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The Work of Pioneering Amish Studies Scholar Walter Kollmorgen: Annotations of His 1940s Amish Publications

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The Work of Pioneering Amish Studies Scholar Walter Kollmorgen: Annotations of His 1940s Amish Publications

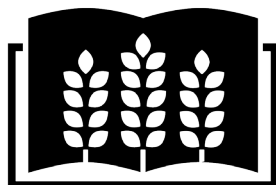
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Abstract: Walter Kollmorgen’s two seminal contributions to Amish studies scholarship include the 1942 report “Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania” published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and his 1943 article “The Agricultural Stability of the Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania” published in the *American Journal of Sociology*. His 1942 report was one of six mixed-methods studies that analyzed the relative in/stability of rural American communities during the Great Depression. The six-part series concluded that the Amish of Lancaster County, PA, weathered the Great Depression with fortitude. In Kollmorgen’s subsequent 1943 *AJS* article, he consolidated key findings from field research, summarizing why the Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonite people persist as a distinctive sect. Representing the very first substantial Amish studies scholarship (alongside Bachman’s 1942 *The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County*), Kollmorgen’s work merits ongoing re-examination, as it defined the conversation and trajectory of Amish studies scholarship. In this essay, I annotate both works, distilling his findings into summary essays that focus on presenting his research as a resource for readers and not necessarily engaging with it. Given the diffuseness of his report’s data, I provide both short summaries of each chapter and full chapter annotations. [Abstract by author.]

Keywords: Rural Life Study series; Lancaster County, PA; Charles Loomis; Old Order Mennonites; community resilience; assimilation; stability and instability



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Annotation of: **Kollmorgen, Walter. 1943. "The Agricultural Stability of the Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania."** *American Journal of Sociology* 49(3):233-41.

In short:

Old Order Amish and Mennonites persist because (1) they refuse to compromise old disciplines, thus achieving stability. Rational modern values have not overtaken traditional values, such as, destroying their productive soil for increased short-term profit. (2) Further, in rural areas, Amish experience less disruption from outsiders; thus, rural residence acts as a shield from many temptations in mass society. Even locally, they mix only sparingly with outsiders, with the main exception being for economic purposes.

Chapter annotation:

Of Pennsylvania's German farmers, the Sects, such as the Amish, are more stable as farmers than the Church groups, e.g. the Lutherans and Reform. Among the sectarians, societal instability increases as particular factions become more progressive. Those factions forsaking old standards/disciplines find themselves less stable than non-yielding groups. What makes the Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites stable are their particular cultural patterns, including:

- innovative farm improvements
- relative self-sufficiency in food
- mutual aid
- resistance to secularization of schooling
- pro-rural/anti-urban Christian thinking
- a common language

Other practices are from their religious beliefs, a literal observance of certain Scriptures. Two in particular offer an unusually resistant barrier against acculturating influences, including:

- Nonresistance
- Nonconformity (standardized in-group practices, to achieve Christian harmony)

Historic experience for the Amish suggests that a life of nonconformity is best lived out in rural areas. Most Amish are farmers; those who

are not have farm-supporting jobs. In rural areas, Amish are least disturbed by outsiders and members are less tempted by the fashions/consumptions of society. However, merely living in rural areas is not enough. Socially, they rarely mix with outsiders except for economic exchanges; as such, they are socially self-contained. Exclusion of non-Amish from Amish social life creates a situation of cultural insulation against outside forces that could weaken traditional values. That is why some Amish people have fought against consolidation of public schools. They wish to perpetuate their own life with an agrarian philosophy, while U.S. education has an urban philosophy that destroys the bond between the farmer and his land.

Beliefs of nonconformity and separation need not necessarily produce good farming, but for the Amish, it has. For generations, Amish have been conditioned to good farming practices as a result of persecution. In Europe, Amish worked poor soils and had to be innovative. Because the scattered churches kept in touch with each other, members traveled and visited each other, spreading new ideas about agriculture. They also studied new developments in broader agriculture.

In Lancaster, the land in the center is highly priced, but on the periphery it is half the price, more what market value should be. Prices are high in the center because church members seek central areas where members are most concentrated, where their practices are dominant and, therefore, practiced with the least difficulty. At the border zone of Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites, land prices have shot up because of competition. While both groups are distinct, they are non-conforming to each other.

Liberal sectarians do not need to live in central locations because they have the automobile. Consequently, they are more likely to purchase lower-priced lands on the community's margins while commuting to meetinghouses in the center of the community, which are more-and-more surrounded by Amish farms. High land values entice liberals to sell their expensive farms and buy cheaper land at the edge of the community.

Kollmorgen concludes: "the value systems reflected centuries of relatively successful farming, because traditional values had not been corroded by a casual form of rationalism which condoned continual exploitation of the land (skinning the soil), and because the life they valued had a definite pro-rural, anti-urban orientation" (pp. 240-41).

Annotation of: **Kollmorgen, Walter. 1942. "Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.**

CHAPTER 1: IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

In short:

The Amish have settled a productive region in Lancaster County. They rely on farming (as an expression of rurality) to survive, as it is advantageous for nonconformity—living together and keeping the outside out. They apply the Bible literally and also adhere to past practices where the Bible is not clear. The Amish maintain separation by providing no focal point in the community (e.g. a meetinghouse) and maintaining a mentality of separation in school and village interactions. The Amish community is administratively divided into districts that have local leadership. The Amish struggle to adjust to a society where legislation increasingly standardizes the country, but they also have internal struggles related to land prices/farm acquisition and differences over regulations.

Chapter annotation:

The Amish settled in the Lancaster Limestone Plain, east of Lancaster City. The region's productivity is the product of a constructive farming program. The gently rolling terrain is well suited for small-machine operation. The area enjoys good rainfall and nearby markets. The area is continually productive because the Pennsylvania Germans that settled here introduced superior farming methods. Yet, farming is a hallmark of the Amish religion, as rurality is essential to their nonconformity, their desire to live on the land, and their desire to live together. The Amish differentiate themselves because the Bible teaches they are to be non-conformed to the world. In practice, this doctrine supports many peculiar practices and customs, such as in clothing details and rejection of some technology and entertainment.

Their resolve to remain nonconformed is shaped by years of persecution, as a sense of martyrdom prevails. The histories of the Anabaptists and Amish are given. The Amish keep the persecution memory alive through using the *Martyrs' Mirror* and the *Ausbund*. Thus, the Amish view with suspicion the "world" and its doing and learning. They attempt to literally apply the Bible, and thus are nonresistant, reject infant baptism, denounce pride as expressed in the outward, separate the church from the world and government, advocate nonconformity in apparel (clothing must be substantial, modest, economical, with gender distinction, without jewelry, and with a head covering for women), and avoid outside organizations, which are an unequal yoke. To maintain these practices, they have developed church disciplines. Though Bible verses explain some practices, they do not explain all, so they also turn to their heritage. Once a ban is placed on something, it is rarely removed.

Relations between the Amish and the local social community are complicated by the social organization of the Amish. They have no community focal point, such as a meetinghouse, for cross-community interaction to occur. School interaction is limited because of the Amish emphasis on separation from secular institutions, and the same principle is in action regarding towns, villages, trading centers, and other focal points of community interaction. Rather, Amish community is defined by religious, kinship, ethnic, and linguistic ties across a vast part of the county. Organizationally, the Amish community is divided into 18 districts. Each district is a church administrative unit, with ministers, a deacon, and a shared bishop with another district. Socializing and recreation are nearly synonymous; friends and kin frequently visit.

Community maladjustment has occurred both externally and internally. In the United States, legislation is standardizing the country, so that formal organizations now operate at a large scale. Consolidated schools, agricultural programs, bargaining agencies/cooperatives, and military training and non-military conscientious objector (C.O.) camps have all been challenges the Amish face, as they adjust to these external changes. Internally, many young men are putting off marriage because they are having trouble acquiring farm land, as land values are increasing. Land values are espe-

cially inflated in the settlement's core. At the time of writing, a local money shortage is prompting some Amish to seek outside loans, signifying partial loss of financial independence. Some dissatisfaction also exists over prohibitions on the telephone, automobiles, and tractors in the fields.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE SETTLEMENT

In short:

In Europe, the Swiss Brethren at first farmed small plots of bad land in remote areas but eventually became tenant farmers. In both scenarios, they developed innovative farming practices to increase productivity. They practiced mutual aid and frequently visited one another, and this added to the stability of their society through exchange relationships that boosted their economy, even as they stigmatized competition and profit motivation. They brought their innovative farming practices to America, as well as their dependence on an agricultural lifestyle, so that staying in rural areas—usually on a farm—is now a church mandate.

Chapter annotation:

The Amish were attracted to the limestone soils of eastern Lancaster County, which has good drainage, high organic matter and nutrients, and is acidic. It avoids the extremes of continental weather. Study informants do not ever recall a complete crop failure. The agricultural history of the area is divided into a colonial period (slash and burn), the post-colonial period (Pennsylvania Germans introduce sustainable farming techniques such as four-year crop rotation with clover), and the post-Civil War period (intensive farming, adding tobacco, potatoes, milk, and truck crops).

The present Amish population comes from Switzerland and the Palatinate. They speak the Rhineland language of 200 years ago. In Europe, the Swiss Brethren/Amish were a refugee group insecure in life and property, so they became a tenant class. They eked out a precarious existence at first on small plots of poor ground in remote areas, but there they devised a farming program that built up the land. As they moved to tenant farming, they

experimented with new farming methods. Thus, their skills in agricultural methods arose from adverse circumstances that forced inventiveness; further, they kept in touch with one another and visited, spreading agricultural knowledge. Separation was not just a belief they embraced but was imposed on them by outsiders, excluded from free associations and prohibited from intermarriage. The Swiss Brethren practiced mutual aid so that there was neither extreme wealth nor poverty, helping the poor become productive. The rule of love strengthened their economy as it prevented them from out-competing one another and supported advice-based relationships. They gave themselves to diligence and thrift. The profit motive was absent or else unbiblical, as wealth would disturb their religion's focus. In the Rhineland, the Swiss Brethren became leaders in agriculture. Clover improved soil productivity and provided feed for stock, which in turn produced manure that built up the soil, which allowed for stall-feeding, making more acres available to crops. They irrigated meadows and spread liquid manure.

Church policy directs the keeping of the old order, particularly in social and religious matters. Though in Europe, both the Amish and local populace enforced social separation, in America, separation was enforced unidirectionally. The Amish have established enclaves in several states and visit one another often. European farming practices helped reinforce Amish visiting practices across enclaves, which they continued when they came to America. Their European farming emphasis has informed regulations in America prohibiting residence in towns and cities. Their mutual aid is still practiced somewhat, but now small levels of interest are more common in loans. Advice relationships are still important in economic development. Nonconformity and nonresistance have been rigidly maintained.

CHAPTER 3: MAKING A LIVING

In short:

Lancaster farming land is expensive because of intensification, close of frontier settlement (i.e. cheap western land), density of living together as a religious community, and demand for farms from young. Some emigrate to escape land and

government pressures. Amish youth strive to attain enough wealth to work up through the cycle of farm tenancy to eventually purchase a farm. Amish farming is intensive and diversified; it utilizes bank barns, crop rotations, heavy manure application, and mechanical equipment designed to accomplish intensive farming; church regulations prohibit some equipment. Amish farmers make the most of their small plots of expensive land. Sundays and the winter are for social and religious activities while weekdays and spring through fall are for farm work. Profit in commercial farming has never been an end in itself but is used as a means to maintain a farming lifestyle. Yet, self-sufficiency is on the decline; Amish rely increasingly on outside suppliers for food and material they used to produce on their farm, even as they continue gardening and sewing. Amish do make a good income and they often hire their own people as laborers. They loan to one another at reduced rates, keeping the money in their circles. Thus, no family is independent in finances and/or labor, even if as a whole, they are largely self-sufficient. However, a slight majority has mortgages on their land, and they have taken loans from non-Amish and banks as supplements, suggesting their community may not have as much money as thought. Many of the Depression-era relief programs are irrelevant to them because of Amish economic strength and religious beliefs (not accepting hand-outs). They struggle to accept payments to reduce production since this is seen as dependence on the outside.

Chapter annotation:

European-era agriculture has shaped Amish agricultural preferences today, though Amish also justify their farming patterns with Bible passages. Amish claim that, wherever you find Plain People, you find good farmers, and this mentality helps keep Amish on farms. However, their acreage has decreased considerably, with concomitant agricultural intensification. The U.S. Census in 1930 reported for Leacock Township (center of the Amish settlement) that 55% of the farmers are Amish, with an average farm size of 48 acres. Lancaster County has avoided the speculative land prices in the twentieth century common in the Midwest, perhaps because the land has been handed down across generations, as well as the wisdom of fa-

thers and grandfathers, so past speculations and the following economic disasters are remembered (even the early 1800s). Also, perhaps after speculations ended, the conservatives stayed, because they were not moving with land investment trends.

Yet, land prices are fairly high in the Amish area. Why is it more expensive? Reasons are multiple: agricultural intensification, the Western frontiers are now closed, Plain People are determined to live together, horse-and-buggy travel makes the settlement dense, they have more disposable income since excess profit is not spent on leisure/fashion, strong work ethic, youth wanting farms increase faster than farms, non-Plain People stayed on the farms during the Depression, fewer Plain People in the area from which to buy farms, and well-kept farms with expensive barns, houses, and other buildings. Pressure has been alleviated slightly with Amish migrants to Lebanon County, PA, and St. Mary's County, MD. More are ready to move out if these migrations are a success.

The Amish have a high rate of tenancy because many young men rent from parents before becoming the owner. Young men start their path toward a farm by being a laborer, then a one-third share tenant, then one-half, then a cash tenant, then an owner. Family/community resources are pooled to help young men up the economic ladder. The main economic goal for Amish men is to accumulate sufficient means to buy enough land to keep all children on the farm, so they work hard, produce much, and save. Those facing economic difficulties are given extensive assistance, not just with money but with no-strings-attached loans of equipment and livestock—they see this as their Christian duty. Young men move up the economic ladder rapidly with assistance from parents, who often give the sons good deals on loans and rent.

When the Amish face struggles from the outside or from within, they are willing to migrate, as they have done in their history. Common struggles include problems with state schooling or internal pushes for different practices. In the latter, those pushing for different practices may end up moving to another settlement. Inheritance practices of land favor the young and males.

The Amish grow some crops, such as corn, but usually not much. Wheat is grown by farm owners despite intense competition with the Midwest because they use it for a nurse crop for clover, make straw for bedding, and use it as a cash or feed crop,

so it gets used in multiple ways. Barley is on the rise, replacing wheat, because it yields more per acre. Amish also commonly grow timothy and/or clover. Tobacco is a good cash crop, grown by both land owners and croppers. Tomatoes and/or fluid milk have sometimes replaced tobacco. Tobacco is attractive not just because of high prices, but because it keeps the young busy with work through the winter. That said, many Amish do not use tobacco and most Mennonites wage a moral war against it—in this case, high prices capitulated to moral objections. Farmers are also starting to grow peas and potatoes. Feed crops are a necessity, for they are needed to feed livestock, the manure of which returns nutrients to the soil. Those who do not engage in dairy farming may have feed cattle, kept as much for their market value as the manure they produce. Hogs are another alternative, mostly for local consumption. Nearly all Amish have horses on their farms. Sheep are kept less often because of the lack of pasture and fences. Nearly all Amish keep chickens and sell the eggs. To generalize Amish agricultural practices, land use is intensive and diversified, with nearly all land under cultivation.

Forests, and even orchards, are increasingly rare (attributed in part to pests and blight). Amish also work lime quarries, which is closely related to farming. The bank barn is designed for manure production, from straw storage to cattle housing. Yields of crops in Lancaster are as high as ever due to the constant build-up of the land. Farmers are concerned not only about the amount of manure but the type and quality (animal type and animal feed). Amish who buy farms on the community's periphery spend several years building up the soil quality and repairing old buildings. Yet, most Amish do not practice methods that prevent erosion, and only the land slope and mantle rock prevent an erosion crisis. Farm machinery is adopted not to reduce labor but to intensify crop production. When Amish need to hire help, they turn to their own because of their work ethic and training.

Because of nonconformity, Amish do not use tractors for field work, employing horses and mules. They do not get electricity from plants but instead use gas engines and water power for a few farm tasks. Amish do have many pieces of farm machinery, though, with the exception of milking

equipment, as parents use family labor and have smaller herds than mechanized operations.

Though families work long hours through the week, Sunday is a day of reduced labor, when they engage in visiting, socializing, and religious activities. Few routines are consistent on certain days during the week. Shopping is conducted through the week, with slight peaks on Friday and Saturday. A yearly schedule is described, with visiting and sales occurring during the winter, as well as meat-related farming. Field farming occurs spring through fall.

Amish do not farm to make money (commercialism over self-sufficiency) per se, but make money in commercial farming in order to maintain a farming lifestyle. However, their self-sufficiency has declined, and they buy many farm-produced goods such as wheat, fabric, and produce, as well as grocery, meat, and bread home delivery. They do retain gardening, though this may be in decline among the younger generation. Many still can large quantities of food, though fruits for canning are often purchased fresh. Some purchased already canned foods, thinking it a savings against other uses of time. Women engage in much sewing, making clothing for the family, which does not go out of style but is worn until worn-out. Women also quilt, embroider, and make carpets; young women, especially, labor to fill their hope chests. Religious taboos prevent excess money from being wasted on non-essentials.

Most Amish make a comfortable income selling crops, livestock, and livestock products. Per acre, croppers make the most because what little land they have is devoted to tobacco. Most expenses go to hiring farm laborers—though this is money staying in the community. They readily loan excess wealth to other members at a 3-4% interest rate, 2% for family generally, and perhaps at no interest for those worthy men in trouble through no fault of their own. These loans are economically viable because they are only given when necessary, among fellow adherents. Rarely does a loan recipient fail to totally repay. Bank loans supplement community money but do not replace it. Yet, over half of the farmers may have mortgages, so they do have debt, perhaps more than non-Amish farmers. Recently, some young Amish have approached older non-Amish farmers for loans. Few Amishmen keep detailed books of finances, because so many farm-based transactions

are without an assigned value (what is the price of manure?). While the community is self-sufficient in labor, individuals are not self-sufficient; they often hire the labor of other Amish. Amish restrict telephone and automobile ownership, though they use shared phones and hire drivers, use public transportation, and rely on trucks to take products from the farm for sale. Non-farming occupations do occur in some frequency, particularly hands-on trades related to farming. Nevertheless, factory work—which is locally accessible to the Amish—is prohibited.

Because of their religious beliefs and internal support for one another, a variety of Depression-era government relief programs are of no use to the Amish. The Agricultural Conservation Program (reducing crop output to raise market prices) is problematic for many Amish, though. They are afraid that by signing on to the program and receiving payments, they are breaking the “unequal yoke” Bible teaching and are becoming dependent on the government, undermining group solidarity. Some did voluntarily reduce their outputs without receiving payments, to show that they are not just profit-driven. But then the question arises: why not get paid to do this? Some do sign up for payment.

CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND VALUES

In short:

The Amish maintain an internal social organization that brings stability to their community, though their separatism brings conflict with non-adherents. Several domains and processes reinforce their community. (1) They intensely socialize through visiting, singings, aid (work-bees are less common), church services, and activities at other times and places. (2) Children are trained at home with kindness, sternness, and intimacy, to be separate and farm, and then to join the church. The adolescent period worries many parents, though they do have some control because they control the money. (3) Children are trained at school, but consolidated schools threaten their socialization by removing children from the community, making them minorities, and devaluing the wisdom, experience, and morals (like separation) of the community. (4) Church services reinforce values

by providing connection with the past, representing non-professionalism, discussing areas of present day concern, and handling discipline. (5) Class differentiation is minimized because of homogeneity in language, ethnicity, religion, family, occupation, garb, and education. (6) Rurality is a means to achieve values, and this means is reinforced by granting prestige to good farmers. (7) Clothing makes members feel out of place with outsiders, precluding intimate association and intermarriage. (8) “Church Amish” [i.e. Beachys and Conservative Conference] function to absorb those wanting more freedoms, thus removing internal pressure.

Chapter annotation:

INFORMAL ASSOCIATIONS

Aid among the Amish has decreased, shifting from routine work bees to aid programs for situations of distress (such as the barn raising or in sickness). Commercial processes and manufacturing reduce the need for work bees. Harvest rings, which pull manpower and machinery together, are often confined to relatives. The work-bees and aid programs that do exist double as social events. Because commercial amusements are forbidden, Amish socialize intensely with one another, especially on Sundays. Sunday activities include the anticipated young people's singing, plus visiting among adults, often of kin. Holidays and wintertime provide additional visiting opportunities. Longer visits locally or to other Amish settlements are still common, lasting overnight or several days. Visits allow young people to intermingle and facilitate the spread of agricultural knowledge.

FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Amish are close, and their intimate ties are sustained by visiting and bringing aid, first within kin, second within community. Outside influences that relocate activities away from family/community are a threat to Amish viability. Parents are charged to teach children about separateness and farming, while schools teach them the three Rs. Amish parents train children to be farmers by giving them tasks around the farm and niches of personal responsibility. Parents exert subtle pres-

sure on young people to join the church, invoking family honor, the suffering of the ancestors, and emotional appeals (especially from women). Members who leave may be shunned, which means the family must break relations with the shunned. Though cutting relations is a particular burden, the goal is to bring the erring one back into the church.

The teen years are spent preparing for marriage, as both males and females save money. Females fill a hope chest to prepare for housekeeping. Courtship is rather secretive, and weddings are a big social event. After marriage, the couple symbolically (personal appearance) and socially associate with the adults. A child's marriage is a relief for his/her parents, who worry about questionable activities among the young singles. When elderly retire, they move to a house on the farm and help where they can; assets are conserved because they contribute to farm production (sewing and gardening) and don't depend on outside retirement services. Funerals are large events that represent their nonconformity and propensity for socializing.

Pennsylvania Germans have long resisted public schooling because they fear it will marginalize the German language, reduce the wisdom of experience and the community, and make children lazy. The recent school controversies are pressing on the minds of Amish, who fear the State's increasing self-appropriated role of socializing children. Consolidated schools threaten Amish survival, which relies on much uniformity and isolation. One-room schools in rural areas may be mostly Amish, whereas consolidated schools make Amish a minority. One room schools are within walking distance, while consolidated schools may accustom Amish to daily bus travel. Amish see a great disparity between a community spirit and higher education, which is evidenced by their non-Amish neighbors' children, who do not want to farm and who move away for a job (and lose their religion). Higher education also molds people into a leisure lifestyle, eight hour work days, and technology mindedness. Amish reject "book farming" because they have a stable, self-sufficient society to show for their years of farming. They further reject higher education because of the lack of moral teaching during a critical time. Amish admit higher education is okay for others, such as for highly skilled professions, but it is

not for them. Their schools all have non-Amish teachers, though they prefer Church Amish or Mennonite teachers.

Amish meet in houses and barns for worship. They must divide church districts when meeting locations become too crowded. Prestige is attached to hosting in a house (as opposed to a barn). Amish renovate houses acquired from non-Amish to make space for hosting. Hosts spend much time preparing for services: extensive cleaning, retrieving benches, and preparing food (meals are smaller today compared to years past). The service has many facets, but major themes include connections with (martyred) ancestors and the lay spirit of teaching. Sermons emphasize Bible stories, explaining how they are instructive for present-day problems. Leaders stress the principles and regulations of the church, urging members to follow, and discuss youth-specific-problems, sometimes in tears. If discipline is needed, it occurs after the service—non-members and the offender leave. Church counsel often concludes by allowing the offender to make amends immediately. When the young want to join the church, relatively little formal indoctrination is required because most instruction has already occurred at home over the years.

Amish do not have insurance, but instead look to one another (aid plans) and God. Regulations about selling milk in the 1920s prompted Amish to start a cheese cooperative. While an Amishman owns the operation, it is run by a non-Amishman. They have shied from joining the Inter-State Milk Producers Cooperative based in Philadelphia (which bargains milk prices) and the Lancaster Farm Bureau. The Amish associate these organizations with the government and politics, and thus the use of force, which they reject. Voting in U.S. elections varies among the Amish, from person-to-person and from election-to-election. They really turn out for school issues.

LEADERSHIP AND CLASS

Uniformity in occupation, religion, education, family (little hereditary class structure), ethnicity, and garb helps flatten class structures. However, some hierarchies exist. For example, prestige is afforded to the one who has a good farm; his advice is sought. Or, young men dress up their horses and buggy to differentiate.

Choosing leaders by lot means leaders are common men. Men generally dread the position of leader because they must spend much time memorizing the Bible and anecdotes to fill the preaching time. Important community decisions require unanimous support, which gives power to all, and also makes tradition difficult to change. The father leads out in the home, and the parents lead over the children in a relationship combining kindness, sternness, and intimacy. Parents of grown children are available for advice but try to encourage the grown children to make the important decisions, "as we will not always be here." Internal leadership is showing signs of competing more with external leadership, since the internal system is having more problems providing everything for its members (farms and new professional services).

YOUTH

The many restrictions in the Amish church give the youth (non-church members) plenty of opportunity to show deviance. (A list of deviant activities is given.) They especially desire to own an automobile, in particular. Those who do save enough to get a car start associating with non-Amish, and thus start dropping distinctive garb. Some end up joining the Amish-Mennonites, who permit cars and require less for clothing. Many, however, intend to observe church regulations later but want a momentary fling. Youth, even though not members, still deviate on the sly, such as outside the community and in the city. Parents and leaders do try to exercise some control. For example, they pulled money together when someone wanted to buy-out a bar in Intercourse that Amish youth frequented. Despite this success, young people still drink on the side, but this is only among a few young people. Parents do exercise some control over the youth in that youth have little money.

VALUE SYSTEMS AND SANCTIONS

Amish achieve their values in various ways. Because rurality is essential to their group survival, good farmers enjoy prestige. Through the life-cycle, members are guided by the community, first in the family, then in approved school programs. After leaving school, the young are encouraged

to join the church. Distinctive clothing prevents members from interacting regularly with outsiders, since they feel conspicuous and out of place. These and other social barriers prevent intermarriage with outsiders. Discipline has the purpose of keeping the church pure and to convince the transgressor of his or her errors.

INTEGRATION AND CONFLICT

Homogeneity eliminates many types of conflict, but the Amish are constantly facing conflict over reinterpreting and perpetuating the old order. Not all agree with decisions about what constitutes a "yoke" with the outside or how to handle school problems. A simple majority vote does not answer the question because these questions are charged with religious values (no compromise with sin). Neighboring Amish-Mennonite churches function to incorporate those Amish who push for technological advances or other leniencies. These past divisions are detailed. Though the issues over which they divide may appear trivial, to them they are not trivial because of worldliness (and sin) are at stake. Because of their emphasis on separation and non-association with other religions, the Amish do encounter difficulties at times with outsiders, such as with school policies, agricultural organizations, their use of neighbors' technological conveniences, and their determination to buy up all farmland.

CHAPTER 5: THE FARMERS' EXPANDING WORLD

In short:

Amish recognize that while some agricultural and home innovations would be useful, they reject them on grounds of nonconformity and practicality, though some members try to get around the rules. Amish people continue to innovate within the lines of the church, so are not "frozen in time." Amish reject city life and government programs as worldly; they do not trust them. The opinions of non-Amish neighbors about the Amish vary, shaped by one's own community role and interpersonal experiences. Amish do consume printed media, which may affirm their negative view of society and positive view of their group. Rejection

of innovations like the telephone and car both function to maintain community stability and introduce challenges to continued viability (farm trucks may be handy and phones could just be used for businesses; community expansion makes visiting by horse and buggy difficult). The horse and buggy makes land prices in the middle of the community high, whereas Church Amish sell expensive land and move to the periphery. Amish believe that problems in society are because of non-Christian practices, and therefore, they do not get involved with secular solutions such as legislation, farm organization, or war. In sum, Amish rejection of some innovations both stabilizes the community (heightened internal identity, internal focus) and threatens its stability in other ways (business success, long distances among people). Their separatism is in part a rejection of secular attempts to solve world problems because these attempts do not address foundational problems solved through Christianity.

Chapter annotation:

The Amish have been commercial farmers for a long time, which makes sense given their location in Lancaster (good land, good markets). They recognize that some of the items they have rejected would be useful, such as tractors, farm trucks, and electricity. All devices were rejected when the mass-adoption of these innovations was still far-off, but now many are mass-adopted. These innovations were rejected on grounds of nonconformity but also practical grounds, such as how tractors waste crops at the corners of plots and also pack the ground. Yet, some young farmers seem to push for these innovations and some have found ways to circumvent the rules. The Amish are not against convenience, *per se*. They have not retained a pre-twentieth century household and mode of farming. Indeed, they continue to innovate. For example, while they do not have fridges, they do have ice boxes, and though ice boxes are less common in mainstream America, the Amish continue to improve their ice boxes. Small gasoline engines operate washing machines, churns, and water pumps. Through mechanization, women now spend less time in the fields doing intensive manual labor and instead tend more to the garden and the house. Men do much of the remaining intensive manual labor in the field.

Amish are critical of government programs and give many reasons for not participating, though it may come down to distrust and disdain for the programs' inefficiencies (such as slothful government project workers). The Amish do go to the city if they need to, but they otherwise reject city life as immoral.

The people around the Amish have mixed opinions about them. Creditors may say they are reliable in paying back loans or are no better than anyone else in paying on time. Educators resent Amish rejection of educational improvements. Locals may see nothing better about Amish youth's behavior than non-Amish. Land owners may resent how Amish buy up land and perhaps isolate those remaining on land islands in their midst. Neighbors may resent that their church forbids things but Amish come asking to use them. Businessmen see them as an opportunity to stir up tourism.

Amish subscribe to newspapers, farm journals, and some religious periodicals (*Herald der Wahrheit*). They watch the news closely, which affirms their stereotypes of immoral city life. The telephone is rejected on the grounds of separation from the world and non-idleness (specifically, for women), but certain commercial businesses find this a problem. A few Amish businesses attempt to creatively get around the rule, such as, placing public telephones around the neighborhood. Similarly, radio and musical instruments are prohibited, but a few try to find a way around the no-radio rule. Travel by horse-and-buggy keeps youth close to home (a major concern if autos were allowed), but with the growth of the community, the distance required to visit other families is becoming longer. They could hire a driver, but this is expensive and inconvenient. Crashes with autos are becoming more frequent. Horse and buggy use creates high land values near the center of the Amish community. For automobile groups, members often sell their land in the center of the community and move to the fringe where land is cheaper.

For the Amish, the concept of separation is based on the belief that all problems result from non-Christian practices and that legislation and organizations will not remedy the problems. They have little concern over international trade issues since most sales are local. The Amish believe in nonresistance and do not get involved in America's

wars, seeking alternatives to the draft. They also are apolitical, though they fear the increasing influence of American government, some pulling lessons from the plight of the Russian Mennonites when communism took over.

CHAPTER 6: INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL LIFE

In short:

Amish community stability is threatened by external pressures of societal standardization. When pressure bears particular hardships on members, Amish may adjust their position, though are wary to adjust essential cornerstones of nonconformity lest they head down a path of assimilation.

Chapter annotation:

In sum:

Integration of the Old Order Amish community springs chiefly from a common, and in certain ways a distinct, background, religion, language, and vocation; and from a devotion to the old order. Disintegration occurs when old symbols become less precise and less meaningful, difficult to maintain, and less imperious in their demands. As conflict problems arise because of technological, economic, governmental, and other changes, the old order is called into question and at times is subjected to modification. Community stability may be impaired by sustained conflicts as well as by rather sharp changes in the old order. (p. 101)

German is essential to nonconformity, as progressive groups that allow English also drop other nonconformity practices. Language changes reformulate meaning, such as the English phrase *the world* replacing the German *die Welt*; the English version does not carry the same theological weight. Technological modernization and the global war make it challenging to retain German. For the Amish, it is increasingly difficult to maintain exterior manifestations of nonconformity as society standardizes its cultural and consumption patterns. When this standardization gives outsiders a competitive edge and threatens the stability

of the Amish, conflict arises internally about the old order regulations. Sometimes, Amish do shift previous stances on issues of nonconformity, such as not voting, not borrowing money, and not having buttons on anything, but these do not threaten the total program of nonconformity, such as adopting automobiles and telephones may. Other religious groups making such concessions were pressured to drop other stances on nonconformity, including distinctive dress, women's head coverings, etc. Increasing social connections may incite more pressure for changes. With the decline in urban/rural distance, Amish youngsters can see more readily how city youth spend their time and enjoy themselves, and Amish young may mimic them. Amish continue to demand rural life for religious survival, but their rural occupations are increasingly difficult to accommodate since it also requires sizeable land holdings to farm (expensive). Working through all of the above pressures is essential for Amish survival, for if too much pressure is on them, they may have to make compromises on their convictions to survive as people, triggering assimilation.