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The Plain Anabaptist People at Mid-Century (1930-1969) / In Memoriam

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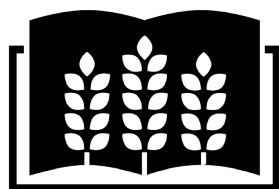
EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

With volume 11, *JAPAS* now enters its second decade of publication. For those keeping count, Volume 10 included only one issue, for this editor needed a short sabbatical after a decade of leadership. In this issue, we focus on a *recent* past—the plain people at mid-century (roughly 1930-70)—that is slowly becoming a more *distant* past. Those experiencing this era are largely aged or have passed on, and in this issue, we spend time reviewing the historical documents, research and data, and autobiographies they have left.

Mid-century was the era North American (Old) Mennonites experienced significant schisms between the main body—which was gradually dropping sectarian distinctions such as plain dress, lifestyle restrictions, and American revival-era liturgical formats—and Conservative Mennonites, who retained these distinctions at some level and in new institutional settings. Among the Old Order Amish, mid-century was the era that waves of in-

dividuals inspired by evangelization left the Old Order for new revivalist-oriented religious institutions, including the (1950s-re-inspired) Beachy Amish-Mennonites, the Fellowship churches, non-conference Conservative Mennonites, and the New Order Amish. This issue's book reviews capture the decisions individuals made as the Conservative Mennonite blossomed and as the mission spirit got ahold of the Beachy Amish-Mennonites, prompting adherents to start new missions in foreign lands, such as Belize.

As some Amish individuals left the Old Order to pursue more evangelical paths, others—alarmed by these changes—charted a stricter course. Christopher Petrovich brings a fresh analysis to the largest schism among the Old Order Amish since their establishment in 1865: the 1955 schism between what is today the Old Order-mainline and the 1955 Beschluss (“Andy Weaver”) churches. He perceptively notes that standard histories of the Amish have left out discussion of this division,



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and he fills this gap with a detailed analysis of the brief text produced at the 1955 meeting.

Mid-century was also the era the Amish rocketed to the attention of the public and scholars, beginning with Lancaster County, PA's Amish. During and after the American Great Depression of the 1930s, leading officials in the U.S. Department of Agriculture came to view the Amish of Lancaster as among the most successful and stable rural communities in the country. As such, Lancaster County was chosen for the 1935-36 Study of Consumer Purchases—collected by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the USDA—to represent general farming. The Farm Security Administration in the USDA sent several photographers to Lancaster County in the mid-to-late 1930s to document Amish culture. In the early 1940s, the USDA commissioned six studies of rural communities on a theorized continuum of most stable to least stable, with the Amish of Lancaster County anchoring the most stable end. Geographer Walter Kollmorgen researched and wrote the study and Irving Rusinow provided the photographs, as traced in this issue by Elizabeth Bennett. Offering further insights into the Lancaster County Amish study, as editors, we provide readers with resources about Kollmorgen's seminal work provided, including an interview with Kollmorgen by Steven Reschly and Katherine Jellison and an annotation of Kollmorgen's Amish-themed publications by Cory Anderson.

Remaining issue content provides other windows into plain Anabaptist life at mid-century. Emeritus Professor of American Studies John Caughey pulls from his early career ethnographic field notes—heretofore never worked into a published study—to create a candid portrait of Old Order Mennonite life in Lancaster County, PA in 1967. The Old Order Mennonites were as far from a denominational schism at this point as possible—sandwiched between 1927 (Weaverland Conference) and 2018 (Midwest Conference)—and this at a time when the Conservative Mennonite/mainline Mennonite divisions were in full swing.

Elsewhere on the globe, the “Russian” Mennonites were processing how early 20th century upheavals were now shaping their identities. This issue's book review symposium spotlights the Mennonites who migrated to Paraguay from Russia and Canada in the 1920s. Reviews of John

P.R. Eicher's *Exiled Among Nations: German and Mennonite Mythologies in a Transnational Age* weigh out contrasting concepts of identity among two adjacent Paraguayan colonies in the 1930s and 1940s. While some Mennonites went to South America, others were forced to eastern Russia, as detailed in Donald Martin's review of Johann Steffen's *In the Fiery Furnace: Life in Ukraine, Siberia, Kazakhstan, and German*.

The JAPAS editorial board lost one of its members recently, Jeffrey Longhofer. In his stead, we warmly welcome Nathan Zook, Ph.D., to the board. Nathan is a professor of political science at Montgomery College and a minister in a Baltimore, MD-based Keystone Mennonite Fellowship congregation. He brings both a new disciplinary representation to our board and practical lived experience in a Conservative Mennonite setting.

IN MEMORIAM

Denise Fuzzell (1952-2022)

The Haines research group at Case Western Reserve University lost a significant member of their research team in the fall of 2022 with the passing of Denise Fuzzell. As a long-time resident of Holmes County, OH, home to one of the largest Amish settlements in the world, she was a critical member of Dr. Haines' genetic research studies for more than 20 years. She was the bridge between the research and the community, providing insight and guidance to their research efforts. Denise spent her days going door to door to speak with individuals about the research and could usually be found in an Amish kitchen or in her car on her way to another Amish kitchen. She was always very sensitive to and protective of the Amish community's way of life. The research has been successful because of her commitment and she is dearly missed.

She was a frequent co-author on CWRU genetics publications, including these recent ones:

- Zaman, Andrew... 2023. “Psychometric Approaches to Defining Cognitive Phenotypes in the Old Order Amish.” *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 38(4):e5903.
- Waksmunski, Andrea... 2022. “Consequences of

a Rare Complement Factor H Variant for Age-Related Macular Degeneration in the Amish.” *Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science* 63(9):8.

Waksmunski, Andrea... 2021. “The GGLEAM Study: Understanding Glaucoma in the Ohio Amish.” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18(4):1551.

-Submitted by the Haines research group

Jeffrey Longhofer (1955-2023)

Jeffrey Longhofer was an emeritus professor of social work at Rutgers and received his MA and Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Kansas. His involvement as an editorial board member of JAPAS—dating back to our very first issues—leaves a conspicuous hole in our organization. I will especially remember his sharp, insightful theoretical critiques in Amish and Mennonite studies. His 1990s research is among the most insightful I have read in our area, and includes articles about genetics and mental health, representations of Amish agriculture, and elder care, but being ahead of his time, his insights at that time were largely ignored, and he gradually out of Anabaptist studies for a time. However, his 1990s articles help inform portions of a collaborative study four editorial board members (including he) published in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* in 2019. This was his last Anabaptist studies publication. Among the places Jeffrey left his influence were the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the University of North Texas, Case Western Reserve University, and Rutgers University. Selected Anabaptist studies publications include:

Anderson, Cory, Joseph Donnermeyer, Jeffrey Longhofer, and Steven D. Reschly. 2019. “A Critical Appraisal of Amish Studies’ De Facto Paradigm, ‘Negotiating with Modernity’.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 58(3):725-42.

Floersch, Jerry, Jeffrey Longhofer, and Kristine Latta. 1997. “Writing Amish Culture into Genes: Biological Reductionism in a Study of Manic Depression.” *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 21(2):137-59.

Kusnetzky, Lara, Jeffrey Longhofer, Jerry

Floersch, and Kristine Latta. 1995. “In Search of the Climax Community: Sustainability and the Old Order Amish.” *Culture and Agriculture* 16(50):12-14.

Longhofer, Jeffrey. 1993. “Toward a Political Economy of Inheritance: Community and Household among the Mennonites.” *Theory and Society* 22(3):337-62.

Longhofer, Jeffrey. 1993. “Household and Community: The Alexanderwohl Mennonites and Two Counterfactuals, the Amish and Hutterites.” *Research in Economic Anthropology* 14:153-88.

Longhofer, Jeffrey. 1994. “Nursing Home Utilization: A Comparative Study of the Hutterian Brethren, the Old Order Amish, and the Mennonites.” *Journal of Aging Studies* 8(1):95-120.

-Submitted by Cory Anderson

James Lowry (1934-2023)

Historian, educator, librarian. Born in Canton, OH, his introduction to the Anabaptist-Mennonite world began through fellow-student John Overholt at Kent State University. Through further associations in his new-found faith, he met his life companion, Mattie, with whom he reared an exemplary family of five: Rebecca, Isaac, Seth, Enoch, and Abigail. Along with years of teaching Amish children in Holmes County, OH, schools, he taught English language in Austria and Afghanistan in the 1960s. Enamored with the 1660 *Martyrs’ Mirror*, he published several books on the subject, including a soon-to-be published work on the book’s compiler, Thielemann Jan van Braght. With the aid of a support group, the Lowrys spent their later 20 years in Amsterdam, where he had access to archival documents for his several volumes of *Documents of Brotherly Love* concerning Dutch Mennonite assistance to Anabaptists expelled from their Swiss homeland. Felled by a stroke in 2019, which disabled him from further work on his projects, James, delighted in teaching his grandchildren the German and Latin languages.

Lowry, James. 1997. *The Martyrs’ Mirror Made Plain: How to Study and Profit From the Martyrs’ Mirror*. Hagerstown, MD: Deutsche Buchhandlung. 152pp.

Lowry, James. 2007. *Documents of Brotherly Love, Volume I: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists, 1635-1709*. Ohio Amish Library. 768pp.

Lowry, James. 2015. *Documents of Brotherly Love, Volume II: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists, 1710-1711*. Ohio Amish Library. 1,448pp.

Lowry, James. 2023. *Documents of Brotherly Love, Volume II: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists, 1712-1784*. Ohio Amish Library. 1,140pp.

-Submitted by Leroy Beachy

Robert Strikwerda (1950-2022)

Robert Strikwerda received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Notre Dame, after which he served at Indiana University-Kokomo for 20 years and St. Louis University for 10. His fearless, stimulating contributions at our APASA conferences will be greatly missed. His recent *JAPAS* article on Amish masculinities made a splash and currently ranks #2 in downloads on the *JAPAS* website:

Strikwerda, Robert. 2020. "Masculinity among the Amish: Characteristics, Hegemony, and 'Soft Patriarchy'." *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies* 8(2):169-84.

This work re-opened discussions about gender roles and relations among the Amish, challenging the "soft patriarchy" characterization of the Amish so prevalent in the literature. This was his last Amish studies publication. At the time of his passing, he had been working on mobilizing Durkheimian theory, aiming to offer a fresh interpretation of the Amish.

-Submitted by Cory Anderson