliked by the prosperous citizenry who were opposed to paying for poor children to receive a primary education. Most of all, the poor themselves resented the stigma of indigency which was attached to them when they sent their children to school to be given an education financed with tax money. Thus school attendance of pauper children was infrequent, and the rate of illiteracy climbed. For the next few decades education remained a privilege of the prosperous.

A dearth of teachers and the lack of public funds for authorizing new schools led to the introduction of the English monitorial school concept. This system had been devised in England by Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell to provide education for the masses with a small teaching staff. One master teacher instructed a number of older capable students who had been chosen as monitors or assistant teachers. These student teachers, in turn, taught the lessons to small groups of other students. This Lancasterian system was used especially for the teaching of indigent children in cities, for it was able to provide a basic education at very low cost. In Pennsylvania two districts – Philadelphia and Lancaster – were established to support monitorial schools for the education of poor children.

In 1824 a law was enacted to create a system having three schoolmen elected in each township to oversee the education of the poor, who were to be treated no differently than the other students. Their education was to be paid by the county. Two years later this act was repealed, putting the pauper school law of 1809 into effect again.

When George Wolf, a former teacher with German ancestry, was elected governor of Pennsylvania, he charged that the government had failed to heed to the state constitution which stipulated free education for the poor. At the time only 150,000 of the 400,000 school-aged children were actually attending

school. In 1834 under his leadership the state legislature passed a bill making the establishment of free public schools possible. The legislative committee presenting the draft was careful not to include the word "poor" in the written formulation. A primary-school education was to be universal and available for all, regardless of economic means; schools were to be financed through local taxes and state appropriations made to those districts which accepted the new law as it had been enacted by the legislature. Schools were free in all districts where the law was accepted.

There was, however, a flaw in the statute: the founding of the schools was voluntary and to be decided individually by each district. As a result, only fifty-two percent of the districts voted to provide for a school. Opposition to the law was especially intense among the German sectarians, for they feared the loss of their church schools. Objections were raised as well by Quakers and Episcopalians who, along with the Mennonites and those of related faiths, feared having to forfeit their right to provide their children with an education accordant to their religious beliefs.

The controversy continued for two years until the legislature began measures for repealing the decree. Governor Wolf spoke out vehemently against rescinding the law, and, in an impassioned appeal to the governing body, Thaddeus Stevens was able to induce them into retaining the statute as it had been originally recorded in the books. In 1848 the acceptance of the act by the individual districts was made mandatory instead of optional as it had been since its inception in 1834. By 1874 all districts within the state had complied with the mandatory law, consequently making free public elementary education available to every child in Pennsylvania, and ultimately school attendance was made compulsory in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the year 1895.

Along with changes of law, other transformations took place in the schools. After 1820 the primitive school buildings in existence were eventually replaced with more solid structures, and a heating stove located in the middle of the building was a substitute for the open fireplace. The pupils were commonly seated two together on a bench, boys and girls located on opposite sides of a narrow aisle which ran through the middle of the room. Usually the



teacher sat on an elevated rostrum at one end of the room. By then window glass had also replaced the oiled paper in the windows.

New textbooks were composed and introduced in the teaching of subjects such as mathematics, history, and English grammar. Noah Webster published of *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (an elementary speller known as "Old Blueback", a grammar of the English language, and a reader) which differentiated American English from British English in spelling, grammar, and pronunciation. Webster became one of the most prolific American authors and was labeled "the schoolmaster of America". His principal significant contribution was his *American Dictionary of the English Language*, the most comprehensive dictionary up to that time. In fact, in revised and abridged versions it is still in prevalent use today.

*The New England Primer* with its strong Puritan influence was the favored reader at the turn of the century. It was followed by *McGuffey's Readers*, which sold millions of copies and served generations of school children. These textbooks emphasized moral development as had the primers before them. As new textbooks were introduced, the practice of grading the contents ultimately became standard practice.

Other changes were gradually introduced into the classroom: schools grew quieter as simultaneous class instruction slowly began to replace the method of individual instruction which had previously been preferred. Nevertheless, long periods of class time were still spent on individual recitations. Teachers themselves received an enhanced education and were better equipped to instruct their charges. Strict discipline was enforced as heretofore and corporal punishment was still frequent.

As the population grew and increasingly more children began receiving an elementary education, the number of schools also multiplied. The progressive development of state laws made it possible for the majority of the state's youth to be enrolled in primary schools. The demand for more and better schools ripened. Pulliam describes a typical common elementary school of 1860 as being "a crowded, one-room institution with poor lighting, bad ventilation, and inadequate furniture ... with few if any blackboards and practically no special

equipment. Imagination was not encouraged and harsh discipline stifled creativity"<sup>33</sup> Newly instituted were the graded schools, where pupils were arranged in groups conforming to their progress in learning. In rural one-room schools with a small number of students, pupils were frequently regrouped to reduce the number of classes or "grades", thus enabling the teacher to work more effectively with his charges.

Changes also took place in the schools for further education. Latin schools declined in importance, as Latin forfeited its significance as the language needed for an academic vocation. English grammar schools taught the subjects deemed necessary for scholarly pursuits required for an occupation with the church or state. Gradually the academy became the favored school form for learning beyond the elementary level. Academies, which had won in esteem over the grammar schools, taught more practical subjects: perspective drawing, merchant's accounts, logic, astronomy, rhetoric – nearly any subject its students sought to learn – was incorporated into the prevailing curriculum of history, geography, bookkeeping, writing, surveying, and navigation.

This school form was often secular and more democratic, and it was not limited to sons of the privileged upper class. It was better geared to serve the needs of the developing nation with its growing economy. At the academies students were prepared to lead a productive life in a trade or business along with those students who were educated to follow an academic calling. A survey made by the American Education Society in 1838 included 497 academies in fourteen states. Many of the academies were boarding schools, often located in small towns or rural areas, a divergence from the practice of grammar schools, which were situated primarily in cities. New too was the shift from a single teacher to a group of instructors or faculty whose influence over the students went beyond the classroom. The academies became co-educational as advanced education for young women became acceptable and girls were admitted to the student bodies for learning beside young men. Monroe states that "in Pennsylvania there were 37 'female seminaries' among the 103 academies or similar institutions founded by 1842."<sup>34</sup>

The academies reached their pinnacle in the middle of the century. They were financially supported chiefly from the fees of the students, although gifts, endowments, grants, and contributions from private individuals and religious groups, and in some cases subsidies from the state, helped to maintain the schools. Nevertheless, as the demand for an education beyond the elementary school increased, the necessity for an academy free of tuition grew. Out of this need the American high school developed, although in many places there was strong resistance to using tax money for financing public secondary schools.

After the town of Kalamazoo, Michigan, created a public high school in 1858, three citizens initiated litigation to prevent the utilization of tax money for the support of the local secondary school. The case went to the Michigan State Supreme Court whose decision was in favor of the school authorities. The court determined that the high school was a common school which served as a link between the public elementary schools and the state university and therefore should be available to all children, not just the affluent. The Kalamazoo Case became a precedent making it possible for other states to levy taxes for the establishment and maintenance of public high schools.

Sometimes the high school came into being by transforming an academy into a high school; other times a high school was established according to a definite plan. Most often the gradual development of advanced courses in an elementary school ushered in the formation of a separate new school – a high school. Good writes "the most complete and best-equipped high schools were formed according to plans worked out in advance. The best examples were found in such cities as Boston (1821), Philadelphia (1838), and Chicago (1856). As the movement developed and as the high schools became more standardized, outright establishment became common."<sup>35</sup>

Central High School of Philadelphia was unrivaled by any other high school of the day. With a small share of the federal surplus revenue distribution of 1837 the first school district of the state chose to erect the new high school, which became one of the prominent buildings in Philadelphia. It cost over three times the amount spent on other city school buildings, and its facilities

included a German-made observatory, the fourth to be erected in the United States.

Alexander Dallas Bache, great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin, was instrumental in framing the course system of the school. Bache, who was a graduate of West Point, became president of Girard College and spent two years visiting European educational institutions. He was especially impressed by the accomplishments of the Prussian schools. Upon his return from Europe, Bache was elected to serve as the principal of Central High School.

There he introduced three courses: the principal course, the classical course, and the short course of only two years, which never became standard. The principal course included a large variety of subjects: English, French, geography, history, mathematics, philosophy, natural history, ethics, writing, and drawing. In the classical course Latin and Greek replaced French, and the amount of required mathematics was less than in the principal course. College aspirants studied the classics, but the majority of the students were enrolled in the principal course. Boys were admitted to the school by examination; girls were required to attend separate high schools. As time progressed, however, the high schools became coeducational. Soon high schools were established in other Pennsylvania cities too: Carlisle, Honesdale, and Norristown were quickly followed by Harrisburg, Lancaster, and York in founding high schools within their boundaries.

Whereas the curriculum of Latin grammar school had been limited to a few subjects, the academy offered a very wide breadth of courses. The emphasis shifted from training of the intellect to imparting information in a given subject. With the advent of the high schools the course of study came under public control with curricula being restricted to the needs of the public rather than being open to the preference of the individual student. Nevertheless, there was little standardization regarding the catalogue of subjects offered and the length of time the courses were taught.

With the expansion of the educational system came the need within the individual states to devise a state-wide bureaucracy for the administration of the schools. Pennsylvania created the position titled State Superintendent of

Schools, where the responsibility for the supervision of educational management was instated. One of the more prolific men to hold the office was James P. Wickersham, who was appointed superintendent in 1866. He had previously served as head of the normal school at Millersville. Wickersham drafted numerous books meant to aid school authorities and teachers in the execution of their tasks. In *School Economy* (1864) he considered school routine along with the organization, grading, and administration of schools. A year later he published *Methods of Instruction* (1865) wherein he discussed the contents of school courses and the methods of teaching the various subjects. His major work was the *History of Education in Pennsylvania* (1886).

The nineteenth century was a period of establishment for many institutions of higher learning throughout the United States. The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 provided for the founding and endowment of state universities especially for instruction in the fields of agriculture and engineering. Pennsylvania State University was created as a result of this legislation.

Within the German populace of Pennsylvania the demand for higher education was limited because religious belief often restricted the extent of education being sought. However, as members of the more liberal German faiths attained economic success, they desired to have their children pursue vocations requiring an advanced academic education. Among the Germans, attendance at academies or high schools increased, and the need for colleges catering to this portion of Pennsylvania's population grew. During the later part of the nineteenth century a number of colleges were established in eastern Pennsylvania by descendants of the early German colonists. Colleges like Albright, Elizabethtown, Franklin and Marshall, Gettysburg, Lebanon Valley, Muhlenberg, and Susquehanna were generally supported by denominations of German origin. The language of instruction was, however, English, even though German was often the language spoken in the homes of the students.

The American university system underwent a number of modifications during the nineteenth century. Liberal arts colleges often became universities, adding colleges of technical and social studies. Following the example of German universities, graduate programs were added to existing colleges.

Emphasis shifted from the transferring of information and skills to scientific investigation and creative scholarship. In 1876 Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore became the first American university with true scientific research.

During the National Period younger children benefited from the incorporation of a German institution, the kindergarten, into the American education system. Friedrich Froebel had conceived the kindergarten in 1837 as an educational basis where children under school age were to be stimulated with activities, play, songs, and stories suitable to their age. According to Pulliam,<sup>36</sup> Margarethe Meyer Schurz, one of Froebel's former students and wife of the German immigrant Carl Schurz,<sup>i</sup> founded the first American kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin. Pulliam writes that it "was really a German kindergarten on American soil, with German language as the means of communication." The first English-speaking kindergarten in America and a training school for kindergarten teachers were established in Boston by Elizabeth Peabody in 1860. Additional kindergartens were established throughout the rest of the country, including Pennsylvania. As Commissioner of Education, William Torrey Harris led the way for kindergartens ultimately to become a component of the public-school system too. Nevertheless, kindergarten attendance was not made compulsory.

In 1826 an institution for adult instruction, the lyceum, was introduced in Massachusetts by the educator Josiah Holbrook. The lyceum was a local association for furthering the learning of the mature learner. The lyceum movement was important for the institutions which arose from its original objective of adult education: public libraries, lecture series, and evening schools were established to fulfill the needs of the public desirous of expanding their knowledge.

Most important, the movement formed a new basis for teaching training, which was generally acknowledged to be lacking at the time. Especially women teachers benefited from the opportunities for advanced learning. Normal schools were established to assure the preparation of teachers for the

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<sup>i</sup> Carl Schurz was a refugee from the German rebellion of 1848-49. In the United States he became a renowned reformer, legislator, statesman, and journalist.

classroom. In Pennsylvania the normal schools preceded a state-wide system of State Teachers' Colleges or State Universities,<sup>i/37</sup> as they are titled today, for studies in the field of pedagogy, or education. Washington and Jefferson College, founded 1781 in southwestern Pennsylvania, was one of the first colleges in the nation to offer courses in pedagogy at the college level; teacher education was introduced there in 1831.

Teacher training, however, remained a greatly neglected matter. Very few universities established departments of education. Professional courses in the field of education were considered unnecessary; a teacher was only expected to have a command of the subject which he taught. The rank of teachers hardly improved; they were still held in low esteem and poorly paid.

Nonetheless, the educators themselves sought to improve the status of their profession with the chartering of a national association for educators. Over the years various associations had been created to aid in establishing standards for teacher training, for determining graduation requirements, for fixing the duration of the school term, and for deciding on the contents of school curricula.

In mid-century a group of ten state teachers' associations organized to form the National Teachers' Association. In 1870 the National Education Association (NEA) was formed by the merger of the National Teachers' Association with the American Normal School Association and the National Association of School Superintendents. The NEA was instrumental in implementing a catalogue of courses recommended to be realized as a basic requirement for all students. The association also established a College Entrance Examination Board.

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University	Founded	University	Founded	University	Founded
Cheyney	1837	Mansfield	1857	Shippensburg	1871
Bloomsburg	1839	Kutztown	1866	West Chester	1871
California	1852	Clarion	1867	Indiana	1875
Millersville	1855	Lock Haven	1870	Slippery Rock	1889
Edinboro	1857			East Stroudsburg	1893

(Other state universities were not former institutions for teacher training.)

### 3.6. Twentieth-century Education

The early segment of the twentieth century was an era of unrest and change. The old agrarian nation was becoming a modern industrial one; the farmers of the country no longer formed the dominant class of society. With the granting of statehood to New Mexico and Arizona in 1912, the continental United States was complete and western expansion practically ceased. The western frontier had virtually disappeared.

Meanwhile the eastern cities swelled with new residents as the population of the nation expanded. The natural birth rate and the influx of immigrants brought about a growth from a population of barely over thirty million to more than one hundred million between the years of 1860 and 1920. Children of the urban slums and large numbers of immigrant children not conversant in the English language and unfamiliar with the American culture placed a severe burden on the schools of the day.

The public perceived education as a means for advancing up the social ladder. However, schooling was seen not only as an instrumentality for securing good employment but also as a medium for generating citizenship, forming morality, and spawning self-improvement. In contrast to the European system where secondary education was generally considered appropriate only for the elite, the American schools were open and available to children from all social classes.

During the twentieth century secondary education grew to be the norm for nearly all American children, and the entire educational system became standardized. Criteria for teacher qualification were set, and the caliber of teaching improved as adequate training programs were developed and instituted. Most important, the student became the main focus of educational intentions as the schools became child-centered.

The twentieth century was one of consequential growth at all levels of education. Emphasis switched from state regulatory steps to federal enactment of measures for the establishment of nationwide educational programs. Federal action played an increasingly significant role as the century progressed. Diverse federal legislation enabled schools to procure federal grants for the



sustaining of educational programs, and individuals were able to obtain government support for earning a college degree. Education became big business as changes and innovations dictated larger budgets at all levels of government to provide for the funding of education throughout the nation. As the century drew to a close, the states reassumed a leading role by setting high standards for the quality of schools and the qualification of teachers.

Litigation came to play an important part in education as individuals sought to have their rights protected. The contents of school curricula, racial integration, and religious beliefs – all made national headlines – were some of the issues debated in court.

Many children were still not enrolled in school at the beginning of the twentieth century although elementary education had become mandatory in most states. Often households were dependent on the offspring for supplementary income to secure the existence of the family. In Pennsylvania, especially in the areas which had been settled by German immigrants two to three centuries earlier, the accent was still on an agrarian economy and children were needed on the farm, particularly during the planting and harvest seasons. Child labor was common in the towns and cities as well, where children toiled in the factories which had been founded as the machine age grew. As the century gradually unfolded, restrictions were placed on the use of child labor, and elementary education did finally become universal with nearly all able children attending a primary school.

Early in the century it was necessary for pupils to walk to the nearest school, which could be located as far as two or three miles from their separate homes. In the country the school might be one room where grades one to eight were taught by one teacher. In 1930 there were 149,282 one-room schools in the nation;<sup>38</sup> by 1995 the number had dropped to 458. In mid-century most schools had large enrollments, frequently as a result of consolidations among neighboring borough and township school districts. Providing busing for students who did not live within walking distance of a school became obligatory for rural districts, for busing made it possible to transport children to schools outside their local neighborhood.

Towards the end of the century many older school buildings had become inadequate and some were no longer able to meet the safety standards which had been set for schools, so modern new edifices were constructed on building sites often located on the periphery of towns. The neighborhood school was disappearing; even in the suburbs it became common for children to be transported by bus to elementary schools.

Just as the elementary school had seen vast expansion during the nineteenth century, the following century brought the spectacular growth of the high school. In 1910 about one-tenth of the adolescents in the age bracket from fourteen to eighteen were enrolled in high schools. During the twentieth century the percentage of youth who graduated from high school rose from roughly six percent to approximately eighty-five percent.

Originally the high school was an academy for the common man, but during the twentieth century the accent shifted away from the singularly academic and preparatory curriculum as changes were made in the normal high-school program. A high-school education was also seen as an opportunity for the learning of vocational skills which would lead to employment after graduation. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 led to vocational agricultural courses, and the Smith-Hughes Act three years later made it possible to launch vocational courses in other fields such as homemaking, trades and industries, or business. The high school became a school of many purposes – a comprehensive high school as it is today – with various kinds of curricula: liberal and vocational, preparatory and terminal. Today most high schools offer courses in three or four main areas: manual arts and home economics, business-commercial subjects, general topics, and preparatory academic studies.

As the number of high-school pupils increased, educators saw the need for a new school form to bridge the age gap between the elementary and high school. The junior high school was introduced to serve adolescent students, enabling them to explore many different subjects in a diverse curriculum before they went on to more concentrated studies in high school. The junior high school is traditionally composed of the grades seven to nine, but there are

also junior high schools with only the grades seven and eight. During the latter half of the century the middle school gained in popularity. With this arrangement the schools are generally organized in a four-four-four scheme, but there are also other variations which exist.

Figure 3.1.: The American School System

Age	Type of School		Degree
↑	Professional Schools		University
			Graduate Schools
22	Four-year Colleges		Bachelor's Degree
18	Two-year Junior College		Associate Degree
12	Senior High School	Six-year High School	High School Diploma
	Junior High School		
6	Six-year Elementary School		Middle School
	Eight-year Elementary School		
	Four-year Elementary School		Four-year Elementary School
	Kindergarten		
0	Nursery School = Day Care		Home
	Home		

In the twentieth century junior colleges were founded throughout the United States. The majority of them were established in states west of the Mississippi where no long tradition of higher education existed. California leads the nation as the state with the highest number of junior/community colleges within its borders. The junior college or community college offers two

years of academic studies ending with an associate degree in arts (A.A.) or in science (A.S.). Some of these graduates then go on to a four-year college or university to earn a higher degree there. At the community colleges it is possible for students to fulfill degree requirements without leaving their local environment. Adult education courses with and without academic credit are also offered. In the state of Pennsylvania the large universities (Pennsylvania State University and the University of Pittsburgh) maintain small campuses at numerous locations where students are able to embark upon their studies at sites closer to their homes.

Within the sphere of higher education manifold transformations also took place in the twentieth century as newly launched standards helped to regulate the system. Borrowing from the European tradition, more and more universities established graduate schools and granted degrees beyond the first level of a bachelor's degree. The AAU (Association of American Universities) initiated quality controls, *i.e.* evaluations of the institutions of higher learning, and admission requirements for students were inaugurated. There was no longer a rigid curriculum for all students; a core program was required of all, but an option was open for "electives", courses chosen by individuals to fit their predilections. Students occasionally made use of the opportunity to expand their horizons by studying abroad; indeed, a doctor's degree from a German university was a label of distinction in the period before World War I. Universities and colleges were organized into departments or faculties such as business, engineering, or arts. As an ever-increasing number of high-school graduates enrolled in colleges, the enrollments at graduate schools likewise steadily rose. Although the majority of elementary and high schools are public, private colleges and universities continue to outnumber the public ones.

By the end of the century nearly all schools and institutions of higher education had become coeducational. As a result of the feminist movement during the latter part of the century even old bastions of tradition opened their doors to both genders. The last to remove the barriers for the admittance of women were the military academies.

Procuring funds for the building and operating of public schools had been a problem from the very outset of education in the United States. Although taxpayers generally favored the establishment of a universal educational system, initial resistance to using public funds for providing free schooling for all children was strong. A system using local (property) taxes for maintaining district schools evolved. As demands and expenses increased, state powers and the federal government were called upon to intervene with supporting action.

The United States Office of Education has grown rapidly in size and influence, due largely to the need for administering federal funds and advising participants in federal projects. The Office has had a varied history, having been moved from the Department of the Interior and given separate status in 1930, moved again to the Federal Security Agency in 1939, and made part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) in 1953. Large grants made through HEW to schools and universities contributed to the importance of the Office of Education, and it was made a separate cabinet level position under the Carter administration.<sup>39</sup>

Early twentieth-century federal measures were the bills endorsing vocational education which were passed by Congress: the Smith-Lever Act (1914), the Smith-Hughes Act (1917), the Capper-Ketchum Act (1924), the George-Reed Act (1929), and the George-Dean Act (1937). These legislative acts reflected the shift of emphasis from the academic to the vocational within the high schools and colleges of the nation. They also serve a social purpose by inducing adolescents to remain in school longer.

In the 1930's when the nation was in the midst of the Great Depression, there was a critical decline in school efficiency. The tax base for school maintenance ebbed, and many schools were forced to close. Teachers went unpaid or were compensated only in part or at a lower rate. In 1933 President Herbert Hoover convened the Citizens' Conference on the Crisis in Education. One resolution of the meeting recommended that the states reorganize their schools districts into larger units which would be economically and educationally prudent, for each individual state had the right to create – but also abolish – school districts within its domain. In 1900 there were

approximately 150,000 school districts within the United States; half a century later the number had dwindled to about 45,000. The reorganization and consolidation of school districts eventually had dire consequences for the Amish and the education of their children.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Hoover's successor, initiated the New Deal, a series of government measures for diminishing the grave effects of the Depression on the population of the United States. Many of the programs were inaugurated especially for the training of young people. In mid-decade the Department of Agriculture arranged for the distribution of surplus food to schools where it was to be utilized for the serving of meals to the students. This procedure led to the passing of the National School Lunch Act (1946), which is still in effect today, providing schools with food and money for their lunch programs.

After World War II, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, better known as the GI Bill, enabled thousands of returning soldiers whose education had been interrupted to acquire a college degree. In 1946 college matriculation was forty-six percent higher than it had been two years earlier. Later the measure was extended to cover veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars as well.

Another federal action for supporting students, the National Defense Education Act, was one response of the United States to Russia's first orbital satellite in 1957. The NDEA, passed in the following year, made grants for the improvement of instruction in mathematics, science, engineering, and modern foreign languages at the college level; it gave aid to schools to improve their facilities and instruction; and it provided loans for students, making it possible for even more young people to attend college. Near the end of the century institutions of higher learning annually granted approximately 1.2 million bachelor's degrees, some 387,000 master's degrees, and about 43,000 doctor's degrees.<sup>40</sup>

The administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson was engaged with social concerns in its efforts to forge the "Great Society", as it was termed. One of the top priorities was equal educational opportunities for all children. With the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) Congress sought to improve learning prospects especially for underprivileged children.

In the Head Start program pre-school children from disadvantaged environments were given the possibility to experience learning situations advantageous to their development. *Sesame Street*, the internationally known television program aimed at pre-school children, is an outgrowth of this program.

Between the years 1930 and 1970 the percentage of local reserves used for maintaining local educational institutions declined from eighty-three to fifty-one percent.<sup>41</sup> The next few decades rendered fewer federal programs with financial support for education; rather they yielded reports and manifestoes dealing with the plight of the schools and their insufficient performance. The account, *A Nation at Risk*, (1983) sparked many educational reform endeavors at both state and local levels. Federal and state funding, however, remained a significant source for school support.

Teacher training and teacher qualification were two of the major matters in twentieth-century education. In 1900 many of those – primarily women – who were teaching had undergone their preparation at one of the many normal schools which existed for that purpose. A shortage of teachers early in the twentieth century sometimes made it necessary for school districts to employ young people who had merely passed an examination or who had completed only one or two years of college work. By the end of the century states had raised standards and established varying criteria required of teachers for licensing. A bachelor's degree is a prerequisite; for high-school teachers study beyond the B.A. or B.S. degree is customarily necessary for permanent certification. Besides a command of at least one academic subject, a teacher is required to have professional training in psychology for children/adolescents, teaching methods, and the history of education.

Conventionally teaching was an underpaid profession with women providing a high proportion of school faculties during the twentieth century. Men, however, were generally chosen to serve in administrative positions such as superintendent or principal. After the feminist movement encouraged many aspiring young women to embark on careers other than those traditionally reserved for their sex, talented females deserted the teaching profession for

challenging, better-paying fields. The nation's schools suffered from the loss of quality teachers. Increased salaries and demands for higher professional qualification after the report *A Nation at Risk* had been published aided in improving the situation.

Whereas the school, the teacher, and the curriculum had been of major interest in previous centuries, during the twentieth century the focus switched to the students – to their needs and to their development. Teaching methods placed emphasis on the child/adolescent-centered classroom. Rote learning and monotonous repetition by the students were replaced with more effective forms of learning and teaching.

The use of teaching devices gained in prominence; multifarious tools were introduced for supporting, enriching, and reinforcing classroom activities. In mid-century television was heralded as an auspicious teaching apparatus; as the century drew to a close the personal computer with all its applications and usefulness was revolutionizing the world as the flow and speed of information exchange reached unexpected magnitudes through the internet.

Computer technology also launched a novel twist in education: many a teacher was being taught by his student. The rapid development and expansion of computer technology reached unprecedented dimensions. Theretofore it was customarily the older, more experienced, better educated members of society who passed on their knowledge to the younger generations. Fascinated by the modern technology, many a teenager became a so-called "computer freak", spending endless hours and days learning to master the complexities of the new discipline. It remains yet to be seen what this new technology's total scope of influence will be in education.

Dealing with exceptional students and their special needs was an issue which received attention in educational circles during the latter part of the twentieth century. Children with physical or learning impairments who had previously been consigned to specific schools designated for the teaching of the handicapped were mainstreamed, *i.e.* integrated, into regular schools to acquire skills in a normal classroom whenever possible. Additional personnel and equipment enabled compensatory education in special groups. The gifted



students, who had been traditionally neglected, were bestowed with newly discovered regard as striving for excellence became a prominent theme.

Traditionally American society was a melting pot for immigrants from diverse cultures, creeds, and nationalities. Education was seen as the tool for achieving socio-economic stability and status within the community as they adopted the ways of their new homeland. During the latter part of the twentieth century assimilation became more difficult to achieve and was not always desired by the immigrants. The United States changed from a melting pot to a salad bowl with a mixture of cultures tossed together but not welded by common educational goals. Innumerable suggestions for the formation of programs for successful multicultural education were discussed and some were instituted. Bilingual education became a passionately debated topic not only within educational circles.

As the problems of molding students of various nationalities, aptitudes, races, and handicaps into a workable classroom community attracted the attention of social scientists, studies of the role of the implicit – or the hidden – curriculum emphasized the non-deliberate effects of schooling.

Sometimes litigation was found to be necessary for achieving the goals in education which were otherwise unattainable. A century after the end of the Civil War Afro-Americans were still suffering discrimination. "Separate but equal" was the formula used by officials for providing them with an education in public schools. The "separate" was clearly visible in many city schools, especially in the South, where there were exclusory public schools which provided education for whites but barred blacks from attending; the "equal" seldom prevailed in the quality of the schools existing for the education of Afro-Americans. In the 1954 court case *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, Topeka, Kansas, the landmark decision of United States Supreme Court set the way for racial integration in public schools.

Nevertheless, due to city demography a *de facto* school segregation often remained, because children generally attended the school located in their neighborhood. Since cities usually had segregated sectors which were caused by or unwillingly created by city zoning officials, real-estate brokers, and

mortgage lenders at banks, minorities attended city schools which were frequently substandard. Socio-economic factors contributed to ghetto building as affluent whites fled to suburban communities. As a result, the quality of city schools deteriorated.

Afro-Americans were not the only people affected by segregation; Hispanics and members of various other cultural groups were frequently confined to impoverished city districts as well. Busing children from one school district to another in order to achieve racially balanced schools was an attempt at rectifying the inadequacies of the *de facto* segregated schools. Busing, however, was greeted with immense protest from the population at large, and some school districts have discontinued it. In higher education segregation barriers at colleges and universities have likewise fallen, allowing eligible young people of all races, nationalities, religions, and genders to pursue studies at any institution above the high-school level.

Curriculum content was the concern of the famous Scopes Trial of 1925. John Scopes, a high-school biology teacher, taught the theory of evolution in his classes and was fined for having violated the Butler Act, which forbade the teaching of evolution in the state of Tennessee because it contradicted the Biblical story of creation. Dubbed the "Monkey Trial" by the press, it attracted worldwide notice. Religion continued to be the motive of other court cases.

In the 1980's during a resurgence of religious fervor fundamentalists sought to have the teaching of evolution as well as sexual education removed from school curricula. The customary prayer and Bible reading in schools was eventually prohibited by law, and the daily pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America in classrooms was no longer compulsory for those whose religious beliefs prevented them from participating in the regular routine. "Although Bible reading, nonsectarian prayers, and released time for religious instruction are illegal in public schools, the issue is not resolved. There is considerable pressure to 'restore religion' to the public classroom."<sup>42</sup>

Because the American judicial system requires a sworn promise to tell the truth in a forum of justice, the Amish seldom call on courts for a legal decision. They believe the necessity of swearing an oath implies that the truth is not

always spoken outside the courtroom. However, after decades of legal harassment by local magistrates, the Amish, with a steering committee under the guidance of a Lutheran minister from Wisconsin, did resort to litigation in order to procure the right to set separate limits for the schooling of Amish children. In the case *Wisconsin vs. Yoder* the United States Supreme Court in 1972 issued a unanimous decision declaring religious liberty to be paramount over state school laws. Thus the way was paved for the establishment of Amish parochial schools nationwide.

### 3.7. A Chronicle of Amish Schooling in Pennsylvania

During colonial times lack of numbers generally would have made it infeasible for the Amish to maintain schools of their own. However, there are early accounts of Anabaptist schools in Germantown, the earliest German settlement in Pennsylvania. Originally established in 1683 by Mennonites on the periphery of Philadelphia, the community eventually became incorporated and is now a part of the city. This group of Mennonites was led by Franz Daniel Pastorius (1651-1720), who was considered to be "the best-educated man in America at the time".<sup>43</sup> Pastorius was concerned with the education of the children in the colony, and in 1697 his primer, *The True Reading, Spelling, and Writing of English*, was published in New York.

The Mennonites also established a school on the Skippack where Christopher Dock began teaching in 1714. Historical accounts praise Dock's teaching methods: (He) "did not believe in caning or threatening his pupils, but in rewarding them for their progress and reasoning with them for their shortcomings."<sup>44</sup> Dock also gained renown with his pedagogical publication *Schulordnung*.

About 1878 Shaub recorded that the first settlement in Lancaster County was made about 1710 near what is now Willow Street in Pequea Township. These pioneers were immigrants from the Palatinate,

"descendants of the persecuted Swiss Mennonites".  
A year or two later these homesteaders erected a meeting house and schoolhouse, "in which religious instruction was given on the Sabbath, and a knowledge

of reading and writing during the week. The teaching of reading and writing was religiously observed, in accordance with the precept of their great founder, Menno Simon(s), who says: 'Insist upon and require the children to learn to read and to write; teach them to spin and to do other necessary and proper work, suited to their years and person.' The schools in the valleys of the Pequea and Conestoga are amongst the best in the county today; although there are some communities in these valleys, who are yet strenuously opposed to all studies, except reading, writing, and arithmetic."<sup>45</sup>

By the middle of the eighteenth century the German-speaking population in Lancaster County had multiplied, and it was apparent that not all their children were receiving an adequate education. Nearly all the Germans were employed in the field of agriculture. Either they worked their own farms or were hired hands for landowners. Children were needed to till the soil or help with household chores, especially during the planting and harvesting seasons. The necessity of having the children work together with their families meant a shortened school year for those who were able to attend school. However, the meager earnings from farming were sometimes not adequate enough to provide a teacher with a salary and thus there was no schooling available for the children of the indigent farmers.

In 1754 the city of Lancaster had two German schools: one Lutheran and one Calvinist (Reformed). A petition was presented to attract subscribers for support of these schools. Sixteen influential citizens of the city – both English and German – pledged assistance for facilitating the employ of a master to teach in the schools sustained by charity. As funds from England for school support in the colonies dwindled and then completely discontinued, the burden of educating the young Germans fell primarily on the churches. As the new nation evolved and debate over funding for public education ensued, the quantity and quality of schools declined.

The plain sects were nevertheless unwavering in their resolve to keep their children in German schools which upheld their religious beliefs. They were intense in their opposition to the "Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge Among the Germans in America," for they viewed it as an attempt to convert

them to the beliefs of the traditional churches. The Pennsylvania sectarians believed that the child is first under God's, then the parents', lastly the state's sovereignty. In their opinion, secularizing the schools was desecration. They had been taught to have deep regard for the idiom of their forefathers, so they were averse to having English replace German as the teaching language in their schools.

The concern of the English-speaking fellow citizens that the Germans were not being assimilated into the colonial society was not unfounded.

The *Reformed Coetus* of 1757 succinctly states the German point of view: "With regard to the schools, we can do little to promote them, since the directors try to erect nothing but English schools and care nothing for the German language. Hence, now as before, the Germans themselves ought to look out for their schools, in which their children may be instructed in German" This they did until 1834, with no organized interference from the state. At that time the Lutheran church was maintaining about 250 schools, the Reformed church about 160, and the sectarian about 150.<sup>46</sup>

As the nineteenth century progressed and public education for all became standard, more and more children regularly attended school, ordinarily the one closest to their home. By 1873 all districts in Pennsylvania were maintaining free public schools. In rural areas the school building was small, consisting of one classroom – spacious enough to house the pupils from the surrounding farms. It was customary for sectarian children living in rural areas to visit public schools along with neighbors of other faiths. Amish and Mennonite scholars sat side by side with pupils from families of different beliefs. Pennsylvania German was the language of the home and in many cases of the school too, but since no teachers were being trained to teach in German schools, ultimately only English-speaking teachers were available for hire and English became the sole language of the classroom.

Compulsory education had been introduced, but the length of the term and the age limit for mandatory attendance continued to vary. In 1899 the school term was extended to seven months, and in 1901 the age limit was set at sixteen. Those between the ages of thirteen and sixteen who were engaged in

lawful employment were exempt from school attendance. From decade to decade the laws were amended. During the Great Depression when the unemployment rate was extremely high, there was a renewed effort to lengthen the school year. In 1937 the term was extended to nine months, and the oldest students were eighteen.

Throughout the nineteenth century the daily routines of laborers within the agrarian society in Lancaster County were nearly uniform. Whether Lutheran or Mennonite, Amish or Reformed, they strove to provide the family with sustenance and to lead pious lives in obedience to God's will. Habit, convention, and dress were puritanical and abstemious. Disparity in daily living being not so great, marriages between Anabaptists and devout members of other congregations did occur, however infrequently. Even if their tasks during the work week were similar, they nevertheless preserved their disparate religious practices, those traditions and creeds which had served them for generations.

Common public schools for diverse denominations became standard practice, although opposition to public schooling remained strong among the conservative sects. "Their objections are based on religious grounds; they feel that primary responsibility for the education of the child rests with the parents and the church, not the state; and that public school education tends to draw children away from the farm and from the religious faith of their fathers."<sup>47</sup>

In general, Amish parents were content with the education their children were receiving. Among the sectarians a command of the ABC's and basic arithmetic was all that was deemed necessary for leading a devout life in an agrarian society. However, with the impact of the industrial revolution society changed as more and more people populated urban areas. The running and maintaining of „the little red school-house", as it is repeatedly called, by local school boards was uneconomical and inefficient. Nationwide school officials pleaded the cause for consolidated school districts which were to provide unlimited opportunities for students from kindergarten through grades twelve with proficiently and professionally run educational programs. The trend in Pennsylvania was obvious: in 1915 there were 10,606 one-room rural schools

within the commonwealth; by 1940 over fifty percent of them had been consolidated or closed because of a declining rural population.

In 1937 plans for the authorization of a consolidated school in East Lampeter Township, an area in Lancaster County where many conservative sectarians live, were presented and government funding for its construction was granted. Amish leaders wrote letters of protest to both the Governor of Pennsylvania and the President of the United States, but the school was built despite their protests. Amish then proceeded to establish parochial schools of their own, but these schools received no state subsidies. The first Amish parochial school in the Lancaster County settlement was Oak Grove, founded in 1938.

Fletcher cites a letter that Amish elders addressed to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania:

Throughout time past we have chosen and do yet choose, to be a farming people. Farming is one of the tenets of our Religion. We wish to have our children educated by the best available means including Scripture in the home and church, three R's in school and actual experienced training under Parental supervision at home and on the farm. To this end, we the Plain Churches petition...that children in rural districts be not compelled to attend school beyond a 160 day term...that the children of Plain People be granted exemption from school attendance upon request of Parent or Guardian and upon completing primary studies of the elementary grades of after attaining the age of fourteen years. We further would desire to have sufficient privileges to establish independent schools where the public school districts determine upon consolidation and transportation.<sup>48</sup>

The conception of newer, larger schools meant that any number of local one-room schools would be replaced by one centrally located contemporary building with modern conveniences and that children would have to be bused there. Not only were the Amish against sending their children to schools beyond their neighborhood, they were also vehement in their opposition to the contemporary curricula taught in the new programs. The Amish adamantly opposed having their children schooled in abstract ideas and in subjects which are contrary to their religious belief. Nevertheless, the advantages of the

consolidated school seemed to outweigh the disadvantages. Especially consolidated high schools in rural areas gave youth there a chance to obtain schooling at a higher level unobtainable at a small neighborhood school. Even many Mennonites elected to send their children to high schools – but the Amish did not. They began to operate their own schools.

Along with the freshly implemented consolidations the regulation of mandatory school attendance until the age of sixteen caused a dilemma for sectarian families. Children were still needed to help during the planting and harvesting seasons, and as soon as they had completed the eighth grade in school they were expected to join the family team in working the farm or in running any other enterprise which sustained their kin. During World War II the state Superintendent of Education granted Amish pupils farm or domestic service permits, thus freeing them from compulsory school attendance.

In the 1950's the consolidation movement was reactivated with fervor, and the state threatened to withhold appropriation funds to school districts which failed to enforce the compulsory attendance law. Amish parents were in a quandary: the state law required children to attend school until the age of sixteen, but sixteen-year-olds had already reached high-school age. The Amish adhered to their belief that children should not receive secular education after they have reached the age of fourteen and have completed the eighth grade. The first cases of Amish prosecuted before a Justice of the Peace for failure to send their children to public school were recorded in 1949.

In 1950 the Amish organized mass absenteeism as one form of protest against the Department of Public Instruction's refusal to issue work permits for their children who had completed eighth grade. The problem escalated. In March 1951 the State Superior Court ruled that two Amish children from Lancaster County would be required to attend school until they reached the age of sixteen.

During the early 1950's Amish parents sought ways out of their dilemma. Some had their children repeat eighth grade until they had reached the age of sixteen, while others kept their children at home and prayed for tolerance from authorities. But the anticipated understanding from the government was never



obtained. Rather, in a continuing series fine after fine was levied. Following their conscience, many a father chose to serve jail sentences rather than pay the penalty. Newspaper reports with pictures of peace-loving bearded fathers being hauled away for incarceration made headlines nation-wide as Amish were incessantly prosecuted. In a wave of goodwill any number of non-sectarians paid the fines of Amishmen who had been indicted.

In Pennsylvania an agreement between the Amish and the state was finally reached in 1956. Amish children who are fourteen and have completed eighth grade are required to attend a vocational school. Their formal schooling is limited to a few hours every week, but they are required to keep a diary detailing their work activities in the family.

The arraignment of Amish people in court was not limited to Lancaster County or even to Pennsylvania; there were instances wherever Amish families resided. A case in the state of Wisconsin finally brought the issue before the United State Supreme Court. A National Committee for Amish Religious Freedom had been founded by the Lutheran pastor Rev. William C. Lindholm. Attorney William B. Ball represented the Amish in the 1972 proceedings. In *Wisconsin vs. Yoder* the opinion of the court found that the religious rights of the Amish would be infringed upon were they required to send their children to schools which did not conform to their belief. The natural parents, not the state, should have the right to decide on the education of the children.

In Lancaster County the trend for the Amish to found their own schools continued. In addition to the normal one-room schools in the neighborhood, special schools for the teaching of the handicapped and the slow learners were established. *The Blackboard Bulletin* of November 1997 lists 146 Amish schools alone in Lancaster County. These schools play an important role in the socialization of Amish children and their ability to function in their society and in the community outside their religious culture.

*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

*II Corinthians 6:14  
The Holy Bible*

#### 4. THE AMISH WORLD

The core of the Amish culture is the family. The nuclear family (2) is composed of the parents with their children – seven on the average. Within Amish spheres the extended family (3) containing grandparents, often great-grandparents too, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other relatives of a lesser degree is very large, and the individual (1) has a store of close bonds to his kin.

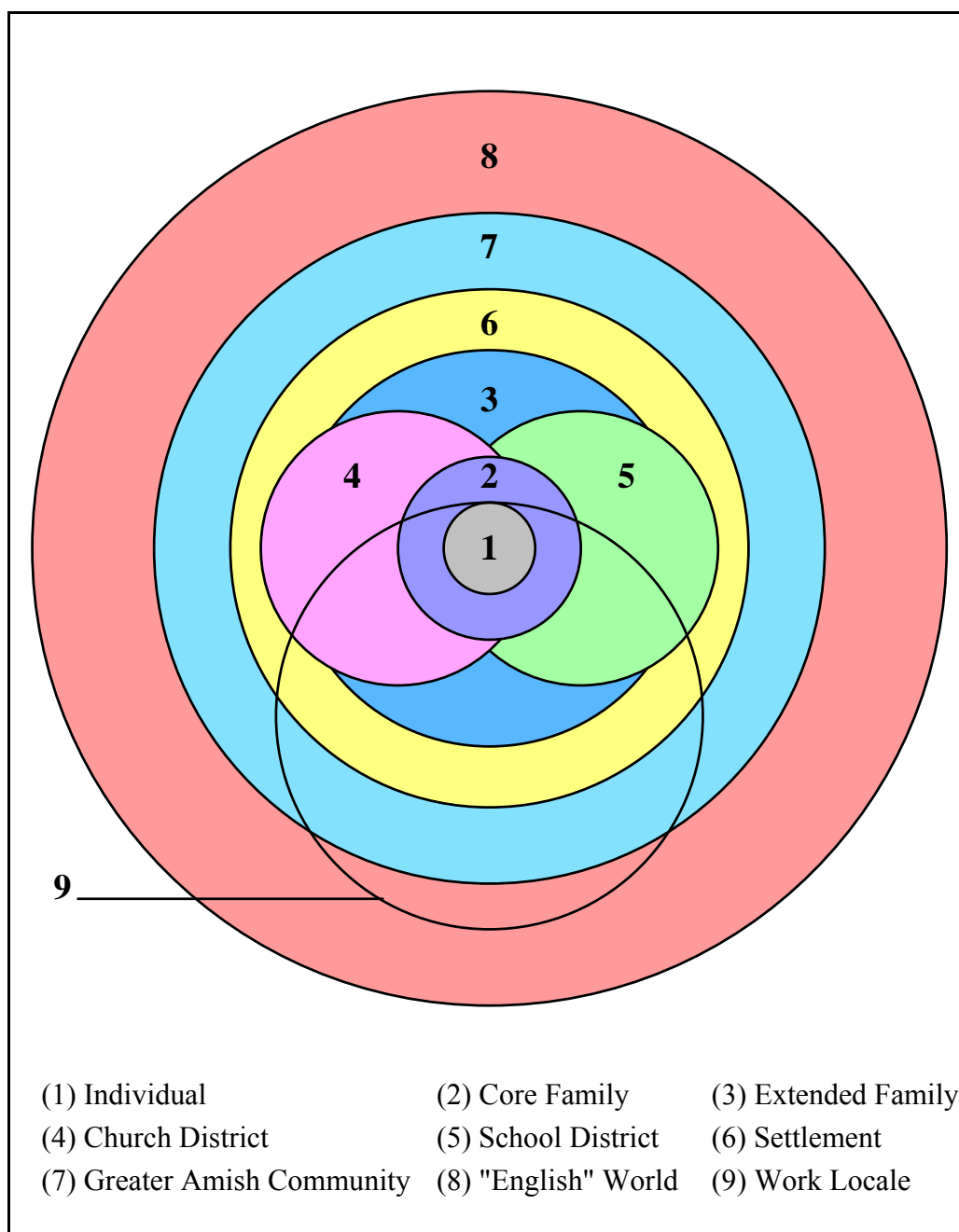
Many of the related families from one neighborhood will be in one and the same church district (4) whose boundaries are drawn according to the number of families – not individuals – attending collective religious services. Not congruent with local church districts but nevertheless embodying children from joint neighborhoods is the school district (5). Children attend school not only with their siblings but also with cousins and friends who live in the vicinity. The settlement (6) embraces all those Amish families living within a common region much larger than the neighborhood. For this study Lancaster County is the settlement in consideration. The greater Amish community (7) covers all Amish settlements throughout the United States and Canada.

All of that which is not Amish is incorporated in the "English" world (8), although Mennonites and other conservative sects are often seen as being very closely related to the Amish and thus not always regarded by the Amish as being "English". The non-Amish world has a broad spectrum. It is found locally among neighbors of dissimilar faiths as well as in society in general, both with lifestyles, mores, and a system of values spurned by the Amish.

The Amish work locale (9) is unique in that its possibilities encompass the whole range of the Amish world. An Amishman might be self-employed on a farm or in a small cottage trade or he might have been hired by a family member, a distant relative, or an Amish businessman from his settlement. His

individual situation necessitating it, he might even work for an "English" person locally or be forced to move to another Amish community in order to earn a living for himself and his family. Likewise, Amish single women work at a variety of locales; married women seldom work outside the home.

Figure 4.1.: The Amish World



Thus the socialization of an Amish individual transpires primarily within the cultural context, but it is not without influence from the outside world. Whether this influence is coveted or not, and, if so, to what extent, is dependent upon the individual perspective.

Amish life is ruled by an unwritten code. In addition to the recorded documents – the Schleithem Articles and the Dordrecht Confession of Faith – there is a traditional set of rules – the *Ordnung* – which regulates behavior within Amish circles. Some of these norms have been passed down over generations; others are newly formulated within the settlements as the need for a more cohesive standard on certain issues arises.

Kraybill and Nolt list examples of practices prescribed or prohibited by the Amish *Ordnung*:<sup>49</sup>

Table 4.1.: The *Ordnung* of the Old Order Amish

<u>Prescribed</u>	<u>Prohibited</u>
color and style of clothing	using tractors for field work
hat styles for men	owning and operating an automobile
color and style of buggies	electricity from public power lines
use of horses for field work	filing a lawsuit
steel wheels on machinery	entering military service
use of the German dialect	owning computers, televisions, radios
worship service in homes	central heating in homes
order of the worship service	wall-to-wall carpeting
unison singing without instruments	pipe-line milking equipment
menu of the congregational meal	high-school education
marriage within the church	air transportation
* hairstyles	jewelry/wedding rings + wrist watches
* beards for married men	divorce
	* bicycles
.....	
(* indicates own additions)	

Discipline within the Amish social order is very strict and so harsh that unrelenting nonconformance to the *Ordnung* results in excommunication from the church and social isolation within the ethnic community. Nevertheless, the

Amish culture is neither inflexible nor static; it moves forward at a much slower pace than the rest of the populace and it very carefully scrutinizes innovations and the effect they will have on Amish life before the unwritten norms are adjusted.

Additional rules are created whenever Amish society is confronted by the "English" world with new challenges which threaten to disrupt and encroach on their Amish culture. Individuals have also devised resourceful ways to bypass some of the rules without coming into conflict with their church.

Learning within the ethnic culture is a continual and an all encompassing process. In the Amish community emphasis is placed on practical learning, social convention, and personal relationships. Cultural transfer and learning transpire in various locales within their society: the home, the church, the school and the work place. Electricity being absent in Amish homes, media influence is practically nonexistent except for an occasional book or newspapers. However, Amish culture is not completely insulated from the rest of the world and it does not remain totally immune to changes within the populace at large. Inside the homogeneous Amish society the sway of peer groups has a diminished influence, playing a role mainly during the *rumspringa* phase which occurs between the point youth leave school until they join the church. Within the Amish context, custom and knowledge are conveyed simply, yet effectively.

#### 4.1. The Home

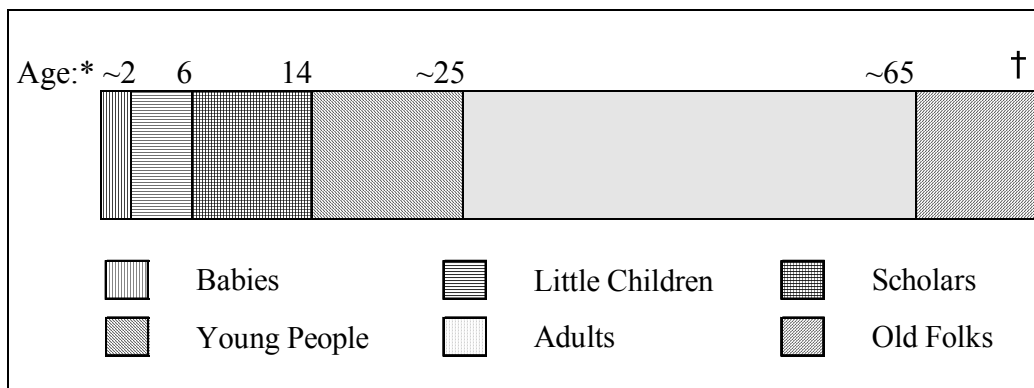
The home is the most important learning place in the life of an Amish child. It is here where language skills are acquired, where ethnic identity is initially fixed, where the foundation for social interaction is laid, and where the groundwork for the Amish work ethic is set.

Home is the cohabitation of three or more generations under one roof; it is also the training ground for learning a trade, farming, or housekeeping. Home-grown produce and home-made clothing supply the family with many of their basic needs. In addition, the family home as a dwelling is seldom far away because the chosen form of transportation by horse-and-buggy limits the radius

of travel. Home is where Amish individuals are firmly rooted as they move through life's stages.

In the Amish society the life span is divided into six age classifications: babies, little children, scholars, young people, adults, and old folks. The social functions of the six categories are proscribed by the ethnic perspective.

Figure 4.2.: The Stages of Amish Life



#### 4.1.1. The Family

The primary purpose of an Amish family is procreation and the rearing of children. Amish belief is that a child belongs first and foremost to the Heavenly Father and then to the earthly parents. Children are not regarded as another mouth to feed but rather as a gift of God. Children are cherished not only by their core families but also by their extended families, many of whom might be found living in the same neighborhood. Grandparents as well as aunts, uncles, and cousins often live in close proximity to one another, a result of the division of property as farms were passed on from one generation to another. The high birthrate among the Amish guarantees that for every child at any family gathering there are cousins of all ages for chatter and play.

Kraybill gives the average number of children born in an Amish family as more than seven (7.1), and he states that slightly over thirteen percent of the families have ten or more children.<sup>50</sup> The rate of reproduction being so high, it is possible for one individual to have an enormous sum of offspring. It has been reported that at his death at the age of ninety-six Adam Borntrager of Bedford, Wisconsin, was survived by 675 direct descendants (eleven children,

115 grandchildren, 529 great-grandchildren, and twenty great-great-grandchildren). Eight grandchildren and twenty-four great-grandchildren had preceded him in death.<sup>51</sup> All were blood relatives; there were no adoptions or stepchildren in the total count of 707.

When a baby is born, the name it is given often is one that might be found elsewhere within the extended family; it may be the namesake of an uncle or grandfather, an aunt or grandmother. Hostetler has recorded the most popular Amish first names in Pennsylvania:

male – John, Amos, Samuel, Daniel, and David;  
female – Mary, Rebecca, Sarah, Katie, and Annie.<sup>52</sup>

In one Amish settlement two, three, or even more Amish individuals with the same name is a prevalent occurrence, for variations of family names is limited. Therefore it becomes a necessity for families and friends to adopt nicknames for people with like names. Over fifty percent of the Amish population in Pennsylvania have one of four family names; alone the surname Stoltzfus (or the variation Stoltzfoos) is born by twenty-five percent of the Amish families living there. Kraybill has listed those family names most frequently found in Lancaster County:<sup>53</sup>

Table 4.2.: Amish Family Names

Name	Number of households	Percentage
Stoltzfus/Stoltzfoos	938	25.3
King	449	12.1
Fisher	408	11.0
Beiler	352	9.5
Esh/Esch	253	6.8
Lapp	215	5.8
Zook	197	5.3
Glick	135	3.6
16 names with 11-72 households	696	18.8
12 names with 10 or fewer households	59	1.5
Total	3702	100.0

The Amish extended family is closely knit. Because the various core families of one extended family frequently live in the same vicinity, help is

always close at hand. Security is what an Amish family offers. There are practically no patchwork or single-parent families so commonly found in the non-Amish society. The elderly are still valued as a contributing member to the community; they participate in family and work life as well as their health and age allow. The ill and infirm are nursed and provided for as long as necessary. Mothers and sisters visit frequently, and men help each other during harvest time or in emergencies. Amish draw neither social security benefits, unemployment compensation, nor health insurance reimbursement. The family is there to provide aid whenever it is needed.

When children are born into the Amish society, they are welcomed with delight by the whole community. Babies are hugged and cuddled by their mothers and older sisters; they are not left to cry for long periods of time. The infants learn to trust, for they are never wantonly mistreated or ignored. They are regarded as being innocent and incapable of doing wrong during this first phase of life – the baby stage – which lasts until they are able to walk and move about on their own.

Babies are seldom alone. They sleep in a crib in their parents' bedroom until they have been weaned, and during the day they spend most of their waking hours in aural and visual contact with other family members. They are included in all family activities. Observing their parents and siblings as they go about their duties, the tots begin to perceive their Amish traditions.

#### 4.1.2. Parental Roles

The longest and most important stage of life in Amish society is adulthood, which extends from the time of marriage and the founding of the couple's own household until the last child leaves home and the parents retire. Although youth are considered to have reached maturity when they are baptized and join the church, it is marriage and the birth of their first child which truly grants a young pair the esteem associated with adulthood. Kraybill formulates it so: "raising a family is the professional career of Amish adults."<sup>54</sup> Children contribute to the livelihood of the family and are seen as future progenitors and securers of Amish ethnicity. Parents serve as role models for their offspring,



hoping to ingrain in them a devout regard for their tradition and faith, for the Amish culture can survive only if the coming generations remain true to the church and unfailing in their ways.

The archetype of the diligent Amish worker is recognized in the tireless mother and the industrious farmer or artisan as they instruct their children in the daily tasks related to their family's livelihood. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children; therefore they are strict with them, dealing out discipline whenever it is required. The couple supports each other in reprimanding and penalizing their offspring; they act as a pair in agreement when punishment is necessary. In general, a married couple presents itself as a team which works together in all aspects.

Despite the twosome's closeness, open affection for each other is never publicly displayed. They may speak admiringly of one another, but praise or rebuke is not uttered in the company of others. Even the social amenities of a verbal thank-you or pardon-me are seldom heard. It goes without saying that each individual strives to achieve a working relationship and successful family life; therefore no special recognition of the individual's contribution is considered necessary, for the goals are self-evident.

The Amish society is a patriarchal one embracing traditional sex roles. Wives defer to their husbands and generally respect the man's authority. Whether on the farm or in a cottage trade, the father is the breadwinner, and he is also seen as being responsible for the moral conduct of his family. He begins to teach his children the simplest routines of his trade as soon as they are old enough to be of aid to him. Rarely, however, does he assist his wife with housework. Occasionally he might help her with gardening, especially in spring when the earth has to be turned over.

The mother is seen as the child-bearing nurturer in the family. Artificial birth control is not practiced, but many young mothers are knowledgeable that the nursing of newborns sometimes provides a natural form of birth control. Many babies are suckled beyond their first birthday, their mothers hoping to prolong the span before a new pregnancy occurs.

In addition to child care, housework and gardening are the duties of a mother. Housewives develop and expand their managerial skills as they supervise the operation of a growing household. They often contribute to the economic well-being of the family by selling their home-grown produce or hand-made products to tourists or the local non-Amish community. Modifications of the *Ordnung* to include more modern devices which have been adapted for use within the Amish culture are heavily weighted to favor the men and ease their workload. Women's labor is not only in the home; they also toil in the barn and in the fields as they are needed by their partners.

By non-Amish standards Amish women are not emancipated, but they are free to set their own time schedule to realize a feasible blend of work and pleasure. Visits to family members in the settlement are frequent. Quilting bees provide a break from the daily routine and afford an opportunity for women to socialize. The so-called sisters' day is a social gathering of mothers, daughters, and daughters-in-law, along with their babies and little children, for work, conversation, and a common lunch to strengthen the familial bonds. Even Amish housewives are not averse to attending "parties" at an Amish friend's home where kitchenware is displayed, demonstrated, and retailed by a non-Amish woman.

Men of a working age engage less in weekday visiting, but they exchange ideas with each other when they attend to business in town or go to a machine shop to have repairs made on their equipment. Both husband and wife might make outings to weekday auctions, where they hope to find bargains on household items or farm animals. One event which brings together male and female, old and young, is a barn raising. When a new homestead is erected or if a barn has been damaged by fire or storm, neighbors, friends and family members congregate on a given day to construct a new building. While the men and older boys are busy with carpentry work, the women cook for the hungry crew and exchange news. By evening the structure is standing, and the thankful Amish farmer will soon be able to utilize the newly constructed building.

At these gatherings even the youngest children are present. Thus, children learn the value of community assistance very early in life, and they learn to treasure the benefits and the comradeship which their society provides. They also are imprinted with the pattern of work and pleasure which accompanies such events.

#### 4.1.3. Children's Chores

All children are taught to help without complaining in carrying out daily tasks within the family. Even the youngest are expected to do chores as well as they can. After babies have mastered walking and achieved a limited amount of independence, they enter into a new life stage at about the age of two. They then are referred to as little children throughout the pre-school period of development.

Little children begin to help within the family by doing simple tasks such as gathering the eggs or setting the table. Children learn to do their chores by imitating their parents or older siblings. Older children are expected to serve as good examples for the younger ones, not only in carrying out tasks but also in demonstrating good conduct. Obedience to God, to the church, and to one's parents is emphasized.

Individualism is not valued; developing good work habits and assuming responsibility which contribute to the success of the family and ethnic community are most highly esteemed. As Amish children mature, they take on more exacting tasks. They are expected to rise early and help with the milking before heading off for a full day of school and then assist again at the evening milking after having completed their schoolwork. Despite the demands of the milking chores, many reported it as one of their favorite tasks. Girls like to bake and cook, while boys prefer tending animals or working in the fields. Cleaning the house or barn rate low in the list of favorite chores, as does weeding tobacco fields or stripping the harvested tobacco leaves. Children will learn practically every job necessary on an Amish farm or in an Amish business at some time during their youth, for duties are rotated among the siblings, with the older ones performing the more difficult tasks. Work is

assigned according to the children's sex generally only after they have reached their teens, but that too depends on the distribution of the sexes within the offspring of a nuclear family.

Thus children grow up feeling wanted and needed in their families. Likewise they realize that the chores they perform are integrated in a greater family enterprise, so that indirectly their participation also means financial reward for the whole family.

Since children learn by observing the behavior and expertise of adults, Amish parents are concerned if the father is employed outside the home environment. They regard it as a temporary necessity and hope for a change of the circumstances. Helping the father who is a farmer, artisan, or owner of a small business is deeply embedded in the Amish educational process where practical learning plays the most important role.

#### 4.1.4. The House

Traditionally an Amish household is established in a wood-slatted farmhouse that has been in the family for generations. Nevertheless, an Amish home may be in an old homestead built of stone, a more modern house constructed of brick, or even a contemporary dwelling finished with aluminum siding. Nowadays non-farming families most often live in a house built on a plot of land which originally had been part of the family farm, or occasionally they reside in a building within the boundaries of a village or borough.

The size of the houses varies, as does the size of the families, but the basic floor-plans are similar, for the inhabitants usually have similar domestic requirements and like living-patterns. Houses in which non-Amish people initially resided and which were subsequently sold to an Amish family have been remodeled to accommodate the Amish style of living.

Generally an Amish home is a two-story dwelling, and modern structures have a basement as well. The sleeping quarters for the children are located on the upper level. There are at least two bedrooms – one for the girls and one for the boys. Larger homes have additional bedrooms. The furnishings are Spartan: beds, night tables, and possibly a chest of drawers.

The remaining rooms are found on the ground floor of the house. The heart of an Amish home is the large, open kitchen with its adjacent space. In the middle of the kitchen is a large table with chairs and benches to provide enough seating capacity for the whole family to partake of their meals together. Each family member has his place at the table: the father traditionally has his chair at the head of the table; the mother usually sits to his right at the side of the table. The youngest girl is seated next to the mother and her sisters follow in ascending age. At the opposite side of the table the boys are seated in similar fashion with the youngest sitting to the left of the father.

Meals always begin and end with a silent prayer. Conversation at the table is generally limited unless guests are present. Work to be done and the progress of various projects are the topics of discussion among the family members as they consume their food. The main meal is cooked and served in the evening when the scholars and the young people who work away from home are also present and can join the rest of the family at the table.

The kitchen area of the house flows into an expanded family/living room containing a sofa, an armchair or two, and often a rocking chair as well. A coal-fired stove provides warmth for the living area; a central heating system is never found in an Amish home. The housewife has a separate corner adjoining the kitchen or family room where she sews clothing for her family or stitches together fabric to make patchwork quilts or other articles to be sold to tourists. A laundry room is located near the kitchen, and it often contains the back door to the house. The front door, which provides entrance into the family/living room, is not in daily use. When there is a death in the family, the coffin is carried out through this doorway. The master bedroom, where the parents and babies sleep, is also located on the ground floor, as is the bathroom.

Public power lines leading to an Amish house are lacking, but the interiors of homes are nevertheless surprisingly modern despite the absence of electricity. Gas-powered kitchen stoves and refrigerators as well as contemporary kitchen cabinets provide the Amish housewife with an adequate workplace. Modern bathrooms with running hot and cold water, tubs, and

showers complete the trend to the adoption of practical conveniences which do not conflict with the Amish *Ordnung*.

The walls of the rooms are plain and usually bare. There may be a bookshelf which holds books pertinent to the Amish way of life, and occasionally a genealogical chart in the form of a family tree is framed and hung for all to see. No curtains adorn the windows; light and privacy are regulated by the drawing of green window shades. Illumination within the house is provided by gas-filled lamps which are hung over the table, attached to the wall, or anchored in a wooden cabinet which contains a gas tank.

Homesteads where three or more generations of a family reside have an annexation attached to the main house. This addition is commonly referred to as the *Dawdi-Haus* (grandfather's house). It houses the older generation – the grandparents – who have turned over the farming or business to a son and his family. In this stage of life the elderly are referred to as the old folks. Those living in a *Dawdi-Haus* have retired, but they still manage their own separate household. They live from their savings and may supplement their income by selling fresh produce, canned goods, handicrafts, or animals they have raised for butchering. They continue to do minor chores and come to the aid of their children when they are needed. As they now have more leisure time, the old folks use their own horse-and-buggy for frequent visits to children, grandchildren, and friends or relatives in other parts of the settlement.

When age and poor health take their toll, the elderly are cared for by their children who live next door. Individuals who have remained unmarried are nursed by nieces and nephews. Often they rotate turns in attending to the needs of their aunt or uncle. If family members are not able to care for a needy member, the church assumes the responsibility.

Amish are not enrolled in pension plans which would provide support in old age. They are exempt from having to pay into the national Social Security plan if they are self-employed or work for an Amish employer, as they belong to a religious body which is opposed to receiving government benefits and which is able to provide for its own members. The high cost of hospitalization in recent years has led to the establishing of an Amish voluntary insurance to

cover health-care expenses. However, the Hospitalization Plan is still disputed and in some districts it is forbidden, for the church is expected to shoulder the burden and help the needy family with donations from church members if such urgency arises.

Children learn to assist the old folks and always to show respect to their elders. Elderly people are esteemed for their wisdom and their experience gained by living a Christian life. There is close contact between the generations of an Amish family. In an Amish house a child is never isolated. Retreating to another room to be alone is not appropriate behavior. In addition, lack of central heating would make it very uncomfortable during the cooler seasons of the year. Curling up on the sofa to read a book is the closest an Amish individual comes to withdrawing. A child is expected to participate in all family affairs. Likewise, children learn that there is always help at hand should they need it.

#### 4.1.5. Garments and Hair Styles

Significant in ethnic identification are the hair styles and the clothing of the Amish, for these characteristics are immediately apparent and notably set off the religious group from the rest of the world. Kraybill writes: "The dress of the Amish, more than any other symbol, sets them apart."<sup>55</sup> In the agricultural regions of Pennsylvania originally settled by German immigrants the fashion in clothing generally tended to be simple, austere, and dark-colored. Initially the differences between Amish garments and those worn by the rest of the population were not so prominent. However, during recent centuries as a larger portion of society began to place greater emphasis on modish attire, the Amish style of dress came to be a more notable factor in indicating their separation and uniqueness.

Apparel was even of concern to the original Amish groups. Ammann emphasized the importance of wearing simple clothing. Eventually the Amish became known as the *Häftler*, for they fastened their clothing with hooks-and-eyes, while the Mennonites – the *Knöpfler* – used buttons. For the Amish, buttons were not only a worldly adornment to be rejected; they were also a

prominent decoration on the uniforms of the constabulary or military who pursued and persecuted the Anabaptists in Europe.

For members of the ethnic group, clothing and hair styles send signals as to an individual's liberality/conservativeness, age, and social status within the Amish culture. Signs such as the width of a hat brim or the trim of the hair, the length of a hem line or the tautness of the coiffure, the type of trousers or the style the apron serve as indicators for the informed. There is a basic dress style for every Amish woman, and men all wear the same type of trousers, shirts, and coats. Children are clothed in garments similar to those worn by adults, but there are variations in style considered appropriate for certain age phases. As individuals mature, their new stages in life are accompanied by a modification in what they wear. The change may be ever so slight, but it denotes a certain coming of age and at some points it may be considered to be a rite of passage in minimal form.

Newborn babies are swaddled in clothe or dressed in plain, store-bought outfits not unlike those worn by non-Amish infants. The clothes are either white or pastel shades of baby blue for boys and of pale pink for girls. Disposable diapers are commonly used and are effective in easing the burden of the new mother. As babies mature, they are dressed in Amish clothing when they are taken out of the house. After they have learned to walk and have become mobile, they are dressed solely in the fashion typical for Amish people.

The dresses Amish women wear are all sewn in the same pattern with variations only in size. They are solid-colored in subdued hues. Black dresses are worn for funerals and during the mourning period. However, the deceased are always buried clothed entirely in white. Clothing sewn from fabric of synthetic fibers is now favored, for it prevents the housewives having to iron the clothing after its laundering. The dresses are pleated at the waist and have a front opening at the neck. The cut does not emphasize the figure; there is ample material to allow for movement while working. Sleeves usually cover the elbow. In winter they will be longer than in summer, and older women wear longer sleeves than younger women. Sleeve length and fullness is considered to be an indication of the strictness with which the wearer adheres to her faith.



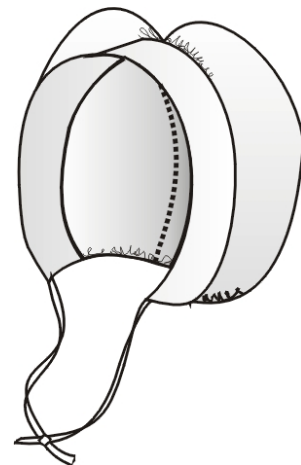
Buttons are lacking; the dresses are closed with straight pins. A *Läppli* – a half circle of material about three inches in diameter sewn on at the waistline in mid-back – is the only decoration adorning the garment. A black half-apron is worn over the dress. It too is fastened with straight pins. However, at her wedding the bride wears a white apron. For work in the house or in the field a woman often wears a full apron to protect her dress from being soiled.

Outside the house a woman wears a cape covering her bodice. The cape is diamond-shaped with a neck opening and a separated front so that it can easily be wrapped over the shoulder. It is pinned to the waist at both the front and back of the dress. Capes vary in color and texture according to the occasion. Usually the cape matches the dress. However, sheer white capes are worn to church, and the bride also wears a white cape at her wedding. Older women wear only black capes. The customs for wearing capes vary from church district to church district. There is uniformity within a district but not within a settlement.

During cold weather women wrap a black knitted shawl over their shoulders for warmth. In winter when temperatures are very low a sweater or jacket under the shawl provides extra insulation. Girls wear jackets over their dresses. A few girls are even seen in anoraks like those found in the "English" world; however, the color is always black.

Distinctive head coverings for the women and girls are characteristic for the Amish and many Mennonite congregations. Gossamer white organdy prayer caps bedeck the back of the head and much of the ear. Older and more conservative women cover more of the ear; younger and more liberal women show more of their hair. Narrow ribbons extending from the front edge of the covering are loosely bound below the chin. The coverings are starched and pressed to make them stiff for wearing. Hence great care is taken to keep them from getting wrinkled or soiled. Older and the more conservative women are always seen with a

Figure 4.3.: Covering



covering. While doing their housework younger women are often bareheaded, or they might wear a scarf to cover their hair.

An Amish woman frequently puts on a bonnet when she leaves the house. The bonnet is made of black dress material and with its wide brim covers a greater portion of her head, concealing her hair and ears completely. Older women regularly don a bonnet outside the home, even in summer. Younger women and girls often forego wearing one except in inclement weather. However, for special occasions, to walk to church on Sundays, or to go visiting girls and women of all ages always wear a bonnet.

Customarily Amish women wear flat-heeled black leather laced shoes. Leather shoes being quite costly, it is currently not unusual to see young women and girls sporting black athletic shoes typically worn by non-Amish teenagers. Shoes are passed down from child to child until the shoes are worn out and no longer repairable. Older women and children up till the age of three usually wear high-cut shoes. Older women wear opaque stockings; younger ones prefer more sheer nylon knee-highs in black.

Girls wear dresses styled basically like those of their mothers, but young girls' dresses are different in that they have a neck opening in the back and are closed with garment snaps. Until the age of eight they wear black full pinafore aprons. The Sunday aprons are made of white gossamer material but in the same pinafore style. At the age of eight they switch to the half aprons which distinguish adult Amish women. At the age of nine the girls advance to the mature women's dress style with a closing in front and a *Läppli* at the back waistline. Young girls' bonnets are blue rather than black in color. Until the age of twelve they wear coverings only to church on Sundays. When they enter the eighth grade they start wearing a covering in school and when they visit or work outside the home. After finishing vocational school at the age of fifteen is customary for girls to wear a covering at home too.

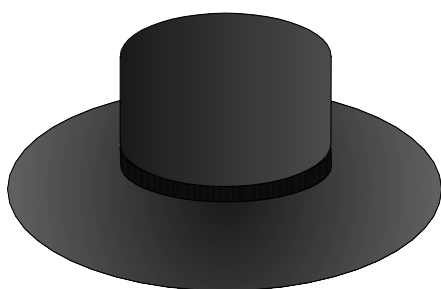
All the Amish women have the same austere hairstyle: their tresses are parted in the middle, twisted at the side, and then tightly pulled to the neck where the hair is rolled into a bun and fastened with hair pins. Not a wisp of hair escapes the tautly fixed locks, for that would be a sign of worldliness and

impiety. Older women sometimes have a bald spot along their part as a result of their severe hairstyle.

Adhering to custom, the hair of Amish girls and women is never cut. As soon as possible the hair of baby girls is pulled together above the forehead into two tufts which are called bobbies. After the hair grows long enough, it is pulled back and braided. Special coverings are made for young girls to accommodate their hair styles. Later at about the age of three girls wear their hair arranged like that of older girls with a knot in the neck, and they don a regular covering with a flat front.

Amish men and boys, however, wear their hair in a bob style which is clipped ear-length. Rebellious teenagers sometimes wear their hair too short, too long, or shingled during the years before their baptism. Single men are clean-shaven; all married men sport a beard but no mustache, for that too is a reminder of the authorities who once had been their oppressors.

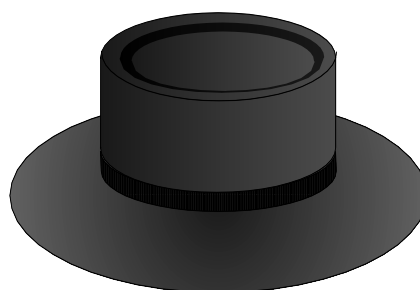
Figure 4.4.: Bishop's Hat



Most men and boys don hats outside the home. Typical headwear is a black felt hat with a three-inch rim and a narrow black band. The hats of older men and especially of bishops, preachers, and deacons have wider brims – an indication of their importance within the ethnic culture. Common wear for work in the field, barn, or shop is a natural-colored straw hat, which also has a black band. In summer straw hats are often worn everywhere, for they are lighter and less expensive than the black felt hats.

Not only the width of the brim sends a message to other Amish; also the form of the hat tells something about the wearer. A baby boy is clothed in a little blue jacket and cap (*Coatie* and *Cappy*). The cap has a small peak (*Snavel*) in the middle over the forehead.

Figure 4.5.: Young Men's Hat



Near the age of two he begins wearing a felt hat with a rounded crown. At the age of nine he changes to a style with a flat crown known as a telescope or stovepipe hat because of its shape. About the age of forty after his first daughter has married he reverts back to donning a hat with a rounded crown and he then wears the typical high-cut shoes.

Boys traditionally wear high-topped shoes, but they are often seen sporting laced athletic shoes favored by teenagers in the non-Amish world. Sundays they wear plain black laced shoes which are low-cut like those of the younger men. Work shoes or rubber boots may find usage in the field, barn, or shop. In general, there is a great deal of leeway in the wearing of footgear.

In comparison, there is little margin in the style of clothing worn by Amish men and boys. Most of their outer garments, fashioned from synthetic fabric for easy care, are sewn by their wives or mothers. Their shirts have collars, but Amish men never wear neckties. The shirts have neither breast pockets nor buttons, and they are closed with fabric snaps. A variety of appropriate colors from pale pastels to dark, subdued shades are accepted, but white shirts are always worn for church and other special occasions. In summer short sleeves are frequently seen.

An Amish man's other outer garments are regularly black. Nevertheless, a man, too, is always buried in a white. Over his shirt an Amish man sports a black vest, which is worn daily outside the home. A vest becomes standard attire for an Amish boy when he leaves the baby phase of life, although it is not worn on a daily basis until he leaves school. In summer the vest with a shirt is considered to be sufficient attire, even for church. During the rest of the year a jacket is worn over the vest for formal and informal occasions.

There are certain coat styles for different age groups and particular circumstances. Boys wear coat jackets – also known as sack coats – which are straight-cut and plain. Traditionally they are fastened with hooks-and-eyes, but in many families there are now buttons on the jackets. At the age of sixteen a young man is given his first tailored suit. The suit jacket, or frock coat, has more seams for a better fit, and there is a slit in the center back. Men wear a

suit to church or for visiting, but during the week they are usually seen sporting the more casual sack coat with trousers.

Men's trousers all have the same style: they are straight-cut and have neither a zipper nor back pockets. The broad-fall closure is similar to that of German *Lederhosen*. Black or white suspenders, not belts, are used to hold the trousers. The suspenders are fastened at the waistband with pins or buttons.

When baby boys are old enough to leave the house, they are dressed in pants that have snaps in the inner seam to facilitate the changing of diapers. As they grow older and begin to walk they start wearing suspenders, and their pants are cut in a wider style so they can easily be pulled down. The traditional trousers with the *Latz* and pockets become standard for boys approximately at the age of three.

In winter men, especially church leaders, wear overcoats over their suits. The overcoats are sewn from woolen material of a good quality by an Amish seamstress or are store-bought.

At a very young age Amish children are dressed in the clothes typical for their culture; thus they have their ethnic identity imprinted early, for they see all family members and peers in similar garments. Brand names and the pressure to wear styles which are "in" are meaningless to Amish children, for they all wear hand-made clothing which has been sewn by their mother. Also, they are accustomed to donning hand-me-downs from older siblings. Whereas many people of the non-Amish world choose to wear apparel for self-expression and enhancement, Amish society regards the unvarying style of their garments as a sign of unity within the group.

#### 4.1.6. Transportation

One of the prominent symbols of Amish ethnic identity is the horse-drawn carriage, which is seen everywhere on country roads in the regions where Amish settlements are located. In Lancaster County the standard Amish buggy is gray, four-wheeled and box-like in form. In other settlements there are variations in color and form. The conservative Mennonite groups in Lancaster County also travel with horse and buggy, but their carriages are black and have

a shorter frame. Thus each group retains its cultural singleness by using vehicles which distinguish them from each another and from the outside world.

The standard buggy, drawn by one horse, is enclosed and has two bench-seats for conveniently conveying at least six passengers. Behind the rear seat there is enough room to transport groceries or small children. All buggies have wooden wheels with metal rims, for the *Ordnung* bars the use of pneumatic tires on carriages. Local ethnic carriage makers have adapted to the times: nowadays buggies are constructed with fiber-glass bottoms and vinyl tops. The carriages are outfitted with ball-bearing wheels, hydraulic brakes, and suspension springs.

Enclosed buggies have doors with glass windows and windshields, which are sometimes equipped with battery-operated windshield wipers and double-glass windows to prevent fogging. The carpeting and upholstery inside are determined by the taste of the owner. Although the state of Pennsylvania does not require the licensing of the Amish horse-drawn vehicles, it does demand adherence to safety regulations. All carriages must be outfitted with headlights, blinking taillights, turn signals, and a reflecting triangle for warning motorists. Amish buggies are sometimes involved in motor accidents, especially during the winter months when darkness sets in early in the evening. Liability insurance was deemed necessary in order for Amish people to meet the obligations resulting from road accidents. As a result the voluntary Amish Liability Plan was created, but not all families choose to join.

The Amish community has several types of carriages to serve diverse purposes. Besides the standard buggy there are the courting buggy, the cart, and assorted wagons. The courting buggy is open and has only one-seat. The custom that unmarried couples were to be seen only in an open carriage – hence the name courting buggy – has lost in significance; only the most conservative Amish still adhere to the practice. The cart is a small, two-wheeled vehicle, which is sometimes hitched to a pony for the pleasure of children. The various wagons are constructed to serve a particular purpose: the market wagon is used for carrying produce and other goods which can easily be loaded and unloaded over the flexible tailgate. The cab wagon has an

enclosed seat and open bed for hauling supplies; the open spring wagon with its strong suspension springs moves loads too heavy or too large for standard carriages. There is a special wagon used as a hearse and another in which the benches for Sunday church services are transported from one home to another. After a heavy winter snowfall the horse is attached to a sleigh rather than to a buggy.

The use of automobiles has been one of the most controversial issues within the church. It has caused discord to flare up in church congregations as well as within families. Throughout the twentieth century the *Ordnung* was redefined any number of times in order to accommodate the needs of the ethnic community. The prevailing rules of the *Ordnung* regarding Amish means of conveyance reveal one more paradox within their community. Although Amish are not allowed to own or operate a motorized vehicle, they are permitted to ride in one which is driven by a non-Amish motorist.

Problems regarding transportation occurred as the Lancaster-County settlement grew and gradually expanded to encompass a much greater area. Distances which had to be traveled could no longer be covered by horse and buggy. Original objections to using public transportation faded and it became common practice for the Amish to travel with streetcars, buses, and trains. However, as individual motorization became widespread, public transportation services for the general public were cut back. Currently, besides the regular city bus service, there is reduced public bus service along main highway routes in the suburban and rural parts of Lancaster County, but bus stops might be miles away from an individual Amish person's home.

Amish people became dependent on generous "English" neighbors for transportation, and a new type of "taxi" service sprang up as car owners started charging to haul the Amish. Eventually the state interceded and began requiring the licensing of vehicle owners who levy a fee for transportation. The van drivers are granted a permit to carry members of a religious group whose beliefs prevent them from owning and operating motor vehicles.

A growth of Amish businesses and cottage industries accompanied the increase of Amish population density within the county. Non-farmers were

compelled to hire motorized vehicles to transport their wares or their employees. The church was forced to accept the arrangement in order to ensure the economic survival these members' enterprises.

When demanded by the circumstances, transportation services are also used for private purposes. Vans are hired by the Amish for trips to local doctors' or dentists' offices, which are often located in the city or in populated suburbs where the Amish generally do not reside. Many housewives jointly engage a van service for grocery-shopping jaunts to a German chain discount store (Aldi) situated beyond the borders of Lancaster County. Teachers who live far away from their schools are regularly transported back and forth by van drivers. Enlisting the aid of a licensed operator for visits to family members living in other parts of the settlement is currently condoned by the Amish community. Journeys to other settlements – even to those out of state – are possible only with the use of a van service. These trips are often arranged by a group of Amish in order to attend the weddings or funerals of friends and relatives.

For those Amish families who have family, friends, and even vacation homes in Sarasota, Florida, a bus service has instituted charter runs from Lancaster County to the sunshine state during winter months. The high cost of American health care have in particular cases caused a number of unhealthy Amish to turn to Mexican doctors for less expensive medical treatment. Amish patients then travel south of the border via bus, train, or a combination of both. However, they never use air transportation, for flying is prohibited by the *Ordnung*. Less frequent, although not unheard-of, are Amish journeys to Europe to view the sites of their origins. Amish tour groups cross the Atlantic by ship and are then carried across the continent by motor coach.

Bicycles have never been accepted by the Amish community, for individuals could be tempted to travel from one place to another too quickly. The Amish fear that the cohesion of family and neighborhood would then be destroyed. A compromise is the scooter, used especially by children to ride back and forth to school. Even grown-ups occasionally peddle one down the road to family or friends. In recent years a larger scooter for adults has been



introduced, but it has yet to find the wide-spread acceptance which the little scooter enjoys. A popular pastime nowadays for liberal Amish teenagers is in-line skating. Other toys with wheels such as roller-skates, wheelbarrows, wagons, and tricycles are also acceptable, for they have a limited range.

Although the Amish attitude towards motor vehicles seems to be contradictory, their stand serves their purposes well. A buggy ride to visit a family member or friend reinforces fellowship and family union, for there is plenty of time for conversation as the horse trots down country roads on the way to the family's destination. Family and church elders emphasize having time for each other and for guests.

Motorized forms of transportation are acceptable only when judged to be necessary and deemed not to be jeopardous to the unity of the ethnic society. The individuality and hectic associated with the motorized non-Amish world is foreign to their way of thinking. Utmost on their list of concerns is the bond within the family and the church community. Remaining close to the family and the neighbor cements the existing ties.

#### 4.2. The Church

Through the church Amish children discover at a very early age that they are a small link in a long chain rich in tradition. Not only are they a contributing part of a large family but they also share a deep common faith with their neighbors and relatives. Amish children belong first of all to God and then to the family, so their roots rest with the church as well as with their numerous kinsmen.

After a woman gives birth she routinely resumes church attendance five or six weeks later; customarily the baby is then taken along to the worship services. Thus socialization within the church context begins practically at birth. Besides conveying the ethnic traditions associated with their faith, the church infuses the children with a deep sense of belonging. Surrounded by kin and neighbors, they are secure in their world for there is always a helping hand nearby. Sharing the joys and tribulations of not only their families but also of a whole church district – yes, even of a settlement – fortifies their sense of

belonging. Regardless of age, they are present in church and included in the observance of special events. They well acquainted with all members of their congregation and are welcome at weddings, funerals, and all other celebrations taking place within their church district.

Behavior learned ranges from the simple, mundane act of sitting still during long worship services to the sacrosanct demeanor of humility which is an integral component of Amish society. Young people comprehend that they are expected to make their contribution for the good of all, sacrificing themselves for the commonwealth of the church. Boys are socialized so that they are prepared to shoulder the duties of being a preacher or bishop should the lot fall their way after baptism. However, striving for authority and supremacy over others is not an intrinsic behavior pattern within their society.

The Amish church does not proselytize, but theoretically new members could be accepted into a congregation if they demonstrate a willingness to adapt to the Amish way of living. In earlier generations a number of individuals did accept the Amish charter and become conforming members of the ethnic society. Many times marriage was the reason for the conversion. In this age it would be nearly impossible for people who have grown up in a worldly culture to adjust to another lifestyle so foreign to the one to which they are accustomed. The very few who did try abandoned the Amish world after a short time.

For Amish people the word church means congregation (*Gemeel/Gemein*) or church district, not a building. It is the gathering of families within a common area for worship services every second Sunday. The alternate or "off-Sunday" is used for resting from the strenuous six-day workweek or for visiting other church districts where family or friends reside.

There being no church building in Amish religious practice, all members of a congregation meet in the home or barn of one of the families in their district on church Sundays. In fixed sequence each family receives the congregation in their home; their turn will be approximately every eight months – that is once or twice a year. This practice is an equalizing and homogenizing component within their society.

Amish dwellings are constructed with enough capacity to house the sizeable families which assemble for the church services. A church district has an average of thirty-five families. When the congregation grows to be too large for comfortable accommodation in the homes, the district is divided and a new, additional district is created along lines formed by roads and streams. Thus the Amish succeed in keeping their group at a manageable size. In 1900 there were only six districts in Lancaster County; in 1950 there were twenty-five and by 1990 the number had expanded to eighty-five.<sup>56</sup>

Welcoming fellow believers in their home is a special event for Amish families. Weeks in advance a thorough cleaning of the house begins and any necessary repairs are made. Housewives are particularly concerned with presenting their home and their homemaker skills in a good light. In more modern homes, which have been built with a cellar, the church meeting is usually consigned to the basement. In older dwellings some ground-floor rooms are separated by moveable partitions, which are pushed aside in preparation for the Sunday service. Other hosting families furthermore use their barn as the place for the common Sunday service.

While worshipping, all but the elderly sit on backless hard wooden benches, which are transported from house to house along with the hymnals in a special, extra long, horse-drawn carriage reserved solely for that purpose. The benches serve not only as seats but also as tables. After the conclusion of every worship service the congregation sits together for a common meal. Tables are formed by joining and elevating two of the benches with special trestles. Usually there are two seatings for the dinner: the men eat first, followed by the women and children. If the room is large enough and only one sitting is necessary, men and women sit at separate tables, and the men are served first.

There is no rivalry among hostesses concerning the food provided, for each of these Sunday meals is nearly identical. Sunday is meant to be a day of rest, so the fare is simple, consisting of dishes which require no cooking. Goods from the housewife's canning shelf are offered, and her friends will also make tasty contributions to the meal.

Amish congregations still practice shunning (*Meidung*), but only if a member's conduct makes it unavoidable. All church members are expected to abide by the *Ordnung*. Those who have strayed from the fold or engaged in behavior considered to be unsuitable within the Amish realm will be chided by the church leaders and urged to reform their ways. Sufficient for dealing with minor offenses is a visit by the deacon and a minister, if the wrongdoers expresses regret and agrees to mend their ways. More serious violations require the admitting to one's fault in front of the congregation. The gravity of the transgression determines how the offender confesses at a special members' meeting following a Sunday worship service: merely sitting to confess is sufficient for a breach of lesser degree; kneeling is prescribed for more serious infractions. Major transgressions require instituting a six-week ban during which time the evildoer is expected to contemplate the misdeed.

During the Sunday procedure the accused have the chance to present their story to his church. The ministers recommend a punishment, which is presented to the congregation by the bishop. A verdict is issued only after all the members of the congregation are in unanimity. Should the transgressors be unbending and should they not amend their conduct, they will be excommunicated or, in the words of the Amish, put under the *Bann*. However, there is always a lifelong chance to rejoin the faith, providing the offender recants and confesses to the wrongdoings.

Anyone who has been excommunicated can expect to be shunned by all Amish people, including his/her own family. Shunning is social avoidance. Business dealings with scorned members are spurned. Church connections are stronger than family bonds in the case of excommunication: the scorned person is seated at a table with children and other non-members. Sharing conjugal pleasures with a shunned spouse is also forbidden.

The Amish practice of adult baptism, however, creates a unique situation in respect to the custom of social avoidance, for those who have not yet been baptized cannot be excommunicated. Thus, children, youth, and unbaptized adult members of Amish ethnicity are not subjected to the same ostracism as are their baptized wayward kin. Despite the harsh consequences, the custom of

shunning is a stabilizing force within the Amish culture, and in combination with the *Ordnung* it serves to fortify and cement their society as a whole.

#### 4.2.1. The Worship Service

The Amish worship service follows a predetermined pattern which is repeated week after week as the various congregations gather together for the Sunday religious ceremony. Devoid of the liturgical components found in high churches, the Amish service is meant to demonstrate humility, modesty, obedience, brotherly love, and submissiveness along with genuine devoutness. Since there is regularly one-hundred percent church attendance, the worship service is a unifying factor.

On a church Sunday after all the early-morning chores have been done, whole families make their way to the home where the worship service will take place that week. Those who live close by will arrive on foot; others will travel there with horse and buggy. Until the service begins the men and boys congregate outdoors or in the barn, while the women and girls gather together inside the home. They are dressed in their Sunday clothes, which are always conform to the *Ordnung*. After all are assembled and they have greeted one another, men and women file separately into the worship area through two different doorways. The elderly enter first to the front rows where there are chairs with backs; the younger people follow until they are all in place at the benches. Men and boys sit on one side of the room; women, girls and young children sit opposite facing them. After all have are standing in place, the men remove their hats on cue and in unison they reach up the hang them on nails which had been hammered into the rafters over their heads.

Church leaders sit in the front rows of the men's side. The preacher stands in the middle when he delivers his sermon. The site where the members gather is visibly void of all the symbols normally associated with a Christian church: nowhere is there an altar, a cross or crucifix, a pulpit, a baptismal font; nor are there any burning candles.

The church service is long, lasting possibly three hours or more. It begins with the signing of a hymn from the *Ausbund*, a book of century-old hymns.

Many of them were written during the sixteenth century by Amish believers while they were imprisoned in the tower in Passau. The singing is not unlike chants of the Middle Ages: long, slow, and drawn out. The actual worship service commences with the singing of hymns. During the chanting of the first hymn the leaders retire to another room for deliberation and guidance. The hymns are lengthy and the pace of the singing is deliberate and unhurried; time elapses slowly. The "Hymn of Praise" (*Loblied/Lobg'sang*) is always the second hymn sung. The first sermon lasts half an hour. After a silent prayer during which the worshippers kneel, the congregation rises for the reading of the scripture by the deacon.

The second or main sermon, preached by a different person, is at least an hour long. Another Bible text is read aloud after the conclusion of the second sermon. At the request of the main preacher for that day, testimonies to his discourse are then given by other ordained elders or sometimes by laymen too. After the minister makes his closing remarks, all kneel again while a prayer is read; then the congregation rises for the benediction, which is followed by a concluding hymn. The gathering departs from the room in reverse order: first to exit are the young; trailing them are the older church members.

#### 4.2.2. The Church Leaders

As Amish tradition dictates, church leaders are laymen without any theological credentials. Typically one church district has four ordained officials. Known as the *Diener* they include a bishop (*Vellicherdiener*), two ministers or preachers (*Breddicher*), and a deacon (*Armediener*). They are chosen by lot and officiate in their respective congregations for the rest of their lives without receiving any financial remuneration for their ministrations. This lottery procedure is based on the model which was employed by the eleven disciples' in choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot (Acts I: 23-26). The church leaders are always males who are residents of the church district where they serve.

The bishop is the uppermost executive within the Amish church. He is the helmsman for steering the direction in which the congregations will gravitate.

He regularly takes his turn at preaching one of the Sunday sermons; in addition, he is responsible for executing the rites at ordinations, baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Twice a year he also conducts a members' meeting, which is followed by the communion service and the foot-washing ceremony a few weeks later, if the whole congregation is in accord. It is the bishop who excommunicates, but only following a unanimous vote by the congregation. He likewise reinstates wayward members who have repented.

Besides being held in esteem for executing his duties during church services, the bishop is also recognized as the authority in the administration of the *Ordnung* within the Amish community. In Lancaster County generally a bishop – discernible on the slightly broader brim of his hat – is responsible to two church districts, his own congregation and an adjoining one; occasionally he will be asked to serve three districts until the preachers there have reached a certain maturity in age and experience. Within Amish circles the church districts are generally known by their bishop's name.

The preacher is the shepherd of his flock. His primary task is the preaching of the Sunday sermons, a duty he shares with his bishop. Sermons are not prepared ahead of time, for that would appear to be haughty and vainglorious. While the congregation is singing the first hymn at the opening of the worship service, the ordained church leaders retreat to another room where they pray for guidance and divine inspiration. It is decided then and there who will do the preaching that day. The sermons themselves are simple, extemporaneous discourses alternating between allusions to Bible passages and excerpts exhorting the congregation to tread the righteous path. A minister visiting in another church district may be requested to preach there too, if the congregations are in full-fellowship with each another. In the eyes of the Amish a "good" preacher is not necessarily a skillful orator but rather an unaffected man who is able to arouse the congregation emotionally; he himself may even shed a few tears during his sermon.

Along with the bishops the preachers play a significant role in maintaining church discipline within their congregations. It is expected that they and their families lead especially exemplary lives. A preacher might be called on to

accompany the deacon when, at the bishop's bidding, he visits an errant member of the church district. At the Holy Communion services the preachers assist the bishop with the distribution of the bread and wine.

Among the church leaders it is the deacon who, in some respects, has the most difficult standing of all, for he is often obligated to mediate with great diplomatic skill. Not only is he sent to counsel with errant members of his congregation, it is also he who conveys the declaration of excommunication to members who have strayed too far from the Amish fold. His tasks likewise include delivering the good tidings to repentant members when the ban on them has been lifted. He serves as the intermediary between families and church districts when a young man wishing to wed approaches him, and it is the deacon of the bride's congregation who officially announces the upcoming wedding.

During the regular worship service the deacon reads passages from the Holy Scripture and leads prayers. He also assists the bishop at baptisms and during Holy Communion. The deacon fills the role of the church district's treasurer, raising and allotting funds as deemed necessary by the church members. Alms for impoverished Amish people are collected by the deacon, and he attends to the distribution of the money to the needy.

Though not an ordained church elder, the leader of the hymn singing (*Vorsinger*) plays a significant role during the Sunday worship service. The *Ausbund* contains the texts of hymns, but there are no recorded music notes to indicate the melody. The tunes are all of oral tradition, having been passed down from generation to generation. The hymns are sung in unison; there are no separate voices for harmonizing. During the worship service the *Vorsinger* initiates the rendering of a hymn by sounding the pitch. He intones the first syllable, and the rest of the congregation immediately joins him in the singing. This procedure is repeated line for line, verse after verse. The hymns are always chanted *a cappella* – there are no accompanying music instruments.

The *Vorsinger* has received no musical training, but he is recognized by his fellows as being gifted. In one congregation there may be any number of men with musical talent. At the Sunday service a nod of a head in one direction will



indicate which man will assume the role of *Vorsinger* that day. In some congregations interested men occasionally gather together to practice singing the hymns. It is a way to preserve the tradition and to retain a unified melody for each hymn. Because there are no music notes, the same hymn may well be sung in varying tempi or with slightly diverging melodies in different church districts.

#### 4.2.3. The Language

High German is the idiom of the worship service, for it was the language of the Amish forefathers. The hymnals and the Bibles are printed in German; in fact, the typeface found in the books is often the old German script. The *Ausbund* is a book of 140 hymns covering more than 800 pages, but the latter part of it also contains stories of the persecution the Amish had to endure during their early days in Europe. The *Martyrs Mirror*, a series of poignant narratives depicting the unforgotten trials and tribulations of the Amish forebears has been recorded in German. A copy of the book can be found in nearly every Amish home. The songbooks used at the young peoples' Sunday night singings are also printed in German.

In general, German is the language used throughout all the religious aspects of Amish life. Sermons are preached in what the Amish consider to be High German. Over the years there has been a strain on the purity of the idiom used in church services. The quality of the German spoken in their Sunday presentations depends on the competence of the individual preacher. Many frequently interweave "Dutchisms", *i. e.* forms of dialect, into the sermons they deliver with commitment.

The Amish communicate orally with each other in a unique German dialect locally called "Pennsylvania Dutch," a mislabeling which evolved from the German word *Deutsch*, which means German. In the vernacular their idiom is known as (*Pennsilfaanisch*) *Deitsch*. The mother tongue of the Lancaster County Amish is rooted in their ancestry; their language is closely related to the dialect of the Palatinate, from whence they immigrated to America.

At the turn of the twentieth century there were many people of German origin working on farms and in related agricultural enterprises in Lancaster County and in the surrounding counties which had also been settled by German immigrants. Most of these people had retained the language of their heritage, although it had been modified and altered through exposure to the English tongue. A century ago members of all religions with German origins – Amish and other sectarians as well as Lutheran, Reformed, or Moravian – had a common daily language, the "Dutch" dialect. English was learned at school and/or in business dealings with English-speaking merchants. The slogan "plain and fancy" was used to differentiate the sectarians from the more liberal German-speaking population.

Having gradually been permeated with residents of diverse customs and conventions, the counties with a German heritage grew culturally more diffuse and the English language came to be the dominant idiom. Today there is an ever decreasing number of "fancy" rural folk who are able to speak the German dialect. Some of the conservative sectarians still use it as the language of their homes. For the Amish it is one of their main forms of identity, and it serves to separate them from the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, a command of English is necessary even for the Amish, and so the language of their schools is English. Textbooks written in English are the basis for learning, and all lessons, except German, are taught in the English language. From the very first day of school English is the language spoken in the classroom and in the schoolyard. The use of dialect in the classroom is forbidden except for very rare occasions. The rule is obeyed with seemingly little effort, even by the youngest.

The measure of English that first-graders command when they enter school varies. Today most have some passive knowledge of the language which they learned just by listening when opportunities arose. Others who have had more contact with "English" neighbors and friends are able to speak it with a certain amount of fluency. In past generations this was not always the case; many young children had learning difficulties during the first year of school because of their deficits in the English language. Some of the older members of the

church, who in their youth had been taught by a public school teacher, expressed concern that the English of today's Amish children is not quite as good as it was in past generations.

Weekly and monthly Amish publications such as *Die Botschaft*, *The Blackboard Bulletin*, and *Diary* are printed in English. Personal letters to friends and family members are also composed in the English language, although a greeting, a phrase, or the closing might be in a form of German. The dialect, however, does not lend itself well to written composition.

#### 4.2.4. The Rituals

Special religious occasions require particular observance. However, the ceremonial rites typical of other churches are lacking in the traditional patterns of the Amish services. Baptisms, weddings, funerals, ordinations, and communion with the accompanying foot-washing compose the list of the church rituals which have exceptional significance within Amish circles. Covenants made at these ceremonies are sacrosanct; violation of the promises made results in excommunication and shunning.

##### 4.2.4.1. Ordination

The formal installation of a bishop, preacher, or deacon is known as ordination. An investiture may be necessitated by the serious illness or death of a church elder or the formation of an additional church district. Only after a unanimous vote by the congregation will the ordination process be set into motion. The course for choosing a new leader by lot is always the same. An ordination is frequently scheduled to coincide with the semiannual celebration of Holy Communion because it reinforces the solemnity of the occasion. On ordination Sundays all baptized members of the church district remain present after the close of the worship service. One by one they are called to come forward to the deacon and whisper the name of a man they deem worthy of becoming a preacher. The deacon relays the suggestions to the bishop. Women are not eligible to hold office, but they too are asked to make a nomination.

Those men who have been named by three or more members are considered to be aspirants for the role. For each of the candidates a song book is placed on a bench or table. One of the hymnals contains a slip of paper bearing an appropriate Bible verse (Proverbs 16:33 – "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." or Acts 1:24 – "And they prayed and said Thou, Lord which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen".) Each man picks a book; the man who draws the volume with the piece of paper concealed between its leaves will then be ordained as the new preacher. He rises to be ordained by the bishop, who places his hands on the man's head while giving him the charge. The bishop then greets the new preacher with a handshake and the Holy Kiss.

The minister to whom the lot falls will take on his obligations without complaint, for at baptism he made a promise to do so, should he be called. Although there will be an increase in status for the new preacher and his family, many families are distraught by the burden; but they submit themselves to what is considered to be God's will. The Amish believe that their leaders should be determined by God, not by church politics.

When the need for a new bishop arises, one of the preachers from that congregation will be selected to fill the vacant office. He to will be chosen by lot in the same fashion utilized for selecting a new minister. Neither deacons, preachers, nor bishops are ever summoned from another church district; they are always members of the congregations where they serve.

#### 4.2.4.2. Communion and Foot-washing

Firmly anchored in Amish church history are their rituals of communion and foot-washing. Twice a year, as was decreed by Jakob Ammann in the seventeenth century, Amish congregations gather for the celebration of Holy Communion. Customarily the ceremony is observed once in spring at Easter time and again in fall during a normal Sunday worship service. All members in good standing participate in the ritual of Holy Communion, which will be celebrated only if complete harmony exists within the church district. If there is disagreement among members regarding any topic, communion will be

postponed until the point at issue has been resolved and peace has been restored within the congregation.

Two weeks before the scheduled communion a preparatory worship service (*Attungsgeme*) takes place. This special service is extremely long, often lasting well into the late afternoon. All members are urged to search their soul to determine whether they are in agreement with the *Ordnung* and at peace with their fellow church members; they must be unfettered in order for all to participate in communion.

At this service the bishop discusses the topics which were deliberated at the bishops' conference and at the leaders' meetings conducted previous to the preparatory worship service. Problems facing the settlement as a whole, such as the behavior of Amish youth, or transgressions detected within the local congregation are presented for consideration. The bishop generally indicates the path to be followed in unraveling the difficulties, but laymen are free to express their opinions, if they are well-founded. When all members of the congregation are in accord with one another, the communion service can be celebrated.

A day of fasting precludes the communion service; Good Friday especially lends itself to this practice. The beginning of a worship service with communion (*Grossgeme*) is identical to that of a normal Sunday service, but the sermons at the *Grossgeme* last countless hours. Visiting bishops and ministers help with the preaching then, for the messages begin with the Creation and continue on through Biblical history till the suffering of Christ. As the main sermon draws to a close, the celebration of Holy Communion commences. Bread and wine, symbols of the body and blood of Christ, are brought into the room. The bishop breaks bread with each individual, and then the church members partake of the wine from a common cup.

The peculiar Amish practice of foot-washing follows their communion celebration. Jesus, the archetype of humbleness, washed his disciples' feet at the celebration of the Last Supper. After the Amish congregation has divided according to sex and separated into pairs, towels and warm water are provided for the culmination of the ritual. In remembrance of Christ's act the Amish

likewise display humility as they stoop – not kneel – to wash the feet of one of their brethren. After the pair has finished washing each other's feet, they exchange a Holy Kiss and a blessing. As the church members depart from the worship service, they give the deacon a donation for the poor fund. This collection of alms is the only time a monetary offering is taken during an Amish church service.

#### 4.2.4.3. Baptism

In order to partake of the bread and wine, one has to be a baptized church member. Baptism, one of the issues which originally caused the Anabaptists to break away from Zwingli during the Reformation, is the most meaningful of the church covenants for the Amish. They practice adult baptism, believing that only then is a person mature enough to make a sincere commitment to the church and a Christian way of life. Baptism in the Amish faith signals a coming of age, a passing from adolescence to adulthood. Young people join the church generally between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two; on the average, girls are younger than boys at the time of baptism.

A period of learning and serious contemplation precedes the actual rite. Amish youth desiring to become members of the church participate in biweekly study sessions conducted by the preachers of their congregation. The Dordrecht Confession of Faith serves as the basis for instruction; in addition, various aspects of the *Ordnung* are considered. After a few months of preparation the young people are exhorted to pray and to ponder over their intention, for the decision to join the Amish church is more than just a symbolic formality; it has far-reaching consequences for the rest of the young person's life. The aspirants are admonished to forego church membership rather than to make a promise which they will be unable keep. At this time young men also promise to accept God's will by becoming a preacher or even a bishop should the lot fall to them during ordination proceedings.

The baptism ritual is performed during Sunday worship in the weeks previous to the preparatory and communion services. The applicants are especially careful to conform to the Amish dress code that day. At the

beginning of the service the young people who have met with the preachers and bishop for one last time file into the room and take their seats near the ministers. It is a very solemn occasion for all. At the conclusion of the second sermon the candidates are called to kneel, indicating a symbol of their readiness to join the church.

The applicants are asked if they are willing to forswear the world and be obedient only to God and his church, if they are willing to remain faithful until death, and if they avow that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Following the affirmative answers, the bishop approaches the first candidate; the deacon pours water into the bishop's hands which are cupped on the head of the aspirant. As the water trickles down their faces, new female members receive the Holy Kiss from the deacon's wife; the males are greeted by the bishop. It is a moment filled with emotion for both the newly baptized and the congregation.

#### 4.2.4.4. Weddings

In Amish society nuptial vows may be exchanged only between baptized members of the Amish church. The desire to marry is one motivation for young people to be baptized into the church, for those who wed outside the faith will be excommunicated. Marriage is a life-long commitment for them, as divorce is prohibited. In a few isolated instances couples who have irreconcilable differences live separately.

Courting is a private matter; intentions to marry are not made public until proclaimed by the church deacon. However, the bride and groom may have to endure a lot of teasing from siblings before the announcement is made. Young people usually meet their future mates at Sunday-night singings, which they regularly attend during the *rumspringa* phase of late adolescence. Practical skills have high priority on the slate of attributes sought in a mate: a young person looks for a compatible partner who shows promise of becoming an able farmer or resourceful housewife. Marriage between second cousins or even cousins, widespread in previous times, is now ordinarily avoided.

A young man woos his girl on Saturday nights, when he visits her at her home. Usually her parents have already retired for the night. The custom of bundling is still practiced only in the most conservative districts. Bundling, an old courtship habit remnant from times when houses were unheated, means the fully clad courting couple lie together on a bed.

Hostetler gives the median age at first marriage for young women as just under twenty-two years and for men, more than twenty-three years.<sup>57</sup> The wedding season in the Lancaster County settlement lasts from late October till early December. Marriages involving widows or widowers, however, are celebrated any time of the year. November is commonly designated as the wedding month, for during that time of year farm chores are at their lowest level, freeing families to journey greater stretches in order to attend the weddings of their kinfolk. The bride's family, who host the event, also has more time to ready the house and do the cooking in preparation for the wedding, which traditionally is celebrated on a Tuesday or Thursday.

A young man who is planning on marriage visits the deacon of his home church district to declare his intentions. After the deacon has obtained the formal consent of the bride and her parents, he confers with his counterpart in the bride's church district. If no deterrents have been found, the couple is "published", as the Amish say when the plans are announced in church a few weeks in advance of the date. The young couple is now expected and prepared to forsake their youthful *rumspringa* and enter into adulthood. After the couple's intent has been made known, guests are personally invited to attend the wedding. Those visitors who live far away will receive a written invitation, however.

Whole families share the joy of the young couple as they enter into matrimony, but the pomp and pageantry associated with "English" nuptial celebrations is visibly missing. The bride wears an Amish-style dress in the color of her choice, but on this special day her cape and apron are white, a sign of chastity. Only after death will she again be clothed in white. Her mother and sisters have been busy sewing so that they too are able to don dresses in the "bride's color" for the wedding. The groom, doubtlessly sporting a new suit for



the wedding, is attired in the black garments typical for Amish men. At the ceremony there is no exchange of wedding rings, for the wearing of jewelry would be against the *Ordnung*. Once married, however, the man will begin to grow a beard.

The marriage service is similar to Sunday worship. The main sermon is preached by the bishop, and he conducts the actual wedding ceremony. The vows taken are akin to those found in the nuptials of other Protestant faiths. The bride and groom promise to hold, cherish, and be faithful to one another until parted by death. The ceremony is a solemn occasion for all. However, the rest of the day is spent with festivities enjoyed by the newly-weds in the company of family and friends.

A generous meal abundant with foods typical of the area is served in whatever number of seatings is necessary to accommodate all the guests. Outsiders never cease to be amazed at the quantity and quality of it all. "If eating were an Olympic event, the Pennsylvania Dutch would surely win gold medals," writes Kent Britt.<sup>58</sup> The bridal party sits in the most prominent place at the table. During the day when the guests are not eating, they play games or sing slow and fast tunes. The celebration might last till midnight.

The couple does not go on a honeymoon, but they usually go calling during the weeks following the wedding. They visit relatives – aunts, uncles, and cousins – throughout the settlement before they finally immerse themselves in their daily routine. In some church districts it is customary for the wedding guests to present the couple with a gift before or at the wedding; in others the newly-weds have practical objects needed for their new household bestowed upon them as they make their visits.

#### 4.2.4.5. Funerals

The demise of a friend or family member is a sad occasion in any society. Within the Amish culture death is acknowledged as being God's will, regardless of the circumstances under which it comes to pass. Amish find consolation in the Biblical promise of an afterlife in Heaven. Accidents and violent deaths are lamented, but even they are accepted as divine bidding.

Families care for the infirm and elderly, thereby allowing the majority to die at home amidst their loved ones. The grieving family has the emotional and tangible support of neighbors, who take over household and farm chores until the deceased has been inhumed. They also dig the grave, serve as pallbearers, and cook the meal which is served after the interment at the cemetery has been completed.

Usually the dead are prepared for burial by their immediate family. Lancaster County, however, does have funeral directors who cater to the Amish trade. A mortician's craft is indispensable if the body is to be embalmed. The corpse is washed and dressed all in white. Men are clothed in a shirt and pants. Women are arrayed in a dress along with a cape and cap, usually those which were worn by the departed at her wedding. The body is laid in a bare wooden coffin of the simplest kind, and the bier is moved to a back room of the home. In some districts it is customary to have an all night wake.

Members of the church district where the deceased resided and relatives who have been personally invited attend the funeral, which usually takes place three days after the death of the departed member. Depending on local custom, there may be an obituary published in a regional newspaper. The guests wear black, the color of mourning. Women will continue to wear black dresses for a period of mourning which can continue for an interval of one whole year, if the deceased was a member of the immediate family.

At the funeral service neither sermon is a eulogy but rather each is an entreaty to the believers on the virtues of following a righteous path and an admonition to the congregation on the consequences of succumbing to evil doings. Prayers are said, but generally there is no singing. At the close of the service the mourners file by the open coffin for a last farewell as the closest family members stand nearby.

The coffin is then hoisted onto the horse-drawn hearse for transport to the site of interment at the nearest Amish cemetery. A long line of carriages follow the hearse at a slow pace to the graveyard. With the aid of poles and belts the coffin is lowered into the grave, and then the pallbearers begin to fill it with earth. Interrupting the shoveling, the preacher may read a hymn. After the

grave has been filled, the mourners return to the home of the deceased to share a common meal.

There are no flowers or other trappings of "English" burials found on Amish cemeteries. Family members are usually interred next to each other, and graves are marked with a simple headstone. The Amish in Lancaster County maintain their own graveyards, but in other areas where the ethnic population is insignificant, they bury their dead in community cemeteries.

#### 4.2.5. The Amish Settlement and National Contacts

Because the Lancaster County settlement is the most densely populated of all the Amish settlements, it means that branches of extended families usually live close to each other or are at least within visiting distance. There are innumerable familial connections among the various church districts. Since young people are required to marry within the church, most families in the settlement are, in fact, closely or distantly related through blood lines or marriage. It appears that nearly all Amish members of a single settlement are acquainted with one another.

Lancaster County being such a large settlement, a need for cohesion among the various church districts is evident. Customarily the eldest bishop summons all the other bishops within the settlement to two convocations per a year – one in spring and one in fall. Here they discuss and deliberate on all matters concerning the *Ordnung*. New innovations which are threatening to disrupt the community are weighed for their value and their compatibility with Amish virtues. The bishops also consult one another for advice on the handling of difficulties within their individual congregations. The meetings adjourn after the bishops have established further guidelines for the direction in which the settlement will proceed.

As the number of church districts increased, the sum of the ordained bishops in the settlement multiplied in correlation. Meetings of a small council composed of senior bishops whose age and tenure in office have qualified them for expanded leadership has evolved as an effective way for broaching the discussion of problems which have arisen within the settlement. The council's

opinions and suggestions, which are by no means final nor decisive, are relayed to the remaining bishops for deliberation at the semiannual bishops' meetings. In turn, the bishops inform their church districts about the resolutions which were made at the bishops' gatherings.

In Lancaster County the bishops' conference precedes a convention of all ordained church leaders by a few weeks. The number of bishops, preachers, and deacons in attendance at the leaders' assembly expanded to the point where it was no longer possible to find a site large enough to accommodate all the church elders. As a result, two groups were created. The settlement was divided along Route 340, forming a Northern and a Southern Leaders' Meeting.

Population density among the Amish combined with the squeeze of urban expansion resulted in a lack of cultivatable farmland for Amish farmers in Lancaster County. One outcome of this dilemma was the migration of families to other areas within the state where land was available at an affordable price. Such a solution is always the last choice, for it separates nuclear families from their extended families and church members from their home districts. However, when no alternative seemed available, groups have moved to other areas and established new settlements there.

At times when there has been friction within a settlement because of too strict adherence to the *Ordnung*, members in disagreement have split away and formed new settlements where they are free to practice their religion in a more liberal atmosphere. In other cases a conservative group, dissatisfied with lax church discipline, leaves and settles elsewhere. During the next generation communication with the extended family in the old settlement generally remains intact unless the family also has been divided by the discord. In addition, some families seek an environment where their children will be less exposed to undesirable "worldly" ways and therefore move to more isolated rural areas.

Usually these new settlements have retained their affiliation with the Old Order Amish. Internal strife has, however, caused splinter groups to form and disassociate themselves from the Old Order church. In Lancaster County the Beachy Amish broke away from the main denomination in 1910 and the New

Order Amish, in 1966, to found congregations more progressive than the Old Order Amish. However, the more liberal sects constitute only a small portion – about fifteen percent – of the total Amish population in the area.

The Lancaster County settlement has spawned sister settlements in twelve other counties. The first new district was established in Lebanon County in 1940; the remaining settlements were founded between 1964 and 1978. These settlements have remained in affiliation or in "full fellowship" with each other. Full fellowship means that there is mutual understanding between the churches and that there is common practice in the implementation of the *Ordnung*. Visiting preachers to other churches in full fellowship with his own may be called upon to deliver a sermon there; it is a sign of trust and tradition within the Amish society.

Families keep in touch with each other through letters and visits. If great distance makes it necessary, a driver with a van is hired for transportation to a church district in a far corner of the county or to a distant settlement elsewhere in the state. A wedding or the death of a migrant family member in another state might even be cause for a trip beyond the borders of the Pennsylvania.

The Amish community keeps abreast of nationwide milestones within their ethnic group by subscribing to weekly and monthly periodicals which cater especially to their needs. Births, weddings, deaths, and migrations are announced and the arrival of visitors from other communities is generally mentioned for all to read. The most popular journal is *Die Botschaft*, a weekly English-language newspaper, written and printed by the Amish in Lancaster County. The Amish are zealous in keeping records of their families and relationships. *The Diary*, a monthly periodical devoted to recording local Amish history, is also of Lancaster County origin. Issued by Pathway Publishers in Alymer, Ontario, Canada, *Blackboard Bulletin* is a monthly magazine geared to the wants of teachers and those affiliated with schools.

Pertinent to the Amish custom of visiting within the settlement is a roster of family relationships and residences. As the need arises, the *Directory*, as it is commonly called, is published. It provides a listing of the Lancaster-County Amish families with their names and addresses. Another catalog or directory

contains a register of Amish shops and services located throughout the United States and Canada.

#### 4.3. The School

Traditionally the American education system aims to imbue students with a sense of social consciousness and civic responsibility. Children are trained, in general, for life in their society; democracy is maintained and strengthened through an educated citizenry. The Amish too strive to educate their children for life – but for a life lived within their ethnic community. Therefore the Amish needs and demands on education deviate from the norms of the average American school system. "...the primary function of the Amish school is not education in the narrow sense of instruction, but the creation of a learning environment continuous with Amish culture."<sup>59</sup>

Foremost for the Amish community and for Amish parents is that the children remain true to their faith. They disapprove of learning that disjoins young people from their heritage. "The Amish are not opposed to education per se, but they disdain public education and higher education that would pull children away from their families and their traditions."<sup>60</sup> It is an anomaly that the Amish, although objecting to higher education for their own youth, are willing to use the services of well-educated and trained professionals.

Among the Amish the call for separation from public schools and the establishment of their own parochial schools swelled as the number of consolidated public schools increased within the state of Pennsylvania. Various procedures for handling the problem of Amish schooling evolved within the diverse local public school districts throughout Lancaster County. During the second half of the twentieth century some districts, seeking cooperation, established special segregated public elementary schools solely for the education of Amish pupils. There the children were taught by qualified non-ethnic teachers. Other districts were less generous, forcing the Amish to attend public schools or found parochial ones of their own.

However, the one-room Amish schools which were run by public school districts gradually became too great a financial burden for tax-payers. Costs for

the teachers' salaries along with the upkeep and repair of the buildings usurped funds which otherwise would have been available for the regular public schools. In addition, the high Amish birthrate resulted in a constant increase in the number of Amish school-age children. Public-school districts were unwilling and unable to shoulder the additional obligations connected with constructing new school buildings needed for Amish students.

The population expansion within the Amish society also made parallel demands on the ethnic community. Where there no longer were public one-room schools for Amish children to attend, parochial schools had to be built. In Lancaster County there were three Amish schools in 1950; in 1975, sixty-two; over 140 parochial schools were being operated there by the Amish community during the school year 1997-98.

There is very little bureaucracy necessary for running an Amish school. School districts are formed according the number of pupils within a specific neighborhood. The student population of one school usually varies between twenty and forty children. A teacher's helper is often hired to assist a few days per week if the number of scholars is too great. Analogous to the management of church-district size, populous school districts are also split when they become too large. If the number of school-age children within one school district increases to the point when they all no longer fit into the classroom, the district is divided in two. An additional schoolhouse for the newly created district is built on land donated by one of the Amish property owners from the neighborhood.

#### 4.3.1. The School Board

School districts are organized and run by an elected school board, which shoulders an assortment of responsibilities. Three to five fathers of scholars serve on the board for terms of five to six years. Their most important task is ascertaining that the children in their district receive a good education. Lapp presents an Amish definition for good education:

A good education does not mean simply book learning, or the acquiring of a great store of information, or a scholarship that has mastered the

many branches of learning that are taught in the schools, colleges, and universities of this day. It does mean, however, a store of practical knowledge and skill, a knowledge that can discern between that which is good and useful and ennobling, and that which is a useless accumulation of learning in worldly arts and sciences. It means a discipline of character and intellect, which will be an aid in living a useful life.<sup>61</sup>

The board has a broad spectrum of duties: they select and hire the teacher; they levy and collect the Amish school tax, plan the budget, and regulate the finances for the school district; they choose the textbooks and make sure that the necessary supplies are available; and they cooperate with the caretakers to see that the building is kept clean and in good repair. In addition, the board finds and hires a van driver to provide daily transportation for the teacher, and they accompany her on visits to other schools. In general, they make all the decisions concerning the management of their neighborhood school.

All the parents with children in attendance at a specific school convene there once a year for a formal board meeting. If necessary, new board members are elected at the annual assembly. At these gatherings the chairman of the board reviews the history of Amish education. He thereby emphasizes the trials and tribulations past generations endured in order for Amish children to be schooled according to Amish beliefs. Talking about the school and the classroom atmosphere, all parents participate in the concluding discussion. The teacher is also present, making her own statements concerning the students and their learning. Praise along with suggestions for improvement is heard. The evening ends on a pleasing note with the singing of songs.

There is also a monthly board meeting for consultation with the teacher. At these meetings the teacher is paid and any unsolved problems are discussed. Advice is given, common goals are set, and parental requests are contemplated. Although the teacher may suggest textbooks for classroom use, it is the school board who makes the final decision. Visits to other schools are planned to reinforce ties within the ethnic community and to gather ideas for their own school. Sometimes the teacher accompanies the board members, for she may profit from viewing the efforts of one of her colleagues.



As is true with public education, Amish schools need financial resources to subsist. Amish parents with children attending school pay tuition. In 1998 the annual amount was more than one-hundred dollars per scholar,<sup>i</sup> and the fee was expected to rise in the following year. In addition, all Amish families within one school district contribute a specified amount for the running of their school. Those with school-age children pay more than other families. All property owners in Lancaster County cities, boroughs, and townships pay assessed property taxes for the financing of public schools. Thus the Amish pay double, for they are not exempted from paying the property tax.

Additional funds for keeping the Amish schools in running order are raised by selling submarine sandwiches, by running a food stand at a public sale within the district, or by retailing hand-made quilts. A committee of three fathers serves as caretakers for four years. They are in charge of painting and repairing the building. Before a new school year begins they call for the parents to help. Fathers then spend a day doing whatever repairs and remodeling are required, while the mothers do a thorough cleaning of the facilities.

#### 4.3.2. The Schoolhouse

The schoolhouse is typically a one-room school building in which all eight grades are taught by one teacher. A few two-classroom school buildings are located sporadically throughout the settlement. Occasionally there are mixed schools housing classes with a combination of Amish and conservative Mennonite scholars who live in the same neighborhood.

Sometimes the buildings are former public schools which were purchased by the Amish for the purpose of establishing their own parochial schools. These schools were constructed with bricks or wooden slatting. New schools are generally built out of low cost cinder blocks. The buildings are usually painted a light color: white, egg-shell, cream, pale yellow, or another pleasant

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<sup>i</sup> The 1997-98 the annual tuition fee in the Hickory Grove and East Gordon School Districts was \$110 per scholar. Parents with school children paid \$255 per year; others who reside in the district were assessed \$90 per head. Rates in other Amish school districts may vary to some degree. In addition, Amish property owners paid taxes – used for maintaining public schools – amounting to hundreds of dollars per year.

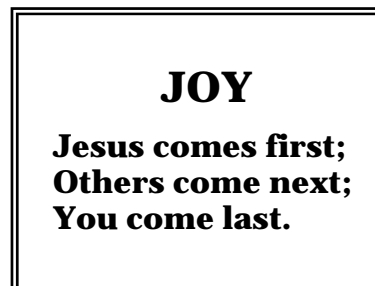
hue. One wall is windowless; on the opposite side is the main entrance. The windows on the other two sides provide light for the classroom. For safety reasons a second, narrower door ends one row of windows. A small tower with a rope-pulled bell often crowns the roof. The school is surrounded by a yard used as a playground during recess and lunchtime. Playground equipment such as swings, see-saws, basketball baskets, and generally a baseball diamond are there for the students' enjoyment. Outdoor toilet facilities or even old-fashioned outhouses stand in the corner of the schoolyard, and a hand pump for drawing water from a well is part of the standard furnishings.

Indoors as well, the school appears to be antiquated and obsolescent. A pot-bellied coal stove supplies the room with warmth when temperatures are low, while the windows provide natural light. Additional illumination, if necessary, is provided by gas lamps like those found in Amish homes. Window shades – in Amish tradition generally half-drawn – serve as sun screens. A few schools do, however, have electricity and/or central heating, remnants of their former owners. Often these are the buildings in which both Amish and conservative Mennonite scholars are taught.

The teacher's desk is positioned in a corner facing the scholars, and frequently a platform covers a portion of the floor space next to the desk. Bookshelves line the walls, and the blackboard stretches across the front of the room. Above the blackboard cards indicating the correct penmanship of the letters of the alphabet and the numerals, beginning with one and ending with zero, have been fastened to the wall. Often a similar sequence arranged in a row below displays the old German script.

The name and grade of each scholar is posted in large lettering along the walls for all to see. Student artwork decorates the schoolroom, while here and there a typical Amish maxim meant to guide the daily lives of the children is hung where it is easily visible. One saying repeatedly seen in the schools typifies the Amish demeanor of submissiveness: it shows the

Figure 4.6.: Amish Saying



it shows the

insignificance the Amish attach to individuality, their emphasis on the importance of helping others, and the anchor of their faith.

The classroom is by no means dull and drab. Teacher and students alike trim it from corner to corner with streamers, banners, and student art and crafts, which vary according to the different holidays and special seasons of the year: autumn, Thanksgiving, winter, Christmas, Valentine's Day, spring, and Easter. The scholars enjoy changing the decorations in their classroom as the school year advances.

Desks are arranged in straight rows with an broader middle aisle where sometimes a table stands to serve as a work bench, as a counter for displaying crafts, or as a base for playing board games when inclement weather makes outdoor activities during lunch and recess impracticable. Usually the desks are century-old models with flip-up seats and ornamental metal side supports which are fastened to the floor. When new schools are constructed and traditional seating is not available, desks from a later era are installed, though the modern equipment found in contemporary public schools is not used.

A walled-off corner of the schoolroom is used as a cloakroom, a place for the scholars to hang up their jackets and hats or bonnets and to deposit their lunch boxes. Often the cloakroom contains additional cupboards for storage. The brooms, brushes, and shovels needed to keep the schoolroom tidy are also kept there. Indoors many schools also have a large camping cooler filled with water. The contents are more temperate than the water drawn from the hand pump outdoors in the schoolyard, and the children do not have to leave the classroom to get a drink when they are thirsty.

#### 4.3.3. The Scholars

When Amish children begin school at the age of six, they enter the third stage of life. As long as they are attending school, they are known within the Amish world as scholars. Embarking upon the formal learning phase signifies the first step alone outside the refuge of the family. However, the procedure is rarely traumatic for Amish children, for they have often visited the school with their parents during their pre-school years. Occasionally they may have even

accompanied an older sibling or neighborhood friend and spent a few hours in the classroom in order to become acquainted with the teacher and the school procedure before their own schooling began.

There may be a few other first-graders, or a single child may be the only beginner. However, the new scholars are already familiar with the other children who attend the same school; they are their siblings, members of their extended families, or friends from the same neighborhood. They also know where their seats will be, for Amish schools still follow a traditional seating arrangement: first-graders sit in the front rows on one side of the aisle, second-graders on the other side. The older scholars, placed according to grades, sit behind the younger children. In some schools there may be a grade level without scholars.

The biggest hurdle the novice scholars have to clear is language practice. At home they have been speaking the German dialect with both family and friends. At church services they were introduced to High German. At school they are expected to switch completely to the English idiom. Within a few months of speaking, reading, and writing English, most of the scholars have a command of the language, which they will be required to use periodically throughout the rest of their lives.

The prevalent docile personality of the Amish is also apparent in the school. Having already learned to sit quietly at church, most students effortlessly adjust to learning in the hushed atmosphere of the classroom. Generally they are respectful to the teacher and helpful to one another. Older scholars who have finished their assignments might read a book or move forward, sliding onto the seat next to a younger pupil in order to help him with his lessons.

Cooperation and sharing are evident as well during recess and lunchtime. Scholars bring a packed lunch from home. Their lunchbox usually contains a portion of juice, a sandwich, fruit, dessert, and a "snack". In Amish word usage a snack means pretzels, chips, corn curls, or other similar food to nibble. It is common for the children to share their snacks with each other.

Daily there are two recess breaks, one in mid-morning and the other in mid-afternoon. At recess time and during the pause for lunch the scholars have opportunity to release their pent up energy by playing games and exercising outdoors. Although some boys from the middle grades might grapple and wrestle among themselves, there is no intent to do serious fighting, so injuries seldom occur.

Most of the games which the children play during their breaks involve a group of scholars and include a lot of interaction among the participants. Some of their favorites are prisoner's base, hounds and deer, fox and geese, and calling over. However, by far the most popular game is baseball (or softball, which is played with a larger, somewhat softer ball.) It is not uncommon to see all of the older scholars and the teacher engaged in a stimulating softball match during recess. Since the teacher determines the time when recess comes to an end, an exciting game will effectively lengthen the interval outdoors. Only the first- and second-graders, considered too young to participate and therefore not chosen to be on one of the teams, busy themselves with other activities during a baseball match. But even they are found playing in groups rather than alone.

Teamwork is also required of the scholars for keeping the classroom in order. Small groups of two or three – boys and girls alike – willingly sweep the floor and tidy up the room. They assume the responsibility readily, for at home they already learned to carry out simple tasks at an early age.

#### 4.3.4. The Teacher

Teachers in Amish schools generally are young, unmarried Amish girls with good academic ability who are dedicated to conveying their knowledge and their Amish heritage to their young charges. Circumstances deeming it necessary, conservative Mennonite women also may be hired to teach Amish children. When the young women marry, they customarily end their "career" in the classroom in order to devote their lives to their husbands and children. An Amish woman who does not marry can stay on and make teaching her vocation indefinitely. In Lancaster County male teachers in Amish schools are extremely rare.

An Amish teacher has no special academic training beyond her own eight years of education in an Amish school. She is hired on the basis of her exemplary Christian character, her good scholastic standing, and her interest in working together with the school board, the parents, and the scholars. She has gathered experience in dealing with children within her own family, and additionally she may have acquired direct classroom practice by working initially as a teacher's helper in a school with a large number of scholars. A few teachers occasionally take correspondence courses to improve their academic background, but this practice is sometimes frowned upon by church elders, for they fear that it could lead to a desire for formal education, *i.e.* a high school or even a college diploma.

The teacher's school day begins early in the morning. Most likely a van service provides her transportation to and from the school, for she usually does not live in the neighborhood of the school where she teaches. If the weather is chilly or cold, she starts the fire before the scholars arrive. She greets each pupil upon arrival and is in charge of organizing the daily plan. Her personality and attitude are important in setting the classroom atmosphere. Her own interests are reflected in the creative activities undertaken by the scholars. After the children are dismissed at the close of the school day, she remains in the building, correcting papers until her van driver arrives to convey her home. There she helps her family in their daily undertakings.

Teachers receive support for their efforts from the local school board as well as from the other parents with children in the school. A teacher usually has to deal with a limited number of parents, for families often have three or more children concurrently attending school. Twice a year teachers in Lancaster County gather together to discuss problems facing them at the local level and to exchange materials which have been used successfully in their classrooms. Inspiration for new activities is culled as ideas are traded among the participants. The teachers' meetings serve not only as a form of further education for the young women but also as a social gathering for those charged with educating Amish youth. School districts rotate turns in hosting these semi-annual gatherings, which last an entire afternoon.

The *Blackboard Bulletin* is a monthly publication meant to aid new teachers as well as those who have already had classroom experience. Articles offer advice on handling the students, on planning the lessons, on dealing with parents, and on organizing special events. Suggestions for class projects are often presented. Miscellaneous stories about past happenings in schools are contributed by readers both old and young. Authors are teachers and scholars, school board members and other parents, or any other individual interested in an ethnic education of Amish youth.

Uria R. Byler, a former teacher, wrote *School Bells Ringing*, a manual for teachers and parents alike. Various topics are considered in three different units. A background discussion prepares for the first day; a summary of the course of study covers the subjects taught; and everyday classroom circumstances and possible clarifications are presented. Love and encouragement rather than scolding and punishment are emphasized as the preferred method for supervising scholars. A large assortment of contributions with suggestions from numerous teachers has been published in *Tips for Teachers, A Handbook for Amish Teachers*.

Nevertheless, not all teachers achieve the expected mastery. In such cases school boards work with their choice to improve the classroom atmosphere, but occasionally it becomes necessary for a teacher to move on at the end of the school year. Sometimes a teacher – especially a beginner – who has had problems in one school profits from her unfortunate experience and becomes a successful educator in another district.

The pay an Amish teacher receives is extremely low in comparison to that of her colleagues employed in public schools. In 1998 a starting teacher at an Amish school in Lancaster County earned \$32 per day.<sup>i</sup> Teachers with years of experience warranted a daily rate between \$35 and \$40, and those teaching in schools with a large number of scholars were also awarded a higher wage. It was always noted that a male teacher would be paid more. It is an Amish

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<sup>i</sup> The average beginning annual salary for a public-school teacher in Pennsylvania was \$32,884 in the school year 1998-99. Each school district sets its own rate. In comparison, starting Amish teachers who teach the full year (180 days) would have annual earnings totaling \$5,760.

custom for the teacher to give her students token gifts, which she purchases from her own income; the school board does not reimburse her for these personal expenses.

In spite of the low pay teachers receive, young women, if asked, are motivated to accept the challenge of the classroom and commit themselves to teaching until their marriage. Teaching carries the recognition associated with the educators' own academic success as a scholar, and it offers working hours more agreeable than those found at most other jobs.

#### 4.3.5. The Lessons and Books

Teaching eight grade levels within one single room requires special skills of the teacher and the employment of educational methods not commonly used in present-day public-school classrooms. Consistent with the Amish conception of education, the teacher is seen as a learning facilitator, not an instructor. Lecturing or frontal teaching is infrequently practiced; the teacher prefers to stroll around the room and assist the scholars on a one-to-one basis.

Amish parents expect their children to be well skilled in the 3-R's. They consider many of the topics taught in public schools to be pointless or objectionable. The subjects taught in an Amish school include English (reading, grammar, and some composition), spelling, penmanship, arithmetic, health, geography/history (in semester rotation), and German. Singing and art are also usually included in the weekly routine. Although the scholars and teacher open the daily school session by praying the Lord's Prayer in unison and singing hymns together, religion is not included in the curriculum. It is expected that religion be lived and learned in the home and in church. Teaching it as a subject in school would possibly open it to questioning and criticism.

Books used in the classroom have been selected by the school board from a list approved by the Book Society of Lancaster County. Often they are old editions of public-school books, for those volumes have fewer references to worldly things which are alien to Amish social convention. Eventually it became necessary for the Amish to print their own primers in order to avoid having their children exposed to the contemporary lifestyles depicted in the



modern books found in public schools. In 1964 the Pathway Publishing Corporation was established near Aylmer, Ontario. A complete sequence of textbooks with accompanying workbooks is now available for use in grades one to eight.

Children are taught to handle their books with prudence, being careful that they are not soiled or torn. Workbooks are left unmarked so that they can be used again year after year; exercises are copied into notebooks for filling in blanks or solving problems. A local Amish bookbinder instructs teachers how to mend books damaged by wear. All is done to keep operating costs low while still fulfilling the obligations connected with running the school.

It is also necessary to abide by state laws. Pennsylvania requires that children attend school 180 days of the year. The Amish heed the regulation and keep accurate attendance records. However, they have an abridged school year and long summer vacation, for their school breaks at Christmas and Easter are much shorter than those of public schools. It is important for the farming families to have all available helpers on hand to work during the planting and harvesting seasons.

Usually the school day begins at eight or eight-thirty in the morning and lasts till three or three-thirty in the afternoon. In mid-morning and again in mid-afternoon there is a fifteen-minute recess break, when the scholars normally go outdoors to romp. An hour is allotted for lunch with plenty of time for eating and playing outside afterwards. If the weather is inclement, the children might remain in the classroom to play board games. The daily and weekly schedule is arranged by the teacher, who is free to vary the plan as she sees fit; there is no universal agenda for all Amish schools to follow. Usually the subjects thought to be more difficult such as arithmetic and English are taught during the morning; easy subjects like art are saved for the end of the day.

The main subjects are studied each day. The daily timetable is always posted in the classroom in view for all. Sitting at his desk, each scholar independently works through the lessons assigned in the various subjects for his grade level. Students who do not complete the assignments in school are

expected to finish them as homework and present them to the teacher the following day.

Oral recitation plays an important role in the Amish classroom. In order to improve their reading skills, pupils in the early grades are asked to read aloud. They are encouraged to speak with a loud and clear voice – a contrast to the otherwise quiet nature of the scholars. Much individual diligence is required of the scholars, who are systematically called upon at the end of each period to recite and to answer questions on the topics they have studied. Younger children profit from hearing the presentations of the upper grades, and there is no grave gap between the various levels. When only a single scholar is in one of the grades, the teacher will often encourage him to learn with those who are at the next higher level. Emphasis is placed on improving the learning level of the individual scholar and not on having each student reach a certain grade average.

Good work habits are one component of the learning imparted in the classroom, as is cooperative learning. An older student will help a younger learner, or someone who is struggling will request guidance from the teacher by inconspicuously raising his hand to get her attention. Students are expected to work hard and do their best, but there is no shame attached in soliciting support and advice from those who are more knowledgeable. There is no such thing as a "dumb question" for the Amish. A stigma is connected to being lazy or unwilling to learn, not to being ignorant.

The Amish society accepts the fact that some individuals are more gifted than others and are able to surpass their peers in their tempo of learning and ability. Within the ethnic culture little significance is connected to such achievement; Amish scholars do not compete to be the best in the class. Putting all his God-given talents to good use is the most important factor for each individual. Care is taken not to embarrass the slow learner. Group memorization and recitation ease the learning procedure for less gifted scholars. The whole class or even the whole school is often called on to repeat in unison that which they have learned by rote.

Table 4.3.: Grading Scale on Report Cards

<b>A = 93 – 100 %</b>
<b>B = 86 – 92 %</b>
<b>C = 77 – 85 %</b>
<b>D = 70 – 76 %</b>
<b>F = 69 % or less</b>
<b>Passing = 70 %</b>

Despite the fact that no importance is attached to individualism and competition, Amish scholars are awarded subject grades for their work. Report cards, seen as an index of student diligence, are issued at the end of each six-week period six times during a school year. They are taken home for the parents' signature and then returned to the teacher. The report card records the scholar's achievement, not his effort.

The students receive absolute marks reflecting their actual accomplishment; there is no bell curve with a range of grades. In certain locations the grades are issued in percentages; in others the numbers are transposed into letter values. Report cards sometimes include grades on department and teachers' comments.

#### 4.3.6. Visitors and Programs

Sparked by their own school tradition, parents are interested in more than just being notified of their children's progress through report cards. Active participation on their part is desired by the school board, the teacher, and the scholars. Besides serving, if called upon, as a member of the school board or as a caretaker, they are welcome guests at special programs presented by the scholars together with the teacher. In addition, unannounced visits to the school are quite common and expected.

Parents are not the only guests at schools. School-board members, church leaders, and friends, as well as teachers and older scholars from other school districts also visit. When visitors knock on the school door, they are usually greeted by the teacher and invited into the building where they are provided with a seat at the back of the room. From there they observe the children as they study. They are given a guest book wherein they add their name, the date, and their remarks to the list. Comments such as "Keep up the good job," "I enjoyed the visit," and "Nice work" are commonly recorded in the book.

The visitors might also glance through another notebook containing the names of all the scholars in that school. Each child has drawn a picture which

is put into the book for viewing by the guests. Many times adages pertinent to Amish life are included, and sometimes children disclose the goals they have for their post-school life: "When I grow up I want to be a ...." If the children are not acquainted with the guests, the teacher will introduce them to the scholars, mentioning where they are from and explaining why they are visiting. Occasionally the guests might be asked to say a few words to the students.

After the guests have observed the classroom for a while, learning ceases and the scholars march to the front of the room to perform for them. Each school has its individual program, which varies according to the teacher's interests and talents. Oral tradition is important within the Amish community, so frequently poems or stories are recited. Sometimes there is a question-and-answer round during which the guest may even be asked a witty question to trick him into giving a false answer. Although music is not a subject taught in an Amish school, it nevertheless plays an important role there. The children always sing for the enjoyment of their guests. Simple songs, which all grade levels are able to master, are sung first; more difficult tunes follow. The guests seldom leave without first distributing simple treats such as candy or snacks to the students.

Scholars also perform at other times during the year, the highlight being the special Christmas program in which all the students participate. Weeks in advance they practice singing and acting out short sketches to present for their parents and younger siblings who pack the classroom on the last school day before the Christmas break. Their skits embody typical Amish humor in which there is any number of mishaps and mistaken identities or cranky characters who change for the better. The teacher's role is minimal; she remains in the background to prompt the students when they forget the text they have memorized. Different children stand up front on the platform to open the event by welcoming the guests or to announce the next episode to be presented. After two to three hours of presentations by the scholars, the afternoon ends with the singing of Christmas carols by all.

Occasionally the teacher or parents organize special events. Sometimes the children are told not to bring a lunch to school the next day; one mother will

then surprise the pupils with warm food she has prepared and brought to school for all to relish. Even her own sons and daughters often are unaware of her plan. Mothers commonly bring popcorn, cookies, cakes, or ice cream to school when one of their children who is a scholar has a birthday. Other times parents plan an outing for the students or a trip to visit another school. The school year typically ends with a big picnic, attended by the teacher, the scholars, and all the families whose children are attending school. Thereby pre-school children already become involved in school activities.

#### 4.3.7. Vocational Schools

Amish vocational schools were instituted in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a compromise between Amish views regarding schooling and the state's compulsory education law. Those pupils who have finished the eighth grade in an Amish parochial school would normally be required to continue their education at a public high school until reaching the age of sixteen. The agreement regulates the school attendance of Amish children between the time they complete their education in an Amish school and their fifteenth birthday. According to its terms, fourteen-year-old Amish children work at home or within the extended family, helping wherever they are needed. They are required to keep a notebook to document their chores and work activities. Parents are usually punctilious in controlling the records of their children, for they fear that negligence could lead to a change in school laws which would require their off-spring to attend public schools once again.

The designation vocational school is a general term; an individual vocational school is actually not a school but rather a small class. A dutiful housewife, frequently one who formerly taught in an Amish school, shoulders the teaching duties. There is no vocational school building; the kitchen of the teacher usually serves as the classroom. She is paid per weekly session by each student's family. Upon reaching his fifteenth birthday the pupil immediately terminates his school attendance. Thus each vocational class decreases in size as the year goes on.

With the small bevy of fourteen-year-olds from her neighborhood the teacher works through the designated textbooks one morning per week. During the three hours of lessons the young people continue their learning in subjects important for living within their ethnic community after the conclusion of their required schooling. Bible verses are learned by rote, and the students practice reading the Bible in German. Using a dual-language German-English Bible facilitates the understanding of selected passages. The class sings hymns which are also sung at the worship services.

The pupils also have practice in academic subjects. Spelling and arithmetic are especially important in the work world, and the textbooks have been chosen accordingly: Vocational Speller and Arithmetic in Agriculture. The scholars practice post-eighth-grade spelling words and they improve their arithmetic skills with number drills in whole numbers, decimals, fractions, percentages, and measurements (linear, square, cubic, and square roots).

Nearly all of the students do their schoolwork and keep their dairy to fulfill the state requirements, but most would rather be working full time and contributing to the family's steadfastness with their own income. Many seem heartened when their fifteenth birthday arrives and their formal schooling ends.

#### 4.3.8. Schools for the Handicapped

Within a single Amish settlement finding a partner for matrimony becomes a challenge because most of the residents are somehow related to one another; the choice of mates is limited. Although wedding a cousin is frowned upon, marriage between second cousins was not unusual. Informed young people now tend to seek a partner outside their family circles. Nevertheless, inbreeding cannot be thwarted, for no new matter is being added to the gene pools. As a result, there are certain hereditary diseases which dominate in particular Amish settlements. Prevailing in Lancaster County are dwarfism and glutaric aciduria, a disorder in the processing of protein; deafness and Down's syndrome along with other mental deficiencies are also commonly found.

Among the ethnics, the young, handicapped Amish are called "special children." For many generations the problems of educating the handicapped

were ignored. Those who were impeded or impaired had to cope with the frustration of trying to function effectively in a normal classroom. After public schools initiated special classes for severely handicapped, some Amish parents enrolled their children there. Others struggled to give their children a rudimentary education at home. Deaf or blind children sometimes were sent to special state-run schools. None of the options offered a good solution akin to Amish habit, for the handicapped were separated from their families and from their ethnic community or were denied the opportunity to function in a large group of Amish children.

In 1975 Amish parents with a handicapped son led the way for the founding of a particular Amish school for the education of the "special children." In Lancaster County there are presently two Amish schools for the instruction of the deaf and two more schools where additional handicapped children are tutored in basic skills. The aim of the schools is to educate the pupils in basic learning skills.

The Belmont School is one of the two Amish schools for teaching the general handicapped. A total of sixteen scholars were being taught there by four teachers during the 1997-98 school year. The classroom is divided by a half wall to create two learning areas. One side is known as the "slow learners' side." This part of the classroom has a blackboard, desks, bookshelves, and alphabet cards like any other Amish schoolroom. Six children with Down's syndrome, two slow learners, and one student with cerebral palsy were enrolled there. All of these children were learning ASL (American Sign Language) along with English. The skills they developed in reading, writing, and arithmetic were limited by the severity of their handicaps. Nonetheless, a serious effort is made to forge a learning atmosphere similar to that of a normal Amish school.

The enrollment in the other half of the room represented a cross-section of the severe handicaps found in the ethnic community. There were six scholars with various disabilities: one was deaf and confined to a wheel chair; another born with dwarfism was also blind; a third was blind and had additional brain

damage; the remaining three children each had been diagnosed with a different affliction: glutaric aciduria, Rett's disorder, and cerebral palsy.

This part of the schoolroom also contained books, a blackboard, and a few desks. In addition, a sofa provided a place to relax for those who were able to move about. All six children were greatly restricted in their ability to learn even basic skills. The teachers encouraged them to look at books, to communicate verbally as well as possible, to play with educational tools, and to help each other to the best of their abilities.

Those teachers who are persuaded to work with the "special children" invariably have gained experience in dealing with the disabled because there is a handicapped child in their extended family. Before they begin their work in the classroom they generally attend a course to learn ASL.

Although the children never reach the eighth-grade learning level, many are able to function in society to a limited extent. The disabled children who complete eight years of schooling and live to reach adulthood are embraced within the family circle and the ethnic community. If at all possible, they are given simple chores to complete, and thus they play a role – albeit very small – in running the family farm or enterprise.

A select few find part-time jobs in a special workshop which employs handicapped – both Amish and non-Amish. Here they do work suitable to their skills. Some attach price-tags to household linens; others make and pack sandwiches to be sold on the premises. There is a great variety of tasks to be carried out, but the individual is permitted to choose his assignment for the day or week. Although they have contact with the non-Amish society, their focus remains ethnic, for they have been socialized in that community and they are dependent upon it.

Raising a handicapped child places both physical and financial strains on the whole family. Even though there are many hands to help, particularly the mother is frequently emotionally drained. The Amish accept their fate with typical *Gelassenheit*, believing that the "special children" are God's will. Genetic studies have led to a deeper understanding of the illnesses and to a greater awareness of the causes even among the Amish. Most recently a special



clinic for the treatment of disorders manifest in the ethnic community was erected in Lancaster County.

#### 4.4. The Work Locale

In ethnic circles, farming is perceived as being the chosen vocation to which all aspire. Working the soil has been an entrenched tradition ever since the days of the Anabaptists in Switzerland, and it is believed to be blessed with heavenly favor. Nonetheless, not all men become farmers; there has always been a need for artisans in associated occupations such as blacksmiths, carriage makers, or wheelwrights. In modern times few people outside the ethnic group ply these trades, so numerous Amish now run such businesses, which cater to Amish and "English" customers alike. A lack of land has also forced many Amish men to seek employment in trades farther afield from the range of agriculture, and they are sometimes forced by circumstances to seek employment outside their ethnic circle.

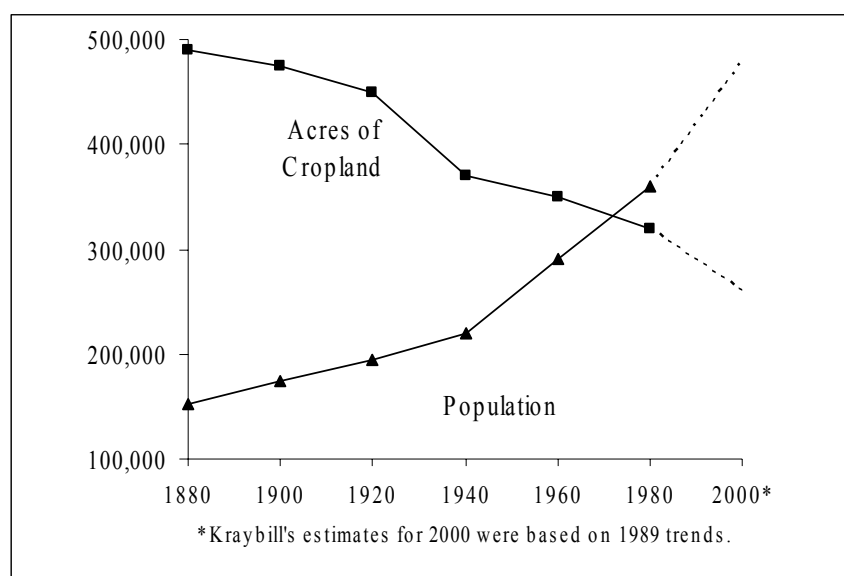
Women have a full-time job as housewives and mothers, but they might supplement the family income by marketing produce and hand-crafted articles or even by running a small business from the home. Then frequently the women make use of the talents they developed during their employment before marriage. The majority of Amish entrepreneurs, however, still are men. Unusual situations occasionally motivate individual ethnics to acquire new knowledge or learn additional skills in order to provide for their families.

##### 4.4.1. The Farm

Currently the biggest problem facing all farmers in Lancaster County is the population squeeze. It is being felt here more than in any other Amish settlement in Pennsylvania or the rest of the United States and Canada. Many existing farms are now too small to be subdivided and still be worked profitably; therefore more arable land has to be obtained elsewhere if a new farm is to be established for an Amish son. The high reproduction rate of the Amish assures a continually enlarging ethnic community. Therefore the

settlement is expanding beyond its conventional boundaries. Moreover, the county has become a coveted residential region for non-ethnics – even for those who find employment in places as far away as Philadelphia. As construction companies vie with farmers to acquire acreage which is for sale, the cost per acre for land has reached new heights.<sup>i</sup>

Figure 4.7.: Lancaster County Population and Acres of Cropland<sup>62</sup>



Although centuries ago immigrating Amish brought with them the farming methods they had used in Europe, the German farm pattern of village homes with scattered acreage in surrounding tracts did not become part of the American tradition. On eastern Pennsylvania farms the house, the barn, and additional structures such as shops, silos, corn cribs, tobacco sheds, or wind mills which are required for prosperous farming stand on an unseparated section of land that might be traversed by a creek or road. Frequently the house and barn stand close to one of the myriad narrow routes which span the county. Otherwise a farm lane provides passage from the road to the buildings.

During colonial times land holdings were large – some as great as four hundred acres – but today the average size of an Amish farm in Lancaster

<sup>i</sup>In 1997 a farm of approximately sixty acres (~ 24 hectares) was sold at public auction for \$660,000. It was purchased by an Amish businessman, not by a farmer. An Amish farmer whose property is adjacent to that which was being sold attempted to procure it for one of his younger sons, but he could not afford to make the highest bid for the tract he so intensely desired for his family.

County is sixty-four acres (almost twenty-seven hectares). The property of some farmers totals less than thirty acres; others have much larger farms of more than one-hundred-fifty acres. Over generations estates were regularly divided to create farms for sons. However, it is generally accepted by the Amish that a farmer needs sixty acres of land to make a profit; hence fathers with small farms hesitate to divide their land even further.

Amish and non-Amish farms have always been scattered among each other. Now, however, as numerous off-spring of non-ethnic farmers choose to enter into other occupations, their farmland is often transferred into the hands of Amish farmers or it is converted into subdivisions for the building of suburban homes. Thus the landscape changes: as the density of Amish farms increases, small residential tracts of suburban housing for non-ethnics more frequently dot the countryside.

Occasionally the wooden structures are damaged by fire, lightening, or storm. They are promptly rebuilt by members of the church, even with the help of non-ethnic neighbors, who in turn receive similar support from their Amish friends. There is an Amish Aid Society which assesses church members to cover the losses caused by disasters.

Assembled in a communal ethnic effort labeled "barn raising", Amish barns are uniform in shape. They are constructed with a ramp on one broad side to provide access from a public road or from the farm lane to the upper level of the barn. Known as Swiss barns or bank barns, they serve a dual purpose. The top story is used as a loft for storing hay and equipment, while animals are sheltered on the bottom floor. It is commonly believed that hex signs decorate Amish barns. Formerly the colorful circular ornaments were painted on barns in eastern Pennsylvania to ward off evil; today they serve as kaleidoscopic decoration. Although hex signs are a widespread element of Pennsylvania Dutch culture, they are found only on the barns of the "fancy

Figure 4.8.: Hex Sign



Dutch", not on Amish barns, which are usually built from wooden slatting and painted white without decoration. Older barns in eastern Pennsylvania rest upon a stone foundation; newer ones have a lower level built from cinderblock.

Traditionally Amish farms were diversified and self-supporting. The families lived from the produce they grew and the animals they raised. Limited specialization, along with restricted adaptation of modern machinery and more modern farming methods, have altered the lives of the farmers. They now can regularly be seen as customers in local grocery stores.

Farmers in southeastern Pennsylvania grow crops which are well-suited for cultivation in the rich limestone soil of Lancaster County and are adapted to the climate of the Piedmont Plateau: corn (maize), diverse types of grain (wheat, oats, and rye), tobacco, grass plants, and legumes – usually alfalfa. Crop rotation, strip plowing, and contour farming aid in preventing the depletion of the soil and the erosion of the land. Among Amish farmers the use of artificial fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides is on retreat; natural fertilizers, especially manure, are now preferred. However, the use of hybrid seeds purchased from professional growers has found widespread acceptance throughout the ethnic community.

The majority of Amish agricultural enterprises are dairy farms, but farmers with a small amount of acreage often divert their efforts to the raising of animals (chickens, cattle, or hogs) for profit. Surplus produce from fruit orchards or vegetable gardens sold at market or roadside stands supplements family income. Tobacco crops are an additional source of revenue for many Amish farmers.

During the winter months the prices obtained for tobacco being sold at auctions in Lancaster County become one of the main topics of conversation. Amish as well as non-ethnic farmers put their tobacco leaves, which after harvest have been dried and stripped, on the block. A decrease in the number of smokers has led to a decline in the profits which can be made. In addition, fields in which tobacco has been planted have to be revived with the growing of nitrogen-fixation plants such as alfalfa. Despite the decline of profits and the

possibility of soil depletion, tobacco continues to be a main crop among the Amish in Lancaster County.

Working the fields in the traditional way with mule teams or draft horses is part of the Amish *Ordnung*, but methods have changed as new devices have been altered and adapted to be acceptable for operation within ethnic circles. Nonetheless, bishops have carefully deliberated over the extent to which agricultural innovations might disrupt Amish culture. In the late nineteenth century steam engines powered threshing machines on most farms. Early in the twentieth century tractors slowly came into use, thus easing the burden of toil involved in tilling the land. However, the first tractors were ponderous and unwieldy; also, they packed the soil firmly as the wheels rolled across the fields. Amish church leaders came to fear that the use of tractors would ultimately lead to more mobility and would take away the opportunity for boys and young men to work in the fields. Eventually the owning and operating of normal tractors in the fields was banned within Amish circles. In 1910 a progressive group known as the Peachy Amish broke away from the church. Soon they were using electricity and telephones along with tractors. Old Order Amish who owned tractors at the time were asked to desist from using them.

By mid-century tractors had become manageable, affordable machines, and an array of new farm equipment was on the market. When farmers turned to specialized forms of agriculture, the employment of modern machinery soon followed. The Amish community was faced with a dilemma: which equipment could be adapted for farm work without upsetting the basic tenets of the church? Many compromises had to be made, and the ingenuity of Amish craftsmen was displayed as they invented new devices and converted existing machines to be acceptable within the ethnic culture. In 1966 debate over the use of the newest farm machinery caused a split within the church. A group of approximately one hundred Amish families who approved the utilization of modern farm equipment separated from the Old Order Amish to form the New Order Amish.

Gradually some rules were established: field work was to be done with horse or mule teams. However, the teams could be hitched up to gasoline-

powered machines to tow them. "If you can pull it with a horse, you can have it"<sup>63</sup> became the dictum. Still, steel wheels had to replace the rubber tires on the equipment used. Although tractors were banned in the fields, they have found acceptance for utilization at the barn. These so-called "Amish tractors" have been rebuilt to meet Amish standards. Fixed with steel wheels, they are used to provide power for barn work such as blowing silage into silos or operating hydraulic systems.

The Amish trend to specializing in dairy farming began when the price for milk rose greatly after the middle of the twentieth century. Originally milk was poured into milk cans and stored in the spring house for cooling. As the demand for milk dramatically increased, farmers turned to mechanical milkers and to mechanical coolers operated by diesel engines. Milk inspectors ultimately demanded that the milk be stored and cooled in stainless steel bulk tanks with automatic stirrers in order to thwart bacterial growth. The Amish community was in a quandary, for electricity was needed for running the bulk tanks. In due time an agreement was reached between the milk companies and representatives of the church. The bishops acquiesced to permit the use of generators for charging batteries to operate the automatic switch for the agitator, which keeps the cream from accumulating at the top, while the farmers continued to refrigerate the tanks with units powered by diesel motors. In return, the milk companies agreed to forego sending their tank trucks to Amish farms for milk collection on Sundays.

The bishops saved face, however. Glass pipelines – like those found in non-ethnic barns – for pumping milk directly from the cows' utters to the bulk tanks were banned, as were automatic gutter cleaners for removing manure. Thus, without automation, the size of Amish dairy herds has remained limited. Meanwhile the profit farmers make on dairy farming has dropped drastically, for milk companies have lowered the prices which they are willing to pay for the fresh product.

All farms have animals which provide children with the opportunity to learn to provide for them. Cows, chickens, hogs, goats, and ducks – all need feed and care. Cats live in the barns to keep the rodent population in check, and

nearly every Amish household has a watchdog to guard the house. Visitors are greeted with loud barking, which alerts the family whether they are in the house, the barn, the fields, or in the shop. A large, barking dog also is used to discourage non-ethnics from setting foot on Amish property.

While horse and mule teams are limited to use on farms, all Amish households own a horse and carriage to provide the needed local transportation. Frequently the Amish purchase retired race horses at auctions. Elderly folks usually prefer older, slower horses, while young people like more spirited ones.

In general, a farm provides an excellent opportunity for children to learn to work hard. They are taught to be diligent, industrious, responsible, reliable, dependable, and efficient in carrying out their chores.

#### 4.4.2. Amish Businesses

Although farming is still the preferred occupation of the Amish, the lack of available farm land and the expansion of the ethnic population have compelled many to turn to other callings. Within the Amish culture it is important for the family to remain united; new couples are reluctant to move and resettle far away from their extended families unless no other alternative is available. Thus young men today are obligated to seek other employment which is accordant with their ethnic identity.

There always have been Amish craftsmen who plied a trade rather than engage in farming, but originally their number was small. In prior generations the diverse artisans needed to sustain a rural society were generally non-ethnics. As the nation slowly shifted from a rural to an urbanized society and the use of motorized vehicles became standard, the demand for the products of such tradesmen dwindled among the general public, but in Amish circles the need still existed; in fact, it even grew as the Amish population increased.

As the latter half of the twentieth century progressed, a gradual transformation from a purely agricultural community to one also able to supply the special commodities required in order to maintain the accepted way of living took place within the ethnic culture. Thus the non-farming Amish first became blacksmiths, carriage makers, or harness makers. When tractors like

those used by non-ethnics were forbidden, other Amishmen opened machine shops where they employed their technical skills in fabricating new machinery to suit their needs or in remaking normal equipment to meet Amish criteria

In order to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families, an ever increasing number of Amish men were forced to seek workplaces beyond the farm. There were some short-lived endeavors at working in regional factories, but factory work proved to be incompatible with the Amish way of life. As a result, Amish craftsmen themselves set up modest manufacturing shops or created their own cottage industries. During the 1970's and 1980's there was a boom of newly launched Amish enterprises. Along with the expansion of the Amish population came a greater variety of jobs and Amish-run businesses. The Amish Directory from 1989 contains a large variety of sectors in which Amish people are entrepreneurs. Kraybill has listed them.<sup>64</sup>

Table 4.4.: Amish Business Sectors in Lancaster County

Air pumps and systems	Foundry	Masonry
Bakery	Furniture	Plumbing
Battery and electrical	Groceries	Printing
Beekeeping supplies	Hardware	Quilts
Bookstores	Hat manufacturing	Retail stores
Butchering	Health foods	Roadside stands
Cabinetry	Horseshoeing	Roofing and spouting
Carriage	Household appliances	Spray painting
Clock and watch repair	Hydraulic systems	Storage buildings
Construction	Lantern manufacturing	Storm windows and glass
Crafts	Leather and harness	Tin fabrication
Dry goods	Log house construction	Tombstone engraving
Engine repair	Machinery assembly	Toys
Fence installation	Machinery manufacturing	Upholstery
Floor covering	Machinery repair	Vegetable plants

Most of the small-scale cottage industries, which employ a few family members and neighbors, are located on a narrow lot of a family farm or have been constructed next to a newly-built Amish house. They may engage in light manufacturing, carry out repair work on Amish machinery, or make crafts for wholesale or retail marketing. Bigger shops have more employees and



manufacture on a greater scale. Farm machinery and wooden articles such as lawn furniture, gazebos, or storage sheds are some of the products produced in the larger firms. Amish construction crews build homes for Amish and non-Amish alike. Their work often carries them beyond the borders of Lancaster County. Amish retail stores cater to ethnics as well as to tourists and the non-ethnic residents of the area. Some of these Amish enterprises began as sidelines, which in due time developed into full-time businesses; others were started up by the owners who have special talents. Less than one-fifth of the present proprietors have taken over a business from their parents or from another family member

As the Amish culture was compelled to depart slowly from its purely agricultural origins, bargains had to be negotiated with the *Ordnung*. Machines were needed for production, and generally the machinery which was available was powered by electricity. The Amish refusal to use electricity is based on their history and their mistrust of government. Actually they rebuff only the utilization of electricity which comes from public suppliers.

While 110-volt current has been rejected, the use of direct current from batteries has been accepted. Some businesses employ the use of an inverter, a mechanism which transforms 12-volt electricity from batteries into 110-volt power. It makes it possible to operate equipment, such as cash registers, which use small amounts of electricity. Shop tools and machinery require more power than an inverter can provide. Ingenious Amish craftsmen have devised pneumatic and hydraulic motors to replace the electric-driven ones in modern shop machinery. Diesel engines operate pumps which thrust air or oil into the motors used to power the machinery.

Gasoline-powered generators provide powerful electricity when welding is carried out, but the use of generators is generally limited to welding procedures. Welding is essential when modern farm equipment is rebuilt to meet Amish requirements. Horse-drawn farm machinery is a necessity in maintaining the ethnic identity. Operating home freezers, electric lights, electric milking equipment, *et cetera* with current provided by the generator is still forbidden by the *Ordnung*.

Amish enterprises which have business dealings beyond the ethnic community are faced with another problem: communication. Non-Amish expect to be able to ask questions or place orders via telephone, but installing a telephone in the home or in a shop is forbidden by the *Ordnung*. Amish leaders fear the use of a phone would encourage gossip and reduce the face-to-face communication which is such an integral part of Amish life.

Using a phone, however, is not forbidden. By mid-twentieth century even the Amish found it no longer practical to use a non-Amish neighbor's phone to make a doctor's appointment, to call a veterinarian, or to order taxi-drivers. A neighborhood phone for use by the Amish was often located in a small shanty at the end of a lane so as to be accessible to all living nearby. The monthly telephone fees were equally shared.

Meanwhile the Amish have reached a new compromise on the use of telephones for businesses. Phones now are frequently installed in shanties attached to the side of the shop or barn, thus enabling customers to place orders or the owners to order supplies. Some businessmen give certain hours when they can be reached by phone. Other alternatives include using an answering machine or subscribing to an answering service.

Construction companies, large manufacturing firms, market-stall retailers, and other similar businesses all have a transportation problem. Amish owners may hire non-ethnics to convey their employees, products, or produce; or they may have a contract with a non-ethnic carrier. Less frequently the solution involves the Amish businessman buying a vehicle in the name of a non-Amish employee. In any case, the Amish businessman is dependent upon the services of a non-ethnic for transportation.

After Amish women marry, they seldom work full-time outside the home. However, more and more women – both single and married – are becoming entrepreneurs. Most of their work is gender related. Retailing hand-made quilts, garden produce, traditional crafts, baked goods, or other products often leads to the establishment of a full-fledged business. In Lancaster County nearly twenty per cent of the shops owned by Amish are run by women.<sup>65</sup>

Others play an important role by helping with the office work in the businesses of their husbands.

Amish businessmen seldom advertise. Small roadside signs announce the presence of a firm or list the products being sold. Whole names are not regularly part of the company title, for the Amish deem incorporating a name to be a show of pride. However, family names are sometimes included (*e.g.* Stolzfoos Quilts), as the individual involved remains anonymous due to the small number of family names within the ethnic community. Nevertheless, businessmen do hand out promotional items such pens or calendars which advertise their wares and enterprises. Larger companies sometimes have brochures with lists of their available products.

Although Amish businessmen continue to be successful – only about four per cent fail – there is still the desire to retain their ethnic agricultural culture. Parents who run businesses are concerned that their children will drift too far away from their heritage, so they make every effort so assure that their offspring learn farming by working for an uncle, cousin, grandfather, or other family member who still earns a living by tilling the soil.

#### 4.4.3. Unusual Amish Pursuits

When it becomes necessary for young men to look for employment beyond the sphere of agriculture, they usually turn to jobs which are somehow associated with the work with which they have become familiar during their youth on the farm. Carpentry, masonry, welding, and machine work are all tasks which a farmer normally encounters. Sometimes the need for adapted equipment leads to the creation of a new mechanism or a special machine. The invention may eventually even be the basis for the founding of an additional Amish-run business.

During the field-work for this study two married women who pursue unusual crafts were interviewed extensively. One is a reflexologist; the other is an artist who paints water-color pictures with Amish themes. They came to their vocations via different paths, but both are exceptions within the Amish community today.

An accident which disabled her husband preceded the reflexologist's diversion into her current line. The reflexologist was a typical Amish wife, mother, and housekeeper without a sideline. She had been married for four years when her husband had an accident. Although he consulted various doctors for treatment, he continued to have health problems, especially severe headaches. Before her marriage she had been interested in herb gardens and special health foods. She was also intrigued by alternatives to standardized medicine. Therefore she decided to enroll in a course to learn about reflexology and its possibilities as an effective treatment for her husband.

She enrolled in a number of seminars; the fees for participation she paid herself. Her newly-won expertise she practiced on her husband. Because he responded favorably with improved health, she went public a year later. In a small practice run from her basement she now treats both Amish and non-ethnic clients to special massages coupled with aromatic oils.

The painter listed art as her favorite school subject. She was exposed to public schooling along with non-ethnic teachers in her earliest elementary grades. For the remainder of her eight-year education she attended a parochial school in another county. Her artistic talent grew with the help of her teacher, and she increased her knowledge by reading books about the techniques of painting. She painted so much that her hobby changed to a vocation.

Her paintings, which are now exhibited in a local gallery, are copied and sold as prints. The originals sometimes carry a four-digit price-tag. She occasionally employs a non-ethnic photographer to catch the scenes she plans to capture in water-colors. Her oldest son, who remains an unbaptized member of the church, is manager of the gallery, while her husband has given up farming and turned to a less strenuous handicraft – the production of wooden articles for retail sale in local shops, especially in those catering to tourists. Although the family continues to live on the farm, the barn has been converted into a shop where the husband and a nephew do the woodworking.

Leisure time is something generally unheard of in Amish circles. However, as men leave the farm to be hired in shops or in businesses, they discover that they have more free time in the evenings or over the weekends than farmers or

business owners do. This will eventually lead to a new assessment of Amish values. One young man who was interviewed is employed in a harness-maker's shop. The employees and the shop customers include both ethnics and non-ethnic, so the Amish have frequent contact with „English" people. This particular Amish man accepted the invitation of a customer to spend a weekend playing golf in North Carolina.

Businesses tend to have greater returns than farms do. Profits are reinvested in the business or used to pay off debts. As gains increase, Amish businessmen seek new investment possibilities. Traditionally older, more affluent farmers and businessmen alike lend start-up capital to new couples in order for the young men to buy a farm or to set up a business. Presently it is Amish businessmen who can afford to pay the current price for farmland. They may invest their cash in farms, hoping that one of their children will indeed turn to farming and return to their cultural roots.

Others acquire hunting camps in northern Pennsylvania where male family members and friends spend any number of days shooting game during the hunting season in fall. As a form of investment, Amish rental properties in Lancaster County are no longer uncommon. Some Amish even purchase vacation homes in Florida where Pinecraft, a settlement in the Sarasota district, has become a favored retreat for Amish vacationers. What began in the late 1920's as a winter haven for Mennonites and Amish with aches and pains to spend a few weeks or months enjoying the healing warmth of the southern climate has now become a popular place for the Amish to take an extended leave from their daily routine. Some of these furnished homes, which do have access to public power lines, are leased to non-ethnic Floridians who agree to vacate the property during November or any other time the Amish owners wish to vacation in Florida. During the winter months busses serving the Amish population run the route from Lancaster County to Sarasota on a routine schedule.

Originally the Florida location attracted elderly and ailing members of the greater ethnic community. Amish from all across the United States met there in winter. Life in Florida was less regimented than at home. Inevitably unmarried

youth seeking employment followed the older folks to the sunshine state. Many young people who lived there for a period of time never officially joined the church by being baptized, and they then became known as being "wild", for their life-styles varied from the traditional ethnic one. Nevertheless, Florida winter vacations continue to be attractive for couples, and property purchased there decades ago has proven to have been a well-made investment.

Amish farmers and businessmen normally do not invest their surplus money in savings accounts or other profit-bringing financial bank plans. Such an investment does not appeal to them. Although the Amish were obligated by daily living to open checking accounts at local banks, they have made limited use of bank investment services which are available. At the close of the twentieth century plans were being formulated to open an "Amish" bank in the village of Intercourse. According to local informants, this bank has meanwhile opened for business.

#### 4.5. The Outside World

Although the Amish prefer to be "in this world but not of it", they are neither completely self-sufficient nor are they able to live without engaging the services of highly qualified experts, especially those of the medical professions. Government regulations all the way from national laws, state statutes, and county regulations down to local ordinances make contact – and sometimes conflict – with official administrators unavoidable.

For most of the Amish, interaction with the outside world occurs at the local level. Some work for employers who are not part of their cultural sphere; others have non-Amish neighbors; many who run businesses have customers who are non-ethnics. Amish people living in Lancaster County are confronted almost daily with tourists. Nearly the entire population of the area – including the Amish – profit immensely from the extensive tourism, for it brings business to county. For the ethnic community, however, it also means an intrusion into their society and a disruption of their way of life.

For outsiders it seems amazing that some of the most intense Amish associations with the outside world come from Amish teenagers. During this

period of life when Amish youth are probing their limits, Amish parents appear to be surprisingly lenient. Nonetheless, it is part of the Amish strategy for survival.

#### 4.5.1. Working for the "English"

Amish men are sometimes forced by extenuating circumstances to turn to employment outside their ethnic circle. Those sons who are not in line to inherit a farm are compelled to tread a new path. Some, if they find a farm to lease, will till the soil. Others will establish their own small businesses or work for an Amish employer. There are, however, some Amish men for whom none of these possibilities is available; therefore they reluctantly labor in non-ethnic shops or businesses.

In other instances young men purposely choose to work outside their ethnic circle in order to learn a particular trade or to develop a specific skill. Employment then is generally perceived as being temporary, lasting only until the worker has acquired the sought-after expertise and is able to found his own enterprise, where he implements his newly attained competence.

Working for an "English" employer confronts the Amish employee with an array of problems, for his job often causes conflicts with his culture. Social Security was a source of contention between the national government and the Amish community. Founded during the Great Depression of the 1930's in order to support the disadvantaged (*i.e.*, the elderly, the unemployed, dependent children, the blind and other disabled individuals), Social Security has always been rejected by the Amish, for they believe the task of caring for the needy to be a responsibility of the church community rather than that of the government.

Those Amish who are self-employed have been exempt from paying Social Security taxes since 1965. After years of negotiation, Congress also freed the Amish from Social Security if both employer and employee are ethnics. However, an Amish entrepreneur is obligated to pay the employer's share into the Social Security program for all his non-ethnic employees. Likewise, as required by law, a non-ethnic employer subtracts Social Security taxes from Amish employees' wages.

Moreover, Amish employees object to paying into company-supported benefit programs. Health or life insurance plans are not considered to be imperative for the Amish way of life. Holidays are another element reflecting cultural differences. In accordance with their ethnic heritage, the Amish observe religious holidays similar to those recognized in much of Europe: Christmas, Good Friday and Easter, Ascension Day, and Pentecost (Whitsunday). Easter Monday, Whitmonday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, plus a day for fasting before their semi-annual Holy Communion service in autumn round out the list of their religious holidays. New Year's Day and Thanksgiving are also observed. Public holidays such as Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, *et cetera* are not celebrated within the Amish community.

Factory work with its inflexible schedule of religious and public holidays along with its rigid daily and weekly timetables was found to be inharmonious with the Amish way of life. Small non-ethnic businesses are more flexible and often allow Amish employees to trade public national holidays for Amish religious ones. Especially in November when young Amish couples traditionally marry, ethnic workers expect to have time off in order to attend the weddings of family members.

Labor on Sundays, however, is unthinkable for Amish employees. Although a regulated forty-hour work week is uncommon among Amish farmers and businessmen, Sunday remains a hallowed day of rest. Throughout the Lancaster County area signs at Amish businesses and roadside stands declare: "Closed Sundays" or "No Sunday Sales". The day is reserved for worship or for visiting on alternate Sundays.

There are numerous reasons why the Amish are reluctant to work away from the family. The major objection to employment outside the home is their concern that their children will not learn and adopt the Amish work ethic which is so essential to the survival of their culture. Farms always provide children with tasks to perform; even young children are involved in daily chores. Family businesses located near the home also supply opportunities for children to learn to carry out simple duties. However, when the father is employed at a



location beyond the range of his offspring's activities, the children are not immersed in the ethnic work values at an early age.

Parents are hesitant to send sons or unmarried daughters to work for non-ethnics where they will have a great deal of interaction with people from outside their cultural sphere. Families fear outside influences will cause the young people to gravitate away from their heritage and the Amish way of life.

A means of transportation to and from the work locale is sometimes a problem too. Public bus-service routes and schedules are generally not in accord with the Amish worker's needs, and hiring a van on a daily basis is too costly. If the work place is far away, employers might provide a means of conveyance for their Amish workers, or sometimes Amish employees find transportation with one of their non-ethnic co-workers.

Amish workers are paid an hourly wage, not a salary. Employers value them for their work ethic; they are punctual, reliable, willing, diligent, thorough, conscientious, trustworthy, and dedicated. There is seldom conflict between Amish and non-ethnic employees; they normally work side-by-side in harmony. Outside the workplace interaction between the two groups is not cultivated; generally there is little or no personal contact between Amish and non-Amish workers. In an emergency, however, all will band together. Fire-fighting or a barn-raising are such typical united efforts.

#### 4.5.2. Intercourse with Neighbors, Professionals, Authorities, and Tourists

On a day-to-day basis Amish adults have personal contact primarily within their cultural circle. Their relations with non-ethnic neighbors are friendly but vary in closeness according to the personalities of both the Amish and the non-Amish individuals. In previous times it was frequent practice for the Amish to use the telephone of their non-ethnic neighbors when special needs arose, but now almost all Amish households have access to an "Amish" phone located at an Amish business, in an Amish barn, or in an Amish phone shanty. Formerly some Amish families stored their meat and garden produce in a cooperating neighbor's deep freezer; nowadays they more likely rent a locker for deep-freeze storage at a local produce store or market.

Amish people sometimes still rely on their "English" neighbors to relay messages to other Amish whom they cannot reach by telephone. Those Amish who live a greater distance from villages or bus stops will often try to coordinate their junkets into town with a neighbor who owns a motor vehicle. An Amish person will quite willingly accept a ride to the next community in order to go grocery shopping, pick up supplies, attend to bank business, or to reach the nearest bus stop. It is also common practice for local non-ethnics driving along country routes to stop and pick up Amish people who are walking along the roadside and then drop them off at a convenient location.

Amish always have to turn to the outside world when they are in need of professional services. Medical doctors, dentists, veterinarians, opticians, public accountants, morticians, and even lawyers are consulted when circumstances demand it. Farmers regularly call a veterinarian to doctor a diseased cow, an afflicted horse, or any other ailing farm animal. Many Amish farmers are not averse to using artificial insemination services for animal breeding.

There is an ever increasing number of self-taught Amish accountants within the settlement. Nevertheless, lacking the needed higher education, they are unable to become certified public accountants (CPA). Larger businesses often engage a non-ethnic accountant on a regular basis; even more accountants are retained by Amish businesses or farmers for assistance in filing their annual income taxes.

Among the Amish population the engagement of undertakers is limited, but employment of their services has increased. There are a few non-Amish funeral directors in Lancaster County who serve the needs of the ethnic community in addition to those of the general population. Although the Amish customarily prepare the corpse themselves, a mortician is always called if the body is to be embalmed. Preserving the remains becomes necessary if family members from far away settlements need a greater length of time for traveling to the area in order to attend the funeral.

A need for medical care is the most pressing reason for Amish families to solicit the aid of professionals. However, they exert careful consideration in making their choice of dentists and medical doctors to be consulted for

treatment. Dental care and the frequency of visits to dentists vary according to the individual family. Amish children can be seen wearing braces on their teeth, an indication that even the expertise of orthodontists is valued. It is not infrequent for Amish people – children and adults alike – to wear eye glasses. Optometrists might make an initial examination and write a prescription, but later measurements by an optician may suffice for obtaining new glasses. The Amish will usually choose the least expensive option.

Especially physicians are expected to exhibit traits highly valued in the Amish community. Doctors who practices in the neighborhood or in the local community are preferred. They are required not only to have a command of their discipline but also to be excellent communicators. Minor illnesses and injuries are treated within the ethnic family. The Amish mistrust of science along with the high cost of medical services spur the ethnics to try cures with home-made remedies before deeming a visit to a doctor's office to be necessary. They apply assorted salves, liniments, and poultices to injuries or inflammations, while diverse teas and tonics are considered to be good for assuaging all kinds of ailments.

Amish patients are not averse to using alternate forms of healing; in addition to the regular family physician, homeopaths, chiropractors, massagers, reflexologists, or "powwowers"<sup>i</sup> are often consulted. Many Amish are avid consumers of products believed to be beneficial to a person's well-being; frequently they augment their daily fare with special health foods. Stores catering to the Amish trade carrying a wide range of non-prescription food supplements and vitamin pills.

The expenses of medical treatment cause the Amish to postpone visits to a doctor, often indefinitely. Hospitalization being even costlier, they are likewise reluctant to seek care and therapy there unless it becomes absolutely necessary. An atypical practice has developed among the afflicted Amish in Lancaster County: they seek medical treatment in Mexico. Traveling by train and bus, especially the elderly who are indisposed are inclined to traverse nearly the

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<sup>i</sup> Powwowing, which is also called sympathy curing, is a folk practice – a ceremony during which a designated person performs healing rituals. It normally refers to the Native American Indian cultural practice of treatment by a shaman (medicine man).

entire continent to California or to Texas where they cross the southern border into Mexico. Here they find special clinics with doctors who attend to their needs for a much lower fee. It is enticing for the Amish to be able to combine medical treatment with travel approved by the church. For transportation to and from their destination along with treatment in Mexico they pay a total amount equivalent approximately to the rates charged alone for a hospital stay in Lancaster County.

In the medical research community there is great interest in studying the Amish, for they have a limited gene pool and generally remain in one geographic area. Particularly Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore has sent genetic scientists to investigate the Lancaster County settlement. Although the Amish usually were obliging, they had no direct benefit from the cooperation with the researchers. The investigators were more intrigued by the hereditary diseases common to the Amish in Lancaster County than they were in assisting the ethnics with their unique health problems.

However, there is one exceptional physician who won the hearts of the Amish for his genuine service to the ethnic community. Dr. D. Holmes Morton has made a great contribution to improving the quality of life for Amish and Mennonite children born with hereditary diseases common in their cultural circles (glutaric aciduria and maple-syrup urine disease). Dr. Morton was pursuing a promising research career in Philadelphia when he was confronted with an occurrence of glutaric aciduria, a hereditary metabolic disorder which, if not properly treated, usually causes brain damage or the death of the young patients. Morton was intrigued by the case because world-wide there were fewer than ten known incidents of the disorder. He traveled to the Amish community to visit the family of the patient. When Morton realized that there were many more afflicted children, he discontinued his academic career and, with the help of the local ethnic community, he established a small clinic in Lancaster County. Here he specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of hereditary diseases, chiefly those found in the Amish and Mennonite societies.

Traditionally the Amish population refrains from engaging the services of lawyers, for nonresistance is one of the basic tenets of their creed. There are,

however, a few examples of an Amish individual having committed a serious crime and therefore needing the aid of a lawyer in courts of law. According to the Amish, records of two murderers who were charged and duly sentenced exist. In a closed society like that of the Amish instances of rape or incest are seldom reported to officials. However, in one case of sexual abuse known to this researcher a group of church leaders conferred with the presiding judge in order to reach an agreement compatible with their way of life. They strove to have the accused remain in his cultural environment, whereas the judge favored having him admitted to an institution run by the Mennonite church where he would receive therapeutic treatment.

The Amish base their unwillingness to appear in courtrooms on the grounds that there they would have to swear an oath. For them, having to give a sworn statement promising to tell the truth in court implies that the truth is otherwise not told. Following the admonishments recorded in the Bible, grievances are met by turning the other cheek. In fact, filing a lawsuit is forbidden by the *Ordnung*.

However, as a system of entrepreneurs evolved within the Amish culture, a new problem arose: non-ethnic businessmen, well aware of the Amish refusal to use courts of law, began renegeing on the payment of their bills. When Amish businesses were no longer able to sustain the losses, a workable solution was sought. Collection agencies, formal complaints with local magistrates, and confessed judgment notes signed as part of a sales agreement all failed to bring the desired results. Finally, some non-ethnic partners of Amish businessmen did sue in their own name and collected the unpaid and overdue sums. A few Amishmen soon followed suit by empowering a third party – a non-ethnic friend or a lawyer – to take legal action. After non-ethnic businessmen realized that the Amish could no longer be duped, large-scale bilking stopped.

Bargaining with authorities at all levels of government is preferred to suing for their rights in courts of law. The most notable exception was the Amish struggle for the right to determine the proper mode of education for their children. In this case the National Committee for Amish Religious Freedom

had the full support of the ethnic community. Exhaustive litigation encompassing a final decision by the Supreme Court gave them the right to establish and maintain their own eight-grade parochial schools.

When the lives of young Amish men were in danger of being disrupted by the military draft during the 1960's, the Old Order Amish Steering Committee was formed in order to confer with government officials in Washington, D. C. to find a solution which would not uproot the youth from their agrarian environment and seduce them into leaving the faith. The committee, which is still in existence, remains informed and lobbies for Amish causes. The committee members have become quite astute negotiators. They have won exemptions from payment into social programs (Social Security, workmen's compensation for incapacitated workers, unemployment insurance). The committee likewise successfully brokered with authorities in order to free Amish workers from having to wear hard hats at construction sites.

The twentieth century, an era of industrialization and commercialization, generated an expanded governmental bureaucracy which regulates, controls, and often is perceived to invade the lives of its citizens. The Amish culture has had to deal with myriad regulations which infringe on their way of life. The education of their children, conscription for military service, milk-collection controls, safety standards for slow moving vehicles (SMV) – these and many more issues created problems which had to be solved by the Amish.

As motorized traffic grew heavier even on country roads, the horse-drawn buggies became a hazard for automobile drivers. Accidents which caused serious injuries or even fatalities occurred more frequently. Therefore safety regulations for the illumination of the Amish/Mennonite carriages were issued. Battery-powered headlights and blinking taillights are required at dawn, dusk, and after dark or during inclement weather. In addition, a red-orange triangular warning reflector is attached to the rear of the buggy where reflecting tape also signals approaching drivers. As a result of the recurrent carriage accidents involving motorized vehicles, Amish families have been forced into participating in the Amish Liability Aid program which covers damages caused by them.

Public health care is another field in which confusion with officials arose. Although the more conservative Amish might disapprove of immunization, the majority of the Amish hold no objection to having their children inoculated. In fact, as long as Amish children were attending public schools, they were given the health vaccinations required by law.<sup>i</sup> After the Amish began building and maintaining their own schools, there were no longer routine controls, so countless parents out of unawareness, misconception, or indifference failed to have their children properly immunized. Widespread outbreaks of childhood diseases as well as a polio epidemic in various Amish settlements made them aware of the necessity of preventive medicine. Protection for their own community and for their non-ethnic neighborhoods is now deemed to be part of their responsibility.

Local or county zoning ordinances governing land use and building permits regulating private construction often appear illogical and impracticable to the Amish. Sanitation-control laws and pollution-management regulations add to the problems of farmers particularly. An ever increasing number of regulatory decisions by county and local officials may provoke some ethnics into leaving their settlement for another area. Those who remain broker with administrators to effect changes favorable for their group.

Authorities in Lancaster County have become especially sensitive to the wishes and needs of the Amish community, for the Plain People living there are an immensely fascinating attraction for outsiders. Officials worry that if conditions in the region become unbearable for the Amish, the ethnics might move to another area. An Amish migration would cause the tourist trade in the county to vanish along with the revenues generated by it. Each year millions of tourists, lured by the "Amish way of life", visit the area. Kraybill reports: "Today, about five million tourists visit Lancaster County annually – some 350 visitors for each Amish person. The tourists spend over \$400 million – \$29,000 per Amish person."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>i</sup>Unless their parents have rejected immunization on religious grounds, all children entering school in the United States are required to have been inoculated against diphtheria, whooping cough (pertussis), measles (rubeola), German measles (rubella), lockjaw (tetanus), and poliomyelitis.

The Amish have very mixed feelings about tourism. They are well aware that the multitudinous tourists who visit the county generate an economic vitality from which the Amish benefit too, either directly or indirectly. At the same time they resent being targeted as a marketable commodity by non-ethnic associations, officials, and individuals who stand to profit from the fascination tourists hold for all things Amish or pseudo-Amish.

The Hollywood film *Witness*, released by Paramount Pictures in 1985, exemplifies the kind of misuse the Amish community tries to avoid. The shooting of the film on location in Lancaster County was promoted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with the intent of drawing many additional visitors, *i.e.* increased revenue, to the state. The ethnics disapproved of being associated with Hollywood – for the Amish a synonym of all that is worldly, sinful, and undesirable. They also strongly objected to the portrayal of Amish in scenes of violence. The leading male role was played by Harrison Ford; Kelly McGillis was his partner. Actual Amish people were not members of the cast, nor did they work together with the production team. When it was discovered that the leading lady (Kelly McGillis) had duped an Amish family into taking her into their home, she was immediately asked to leave. This misuse left the Amish feeling exploited and wary of trusting and befriending strangers.

Nevertheless, as a result of the film, Lancaster County gained national eminence and international renown, bringing even more tourists to the region. They arrive outfitted with cameras and camcorders to record Amish life in the natural setting. These efforts of the visitors are met with strong objection from the Amish, who view photographs as a great show of pride, one of the cardinal sins according to their belief. They ground their religious convictions forbidding their being photographed or using photographic equipment on scripture (Exodus 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing...)<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Many Amish do own photographs of themselves taken before baptism, or they have snapshots of their young children taken by non-ethnics. Even an elderly bishop admitted to taking out and looking at an old class photograph from his public-school days when he reminisces about his youth.



There is a trade-off between the Amish and the non-ethnic communities. The steel wheels on Amish carriages rip up rural roads, which are kept in repair at extra cost to the county. Serious information centers which provide instructive material on the habits of the plain people help assuage the demands that tourists place on the ethnic culture. Non-sectarian businessmen have taken advantage of the marketing value of the Amish and built models of Amish homes, barns, and schools which attract paying visitors. Amish-style food is served in restaurants, and local theaters present programs depicting Amish habits and ways of living.

Due to the greatly successful merchandising of all things Amish, there are, of course, multifarious products sold under the Amish name which are not from their farms or workshops. The ethnics resent being misrepresented in motel and restaurant names, product designations, or entertainment programs. However, many – particularly the young, unmarried ethnics – do profit directly from the tourist business by working as chambermaids, kitchen helpers, janitors, or handymen at various tourist locations.

While the Amish now and then suffer from overly curious tourists who brazenly walk onto their property and sometimes likewise into their homes, they still try to maintain a balance in dealing with the outsiders. Some Amish families – especially those with young children – try to avoid all contact with non-ethnics. Others see it as a financial or even as an educational opportunity. Many produce crafts for sales to tourists. Liberal Amish retail directly; others avoid immediate dealings with customers by wholesaling their wares to craft shops which cater to the tourist trade.

There are a few rare arrangements which particular Amish have with tourists. Some tour directors bring small groups of ten to twenty tourists to certain ethnic homes for dinner. The curious tourists are rewarded with an inside view of a genuine Amish home and treated to a meal cooked by the housewife. They are encouraged to sing and pray together just as an Amish family does before partaking of the food. Children who are old enough help their mother with the cooking and serving. When there is time, family members

who are present answer the questions of their visitors. There is no charge for the evening; guests leave a "donation", the amount of which has been suggested by the guide beforehand.

Such home-cooking arrangements do not have the approval of authorities and are therefore not licensed. Officials have threatened to levy fines and have forced housewives who have been discovered running an unauthorized dining service to discontinue their business. However, a short time later new tour groups can usually be found eating at the home of the housewife's daughter, mother, sister, or other kinfolk.

Amish roadside stands dot the roads in Lancaster County. Here ethnic farm families present their produce for sale to the general public. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are offered most frequently, along with eggs, cheese, and honey. Home-baked pies and cakes are often included in the selection. At some stands handcrafted products are also for sale. When family members are busy working and unable to tend the sales booth, a money box is set out for buyers to deposit the money for their purchases. According to the Amish venders, the system works amazingly well.

Although the Amish are forced to deal with government officials at various levels, they are not politically active. Many go to the polls to vote only if the issues at stake are pertinent to their way of life. Although an Amish man is committed to assuming leadership within his cultural circle, he does not aspire to become a candidate for public office.

#### 4.5.3. *Rumspringa* Time

*Rumspringa* – this descriptive word in the German dialect which the Amish use designates the period of Amish life which begins with the completion of schooling and ends when the young man or woman marries. It is the age when teenagers and twenty-year-olds do their "running around", as the word suggests. Ethnics refer to individuals in this stage of life as young people. Those very few who do not marry generally drop out when they no longer fit into the age group, *i.e.* when they are in their early or mid-thirties.

The teenage years of Amish youth are not only a period for learning to apply the work ethic in which the young people have been steeped since birth; they are also a phase for indulging in the enjoyment of the pleasures which an Amish life allows and an age for experimenting with the constraints which their culture puts on the ethnics. In addition, it is the courting age, when mates are sought and found.

Children's contacts with the outside world are controlled and limited by each family in its own way. Farming families usually have less interaction with non-ethnics than entrepreneurial families do. The socialization of Amish children takes place within the family, church, and school, but it has not been completed before teenagers conclude their vocational schooling at the age of fifteen. Sway from teenage Amish peer groups and influence from connections with the non-ethnic world continue the socialization process. As teen-agers, they form associations with the non-Amish culture during a time in life when they are most susceptible to outside influences.

Amish children enter the work force at a much earlier age than most other young people do. Having done chores since early childhood, they are prepared to assume the responsibility required for laboring in the adult world. The young people are usually encouraged to "work away" rather than at home in order to gain experience at various jobs. Some older teenagers establish initial contacts with the outside world by temporarily working for non-Amish.

Boys who will later take over the farm from their parents immediately begin shouldering a full day's work in the fields and in the barn. Others turn to neighbors or family members to find employment in the agricultural sector. Since not all young men are able to work on a farm, some enter into related trades or small businesses.

Girls initially find it more difficult to be hired for regular jobs. Their mothers, however, are quite happy to have a full-time assistant at home. Frequently the girls work as a mother's helper for a neighborhood family with a number of small children. Here they do cleaning and help with child care. Later most of the girls do find employment – for example, in motels, restaurants, bakeries, shops, grocery stores, and at market stands. Of course, some are

recruited to become teachers. Most girls marry within the next ten years, so their jobs are viewed as being temporary and are frequently only part-time.

The range of family influence over the lives of Amish teenagers dwindles when the young people reach the age of sixteen. Boys are then given their own horse and buggy so that they are mobile within the settlement. They may use their carriage to travel to their place of work, but it is also important for them to be able to participate in the various social events geared to the youth of the local settlement. The buggy plays an important role in Amish courting customs. The social functions of unmarried Amish have a long tradition within their culture, but their habits are continually undergoing change, especially through influence from outside the ethnic circle.

The socialization of Amish youth is influenced by the friendships they make during their *rumspringa* stage. Young people informally join groups referred to as "gangs" or "crowds". These peer groups, whose habits range from extremely conservative to very liberal, determine the behavior of the Amish during their formative years. Some Amish youth, especially young men, develop friendships with non-ethnics and thereby adopt various patterns of nonconforming behavior.

The Amish gangs vary in size and may range from fifty to over a hundred young people from assorted church districts. They congregate Sunday evenings for socializing in the barn of one of the local families with offspring in the *rumspringa* stage. In the large Lancaster County settlement there are a number of singings, as they are called, every weekend. With girls and boys seated on opposite sides of long tables, the unchaperoned activities begin with singing of secular songs. The tunes are "fast songs", not hymns, for the event is social, not devotional. In previous generations young people sometimes provided accompaniment with a mouth-organ or guitar. Nowadays at the singings of more liberal groups even electric guitars might be spotted. Between songs plenty of chattering takes place, and after the close of the singing there is even more time for conversation. Boys then try to arrange to drive a girl home at the close of the evening.

There are other social events which also provide Amish youth with numerous opportunities for getting acquainted with young people from other church districts: weddings, barn-raising, hoedowns, and parties bring large numbers of young ethnics together. Smaller groups arrange activities to suit their interests. Some take trips to big cities such as Philadelphia and New York, or they travel to the Atlantic seashore for pleasure. Roller-skating, ice-skating, swimming, and especially baseball are common forms of recreation in their circles.

The *rumspringa* stage serves as a period of time for tasting forbidden fruits. Some young men dress in non-ethnic clothing or sport hairstyles which do not conform to the Amish code. Buggies are outfitted with battery-operated stereo systems which blare out modern music as young Amish people criss-cross the county on Sunday afternoon rides. Viewing Hollywood films at local movie theaters is another pleasure in which both sexes sometimes indulge.

After the conclusion of Sunday church services young Amish men in regular baseball uniforms can be seen playing the game at local public fields. There are even those who play in league matches. Sitting on the bleachers are their cheering fans – male and especially female. Nearby horses are hitched to the rail while buggies and an unexpected large number of motor vehicles which are owned and operated by the young men stand on an adjacent lot.

Numerous young men succumb to the temptation of motorization and learn to drive an automobile. Many obtain an official state driver's license and frequently even own a car. Those vehicles are then hidden from the view of family and church, but the ownership seldom remains a secret. Before Amish car owners can be baptized into the church, they have to discontinue driving and shed their automobiles.

Although the *rumspringa* stage begins when the children are considered to be of a marriageable age, most young people reach their twenties before they marry. The numerous social events provide a wide scope of opportunities for young people to meet members of the opposite sex. Since the Amish gene pool is limited, it has become important for them to find suitable partners with a divergent lineage. Young men generally try to establish friendships with

potential partners from more distant church districts, for here the girls are less likely to be closely related to the man's own family.

Courting is a very personal matter. It is not discussed widely within the family, although teasing from younger siblings might have to be endured. When a young man has found a girl to his liking, he begins wooing her by driving her home from the Sunday singings. They may then spend more time together in their gang activities. When the bond becomes more serious, he will dress in his best clothes and drive to her home on Saturday evenings to court her after her family has discreetly retired. However, before the courtship can culminate in marriage, the young couple will first have to become church members by being baptized in their respective church districts. The ensuing wedding then takes place in congregation of the bride.

Sex education is not included in the curriculum of Amish schools; likewise, Amish children seldom learn about the facts of life from their parents. Most of their information about sex comes from peers, older siblings, and their observation of farm animals. Young people are expected to remain chaste until marriage. Nonetheless, a small minority of the couples do have premarital sexual relations. If a pregnancy results from their union, the couple confesses and then marries. In a very few rare instances a wedding does not take place for certain reasons, and the child is born out of wedlock. It normally remains with its mother in the fold of her family and is raised there.

For parents and the church as a whole the social activities of the young people are often perceived to be just teeming with unsanctioned escapades. Liberal young people frequently consume alcoholic beverages and some have been charged with under-age drinking. Others have been arrested for driving without a license or for driving under the influence of alcohol. Rowdiness and vandalism generally occur within the ethnic community, but sometimes law-enforcement officials are forced to intervene. In 1998 two young Amish men from Lancaster County were indicted for the trafficking of drugs. In this surprising case, which made headlines nationwide, the two men, who were in their mid-twenties and not yet baptized members of the church, bought cocaine

and methamphetamine from a non-ethnic motorcycle gang for distribution to young Amish at hoe-downs.

During the *rumspringa* stage of their children's lives Amish parents are remarkably tolerant of their off-spring's behavior. The families of the young people are usually aware of their teenagers' misdoing, but parents choose to ignore the issues. Because the Amish culture is very restricting, its young members are given freedom to expand their horizons during their formative years. The church hopes that the young people have been given a solid enough foundation during their childhood so that they can sample parts of the outside world and then willingly return to the fold of their family and their faith.

When the intention to join the church has been made known and baptism ensues, striving to live a virtuous life according to the norms of their culture, which are anchored in the *Ordnung*, must follow. Church members who fall short are banned from fellowship with friends and family; eventually they are shunned throughout their community if a ban has been pronounced by the bishop. The Amish believe that the resolve to join the church should be very well contemplated before a final decision is made. The young people are more or less unrestricted during this stage of life so that they are able to experiment with some of the appealing ways of the non-ethnic society. They are expected to be completely firm in their conviction when at baptism they finally make the solemn pledge to be true to their faith. In countless circumstances the desire to marry is the motivating factor for joining the church.

Over twenty percent of the Amish young people are never baptized. Some of these wayward youth remain in the unbaptized status. Consequently, they are not shunned for inappropriate behavior, for they are not church members. It is frequently this group of young people who cause families and church leaders the most concern. In due time some of them do become affiliated with plain churches akin to the Amish. During their youth others early opt to unite with more liberal plain groups, such as the Mennonites, and thus leave their ethnic circle without ever having officially joined the Amish church.

Those who do break away from their cultural roots follow a variety of life lines later. Members of conservative Mennonite churches tend to follow an

Amish-like life-style, but it usually includes the use of modern conveniences such as automobiles, telephones, and electricity in the home. Others who adventure further afield have more difficulty in establishing a sound way of life without the familiar succor, affection, and companionship of the family. Nonetheless, they seldom have problems entering into the general work force. Although their choice of occupations is restricted by their limited schooling, they are desirable, reliable laborers and craftsmen who possess the excellent ethnic work ethic which is firmly rooted in their Amish heritage.



*The price we pay for the complexity of life is too high. When you think of all the effort you have to put in – telephonic, technological and relational – to alter even the slightest bit of behavior in this strange world we call social life, you are left pining for the straightforwardness of primitive peoples and their physical work.*

– Jean Baudrillard  
*Cool Memories*

## 5. CONCLUSION

Leading a simple, puritanical life as the Amish do has particular appeal for others, especially during troubled times. Many non-ethnics behold the Amish world as being old-fashioned and quaint but free from occupational stress, free from greed and covetousness, free from drugs and violence, free from lust and debauchery – simply, a rock standing solid in the tempests of the age.

Competition and individualism, so highly regarded by society in general, have little value in the flat society of the Amish where everyone has the same social standing. Humility and submissiveness (*Gelassenheit*) merit highest for the ethnic community; accumulating wealth – although not taboo – is not their main intent. Their primary goal in this world is based on their religious belief: living a God-fearing life by following a path of righteousness, which is in stark contrast to the non-ethnic community where leading a good life is generally interpreted to mean financial success coupled with consumerism.

While non-ethnic businesses strive to be prosperous and profitable, job security is infrequent and employees are often unmotivated. The refusal of the Amish to employ most modern technologies has left them outdated, and their abridged education limits their book knowledge. Nevertheless, they are surprisingly successful in their endeavors, even in those non-agricultural branches which are not traditionally Amish. Perhaps the Amish way of doing things is not so behind the times after all. For the rest of society could a step backwards in reality be a step forward?

The family is the solid fundament of Amish culture. It provides sanctuary and permanence in the lives of its members. Interaction among individuals is amicable, respectful, and considerate. "Personal alienation, loneliness, and meaninglessness are for the most part absent. ... The Amish have created a humane and enviable social system."<sup>67</sup>

Intra- and interfamilial support is the essence of Amish life. There are practically no patchwork or single-parent families so commonly found in the non-Amish society. Divorce is unheard-of within their community; only if there is an untimely death of a marriage partner will the other eventually remarry. Thus Amish children remain in a secure familial environment, which provides them with lifelong social continuation. In contrast, non-ethnics are frequently disconnected by family disintegration. The relocation of the complete household in a new neighborhood or even in a distant community uproots whole families.

With an average of more than seven births per couple, Amish families are large. But each newborn is seen as a creation of God and is therefore accepted and welcomed into the fold of the family, regardless of how many other children the parents already have. An abortion would never be considered – not even when it is evident that the baby will be handicapped. In the United States the average birth rate is slightly over two; in Germany it is less than two. While non-ethnic children frequently grow up without siblings, Amish children are surrounded by brothers and sisters, grand-parents, aunts, uncles, and numberless cousins from the same neighborhood. The mobility of the American society often leaves non-Amish grandparents as well as aunts, uncles, and cousins scattered throughout the nation, thus making personal visits infrequent and close family members to near strangers.

However, non-ethnics may make use of telephone and internet connections to communicate with each other. The Amish *Ordnung* forbids the utilization of these devices; their substitutes are letters or cards mailed to friends and relatives who do not live nearby. Their daily contacts are face-to-face conversations. While the internet is able to make frequent written contact possible, that kind of interaction between individuals appears very impersonal

to the Amish, for facial expressions and body language are absent, as is the warmth or coolness heard in the voice of a telephone partner.

Within the Amish community every individual has his own worth. The handicapped and the elderly all contribute to the family as much as their ability and health permit. Likewise, the family provides for those persons who are feeble, infirm, or disabled. In the non-ethnic society the incapacitated, indisposed, and elderly are routinely forced to leave their familiar surroundings to live in institutions, where they are given necessary care by strangers.

Despite the large size of Amish families, they are able to survive on small incomes, for they lead frugal lives. Their austere existence is molded by their faith. There is no urge for them to follow the latest trends; preoccupation with consumerism is foreign to Amish habit. To non-ethnics the simple clothing and hair styles of the Amish appear unfashionable. Amish garments are home-sewn; there is no pressure for them to purchase special brand-name clothing or expensive designer apparel so often in great demand by much of the rest of society. Costly stylish haircuts reflect the current fashion in the non-ethnic society, but the locks of Amish women remain untrimmed and the men sport only one unchanging hair style, which is clipped at home.

There are, however, occasional indulgences even by the Amish. Many invest in building modern homes or in renovating old ones. The floor plans vary only slightly, but the materials used are frequently of a very high quality. Modern gas-operated kitchen appliances and contemporary bathrooms are installed for convenience. Some Amish men smoke cigars or pipes; many women have lavish flower gardens. Couples take trips, and whole families may go on excursions to nearby parks or sites of interest.

The ethnic culture does not consider material wealth to be ungodly. "Evil, the Amish believe, is found in human desires for self-exaltation rather than in the material world as such."<sup>68</sup> Amish society is simply not engrossed in shopping and "keeping up with the Joneses" (*i.e.* the possession of material goods) to the same extent as is a great part of the remainder of society.

Within the Amish culture primary emphasis is placed on their Protestant work ethic. Beginning at a very early age, children are steeped in the traditional

values. Some observers consider the integrating of Amish offspring in the daily work routines of the family to be a mistreatment of the young people – in fact, even a breach of child labor laws.

Non-ethnic youth under the age of sixteen seldom shoulder an amount of responsibility equal to that of same-aged Amish children. Non-Amish young people in cities and suburbs occasionally are assigned tasks within the family such as taking out the garbage or feeding pets; farm youth regularly have more duties, which often include raising their own animals. Non-ethnic children have a great deal of leisure time. They tend to spend it watching television or playing video games, and many participate in extra-curricular programs of the local schools. Nonetheless, Amish children too have amusement and diversion from their daily chores, but their lives have more direction and purpose than those of their non-ethnic peers.

Since Amish children work side by side with their parents, they are well aware of the effort required to manage a farm or run a business. Although non-Amish children are able to name their parents' occupations, they may be unfamiliar with the daily on-the-job routines and the actual duties of their mothers and fathers. Efforts to combat this lack of information have been initiated by schools in cooperation with businesses and government agencies. A special day is set aside annually in order for children to accompany one of their parents to their place of work, where the young people are able to observe what their parent accomplishes outside the home.

Amish parents punish their offspring when they deem it to be necessary; unknown in ethnic families is the permissiveness of anti-authoritarian parents, which may lead to undisciplined, indulged children. The Amish society believes in the slogan "practice what you preach", *i.e.* in setting a good example for youth to follow. Amish children whose behavior is inappropriate are reprimanded; ethnic parents are usually not averse to administering physical punishment if the disobedience persists.

In contrast, Amish parents are remarkably lenient with their teenage offspring during the *rumspringa* stage. They share the worries of non-ethnic parents concerning the behavior of their progeny. Common to adolescents in

both cultures is the testing of their bounds within the family, peer group, and society as a whole. There are other parallels as well: a sixteen-year-old Amish boy has his own horse and carriage; in most states non-ethnic teenagers of the same age obtain a driver's license, and many are likewise given an automobile. Whether horse or car – both are status symbols within their respective peer groups and cultures.

Of uppermost importance for Amish parents is the baptism of their children. Amish parents instinctively know that harsh punishment and too much strictness would drive most youth from their faith and eventually lead to its demise. Parents whose offspring do not join the church feel that they have failed. It is not only an individual failing but a collective one as well, for the ethnic society is dependent on its youth for further existence.

Correspondingly Amish youth are well aware of the consequences they will have to bear if they defy their heritage and leave the folds of family and church. They are sensible to the fact that an individual failure on their part is a group failure: their family, their church as a whole, and their ethnic culture suffer from the aftermath. Non-ethnic teenagers are not always faced with such clear consequences for their behavior; therefore their feeling of responsibility to the family and to society is more limited than that of their Amish peers. Likewise success is a group or an individual matter in the respective cultures.

For the non-Amish community the word church generally connotes a place of worship: an edifice which reflects the means of its congregation. The range extends from a simple clapboard structure with little adornment to an opulent building of either a traditional or modern style, embellished with carved wooden altars, golden religious ornaments and works of art. The singing of hymns plays an important role in worship services; therefore an organ or piano is available for accompaniment in most churches. Choirs, instrumental groups, and seasonal pageantry contribute to transforming religious ceremonies into symbolic attractions for the faithful.

There is little similarity to the Amish practice of unaffected worship where even a plain wooden cross is absent. Amish congregations do not compete with each other in demonstrating their wealth; their resources are used to support the

needy. Worship in the home with the succeeding agape has a leveling effect on the Amish congregation, for each family in due time opens its doors to all church members. In such circumstances deviations from the norm are quickly uncovered. In the non-ethnic public contact within congregations might be limited to weekly worship services.

A church hierarchy is lacking in the Amish culture; their church leaders are chosen by lot. In the non-ethnic society independent sects have self-named preachers who attract supporters with their charisma more than with their religious message, but most main-stream congregations are part of national and international organizations. In the United States there is no tax or government support for religious bodies; each individual congregation is self-sustaining. In Protestant churches an elected council of church elders is in charge of running a local congregation. Their duties include planning the annual budget, hiring the pastor, and advising him in congregational affairs. Mainline Protestant churches have affiliation with worldwide associations of the same creed; the Roman Catholic faith has direction from Rome through its church hierarchy. The success of the local church, measured by regular attendance at worship services and sum of pledges and donations, depends heavily on the personality and competence of the responsible priest/pastor.

The Amish lay preachers are without formal religious training. This might also be the case in low churches, but high churches require that their ministers have a degree in theology. Larger congregations engage not only a pastor and an assistant; they employ other professionals as well. Most have a hired organist/choir director. Some retain family counselors or full-time youth leaders to aid the clergy in their social work. Even though the church offers a wide range of succor and may dominate the lives of its members, their organized faith is unlike that of the Amish.

For the Amish, religion is not a creed; it is a way of life which permeates their whole society on a daily basis, not just on Sundays. Throughout centuries their religious thought has stayed constant with no principal alterations to their basic beliefs, and their practices have remained relatively unchanged except for adjustments to the *Ordnung* when deemed necessary. The majority of these

modifications to the *Ordnung* occurred in the twentieth century as the nation moved forward from an agrarian civilization to an industrialized, technologized society. Thus, the gap between the Amish way of life and the non-ethnic culture expanded greatly. Paradoxically, at the same time the Amish became more dependent on the outside world.

While the Amish remained steadfast, the rest of the United States was undergoing a transformation in its religious focus. During the latter half of the past century American society became more secularized than ever before. An ever greater number of people declared themselves to be atheists, agnostics, or non-practicing Christians. In addition, there was a population shift: the percent of (Roman-Catholic affiliated) Hispanics within the country expanded through a high birth along with immigration, and national laws were altered to allow extended immigration from non-European countries. It resulted in an increase of non-Christian immigrants, moving the nation farther away from its WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) origins. Likewise, the number of residents in the country adhering to non-Christian faiths multiplied.

Some blacks, traditionally members of Baptist congregations, used their newly found cultural awareness by joining Black Muslim groups, whose code of conduct was based on Islamic doctrines. The eminent boxer Cassius Clay, alias Muhammad Ali, is perhaps the most prominent convert. Within the movement there were advocates of black separatism who even promoted the establishment of a separate homeland for Afro-Americans in the United States.

Simultaneously, mainstream churches lost influence as manifold sects with diverse affiliations sprang up throughout the country. Some, like Scientology, are pseudo-sects which combine church and big business all in one. In the southeastern part of the United States, known as the Bible Belt, tent meetings and circuit evangelists are part of the local culture. Mass media has brought religion into the homes of radio listeners and television viewers as "televangelists" of all shades have their sermons broadcast nationwide. Many of these lay preachers are good salesmen as well; donations in response to their solicitations on air have made it possible for some to amass large fortunes.

The tenets of the Anabaptists were extremely radical in sixteenth-century Zurich, an absolute disparity to their present conservative leanings. But their faith today is very tolerant of those with another creed. They are without religious fanaticism or extremism. Quietly they adhere to their beliefs without trying to convert others. Living a God-fearing life sets a good example for others to follow, but they do not "preach" or proselytize, nor do they condemn those with other convictions.<sup>i</sup>

The non-Amish population is less tolerant of other beliefs. Courts have been summoned to regulate the handling of religious practices, especially those in public schools. As anchored in the Constitution, there has always been a separation of church and state in the United States; therefore, religious instruction has never been part of the curriculum in public schools. However, the school day there was traditionally opened with the reading of a few Bible verses, the praying of the Lord's Prayer, and the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States. Litigation initiated by individuals and interest groups alike have compelled officials to adjust and exclude these classroom conventions. Likewise, there is no religious education in Amish schools, just religious practice. The Amish family and the church are responsible for the religious education of the children and believe that religion need not be taught as a subject, for it should be lived rather than studied.

Among the general population national holidays now are emphasized more than religious holidays, since non-Christians sometimes requested that their religious holidays be included in the school/work calendar too. The Amish do not adhere to all the calendar holidays either, but they differ in the fact that they celebrate all the traditional Christian holidays according to their customs that are anchored in their European heritage.

Meanwhile, within the United States a religious polarization has taken place. A swing towards fundamentalism has had an effect on the courts as well as on the platforms of political parties. Dogmatic extremists who are without

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<sup>i</sup>When asked if only God-fearing Amish people could enter into Heaven, an Amishman responded with a metaphor: The gates to Heaven are manifold with each door bearing the name of a different denomination (Old Order Amish, Mennonite, Lutheran, Methodist, *etc.*) When one knocks and his door is opened, one proceeds inside, only to find that all are in one and the same great room.



tolerance for those who think differently have promulgated their own ideas to the extent of committing criminal acts. For example, in the heated controversy over abortion, doctors have been murdered and abortion clinics have been destroyed by militants. In order to be elected, political candidates are now compelled to regard the objectives of various right-wing associations, religious denominations, and individual conservatives.

The Amish do not effect change through radicalism; a wanton crime would never be committed to defend their beliefs. They prefer to confer with their opponents in order to untangle problems. The Amish faith induces its members to learn the skills of negotiation. Changes to the *Ordnung* are always preceded by a period of bargaining before a final conclusion is drawn.

Amish individuals learn to contemplate all important decisions very carefully, for their intents might affect not only their family but their church as well. They make their resolutions for the good of all. The non-ethnic culture seeks self-advancement by making decisions which are first of all self-serving. An Amish person seeks to mediate when disagreement arises, for harmony is more important than triumph and success. Even when a church member with unacceptable behavior is being threatened with shunning, church leaders attempt to negotiate rather than pursue a course of confrontation.

The schools are one area in which the Amish were initially unsuccessful with their negotiation. Here they remained unbending and at length were awarded a Supreme Court decision supporting their efforts to maintain their own schools. Although all schools are required to abide by state regulations, there are considerable differences between Amish schools and those public, private, and parochial educational institutions which serve the non-ethnic population in Lancaster County.

The neighborhood Amish school is a product of the ethnics who live in that particular school district. Parents organize the management of the school for their children and they remain active, interested participants in the daily operation. Visits to the classroom are frequent. Decentralized decision-making at the local level enable the schools to function to meet the demands of the ethnic culture and to exist on a small budget. The lack of an administrative

hierarchy permits quick modifications when change within the local district is found to be necessary.

Classroom observation by non-ethnic parents is seldom. They become involved most frequently as spectators at special school events when their offspring play on an athletic team or perform in a music group. In order to supply general information to families of the students most schools have a parents night every autumn, but attendance varies. Some schools also have regularly scheduled appointments for individual parent-teacher conferences; in other districts any one teacher or the parents may request a private meeting when the behavior or the achievement of the student makes it necessary.

Non-sectarian school districts are large and carry the ballast of myriad administrative and non-teaching positions. School boards are composed of politically elected office seekers who are not necessarily parents. The district superintendent or supervising principal is responsible for the daily operation of the schools within the regional district, but the administrator has to answer to the local board. The danger that local politics upset the school atmosphere is always present. Local citizens determine the tax rates applicable for the running of educational institutions within their district; school programs may suddenly have to be altered because adequate funds are no longer available. For example, parents of school-age children in some public school districts suddenly had to arrange school transportation for their children because the allotment for busing had been eliminated from the district budget.

The school buildings of ethnics and non-sectarians are markedly unlike. Amish schoolhouses remind the viewer of bygone times when children of all grades were taught together in one room by one teacher. Public schools housing large numbers of pupils are modern buildings constructed to meet actual fire and safety standards. They are also built to meet the needs of the students and curricula. Elementary schools are generally less spacious than high schools, where, in addition to regular classrooms, there are generally special tracts for the teaching of physical education, music, art, or vocational skills. A library and a cafeteria are part of nearly every public school.

All students are commonly divided into groups according to age and learning levels. Classes reflect the local school population; usually they are twenty to thirty strong. Amish schools have a similar number ranging from twenty to forty, but a single room includes students all grades from one to eight. Large (high) schools which accommodate hundreds or even thousand of pupils set limits on social interaction within the student body. Even the teaching staff of such a populous school is so large that all teachers are not well acquainted with each other. The integration of faculty and students becomes a major problem because of school size. Peer groups exert enormous influence; being linked to an accepted clique or circle of students is important for the young people. Misconduct, vandalism, or violence is more likely to be incited by marginal groups of rejected and ostracized students who feel no sense of belonging or loyalty to their peers or to their school.<sup>i</sup>

Both ethnic and non-ethnic schools follow a full-day schedule. Amish scholars attend a school within walking distance of their home; non-sectarians are bused to the closest school. Not considered to be a neighborhood school, it may be located nearby or miles away, thus entailing any amount of travel time spent on the school bus. When non-ethnic school-aged children are uprooted from their familiar surroundings to be transported to their respective places of learning, the subtle restraint on conduct that comes from their families living in close proximity to one another ebbs and fades.

Public school populations are much more complex than those of the homogeneous Amish schools. Depending on the socio-economic arrangement of the school district, a large variety of social classes may be mixed together in non-ethnic schools; the teacher generally has a middle-class background. He or she may have difficulty in recognizing and acknowledging the needs and problems of the students and their parents who derive from a divergent milieu. Both an Amish teacher and her scholars have the same lifestyle. The teacher understands her charges well because she is akin to them and their ways; they all share the same heritage and cherish similar values.

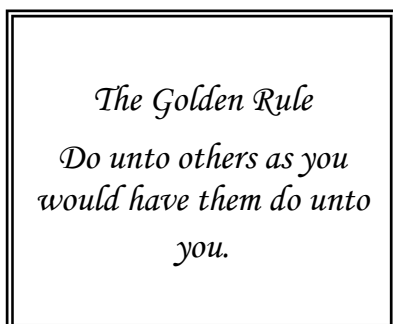
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<sup>i</sup>There were over four thousand students enrolled at the high school in Littleton, Colorado, when the student massacre occurred there.

The Amish have always been opposed to having their children attend high school because the main differences in schooling occur at that level. In addition to learning abstract thinking, applying critical analysis, and being taught subjects unacceptable to their culture, the Amish see numerous high-school activities as a complete waste of time. Sports and music groups are the most common extracurricular activities in non-ethnic schools, but in some areas there are school newspapers, radio broadcasts, thespian performances, yearbooks, and numberless other opportunities for students to gain experience and to broaden their knowledge outside the classroom. Sometimes these activities serve as a base for choosing a future occupation, or they may remain a life-long hobby. Amish children, however, obtain practical experience by working with the family on farms or in family enterprises.

Elementary schools differ from Amish ones not only in the facilities but also in procedures. Teaching methods are various in non-sectarian schools: team effort and frontal teaching, individual achievement and group work – numerous techniques are implemented to motivate students. Individual accomplishment is rewarded with praise from the teacher, gold stars on charts, and high grades on tests and report cards. The student is encouraged to strive for high personal achievement. Children sit at tables to spur collective learning along with personal exchange and positive influence. Classroom rules are established to control the behavior of the students.

Figure 5.1.: The Golden Rule



In Amish schools there is less emphasis on formal regulation; the Golden Rule is the guide for behavior. Amish scholars sit at old-fashioned desks arranged in straight rows. Individual learning takes place at the desk in a still and quiet atmosphere. A glance or a whisper to another scholar conveys the wish for assistance; a raised hand indicates the need of an explanation from the teacher. Students are expected to commit facts to memory for recall when quizzed by the teacher. In turn, each child is asked the same number of questions so that none feels slighted. There is no

competitive wild waving of hands to gain the attention of the teacher in order to be called upon to give an answer as is common practice in non-ethnic education.

In comparison to non-sectarian colleagues, the Amish teacher is less verbal and less mobile in the classroom. Lacking formal education beyond the eighth grade, her level of school knowledge is scarcely more than that of her scholars. Her task exists mainly in facilitating, *i.e.* in assisting the children in becoming competent in reading, writing, and arithmetic. She is also responsible for creating and maintaining the friendly atmosphere which permeates the classroom, for Amish education is more social than individual. Although sometimes she too may honor progress with gold stars or other stickers, scholars are taught to find merit in their mastery of the material. Achievement itself is the reward. Amish pupils are encouraged to become self-reliant learners at a young age. In contrast to her non-ethnic colleagues, the Amish teacher does not motivate students to seek out more knowledge or aim for higher levels of education to broaden their learning horizons.

One of the most uncertain components in the ethnic educational system is the teacher. Her comportment in the classroom is without flaw, and frequently she serves as a role model for young girls. She projects the humility and gentleness characteristic of her ethnic culture into the classroom. Nonetheless, some errors which she makes while teaching will be transferred on to the next generation without correction, for her pupils are not taught to question or scrutinize that which they learn.

The teachers are usually young and not always confident in their position. Preparation for their job frequently consists solely of the experience they have obtained as students in an Amish school. Teachers gain additional knowledge for classroom instruction by reading Amish publications geared to helping them improve their efforts and by gleaning practical tips from colleagues who attend the semiannual teachers' meetings. There is now an evolving trend to have those young girls interested in teaching serve initially as teacher's helpers before filling an opening at another school. Yet not every teacher is first able to acquire practice as a helper. In addition, matrimony generates a high turn-over

rate among the teachers. Married women no longer teach, so a continuity of many years exists only when a teacher remains unmarried. A single scholar may have been taught by as many as seven different teachers during his eight years of school.

All is meager in contrast to the circumstances of the college-educated teacher of public schools who is obligated to meet state requirements. In order to be able to fulfill the demands of teaching in a heterogeneous classroom, non-ethnic teachers have been prepared in an array of courses in the field of education. They also have the opportunity to broaden their horizons by enrolling in advanced programs or by participating in seminars geared to their needs and subject interests. For non-ethnics, teaching is considered to be a professional vocation rather than a job position to be filled only until marriage. Nevertheless, in both cultures the quality and the success of the classroom teaching depend primarily on the ability of the individual teacher.

Some elderly Amishmen offered the candid opinion: "our schools were better years ago". That assumption would suggest that Amish scholars fared better when they were being taught by non-ethnic teachers who had been trained as educators. In 1969 Hostetler published results from his testing of Amish scholars along with non-sectarian pupils in Iowa. His research indicates that at the time the academic achievement of Amish scholars was comparable to that of non-ethnic pupils in public schools. Amish scholars were outperformed by non-ethnics only in vocabulary. Hostetler offers an explanation:

The generally low performance of the Amish on the language aspects ... can perhaps be attributed in part to the time limitation. On rechecking the reading tests we found that the children did very well in the parts they finished; but, especially in the upper grades, most of the children who had not been trained to take timed tests did not complete the work. It should also be remembered that English is a second language that is not learned until they enter school.<sup>69</sup>

Advisable is a new round of testing to define the current academic standing of Amish students. It would be intriguing to compare the scores of Amish and non-sectarian students particularly in Lancaster County, where Amish children

have greater contact outside their ethnic culture. Of special interest would be the variations of results from 1969 and the effects television and computers have had on the (language) skills of non-ethnic students.

Historically the state has striven to sustain an educated citizenry. Children, however, were needed not only for the working of family farms but were also coveted for the labor force in factories as the nation became industrialized. Appalling accounts of child labor in sweat shops record the hardships of children forced to work to support their families. Therefore many a young person then obtained only a nominal amount of schooling. However, during bad times, when there is a shortage of jobs for all, there is a tendency to get young people off the street and into schools to teach them additional skills that better qualify them for the labor market. It was during the years of the Great Depression in the 1930's when a high-school diploma became standard for most young people, for there were no jobs or apprenticeships available for those who left school before graduation.

Amish people are never faced with unemployment. Their children are all furnished with an equal amount of schooling, and all are integrated into a family entrepreneurial system at an early age. Despite their limited formal education, Amish youth are able to function well in society after having completed their state-required schooling. Within their cultural group they effortlessly slip into the work force. Those who break away from their ethnic bindings easily find employment elsewhere, for the Amish have an excellent reputation as being hard-working, responsible, and willing workers.

In comparison, the high-school diploma of a non-ethnic student bears no such reputation, for it is nothing more than proof of attendance. Future employers ask job-seeking graduates to submit a transcript containing a record of all subjects studied and their achievement in each course for the four years of high school. Likewise, colleges and universities request a document of academic standing as one of the requirements for matriculation. Nonetheless, a transcript manifests no true evidence of an admirable work ethic nor does it exhibit a disposition for future success.

The preferred place of employment for the Amish continues to be found in farming. They perceive the fruits of their labor as a divine blessing; tilling the soil keeps them close to nature and close to God. Being dependent on the weather and the environment, they remain humble. By foregoing the use of tractors for work in the fields, they maintain a simple life-style. Farming is the predominant calling within the ethnic culture, and rural practices permeate the entire Amish society.

Amish farms cannot be likened to the large agricultural holdings in the Midwest of the United States; they can, however, be compared to farms that are operated by non-ethnics in Lancaster County. Acreage, crops, livestock, and farming patterns are all similar. At harvest time many neighbors mutually hire a combine and help each other with the reaping of their crops. Within Amish society reciprocal aid that goes without saying is an integral part of the cultural. Emergencies bring both groups together to work for the common good.

The Amish family-run farms are not less productive than those of their non-Amish neighbors. While non-sectarians employ modern farming equipment to increase productivity and ease the work load, Amish farmers rely on their kin for manpower to till the soil, harvest the crops, and care for the animals. Non-ethnic farmers seldom have the help of a whole family to work their farms, for their children attend school. For both cultural groups farming provides the opportunity for children to become familiar with the rural work ethic. The young people usually find special satisfaction in caring for animals. Particularly Amish youth assume a great amount of responsibility at an early age. The work load farmers have to bear may curb the willingness of their offspring to follow in their father's footsteps; countless non-ethnics prefer to enter into another, less demanding trade or business. Amish young people, however, adhere to tradition and remain on the farm whenever possible.

Amish farmers also profit in an exchange of information with their non-ethnic neighbors who often are the first to test new tools or methods. In addition, salesmen provide facts and figures on the latest commodities as they are put on the market. Although Amish farmers are not unwilling to adopt new



products or tools, they occasionally feel cheated and outfoxed by non-ethnic salesmen who sell them goods which later prove to be ineffectual or purposeless for use on Amish farms.

Both ethnic and non-Amish farmers are equally concerned with growing crops and raising animals, but in the business world the two groups have less in common. Amishmen who are entrepreneurs still follow the daily, weekly, and yearly schedules of a farmer. A farmer rises in the wee hours of the morning to milk his cows and care for his animals; an Amish businessman begins his working day just as early. True to his cultural heritage, an Amishman works six days a week except for holidays<sup>i/70</sup> His priorities are ranked: the church comes first, the family next, and the business last. A profit must be made, but not at the cost of losing ethnic values.

Needed operating capital is accrued through hard work and business acumen, not through the sale of stocks. Amish businessmen remain self-reliant and answerable to their family, church, and society, but not to the stock market. Profit is the main interest of non-ethnic owners, but gains are normally more difficult to accrue in a non-Amish business because there are more expenses involved in running it. Employees are commonly hired workers, not family members. Paid holidays and paid vacation time are granted to all personnel, and a five-day working week is the norm. Non-Amish entrepreneurs regularly pay into health and retirement funds for their employees; Amish businessmen believe the church should care for the infirm and aged and therefore do not ordinarily participate in such plans.

Prosperity usually brings not only profit but organization and management expansion as well. In contrast to Amish entrepreneurs, non-ethnic businessmen seldom put a cap on their growth. By remaining small, Amish enterprises can easily be modified or converted should the need arise. Flexibility, one of the main keys to the success of Amish entrepreneurs, enables them quickly to meet the daily needs of the ethnic community or the demands of the business world.

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<sup>i</sup> Swiss Protestant craftsmen praised the six-day work week when it was introduced during the Reformation, for they were able to increase productivity and thereby add to their profits. In Zurich the Roman Catholics had 120 non-working days per year; under the Protestants the number was halved to sixty.

Size limits are set by their restricted use of technology, their limited education, and their inclination to elude government regulation. In addition, indirect control is exerted by the church. Large businesses elevate owners above the norm and disrupt the flat social order of the Amish. Therefore they are met with disapproval by the ethnic community. Those who do accumulate wealth do not display it openly. Some purchase a vacation home in Florida or take long trips; otherwise they live frugally without flaunting their riches. They are never found investing their capital in the stock market or in other money-making systems as innumerable non-ethnics do.

Amish businesses have little overhead, for they have few trappings and no hierarchy. The owner is the leader of the business, but even as the boss he remains unassuming and unaffected. Generally he works side by side with his employees and is able to perform each of the single tasks involved in the production of his product. The entrepreneur trains his new workers until they have attained the skills required for their job. Communication between management and labor is open; the owner encourages his workers to give constructive criticism and make suggestions for bettering a product or work procedures. Sometimes a bonus is awarded to an employee who has made a money-saving proposal which improves an article or its manufacture. An Amish entrepreneur may lend money to an employee for him to build a house or even to open a business of his own.

Non-ethnic employees are also encouraged to contribute to the success of their companies, but entrepreneurs sometimes have to deal with labor unions and dissatisfied employees who feel detached from company aims and purposes. Expansion and take-overs give rise to even larger business conglomerates. Huge international and multi-national companies have a costly hierarchy of executive officers and managers far removed from the daily routines of their workers; only in very small businesses does the owner work together with his employees. Labor overhead is high, especially in large companies; consequently one of the first cost-saving devices applied during an economic slump is a reduction of the work force. Hire and fire as required for profit earning is alien to Amish ways; their entrepreneurs offer permanence and

job security for their employees. By maintaining a simple system of production they are able to supply employment for all except for the disabled and infirm.

Most non-sectarian employees have qualified for their jobs first through book learning – maybe even earning a college degree – and then through work experience. Some non-ethnic teenagers work part-time after school or on weekend jobs not so much to acquire knowledge as to earn extra spending money. Only a few gain true work experience within the family. Amish youth have been trained in manual skills since childhood; they learn by observing those who are adept at the task and through on-the-job practice. The broadening of one's knowledge through continuing education has become standard practice in non-ethnic circles. Amish, however, very seldom receive any formal education beyond the eighth-grade level. A very few enroll in special courses for learning to use specific products or techniques for their businesses, and Amish tax accountants keep up to date on the latest laws by attending seminars.

A comparison between two divergent groups of ethnics – the farmers and the businessmen – is fitting. As the lack of available farm land in Lancaster County forces young Amish men to turn to other pursuits, primary focus is set on coping within the ethnic culture. Almost all of the Amish enterprises have been founded within the past fifty years, and the necessitated shift from agrarian to entrepreneurial operations continues to increase at an ever sharper rate and thereby impose heretofore unknown demands on the ethnic society. In early Pennsylvania the vocational endeavors of the Quakers were centered in commerce. As merchants and skilled tradesmen with flourishing enterprises they were gradually absorbed into the mainstream of society in Philadelphia and eventually lost their ethnic identity.

Already it is evident that Amish businessmen are able to make greater gains than farmers are, for it is most often an Amish businessman who purchases a farm that is up for sale in Lancaster County. In fact, Kraybill and Nolt found that seven percent of the Amish enterprises in the county have annual sales totaling more than one million dollars and an additional seven percent have sales over half a million dollars.<sup>71</sup> The originally flat ethnic society is now less homogenous because the developing of Amish enterprises

has created a new level – that of affluent entrepreneurs. Although Amish people labor not for the accumulation of wealth but rather for following a Christian path in life, the question still arises: will an increasing number of envious farmers and laborers begin begrudging their entrepreneurial associates their financial success and thereby divide the ethnic group?

Non-farm jobs unquestionably lead to more outside contact and more "worldliness". Those who are employed by others find that their workday ends earlier and their workweek is shorter, thus providing them with leisure time otherwise unfamiliar in ethnic circles. Confronted with temptations from the society beyond their own culture, the inclination not to conform to the church is greater. Church leaders worry that their culture will disintegrate as the ethnic society is forced to move away from its agrarian roots.

Nevertheless, Amish businessmen have been well equipped by their schools and their practical training to establish and run their own enterprises. Problem solving is part of their daily routine, and an amazing amount of ingenuity is displayed in the numerous devices and machines which they construct and utilize in order to obey laws and comply with the requirements of the *Ordnung*. Having learned on the farm to assume responsibility and to work independently, they are prepared to establish and manage a business of their own. Most remain small; only about thirty-seven percent of the owners have one or more full-time employees. In Germany the unemployed are presently being encouraged to found so-called *Ich-AG's*, a one-man venture. Not all of these endeavors are successful, however, for many of these new businessmen are lacking in entrepreneurial skills. Course offerings may inform them, or they are obliged to follow the Amish practice of learning by doing.

Non-ethnic women have been a part of the work force for generations, but the Amish wife has traditionally been bound to the home. The decrease of farming families has been accompanied by modest changes in the gender roles of Amish women. The trend for establishing Amish entrepreneurships animated some ethnic women to open businesses of their own. Married women generally have joint ownership with their husbands even if the wives run their businesses alone. Most of these enterprises are related to work with which they

are familiar: the sale of baked goods and quilts, the retail of fabrics, groceries, and household wares, or the marketing of fruit and produce. It remains to be seen what cultural variations will occur through the ethnic role modifications.

Amish people have been educated to seek help when difficulty ensues. With the *modus operandi* they implicitly learned in the schoolroom, they first try to solve the problem alone. If unsuccessful, they turn to knowledgeable family or friends who teach them the needed skill. There is no shame in not knowing, only in being unwilling to learn. The learners enter into a kind of apprenticeship for a few hours, a few days, a few weeks, a few months, or even a few years to acquire the necessary proficiency, and they stick to the task until they are able to work independently.

Non-ethnics do not as readily admit to their lack of comprehension or proficiency, for in the classroom they have been imbued with a compulsion to be an achiever; not knowing is often seen as being a failure. Test papers containing myriad red correction marks which emphasize the negative and report cards with low grades which indicate poor academic performance tend to neutralize the willingness and motivation to learn. In Amish schools cooperation rather than competition is greatly stressed. Joy is found in the mastery and accomplishment of a task.

The reasons for the notable success of Amish endeavors have a number of explanations. One important element is size. The Amish community has never needed to turn to academic studies to obtain information on successful social networks. Their instinctively correct assessment of feasible group dimension has kept their organizational units small and workable. Church districts are divided as soon as the congregation becomes too large to fit into a house or barn. As the group correspondingly reaches the limit where close interpersonal relationships are no longer practicable, the division provides the opportunity to establish and renew meaningful bonds. Similarly the school remains a small, local institution serving the neighborhood population. Parents, children, and teacher are all acquainted with one another and cooperate to sustain the vitality necessary for learning achievement.

Amish entrepreneurs likewise are limited in magnitude. Bigger is not always better. Small firms like those the Amish operate enable owners to remain flexible and to make modifications when they become necessary. Down-sizing – a current catchword in non-sectarian business circles – remains unknown and unnecessary in the Amish business world, for they keep their enterprises running on a scale suitable to their own managerial talents and the church *Ordnung*. Even the Amish ego remains modest, for individualism is not valued in their culture. Large-scale within the Amish society are only the families. The children provide part of the labor force on the farms and in the enterprises of their parents and are thereby an indispensable part of the entrepreneurial success.

By restricting their operations to a local level they are able to keep their aims contained and meaningful. Correspondingly personal relationships within the multibonded society are also familiar and intimate. Family groups are strong and steadfast, and the informal and homogeneous structure of the ethnic culture provides cohesion and stability. Their simple lifestyle, thrift, and rejection of consumerism are additional determining factors. All contribute to the success of the ethnic culture and to the satisfaction of its members.

The Amish community is nonetheless not autarkic; without modern society the ethnic group would be unable to exist. Amish life, however, is a constant negotiating with the other world: what should be accepted and what not. Change comes only after very careful consideration and mediation. The modern world is engrossed in learning to mediate successfully, but the Amish have always employed this tool in their day-to-day living. When the need to bargain with government officials has arisen, representatives of the ethnic circle have proven to be excellent negotiators. Their genuine sincerity amply compensated for their lack of legal training. Their flexibility and willingness to negotiate strengthens group unity as they struggle to balance the rights of the individual with the needs of their ethnic culture.

Most meritorious is the high regard the Amish place on human dignity. Their social practices of caring for the needy, ill, and elderly and integrating them in the ethnic culture is exemplary. The price of these communal social

benefits is the curtailment individual liberty and privilege. The quintessence of the matter lies in determining the amount of individualism modern society is willing to sacrifice for the advancement of human values and social habits. If society places a high desirability on social interaction, schools must become better geared to providing an appropriate platform for the acquiring of human values and the mastering of social skills.

Within the Amish society the family, the church, and the school are all a part of the whole way of life and not single entities in themselves. If one considers Goodlad as quoted by Pulliam and Van Patten,<sup>72</sup>

Tomorrow's systems of education will evolve if present arrangements are dynamic ... (and) schooling and education are not synonymous ... Hope for the future rests with our ability to use and relate effectively all those educative and potentially educative institutions and agencies in our society – home, school, church, media, museums, workplace and more.

then the Amish are truly ahead, for their education, which combines both book knowledge and practical learning, is life long and all encompassing: home, school, church, and workplace.

Instilled with a solid work ethic, unencumbered by a fear of failure, invested with self-satisfaction in achievement, and embedded in familial and ethnic networks, they are well equipped to master the tasks confronting them in the daily routines of their household, farm, or enterprise.

Nevertheless, their restricted formal education prevents them from becoming highly trained professionals whom modern society needs and even the ethnics themselves are unable to do without. By placing emphasis on technology and the natural sciences, the world has been able to make great strides in the medical field and to create innovative products that make life more pleasurable. Celebrated achievements such as sending a man to the moon enabled mankind to reach new frontiers, while Amish outings are usually limited to the range of their horse and buggy. The non-ethnic society, however, would be richer if it were willing and able to incorporate some of the social

components embedded in the Amish culture: their regard for human charity and their honoring the worth of the individual person.



## ENDNOTES

### INTRODUCTION

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### 3. THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

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- <sup>27</sup> Fletcher, Stevenson Whitcomb, in Lapp, Christ S. (1991), p. 68.
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- <sup>31</sup> Monroe, Paul, (1940), p.190.
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- <sup>33</sup> Pulliam, John D., (1968), p. 50.
- <sup>34</sup> Monroe, Paul, (1940), p. 394.
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## 5. PLACES OF LEARNING FOR THE AMISH

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- <sup>50</sup> Kraybill, Donald B., (1989), p. 74.
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- <sup>54</sup> Kraybill, Donald B., (1989), p. 74.
- <sup>55</sup> Kraybill, D., (1989), p. 49.
- <sup>56</sup> Hostetler, John A., (1993), p. 103.
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- <sup>59</sup> Hostetler, John A. & Huntington, Gertrude Enders, (1992), p.13.
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- <sup>64</sup> Kraybill, Donald B., (1989), p. 205.
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## 6. CONCLUSION

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<sup>68</sup>Kraybill, Donald B., (1989), p. 27.

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<sup>70</sup>Display at the exhibition Der Nachfolger – Heinrich Bullinger, Grossmünster Zurich, 2004.

<sup>71</sup>Kraybill, Donald B. & Nolt, Steven M., (1995), p. 51.

<sup>72</sup>Pulliam, John D. & Van Patten, James J., (1999), p. 241.

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*The Founding Fathers in their wisdom decided that children were an unnatural strain on parents. So they provided jails called schools, equipped with tortures called an education. School is where you go between when your parents can't take you and industry can't take you.*

— John Updike  
*The Centaur*

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**ERKLÄRUNGEN**

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit mit dem Titel

EDUCATION IN PARADISE:  
LEARNING FOR PROFITABLE EMPLOYMENT  
AMONG THE OLD ORDER AMISH  
OF LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, USA

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Dossenheim, d. 10. April 2005

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