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A Brief History of Amish Churches in Holmes County, Ohio

[AUTHOR'S NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST]

Abstract: This article provides a brief history of several Amish church schisms in Holmes County during the 20th century. After a 1917 Diener Versammlung, Sam Yoder divided from the South Churches (Old Order) due to differences in Ordnung. Yoder was joined by additional families, including from Buchanan County, Iowa, and later more from the South Churches. The migrations and schisms of the Sam Yoder (Swartzentruber) people are detailed. The Dan Wengerd group split from the Sam Yoder church in 1922 and later rejoined the South Churches. Bishops Jacob Stutzman and Eli A. Troyer left the South Churches and joined Yoder in 1928 but withdrew in 1931, forming a separate group. In 1940, the Stutzman-Troyer church experienced a division when Minister Tobe Hochstetler and Deacon Emanuel Hershberger withdrew and later fellowshipped with the South Churches. In the 1940s-50s, many members of the Troyer-Stutzman church moved to new affiliated settlements, including in Canada and New York. The Holmes-Wayne Stutzman-Troyer church wrestled with a dispute over tobacco and excommunication in the late 1950s. The John Helmuth district in Wayne County experienced a defection in the 1940s, and one of the ex-members successfully sued the church leaders because of the Meidung. The Andy Weaver division and New Order division from the South Churches are briefly described. The P.V. (Conservative Mennonite Conference) church divided from the Amish in the early 1900s, but later a Beachy Amish-Mennonite group divided from them. An appendix lists Amish communities that started from the Wayne-Holmes area, that started from settlements started from Wayne-Holmes, and that are in Ohio. [Abstract by editor]

Keywords: Church schism; Swartzentruber Amish; Conservative Mennonite Conference; Beachy Amish-Mennonite; Andy Weaver Amish; Old Order Amish

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Note: This essay was first released in English in 2012 but had a limited distribution. Three changes were made for the present release. First, we conducted minor editing to clarify meanings while trying to retain the author's original wording, structure, and punctuation. Second, the original publication printed an account of the Andy Yoder court case of the 1940s. Because this account was taken from an indeterminate source, we omitted it. Third, the original release included an appendix listing Holmes County Amish church leaders and districts from the early to mid-1900s, as well as Andy Weaver bishops and districts from 2011. We omitted these appendices.

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