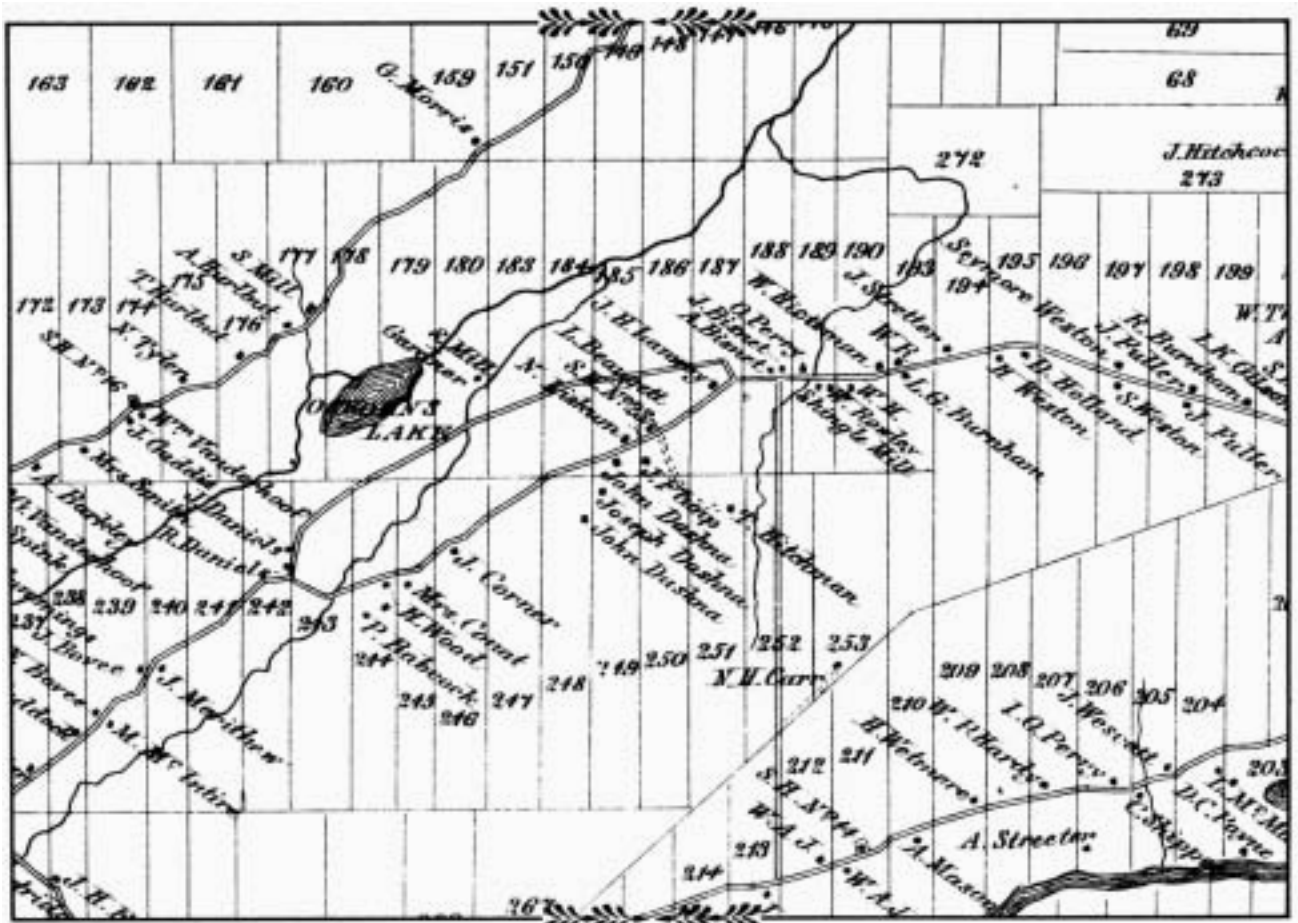


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CONTENTS

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Bryan Thompson</i> | 3 | The Coming and Going of a Road and its Residents |
| <i>Karen M. Johnson-Weiner</i> | 8 | The Plain People Among Us:
The North Country Amish |

Cover: Section of St. Lawrence County Map by S.N. & D.G. Beers and Associates, 1865, showing Osborn Lake, Maple Ridge Road and Gardner Mill Road with residents. (SLCHA Archives)

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The Coming and Going of a Road and its Residents

by Bryan Thompson

Throughout the North Country of New York State, amidst ever-encroaching brush and forest, lie the remains of former highways and the hopes of settlers of bygone days. As older neighbors pass from the scene, so do the living histories of the adventures and aspirations of our predecessors on the land of the St. Lawrence River valley. This essay is an attempt to recover from memories and old records the history of such a road and the settlement that developed there since the early years of the nineteenth century.

The Northwest portion of the present Town of DeKalb "is much broken by low disconnected ridges of gneiss and white limestone, separated by narrow valleys... Osborn's Lake is a small body of water located in the midst of a swampy region."¹ It is through this region that the Gardner Mill Road runs.

This whole region was largely uninhabited in 1814 when Silas Spencer mapped it for the Cooper Estate. However, "a man named Osborn (for whom the lake was named) had erected a mill nigh the lake on lot 182."² The first name of this original Gardner Mill Road resident is unknown today, but the mill he established gave the road its principal feature for almost 70 years.

The water-powered potential of South Beaver Creek, where it falls into the marsh, must have seemed quite lucrative to Osborn. It was certainly no easy task for him to get there. The closest road and settlers at this time were on the present-day DeKalb-DePeyster Road, one and a half miles across a swamp. No closer town roads were laid out until 1835.

Being a North Country pioneer almost 200 years ago was a financially uncertain business. Although Osborn developed the mill race and stayed long enough to have a lake, marsh, millpond and creek named for him, by 1814 he was gone.

John R. Murray, a divisee (In 1803 Judge William Cooper, of what came to be known as Cooperstown, New York, purchased the Town of DeKalb from Samuel Ogden, putting up about sixty percent of the purchase price himself. After his death, Fredrick DePeyster, as executor, commissioned Potter, Goff, and Silas Spencer to "divide up the town into a number of tracts among his heirs and creditors.") of William Cooper, had the mill site divided from the rest of lot 182 in 1814.³ By 1822, he was having financial difficulties as well, and the mill lot was sold through bankruptcy proceedings to Louis Hasbrouk.⁴ Hasbrouk was a prominent early attor-

ney and public official in St. Lawrence County.⁵ A month later, he sold the mill property, including a portion of lot 245 surveyed for a mill pond, to John Fine, his law partner.⁶

Fine was no less prominent a local figure: the St. Lawrence County Treasurer, a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, a U.S. Congressman (26th Congress), and a New York Senator.⁷ Fine owned the mill property until 1850, most likely leasing the mill on a yearly basis to various operators.

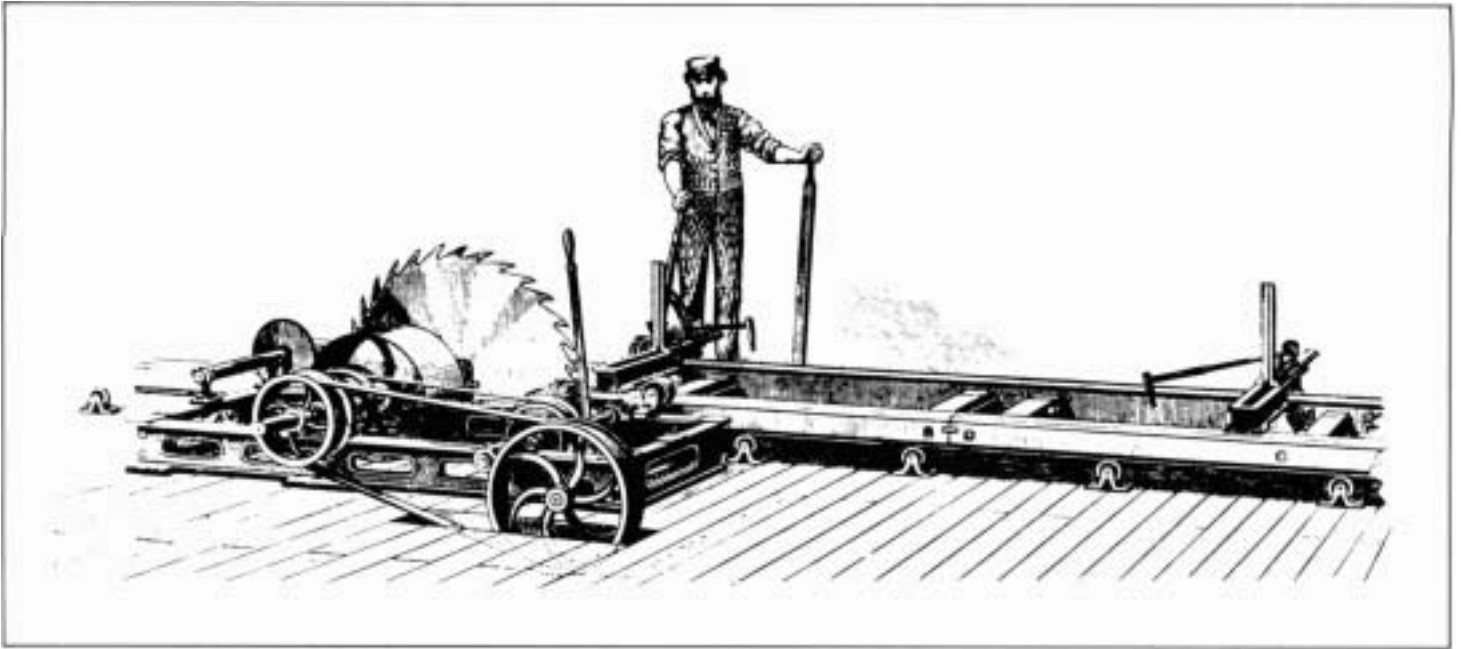
In 1850, the mill was operated by Thomas L. Johnson. It was a water-powered sawmill located on the edge of the Beaver Creek Rapids 150 feet from where the Mill Road crossed Beaver Creek.⁸ Two large stone dams were located in the creek rapids.⁹ In March, 1850, Fine sold his interest in the mill to Orin Fisk.¹⁰ Fisk, another attorney and supervisor of the Town of DeKalb, continued to lease the property to Johnson.



Herschel McIntyre with shotgun standing beside Gardner Mill Road, circa 1915. (Courtesy of Mary Stowell)

The Mill Road was legally commenced as a town road during Fisk's ownership of the mill although a private road must have existed prior to that date. E.P. Townsley did the initial survey on June 12, 1850. This tract, being three rods wide, led from the edge of Beaver Creek by Johnson's sawmill northeasterly to the Maple Ridge Road near John Todd's house¹¹ (currently Bill Conklin's residence). There appear to have been some difficulties with the original route. It was altered in 1851, 1858, and 1874. In 1859, the western portion of the road commenced at the sawmill and went to Maple Ridge Road through the Elam McIntyre farm.¹²

Whereas the companies that supplied tools to sawmills, like the one in Watertown from which the Mill Road equipment was no doubt purchased, made money, sawyers themselves had great difficulty making a mill profitable. Since the milling seasons were short because of the North Country weather



A steam circular sawmill manufactured by the Watertown Steam Engine Company of Watertown, New York, probably the same kind as used in the Gardner Mill although a later model. The Circular Sawmill by C.H. Wendel, 1889, p. 50. (With permission of Stemgas Publishing Co., Lancaster, PA.)

and transportation uncertain or too expensive, the operators had to farm as well to make ends meet. No wonder, then, that operators and owners of the sawmill property changed so often.

In March, 1856, Fisk sold the mill to Charles A. Borland and Reuben F. (Frank) Gardner for \$600.¹³ This was the third time the title had been transferred in March, the season of maximal water-power. Borland, from a successful family of millers and farmers, provided the financial backing for the operation. For the first time the mill was owned by its operators. In 1860, Reuben Gardner was living at the mill with his wife Sally, father Gilbert, and mother Aurilla.¹⁴ His father worked for him in the mill. Gardner had built a new house on the property. He put his personal worth at \$1,000.

The 1850's saw the rise of the steam engine and the much more efficient circular blade sawmill. Borland and Gardner converted the operation from water-power to steam. They purchased parts of lots 246 and 183. On lot 183, they erected the new steam mill near the Indian Wells ledge.¹⁵

The old water-powered sawmill building was used as a barn for livestock and hay. Local legend holds that this barn was easy to clean because the manure could be thrown out into the millrace whence it was swept into the marsh. Nevertheless, running a sawmill continued to be neither highly profitable nor safe in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In addition to the constant pressure of economic forces, the

mill on Gardner Road suffered several serious fires.

Following the death of Borland's first wife Pernelia in 1859, Borland and Gardner sold their property to Harlow Godard of Richville. Gardner and his father continued to operate the mill with the assistance of Frank Barkley until 1872.¹⁶ Gilbert Merithew (1836-1913) purchased the mill and 100 acres for \$2,000 and an added mortgage of \$3,480.¹² In 1872.¹⁷ Sawmill operation must not have suited Merithew because a year later he sold the mill to John F. Wells.¹⁸ Wells died one month later leaving a widow and five minor children. May Jane Wells managed the mill, with the assistance of Marvin Holt until 1875.

Documents from the County Probate Office shed some interesting light on the life and fortunes of a mill operator. In one month, Wells had sawed 2,967 feet of basswood lumber and 475 feet of pine lumber. The price for basswood was 1.3¢ per board foot and for pine 2.2¢ per board foot. One hundred sawlogs at the mill were valued at \$10. The Wells' personal estate consisted of 9 chairs, 4 beds with bedding, six knives and forks, one set of dishes, a stove, a clock, a tool box, a harness, a sleigh, and 30,000 pounds of hay.¹⁹ This was certainly not a rich man's household!

In 1875, Abner Cross (1838-1925), backed by his brother-in-law Quincy Van Ornum, purchased the mill for \$1,720.²⁰ In 1880, Cross was operating the mill with the assistance of his partners, George Spring and Francis McIntyre.²¹ It took three people to operate

a steam sawmill, one to stoke the engine, one to tail the saw and one to operate the mill. During this period, a shingle mill was also part of the mill operation. Abner and Lianda Cross raised seven children while living at the mill. The children's labor was utilized in bundling shingles and in other tasks around the mill.

In 1888, Cross sold the mill to Edwin and Lucy Holland for \$1,400.²² Ed Holland was the last person to operate a sawmill on the Mill Road. He listed his primary occupation as farming in the 1905 census. The land he tilled was so wet that he had to fit his horses with wooden clogs to work it. It is believed by an elderly local resident that he moved the mill to his son's farm on Maple Ridge Road where it continued to function for a time. The boiler and steam engine were left behind, eventually being broken up and sold for scrap just prior to World War II.

When the Gardner Mill Road was commenced as a public highway in June, 1850, it opened up the land on both sides for settlement. At that time, much of the land remained in the hands of the original Cooper Divisees. The Real Property Tax Law was passed in 1851, authorizing the taxing of land rather than residents. The absentee landholders quickly arranged land contracts to avoid the burden of the new tax. These early contract settlers in effect paid rent annually, but didn't receive title to their properties until years after initial settlement. Others stayed for a few years, did not fulfill their

contracts, and left. Since land contracts were not recorded, residents may have left no record of their passing.

One of the early contract farmers on the Mill Road was Elam McIntyre. Moving from Herkimer County, he settled on the northerly portion of lot 244 prior to 1850. He and his wife Polly had five children. Elam died without fulfilling his contract, and so his family was dispossessed. No other families are known to have lived on this farm. The property, along with much of the mill farm, became part of Rodney Conant's farm on the Maple Ridge Road.

Settling next-door to Elam on lot 243 was his brother-in-law James Daniels, who obtained a land contract in 1852.²³ He was succeeded by Gilbert Merithew in 1870,²⁴ Amos and Delia Farnsworth in the 1880's,²⁵ and the Liscum family in 1889.²⁶ Various Liscum family members lived there and operated the farm until the Great Depression when they lost title to their property.²⁷ James and Hattie Conklin ran the farm until 1955, when Carol and Vance Phillips purchased it.²⁸ In the 1960's, both the barn and the house were destroyed in fires.

When Reuben F. Gardner gave up operation of the sawmill in 1872, he



John McIntyre's store, as it looks in 1990. (Courtesy of the author)



Richville Civil War veterans, circa 1910: left to right, Gilbert Merithew, unknown, unknown, Abner Cross, unknown. Both Merithew and Cross had been operators of the mill. (Courtesy of Elwin Bigelow)

moved to lot 181 by Osborn Lake. Although Gardner lost title to his farm through non-payment of taxes in 1874,²⁹ he was still living there and operating the farm with his wife Sally at the time of the 1880 census.³⁰ In 1883, Samuel (1823-1898) and Mary Miller moved to this farm. They raised two sons, Thomas and Robert. Mary and Thomas continued to live there until after 1905.

The next residence on the Mill Road was a log house located on the northern portion of lot 182, near the mill. In 1860, David VanDuzee, a carpenter and joiner, was in residence there with his wife Lydia and three daughters.³¹ In 1880, Henry C. Austin, a carpenter, lived there.³² Lewis and Veloni McIntyre purchased the property in 1882,³³ where they raised three children. Shortly after 1900, Lewis McIntyre remarried and abandoned his home on the Mill Road.

Lot 184 was described by Spencer in 1814 as "choice land save the Northwest end lying in the swamp . . . suitable for grass or wheat."³⁴ Evidently, the early settlers did not agree. This lot went through three tenants between 1853 and 1862, including Sullivan Perry, Francis Jones, and Merritt Force.³⁵ Jones was only a resident for two years, yet the large island in the swamp is still known locally as Jones's Island. Eventually, this property became part of James Streeter's farm.

James (1836-1899) and Ellen (1839-1913) Streeter were among the early settlers on the Mill Road. They settled on the westerly half of lot 185 in 1865, first in a log cabin and then in a frame house built in 1878. James spent the rest of his life there, raising two children, Ada and Ervin.

By 1900, the Streeters had erected a large, new dairy barn. Ervin Streeter was running a successful dairy operation utilizing all his father's land. Further parcels were purchased in 1907 and 1917 as Ervin's cattle brokerage business in DeKalb Junction flourished. Sometime after 1905, the Streeters began renting out their farm or hiring help to run it on shares. Among the people who worked for or rented the Streeter farm were George Spicer, Will Liskum, Claude Shepard, Roy Alguire, Henry Blake and Bill George. The Streeter name replaced that of Gardner and the mill as the designation of the road.

A typical pattern of farming was to put cows on in the spring and sell them in the fall. Since this was before the era of trucks, the cows were driven down the roads from points of purchase, being collected as they went, until they reached the railroad yard in DeKalb Junction.

Across the road from the Streeter farm, also on lot 185, lies a narrow valley field. At the east end of this field stood the home of Rudolphus and



The Maple Ridge Cheese Factory, circa 1915-16. (Courtesy of Mary Stowell)

Mary Liskum. This house was built on land deeded to them in 1874 by Aurilla Liskum for \$16.³⁶ The Liskums were famous for their loud voices, which precluded any need for a telephone. Mary and Aurilla would stand on the ridges behind their houses and holler messages from Maple Ridge Road to Mill Road.

In 1878, Mary and Rudolphus mortgaged their home to finance moving west to Michigan. In 1880, their house was occupied by Harrison Smith, a laborer, and his wife Julie.³⁷ The mortgage was forfeited and the house removed by 1883.

The final area of settlement on the Mill Road was lot 186. The northwest portion of the lot was settled by Joseph and Margaret Dashnaw prior to 1860. Their cabin was located near the 1858 route of the road, which was northwest of its present location.³⁸ After Joseph's and Margaret's deaths, the family used this property for a summer pasture. They milked cows in a long open shed near the old cabin instead of herding them back to the main farm on Maple Ridge Road. Eventually, this parcel became part of Fred McIntyre's farm.

Thirty acres of lot 186 were contracted to Zebulon Roach who signed his claim over to Francis McIntyre (1856-1921) in 1876. Francis's mother, Mary McIntyre Bisnette (1820-1912) purchased a quarter-acre house plot next to his land in 1877.³⁹ By 1880, Mary Bisnette had married James Territt and was living on the Mill Road with her son Francis, allowing another son to live in her house next-door. James Territt purchased the remaining ten acres of land

lying north of the road in 1890.⁴⁰ All the Territts' land was eventually transferred to Francis.

Francis and his wife Lucinda raised five children named Herschel, Leona, Fred, Floyd, and Etta. They milked a half dozen cows, kept a few turkeys and sheep, made maple syrup, and grew a large garden. When Francis died in 1921, his farm passed on to his son Fred.⁴¹

The children of the Mill Road attended DeKalb School #23 which was organized in 1835. A series of footpaths and stiles allowed the children to walk crosslots. Traces of the paths worn by the children are still evident today.

Jack (John) McIntyre ran a small store on the Mill Road where it joins the Maple Ridge Road, starting about 1905.⁴² The store sold penny candy, chewing tobacco, and canned goods, serving farmers who brought their milk to the nearby Maple Ridge Cheese Factory.

The Maple Ridge Cheese Factory had been organized by local farmers on February 10, 1892.⁴³ It continued in operation, processing local farmers' milk into soft "Greek" cheese, until after 1924.

In the early 1900's, the same farmers, who had organized the cheese factory, started the Maple Ridge Telephone Company, providing the first telephone service to the Gardner Mill Road. Twelve-foot poles carried the wires to fifty families in the area.

The residents of the mill road took an active part in community affairs. Reuben Gardner and Abner Cross both served as district highway commission-

ers, overseeing repair of roads by residents in their district. Seven residents of the road served in the Civil War: Abner Cross, James Streeter, Edwin P. Holland, Rudolphus Liskum, Samuel Miller, Henry C. Austin, and Gilbert Merithew.⁴⁴

Clearly, the record indicates that life on this little loop of a road, only a mile and a third long, was seldom easy. Francis McIntyre is credited with oft repeating, "I'll tell you now, what can't be cured must be endured!" The community suffered at least its share of tragedies, such as homes burning and children dying young, and the wolf of financial catastrophe was always lurking nearby. Most memorable of the tragedies were the accidental death of Minard Conant in 1906 when he and a friend were hunting in the swamp not far from the mill and the friend tripped and shot him and the drowning of Leslie Sayer at the local swimming hole in 1901 when the young fellow was showing off by swimming underwater and got caught in the roots of trees near the shoreline.⁴⁵

Yet life went on. People expected less

then and made their own entertainment at home. Mildred Hemmings, who grew up on the road, recalled, for instance, that her first dance and also her first funeral were both held at the home of Francis McIntyre. For Mildred's sixteenth birthday Etta McIntyre took her fishing as a ruse to get her away from the house where a surprise birthday party was in preparation. But all of that was long ago.

The Great Depression and the exodus from rural America took their toll on Gardner Mill Road or, as it eventually came to be known, Streeter Road. In 1880 about eleven families of farmers and carpenters lived on either side of the road on holdings of anywhere from one acre to 150 acres. At one point Erv Streeter's dairy farm had spread out over 500 acres. One by one the homes and the farms were vacated and fell into disrepair or ruin. For many years no one lived on the road. Only in the last ten years have two new residents rediscovered the old dirt track of Gardner Mill Road and built their homes there. And so the history of the road goes on.



Edna Streeter at the ice house on the Streeter farm. The building had formerly been the Jones-Kingsley house. (Courtesy of Ashton O'Brien)



NOTES

¹ L.H. Everts & Co. ed. *History of St. Lawrence Co., New York* (Philadelphia; L.H. Everts & Co., 1878), p. 353.

² Spence, Silas A *Classification of Lands In The Town of DeKalb*, Oct. 31, 1814, SLCHA Archives.

³ *St. Lawrence Co. Deeds*, Liber 6, p. 280.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 280.

⁵ Everts, *History of St. Lawrence Co.*, p. 109-113.

⁶ *St. Lawrence Co. Deeds*, Liber 6, p. 279.

⁷ Everts, *History of St. Lawrence Co.*, p. 113.

⁸ Town of DeKalb, *Records of Road Surveys*, rewritten 1907, p. 99-101.

⁹ Town of DeKalb, *Miscellaneous Highway Records*, 1859.

¹⁰ *St. Lawrence Co. Deeds*, Liber 420, p. 472.

¹¹ DeKalb, *Road Surveys*, p. 99.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 100.

¹³ *St. Lawrence Co. Deeds*, Liber 52A, p. 280-281.

¹⁴ Eighth Census of the United States, Town of DeKalb, Household 384.

¹⁵ Everets, *History of St. Lawrence Co.*, p. 353.

¹⁶ Ninth Census of the United States, Town of DeKalb, Household 472.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, Liber 94C, p. 273.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, Liber 99A, p. 9.

¹⁹ St. Lawrence Co. Probate Office, Folio 4417.

²⁰ *Ibid*, Liber 130A, p. 126.

²¹ Tenth Census of the U.S., 1880, Town of DeKalb, Dwelling 290, 295.

²² *St. Lawrence Co. Deeds*, Liber 130A, p. 126.

²³ *St. Lawrence Co. Deeds*, Liber 64B, p. 5.

²⁴ *Ibid*, Liber 75B, p. 245.

²⁵ *Ibid*, Liber 117B, p. 141.

²⁶ *Ibid*, Liber 130A, p. 632.

²⁷ *Ibid*, Liber 270, p. 195.

²⁸ *Ibid*, Liber 567, p. 124.

²⁹ *Ibid*, Liber 117B, p. 391.

³⁰ Tenth Census of the U.S., 1880, Town of DeKalb, Dwelling 293.

³¹ Eighth Census of the U.S., 1860, Household 385.

³² Tenth Census of the U.S., 1880, Household 294.

³³ *St. Lawrence Co. Deeds*, Liber 121A, p. 427.

³⁴ Silas Spencer, A *Classification of Lands in the Town of DeKalb*, Oct. 31, 1814, SLCHA Archives.

³⁵ *Ibid*, Liber 48B, p. 207 and Liber 52C, p. 8.

³⁶ *Ibid*, Liber 98A, p. 110.

³⁷ Tenth Census of the U.S., 1880, Town of DeKalb, Dwelling 291.

³⁸ Town of DeKalb, *Records of Road Surveys*, rewritten 1907, p. 99-101.

³⁹ *St. Lawrence Co. Deeds*, Liber 112C, p. 69.

⁴⁰ Tenth Census of the U.S., 1880, Town of DeKalb, Dwellings 289 & 290.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, Liber 221, p. 11.

⁴² New York State Census, 1905, Town of DeKalb.

⁴³ *Watertown Daily Times*, February 12, 1892.

⁴⁴ L.H. Everts & Co., ed. *History of St. Lawrence Co., New York*.

⁴⁵ "Sad Fatality Near DeKalb," *Watertown Daily Times*, February 20, 1906.

The Plain People Among Us: The North Country Amish

by Karen M. Johnson-Weiner
Drawings by Anna Gerhard-Arnold

When I first visited an Amish home five years ago, I worried whether what I was wearing was modest enough. I expected to be meeting stern, biblical-looking patriarchs, neat but silent wives and well-behaved children. Although a knowledgeable linguist, I had a vague idea that they would address me in English peppered with "thees" and "thous." I expected to find a people whose lifestyle was somehow slower, more natural, more satisfying, and less hypocritical than my own, a people closer to their faith. The reality was not at all what I had imagined, yet I was not disappointed. In getting to know the Amish, I have found, as have many others in the North Country, that the Amish laugh, fish, hunt, and sing. Amish children color pictures, play ball, and tell jokes, and Amish young people hold mystery suppers and wonder who is taking whom to the next get-together. I have heard no "thees" and "thous" and discovered that Amish children can be every bit as naughty as my own. Yet, at the same time, I have found a people committed to a way of life that makes them seem like "strangers" and "pilgrims", "in the world but not of it" (1 Peter 2:11). In their attempt to establish and maintain "redemptive communities," the Amish cherish tradition and family values, reject the values of progress, and interact with each other in unique ways to create a culture very different from that of the dominant "English" world around them.

Relative newcomers to the North Country, the Old Order Amish communities in Norfolk and the Heuvelton-DePeyster area and the Philadelphia Christian Fellowship, the Beachy Amish-Mennonite community in Antwerp, are neither relics of a bygone era nor a people misplaced in time (Hostetler, 1980, p. 4). Like their spiritual brothers, the Mennonites and Hutterites, the Amish trace their roots to the suffering and martyrdom of the Swiss Reformation. It is hard to believe, but the conservative Amish are descended from a radical faction of this reform movement. Frustrated by the slow pace of change, three young reformers, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and Georg Blaurock, met secretly in Zurich on January 21, 1525, and illegally rebaptized each other. In so doing, the three abandoned the constitution of the Swiss Protestant church to set up a new church of believers "according to evangelical truth and the

word of God."

Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock paid dearly for their actions. Grebel died in exile at age 27; Manz was thrown bound and gagged into the Limmat River; and Blaurock was burned at the stake. Yet their followers strived to realize their vision of a new church in which all things were to be held in common. Ministers, they determined, were no longer to live upon mandatory tithes or the sale of indulgences, but were to be supported by the voluntary gifts of church members. Within the church, sin and vice were to be dealt with severely; errant members were to be disciplined by the church, and those who did not change their way of life were to be excommunicated, placed under a ban and excluded from the fellowship of the church.

Though familiar to us now, a voluntary church of believers that neither sought to control the state, like the Catholic church, nor was controlled by it or allied to it, like the newly-formed Lutheran church, was profoundly threatening to church hierarchy in the 1520s. Those who joined the new church, refusing to baptize their infant children, taking new vows and, finally, signifying their rejection of the old church by being baptized again, did so at great peril. Ulrich Zwingli, leader of the Swiss Reformation, denounced the "rebaptizers" or Anabaptists, charging that their arrogant separatism and self-sufficiency had brought confusion into the church.

In 1524, the Zurich City Council outlawed adult baptism, and Zurich preachers denounced the Anabaptists from the pulpit, calling them 'rascals' and 'satans in angel's clothing.' Zwingli, himself, portrayed them as more "puffed up by their knowledge of the Gospel than a flame with the spirit of charity;" they were, he argued, "obedient to Satan who has brought them again under the yoke of works" (Rilliet, 1959, p. 142). The Anabaptists, in renouncing the Council, infant baptism, and other teachings of the state church, were branded seditious.

In response to the persecution that followed the 1524 ban, the Anabaptists, or Swiss Brethren as they came to call themselves, developed the strong sense of group solidarity that marks their descendants today. The Swiss Brethren saw clearly that the church of true believers must be opposed to the outside world and persecuted by it just as the

early Christian martyrs had been. Thielemann J. van Braght's *The Bloody Theater, or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*, published in 1660, combined accounts of the torture and execution of Anabaptists with stories of the early Christian martyrs to encourage believers to remain strong in the face of persecution. Like the first Christians, all "who baptized only upon confession of faith, and who suffered and died for the testimony of Jesus, their saviour . . . could expect the blessed crown of immortal glory" (p.6). As van Braght wrote in his introduction, "for ourselves and our fellow brethen,

The dreadful sacrificial fire, the shining stakes, the shame which Zion suffers, could neither disturb nor hinder God's chosen people, nor make them afraid to bear the name of Christ, as in a white cloud: Until a burning flame has consumed their bodies; whereby their souls found refreshing with God" (pp. 6-7)

The *Mirror* is still read today by Amish and Mennonites, who find consolation in it for the persecution they face in the "English" world for their resistance to mandatory schooling, military service, or vaccination.

Despite persecution, or maybe because of it, the Anabaptist movement spread. The Anabaptists came to be called Mennonites after Menno Simons, a Dutch priest turned Anabaptist preacher whose teachings helped shape Anabaptist views of baptism, nonconformity in attire, pacifism, and the *Meidung* or shunning of excommunicated members. In 1693, an Alsatian preacher, Jacob Ammann, argued that the Mennonites were becoming too much a part of the world, that they were following too closely fashions in dress and interacting with and even marrying non-Mennonites. The majority of Mennonite preachers and congregations rejected Ammann's call for greater separation from the world, and so Ammann excommunicated them. The conservative minority became known as Amish Mennonites or, simply, Amish. In response to continued persecution in Europe, many Amish immigrated to the new world. The last remaining Amish congregations in Europe rejoined the Mennonites



in the latter part of the 19th century. There are no Amish left in Europe today.

William K. Crowley notes that there were two main periods of Amish emigration to North America, the first lasting from 1717 to 1750 and the second from 1817 to 1861. The Amish did not arrive in large numbers. During the first wave of immigration, approximately 500 arrived, mostly from Switzerland and the Palatinate area of Germany; during the second, approximately 1,500 arrived, nearly all from Alsace and Lorraine (Crowley, 1978, p. 251). The first group, attracted by land offers and the promise of religious freedom, settled in Pennsylvania, first founding communities in Berks County in the southeastern part of the state. Other settlements were soon founded in Lancaster and Chester counties (Crowley, 1978, p. 252).

Of the first six Amish settlements in the New World, only one, the Amish community in Lancaster County, survived. Some communities were lost to Indian attacks, whereas others were absorbed by neighboring communities of other religions, including the German Reformed and the Church of the Brethren. Intermarriage with non-Amish was also common and further weakened small settlements (Hostetler, 1980, p. 62). In the first period of Amish immigration new communities were established in a generally westward progression, but by 1809 there were only three settlements outside of Pennsylvania, one in Garrett County, Maryland, and the others in Holmes and Tuscarawas Counties, Ohio. It is noteworthy that the Amish did not follow the settlements of their Mennonite brethren. The bitter feelings left after the Amish-Mennonite split came to the new world and affected immigration patterns. The Mennonites moved southward from Pennsylvania along the Cumberland and Shenandoah valleys, whereas the Amish moved west through the Juniata Valley (Crowley, 1978, p. 253).

The settlement patterns of the first wave of Amish immigration are still evident in founding of new communities, such as those in Norfolk, Heuvelton, and Antwerp. From the beginning, the Amish have tended to establish new communities at a great distance from old ones. Often they have moved much farther than they needed to, many times choosing to settle in areas near or on the frontier. Although economics plays a role (land in or out of the way places tends to be cheaper), Crowley suggests that isolation makes it easier to maintain religious practice (1978, p. 253). As Crowley also notes, however, isolating a new community increases the likelihood that it will not succeed. During the first immigration period, 11 of every

15 settlements failed or did not remain Amish. Having lost nearly half its families in the past five years, for economic reasons, the Norfolk community may be a contemporary example of a settlement in danger of extinction.

The second period of Amish immigration saw the founding of communities in western Ohio, Illinois and southeastern Iowa. There were, in fact, two different Amish movements during this time. New, predominantly Alsatian immigrants came to North America primarily to avoid continued persecution, including compulsory military training. At the same time, descendants of the first immigrants migrated westward. The second group proved much more successful; none of the colonies established by exclusively Alsatian Amish groups survived as *Amish* communities past 1870 (Crowley, 1978, p. 253).

Attracted by cheap and available farm land, the Old Order Amish came to the North Country in 1974. In Norfolk one finds, for the most part, descendants of the Swiss Amish who first settled in the Allen County area of Indiana; yet, it is a mixed community, and one hears several dialects of Pennsylvania "Dutch," or German. For many of the Norfolk Amish, the North Country is the latest stop in a migration that has included stays in Indiana, Michigan or Pennsylvania. The Heuvelton-DePeyster community, called by other Old Order groups the "Swartzentruber" Amish, is more homogeneous. Nearly all have come from the Holmes County area of Ohio or from related Swartzentruber settlements, and all speak the same variety of "Dutch." The Philadelphia Christian Fellowship in Antwerp, an offshoot of the Melitta Fellowship Church in Leola, Pennsylvania, was also founded in 1974. Like their Old Order brethren, they too were attracted to the North Country by cheap land.

The three North Country Amish communities illustrate that Amish today are not a homogeneous, monolithic group. One finds not only many different Old Order Amish groups, but also the Beachy Amish, and the "New Order" Amish or "Amish Brotherhood," who trace their origin to a revivalist spirit that swept many communities in the 1940s, and who cling to horse and buggy but permit the use of tractors in fields and on the road. In fact, names like "Old Order," "Beachy Amish" and "Amish Brotherhood" obscure the true extent of Amish diversity. Used to thinking of our neighborhood church or synagogue as part of a larger religious organization, we find it hard to understand that each Amish church is a distinct and self-defined community, separate not only from the "English," or non-Amish community that surrounds it, but from most other Amish ones as well.

The church is, moreover, the one pervasive force in Amish existence. The standard German word for "church" is *Kirche*, which, like its English equivalent, refers to the building in which services are held or to the services themselves. The Amish word for church, however, is *Gme*, pronounced "Gmay" in Pennsylvania German, from the German *Gemeinde* meaning 'community'. For the Amish, the "church" is not the building in which one meets or even the meetings themselves but rather a redemptive community formed of those dedicated to putting into practice the teachings of Christ. The early Anabaptists preached, and their modern descendants accept, that, since Adam and Eve's fall from grace, the Kingdom of God has been in conflict with that of Satan, and it will be so until Christ's return and his final judgment. To be prepared for this judgment, Christ's believers, the "Gmay," must remain separate from the world and its evil. The Amish believe that God's people must be a faithful minority, "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2:11) in the world, but not of it that they "may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among [which they] shine as lights in the world" (Phillippians 2:15). The Amish assumption, reinforced by centuries of persecution, is that the Christian way will not be chosen by the majority of society, and thus, the Amish remain "a peculiar people" (Titus 2:14), separate from the world and prepared to suffer persecution. One cannot be a passive member of such a church. Each member must be a committed disciple of Christ, willing to take up the cross and suffer inevitable persecution.

This is not to suggest that Amish community sees itself in conflict with the surrounding "English" one. In fact, unless the larger, non-Amish community takes actions that directly affect the Amish one, such as raising taxes or enacting conscription laws, the Amish simply accept it. It is necessary to their existence, a market for their goods and a source of products they cannot themselves produce. The Amish do not judge the "English," for they believe only God can judge. The Amish will go to "English doctors" and dentists and, when necessary, to "English" hospitals. The Amish will work and trade with the "English," joke with them, help them, and even accept help from them, but they will remain separate from them, believing that they must serve God and be worthy of redemption.

One joins this fellowship of believers when baptized into a community. Like the first Anabaptists, the Amish believe that baptism is literally a covenant with God and that children cannot under-

stand or make a commitment of such importance. Therefore, baptism may be sought only by adults, who are urged to think carefully before taking this important step. The Amish do not believe, as some other Christians do, that baptism brings salvation. Although the Beachy Amish, like the New Order Amish, believe that the individual can have "assurance of salvation" rather than a vague "hope of salvation" (Hostetler, 1980, p. 286), to assert that one is saved, according to the Old Order Amish, is the ultimate in *Hochmut* or pride, for this is something only God can know. Baptism is, instead, a public symbol of one's repentance and commitment to serve God and His church. In joining in fellowship with others in the community, drawing on the strength of the community and guided by its wisdom, the Amish individual gains the strength to lead a life worthy of salvation.

In choosing baptism, the Amish man or woman vows to maintain until death the *Ordnung*, or "discipline," of the church. Encoding the community's beliefs, the *Ordnung*, or "Ottning" governs most aspects of Amish life, yet it is more than simply a collection of rules. It is, in fact, a *Zaun*, a fence, uniting the individual to the larger body, the "Gmay," and protecting the "Gmay" against the outside world. As Amish historian Joseph A. Beiler writes, "It creates a desire for togetherness and fellowship. It binds marriages, it strengthens family ties; to live together, to work together, to worship together, and to commune secluded from the world" (in Hostetler, 1989, pp. 84-85). To the Amish, obedience to the "Ottning," to all of the "Ottning," indicates one's love for the church. One cannot follow it half way; one is either in the church or outside of it.

The contemporary "Ottnings" of today's Amish churches have evolved over the years. Although these "Ottnings" are normally not written, they are clarified, developed, modified and reaffirmed at each "Ottningsgmay," *Ordnungsgme* or "council church." The "Ottning" specifies what is sinful and worldly and, hence, not to be tolerated. Although the *Bible* is the source of many rules, not everything set down in an "Ottning" has a biblical basis. For example, a 1799 discipline prohibits "tobacco, smoking or snuff-taking and such-like evil practices," whereas an 1865 church discipline forbids fairs, insurance companies, lightning rods, and oilcloth or rubber overcoats, and enjoins church members from decorating their houses "with all sorts of unnecessary and luxurious things such as gaily-colored walls, window curtains, and large mirrors and such like" (McGrath, 1966). What cannot be scripturally supported

is justified by the feeling that to do otherwise would be worldly and disruptive to the community.

"Ottningsgmay" is held twice a year before communion. If there is any dispute at all over the "Ottning," communion will not be held, for the "Gmay," the church community, must be united. If there are irreconcilable differences, a split in the community is inevitable. Often disagreements will seem petty to outsiders. For example, the Old School or Nebraska Amish, the most traditional of all Amish groups, split into two factions over whether the "Ottning" required a member to saw off projecting gables on buildings on the farm he had just bought. However, the "Ottning" marks the boundary between the community and the outside. In giving in even a little, the community risks weakening this protective barrier.

That each community has its own "Ottning" gives rise to contradictions that puzzle outsiders. In the North Country, the Norfolk Old Order Amish use the bright orange triangle on the backs of their buggies, but the Swartzentruber Amish refuse to do so; Norfolk Amish schoolchildren ride a schoolbus to a central parochial school, whereas Swartzentruber children will not, walking instead to one of the small, one-room school houses spread throughout the Swartzentruber community. Each community has chosen where to mark its boundaries, and there will be little or no social or religious interaction between communities whose "Ottnings" differ. Although they may greet each other amiably at auctions, their young people will not date, and ministers from one community will not preach in churches of the other. Like the Norfolk Amish and the Swartzentruber Amish in the Heuvelton-DePeyster area, they will not be 'in communion' with each other, and members of one group will say of the practices of another, "that's just not our way."

By creating norms that all members of the community pledge at baptism to support, the "Ottning" ties the community together and ensures its solidarity. If an individual has doubts about his or her ability to walk in the straight and narrow way proscribed by the "Ottning," then he or she is advised to put off baptism. Being baptized and then breaking the "Ottning" threatens the community and may bring upon the offending individual the *Bann*, or excommunication, and *Meidung*, social shunning.

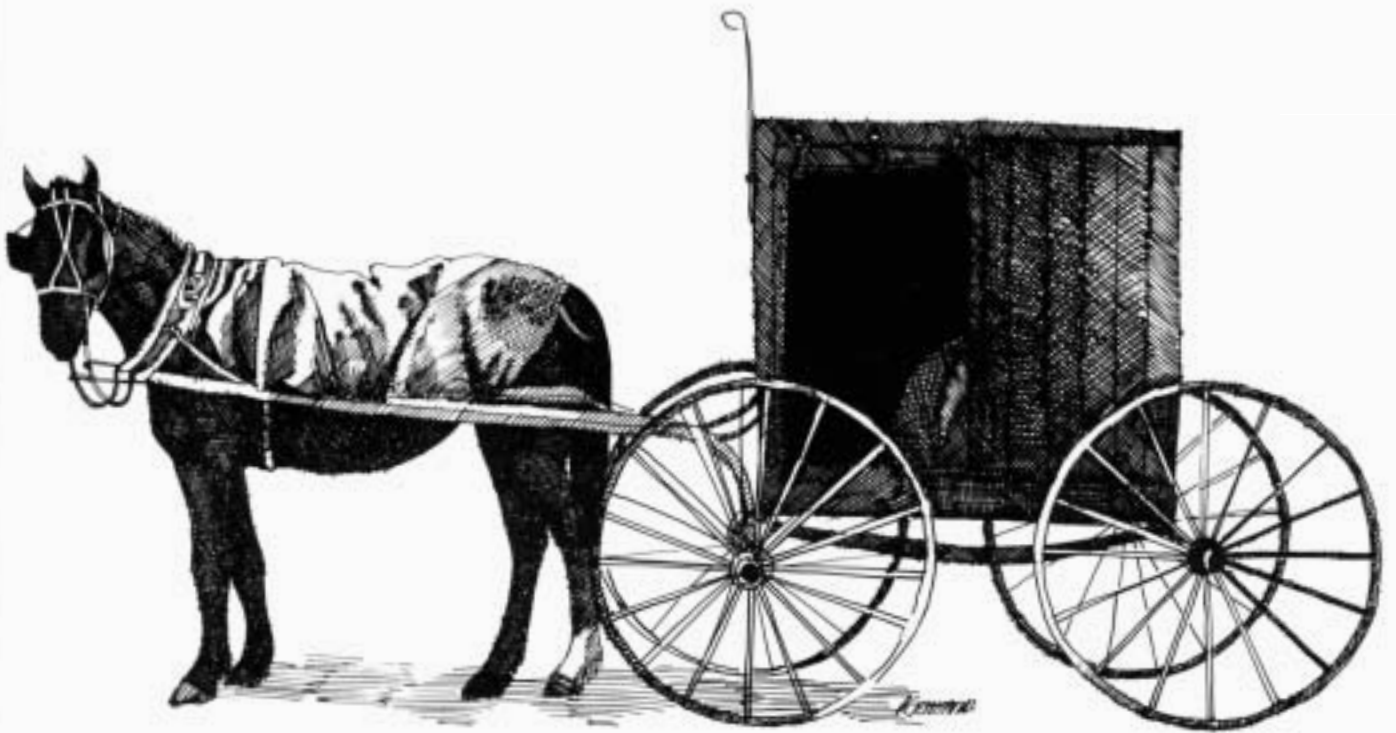
The *Bann* and *Meidung*, or "Ban" and "Miting," are basic to Amish life. If a member violates the baptismal vows, falls into sin, breaks the "Ottning" and/or refuses to heed the counsel and concern of the fellowship, then he/she must be excommunicated. The Amish community has no alternative, for the bibli-

cal instruction is to "Root out the evil-doer from your community" (I Corinthians 5:12-13). Ironically, excommunication is viewed as a means of protecting not only the church but also the offender. Rather than denying hope of salvation to the individual—only God can do that, excommunication is a last attempt to convince the erring member to return to the church. If the individual does not repent, then, as the "Ban" declares, that individual has, by his own actions, taken himself outside the fellowship (cf. Matthew 18) and must be expelled "that he may again be convinced of the error of his ways and brought to repentance and amendment of life" (Hostetler, 1980, p. 87). It is clear to the Amish that the "Ban" is not something the community does to the individual but rather something the individual does to himself. "Miting," or shunning, adds to excommunication the pain of social avoidance. Following the biblical command that one neither eat nor keep company with those expelled from the church (I Corinthians 5:11; II Thessalonians 3:14), it requires members to cease all social and business relationships with the excommunicated person.

The "Ban" and "Miting" can be very devious. Not only the original division between the Amish and the Mennonites, but most major divisions in the Amish church since then have involved disagreement over the enforcement of excommunication and shunning (Kraybill, 1989, pp. 141-143). Yet, most Amish believe that the "Ban" and "Miting" contribute in a positive way to the unity and purity of the church, for they minimize the threat posed by the offending individual and help the "Gmay" to remain distinct and socially intact.

The spiritual fence of the "Ottning" is reinforced in a variety of ways. Most Amish communities are agriculturally based, for example, and the earth is viewed as a sacred trust. The Amish believe that God created the world and enjoyed it and then created human beings whom he commanded to harness and cultivate the earth. They do not worship nature, but they find it easier to be Christian in close relationship to nature. As the Bible teaches, some soil favors good seed and some favors weeds; so too, they believe, some occupations favor a Christian life.

This has been a challenge for the Amish communities in the North Country, where the soil is poorer, the growing season shorter, and markets less accessible than they were in Pennsylvania or Ohio. They have responded by altering their traditional reliance on agriculture and introducing new agriculturally-related industries. For example, the Norfolk cheese factory, now called Plumbrook Amish Farms, was founded by the Norfolk Amish in an attempt to



create a market for their milk. Several Swartzentruber farmers have been attempting to introduce a new cash crop, sorghum, in the hope that fall molasses making will balance spring maple syrup production. Moreover, as in Amish communities throughout North America, there has been a growth of cottage manufacturing and retail industries. In the Swartzentruber community one finds at least six saw mills, a buggy maker, several furniture shops, and two straw hat makers, as well as numerous housewives supplementing the family income by making and selling quilts and aprons and retailing to others in the Amish community everything from chocolate chips to flour. In the Norfolk community, whose "Ottning" allows members to work in town, only one family makes a living solely by farming. Most have turned to carpentry, furniture making, and other crafts to earn a living, and skills like quilting and basket making, which once were employed to keep a comfortable home, have become economic mainstays (Golden, 1989).

Despite difficulty earning a living from the land, staying close to the farm is important for the Amish, who find that nature reinforces the teachings of the *Bible*, and even Amish families who do no commercial farming will often keep a horse or some chickens and grow vegetables for their own use. The farmer's dependency on weather teaches dependency on God. Nature also teaches constancy in hardship. Although crops may fail one year, there is the promise of a good harvest the next. In fact, two lessons learned from the soil are central to Amish faith: if there is death, then there is also resurrection, and sooner or later one reaps what one sows.

The physical structure of the Amish community also reinforces church teachings. Old Order Amish settlements are organized socially and geographically into church districts. Those families that are able to meet together for worship form a district. The size of the church district is limited by the distance that can be easily traveled by horse and buggy and the size of the meeting place. Like the early Anabaptists who worshiped secretly in private homes to avoid arrest, most Old Order Amish sects do not have separate meeting houses. Church services are held in houses or, when warm enough, in barns, so the congregation cannot be too large. The Norfolk community had two church districts, but now has one; the Swartzentrubers, in the Heuvelton-DePeyster area, have three. Church, which is held every two weeks, is an important social as well as a religious event. Neighbor women and able female relatives join the housewife who will host church in her home to scrub the house from cellar to attic, clean every pot, and bake enough

bread and pies and cook enough food to serve dinner to the congregation following services. On the off week people will visit or perhaps attend church in a neighboring, communing district, thus further reinforcing community ties.

Members of the Philadelphia Christian Fellowship and other Beachy Amish-Mennonites, who are not constrained by horse and buggy, must use different means to make sure the community does not get so large that members lose touch with each other. When church membership reaches about 30 families, 15 families, all volunteers, will leave to found a colony church, generally in an area distant from the original church. This not only limits the possibility of conflict between churches, but may reinforce the bond between those who move and help the group to perform missionary work. Thus, although members of the Beachy Amish may live farther from one another than members of Old Order communities, drive to services that are conducted in a separate meeting house, and actively seek to attract new members, there are strong ties uniting them against the outside.

For all Amish, the church district is the central unit of Amish authority. It is governed by a three-part ministry whose officials are chosen by a combination of democracy and faith. Generally, in each district, there is a deacon, whose responsibilities include assisting in marriage arrangements and seeing that the material needs of the community are met, two or three ministers, who are responsible for preaching and counseling, and a Bishop, who performs marriages, baptisms, excommunications, and funerals. The Swartzentruber community now has only one bishop, and the Philadelphia Christian Fellowship is served by a bishop who lives in Pennsylvania. When a new minister (or deacon or bishop) is needed, all members of the church are consulted, and nominations are called for. Although women take part in the process, only a baptized man, married and, therefore, settled enough to be a stable leader, can be considered for the ministry. Those receiving two or more nominations, depending on the size of the congregation, take part in a lottery. In order of their age, each chooses a hymnal, and the one choosing the hymnal containing a slip of paper on which is written a biblical verse rises to ecclesiastical office (Hostetler, 1980, p. 113). Each Amish church member, therefore, has a say in determining the leadership of the church and, by extension, in maintaining the stability of the community as a whole.

The church and the "Ottning" allow Amish families to live as a community within a community, surrounded by the "English" yet apart from them. The

Old Order Amish community is separated by time itself. The "English" may manipulate the clock and equate time and money, but the Amish pay little attention. Keeping "slow time" are the Swartzentrubers, who do not move their clocks ahead in summer. The Norfolk Amish are on "fast time," never setting their clocks back an hour in the fall. The Old Order Amish rarely wear watches. Seasons, not minutes, matter, and events begin when participants arrive.

The community is further strengthened by language and dress. For the Old Order Amish, the survival of Pennsylvania German or 'Deutsch,' commonly called Dutch, is intertwined with their survival as a separate and "peculiar" people. The use of Dutch within the community serves as a reminder of the differences between the community and the outside, not only isolating the Amish from the dominant "English" culture but protecting them from it.

That young children often do not begin to learn English until they enter school further reinforces the notion that English is the language of outsiders. Although school is a normal part of the Amish child's life, it is also in the domain of the outside world, regulated and restricted by state laws. In fact, like the English language in which it is conducted, school is an outside institution that plays a necessary role in the Amish community. In the Amish schools, taught by members of the community under the watchful eye of an Amish school board, Amish children are introduced to the non-Amish, sinful world outside. Symbolic of this introduction to the outside world is that new pupils are addressed in English by the teacher, often a neighbor they know well or even a sibling, who has never before spoken English to them (cf. Johnson-Weiner, 1989a). The Amish try to limit the effects of English school by placing strict boundaries between the school and the community. Only in schools do the Amish use English as the sole means of oral communication with other Amish. In Swartzentruber schools, English ceases to be spoken when school is not in session, even if the break is just for recess. One Swartzentruber mother acknowledged that her children sometimes spoke English with each other "just for fun" but then noted that "if they do it regularly we make them quit."

Because Pennsylvania Dutch is not a written language (all Amish correspondence is conducted in English), its form may vary considerably from one Old Order Amish settlement to the next. The Swartzentrubers speak a single dialect, but in the Norfolk community one can hear at least two distinct varieties of Dutch. Increases in the Amish population, the subsequent search for

new land, and the founding of new communities have, as in Norfolk, brought together speakers of different Dutch dialects, which may, in turn, be helping to bring about increased reliance on English (Johnson-Weiner, 1989b). Loss of Dutch and the growing use of English distress many in the Old Order Amish community, who, like Amish writer Joseph Stoll, feel that "English . . . represents everything outside our church and community" (Stoll, 1975). Lamenting the growing use of English among the young folk in the community, one Norfolk woman notes, "churches that lost their mother tongues and started talking English lost more than that; they lost quite a bit. They're just not plain like they were before."

When an Amish community re-evaluates its relationship with the outside world, patterns of language use do, in fact, change. This is evident in the Philadelphia Christian Fellowship. Unlike the Old Order Amish, who are concerned primarily with keeping baptized members in the community and the world out and who, therefore, make no attempt to convert outsiders, Beachy Amish feel themselves commanded by the *Bible* to preach to the world. This, combined with the Beachy emphasis on individual *Bible* study, and the difficulty they have learning to read German with ease, has led to the adoption of English as the language of the community. Children may be taught to speak German because, as one mother says, "it's good to know two languages," but they will be chastized for speaking it too often.

But although the Beachy Amish have dispensed with the use of German, they are still "plain." Their dress easily distinguishes members of the church from outsiders. Since dress can be a powerful symbol, signaling not only one's membership in a particular group but also the responsibilities and privileges of different ages in the group, it is not surprising that Amish "Ottnings," concerned with the integrity of the community, proscribe certain styles and items of clothing. Dress became an issue early on when Jacob Ammann argued that non-conformity to the world meant not only non-conformity in thought and belief but also in dress. The break-away Amish were called the *Haftler* ("hook-and-eyers") in contrast to the Mennonite *Knopfler* ("button people"). Plain dress now identifies the community of believers and gives the wearer a sense of belonging. It is not thought of as "Christian clothing" but as Amish clothing, essential not to salvation but to carrying out the full will of God that believers be not conformed to the world (Romans 12:2). Besides, if one's mind is on one's appearance, then it is not on things that matter.

Although the dress of each Amish community differs from that of others, particularly if the communities are not in communion with each other, there are some features common to all. Modesty is considered an important Christian virtue, so plain clothing helps to conceal the form of the body. Furthermore, no disfigurement of the body as in tattooing or ear piercing is allowed. No jewelry is worn except for medical reasons (i.e. copper bracelets). Following 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, women's hair remains uncut. Braided from early infancy, with adolescence it is put up in back. A man's beard is allowed to grow either after baptism or after marriage, depending on the group. In no case is it ever trimmed, and there is never a mustache, which would be too reminiscent of 17th and 18th century military styles. Men's hair length is an indication of group conservatism. Ironically, from our point of view, a haircut that is too short can bring a visit from the deacon. In all groups hooks and eyes are generally used for men's shirts and jackets. All Amish use buttons, but their use is generally restricted to children's clothing and work clothes. Women use straight pins to fasten their dresses. Men's trousers are broadfalls, with buttons to fasten the front flap. Groups differ about whether suspenders are allowed, and, if so, whether one or two. The ultra-conservative Nebraska Amish of Pennsylvania forbid suspenders; their trousers are laced up in back. Hats, like hair, distinguish one group from another. The wider the brim, the more conservative the group. A boy gets his first hat when he starts wearing trousers. Among the Swartzentrubers, this is after being toilet trained, whereas among the Norfolk Amish, it occurs at about age one. Prior to getting his first pair of pants, the young Amishman wears a dress and bonnet like those of his sisters.

In symbolic obedience to God and to man (1 Corinthians 11:1-14), plain women are seldom seen in public without some type of head covering (Scott, 1986, p. 100). In some Amish groups, including both the Norfolk and the Swartzentruber Amish, all girls wear prayer caps at all times. In others, wearing the cap at all times is a sign one is married, and unmarried girls wear them only to church. In the Beachy Amish community in Antwerp, young girls begin to cover their heads at all times when they are about three or four years old. The more conservative the group, the more of the head the cap will cover. The bonnet covers the prayer cap and again differs from group to group. The cape and apron worn by all Amish females were originally for extra modesty. Cape and apron styles also differ among groups

and with age. In Norfolk a young girl starts to wear a "front-shut dress" with a cape and separate apron when she is about thirteen. Until then she wears a pinafore apron over a long-waisted dress that buttons in the back. At about eleven or twelve, Swartzentruber girls go from the little girl's dress to one that pins in the front with a separate, crossed cape. At about age eighteen they begin to wear the adult straight cape. Hemlines are generally midcalf, but longer in more conservative groups. Color, like style, varies from community to community. The Amish never use patterned fabric, and most groups use only dark colors, although in Ontario, one can see Amish wearing bright yellow and orange. Like the Old Order, members of the Philadelphia Christian Fellowship wear solid colors, usually blues and browns. There are noticeable differences between the Norfolk and Swartzentruber Old Order groups. The Norfolk adults, for example, wear light blue and beige; however, they will not wear the dark green worn by Swartzentruber children. Swartzentruber adults will use the dark green for undergarments. "Plain dress" is also evident in footwear, although, since the Amish do not make their own shoes, there is more variation. Dark shoes, usually black are the most accepted, and sandals are worn in few groups. The Swartzentrubers wear high top shoes in winter and low shoes in summer. The Norfolk Amish wear low shoes year round and, unlike the Swartzentrubers, accept dark-colored canvas shoes. Women in both communities, like most of their Old Order counterparts, wear black stockings. In the Norfolk community the thickness of the stocking has been the subject of some discussion.

"Ottnings" dictate other ways in which one Amish group differs from another and from the outside. Most, but not all, Amish communities forbid the use of the automobile. The Philadelphia Christian Fellowship, like other Beachy churches, allows ownership of automobiles provided they are painted entirely black. For this reason, Beachy Amish have also been called the "black bumper" Amish. In Old Order communities, the type and style of buggy is subject to local custom and church regulation. Variations due to personal preference are minimized, although young, not-yet-baptized men may ornament their buggies quite a lot. Norfolk buggies differ from Swartzentruber buggies significantly; they are shaped differently and have rear windows. A Lancaster carriage, grey topped, with straight sides and rounded roof corners would never be confused with a Holmes County, Ohio, buggy with its black top, angled in sides and square roof corners.

Buggies help to mark the group and





protect it. Although the Amish will often accept rides from neighbors, hire a car and driver or take a bus, the general feeling is that owning a car would make it difficult to remain plain and, therefore, would threaten the community. As Stephen Scott (1981, p. 6) points out, "With fast, easy transportation readily available, family members are apt to be away from home more often than not, and the church community is likely to become very scattered. The auto also tends to draw people to the city and the plain people feel that this is no place for a Christian to be. After all, they reason, Lot's downfall was his entrance into the city of Sodom. Abraham remained content tending his sheep and cattle far out on the plain." Tractors are also rejected, perhaps as much because they provide the user with unnecessary choice and convenience as because they "ruin the land" (Hostetler, 1980, p. 127).

Other machinery is similarly evaluated. That a piece of machinery or a household appliance saves the owner time does not necessarily recommend it, nor does its being "modern" condemn it. As Scott and Pellman (1990) point out, most Amish communities use some battery-powered devices, most notably flashlights, and calculators and even battery-powered electric fences are in wide use among Amish groups. Most Amish communities have, however, determined that connecting to power lines would not be in the best interests of their communities, not because electricity is bad, but because easy access to electricity "could lead to many temptations and the deterioration of church and family life" (Scott & Pullman, 1990, p. 5).

The Amish are plain in all they do, for to be otherwise would be *Hochmut*. Even a baby's name must be chosen carefully, for it would cause comment if it were "too gay" or "fancy." Yet, there is beauty in Amish homes. Often a pretty calendar may hang long after it is out of date, and Amish quilts are anything but drab. These things, however, are functional, demonstrating that there is beauty in work and the simple things. The patterns on quilts are images of nature (leaves, flowers, and stars), household utensils (baskets) and, of course, the endless wedding ring.

These symbols unite the plain people. They are of little meaning to the outside world, but then, the symbols of the outside world mean little to the Amish. The Amish child learns the symbols of his people and the values they represent not in school but through active participation in the life events of the community. The school, in fact, often plays a rather marginal role in the community; it is where the child learns English, arithmetic and the other skills

needed to survive in a world in which the Amish are a minority. The important lessons—how to manage the farm and the household, how to raise the children, how to be responsible and work hard—are learned at home, where children participate in work, play, and ceremony to the extent of their abilities. Young children take care of younger ones, and older ones delight in being able to go on husking parties or to quilting bees. In baseball games and group "singings," young people learn that, no matter how capable they are as individuals, they can achieve much more by working with others. "Frolics," work parties in which members of the community come together to raise a barn, build a house, cut timber, or butcher hogs, are also times for learning, not only how to perform tasks and to enjoy them, but also that individuals can accomplish much in fellowship with others and that working together is as enjoyable as playing together.

As John Hostetler (1980, p. 374) notes, the Amish community is one in which silent discourse often prevails. Children learn as much by watching and doing as by being told, and their play reflects what they see. I remember watching three young Swartztruber children line chairs up, climb into them, and proceed to sit motionless, without saying a word. About five minutes later, their mother noted my astonishment and explained with a laugh that they were playing "church." As the game of church suggests, commitment to faith is often shown without words. Prayer, before and after meals, is silent. Indeed, too many words can bring trouble. As Hostetler (1989, p. 8) points out, "Amish sermons routinely stress biblical passages related to speech behavior; for example, 'The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison' (James 3:8). Cleverness, long-windedness, eloquence, and wordiness belong to the proud and wicked." Confronted with actions of which they disapprove or about which they can do nothing, the Amish often respond with silence. When asked to comment on their own actions or those of others, the answer is usually short and to the point: "That's just our way."

A quarter century ago many would have predicted that the Amish would not survive as a distinct cultural group. They have, after all, completely disappeared from their European homeland. How could they survive in America, the "melting pot" of the world? Nevertheless, today, scattered in clusters throughout at least 20 states and one Canadian province, approximately 100,000 people live in the Amish way, nearly twice as many as two decades ago (Hostetler, 1980, p. 99). There are deviants and rebellious individuals in Amish communities. The Amish emphasize voluntary

membership in the church, and there are always those who are doubtful and confused, and choose not to join. Researchers estimate that from one-tenth to one-third of each generation does not stay with the church, the numbers probably varying greatly from group to group (Crowley, 1978, p. 263; Kraybill, 1989, p. 14).

Interestingly, dissatisfied members often seek some assurance of salvation at prayer meetings or in *Bible* study groups of more liberal churches. The Amish person who leaves a community like that in Norfolk or Heuvelton usually joins a more liberal Amish congregation, such as the Beachy church, or a Mennonite congregation.

The costs of being Amish are high. As pacifists, they are easy prey for some. Near Berne, Indiana, in August, 1979, for example, an Amish baby, Adeline Schwartz, was killed when a group of boys in a pick-up truck threw bricks at the buggy in which her family was riding. In 1984, Naomi Huyard was murdered by two unsupervised, emotionally-disturbed youths. In each case, the Amish reaction was one of resignation rather than revenge. In accepting a life of non-conformity, they are willing to suffer "just as our Anabaptist forebears were martyrs for their vision of living out Christ's teachings on earth." Adeline Schwartz's parents even pleaded with the judge for leniency in the sentencing of her murderers, arguing that "Sending the defendants to prison would serve no good purpose . . ." (Hostetler, 1989, pp. 254-256).

The Amish are, moreover, unwilling to resort to legal force to exact justice, preferring instead to believe that God's justice will ultimately prevail. They do not go to court to settle disputes, for to use any kind of coercion, legal or otherwise, is to interfere with God's will. Their case for separate schools, which eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court, was carried on by non-Amish clergy and lawyers. A Norfolk Amish girl, describing a hit-and-run on a buggy, noted her relief that there had been a non-Amish passerby to get the license number of the truck. Even in small matters the Amish seek nonconfrontational solution. Faced with thieves who were stealing jugs of maple syrup from roadside stands, Amish farmers responded by simply setting out jugs filled with water, thereby leaving the punishment in God's hands. One hospitalized Amish woman sought no help when a non-Amish roommate stole fruit from a gift basket (after refusing it when it had been freely offered). That the roommate subsequently suffered digestive problems was to her evidence that God sees all and is just.

The Amish appreciate the necessity of government and view rebellion as

un-Christian. Yet, they will not allow the government to assume the functions of conscience. They pay taxes but will not collect social security or any other kind of financial benefit from the government. Insurance of any kind is often viewed as evidence of lack of faith in God's protection; they believe they must care for themselves. If a family is having difficulty paying doctor's bills, the community will help.

But if the costs of being Amish are high, so too are the rewards. Explaining what, in fact, holds them together, Merle and Phyllis Good (1979, p. 82) note that "These people believe God has called them to a life of faith, dedication, humility, and service. It is that belief

in God's personal interest in their lives and their communities which holds them together, in spite of many forces which could easily pull them apart. Without a strong belief in God and the seriousness of life, these people as a people would have disappeared many decades ago."

From my own observations, Amish life is rich in earthly rewards as well. Amish children are born into welcoming families and are taught early on their importance to the family and the community. Amish persons acquire from the community a sense of who they are, where they come from and where they should be going. They know that their basic needs will be taken care

of, that they will contribute. They see the value of work and have the joy of working first with parents and grandparents and then with children and grandchildren. In times of need, they are supported by the entire community. If they are sick or their barn burns down, the community will come together to donate labor, money and social and spiritual support. The Amish learn the joy of working together, and every event, from a quilting bee to silo filling, is an opportunity for visiting and recreation. Amish life is plain and simple, but for those who accept the faith that defines it, it is very satisfying.

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To and From the Editors

We were pleased to receive a letter of warm praise for the "Everett Farm and Family" article from a gentleman at the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, Connecticut, for the author's patient research and graceful writing and for our decision to publish her work. We have, of course, been pleased to hear by word of mouth that many county residents also thought highly of that series. The editors would like to encourage others to undertake and submit similarly well-documented and interesting accounts of other old county families.

It was most unusual and kind of amusing to find that *The Quarterly* had virtually scooped the newspapers by printing Arthur Johnson's article on the 50-year-old Ogdensburg Agreement between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Mackenzie King. On August 19, 1990, the *Watertown Daily Times* printed an article, "North Country Watched The Move Toward War" (pages C-1 and C-2), a reminiscence by A.C. Viebranz, a longtime friend of the North Country, who in 1940 covered the army maneuvers of that summer in St. Lawrence County and the meeting of the two heads of state on August 17-18, 1940, at Ogdensburg and Heuvelton. In the Sunday Weekly section of the *Times* (page 5) Walter B. Gunnison shared his correspondence with Clarence E. Armstrong of Canton concerning some of the more down-to-earth and amusing aspects of the war maneuvers up here that summer.

A member of SLCHA, Doris L. Clark, of Schenectady, expressed her pleasure with Arthur Johnson's essay—just the kind of article she likes to read in *The Quarterly*. She also shared with us her correspondence with a friend in Sun City, Arizona, Jane E. King, to whom she had sent a copy of the article, knowing about Miss King's keen interest in matters relative to the U.S.-Canadian border. Miss King sent a copy of our article to James E. Cook, columnist for *The Arizona Republic* since the private railroad car, the "Roald Ammundsen," in which the Ogdensburg Declaration was signed, had become part of the collection at McCormick Railroad Park in Scottsdale, Arizona, in 1973. That communications hook-up proved to be remarkably timely because the "Roald Ammundsen" was to be dedicated at ceremonies on August 17, 1990, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the pact between the U.S. and Canada. There were, of course, other celebrations of the anniversary, the most pertinent for us being that in Ogdensburg with the visit of John H. Rousselot, co-chairman of the Permanent Joint Board of Defense, during which he read the proclamation made by President George Bush and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, on the occasion: "On the 50th anniversary of the Ogdensburg Declaration, we again express our faith in collective defense . . . We believe that Canada and the United States now, as they did 50 years ago, represent a model of cooperation between neighbors." (as quoted in *The Watertown Daily Times*, August 19, 1990, p. B-6)

Before the dust settles once more on the war maneuvers in St. Lawrence County in the summer of 1940, we would like to encourage other readers with long memories to jot down their recollections and send them to us so that we might do a follow-up story and then place them in the archives. Old black-and-white photos would also be appreciated.

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Schedule of Upcoming Events at The County Museum

September 7

Meet-the-Artist Reception

An opportunity to meet Ogdensburg folk artist Carl Martel, whose paintings are featured in the current exhibition at the museum, "Logger Artist", on display until September 14.

October 6

Gala Fall Fundraiser: Silent Auction & Buffet

Join us for an evening of delicious food and heady excitement as you compete with other bidders on a variety of donated antiques, arts, crafts and services. All in support of YOUR Historical Association!

September 30

Opening Reception for "Changing Works: End of the Homestead Era"

New exhibition in the Main Gallery which highlights the transformation of traditional North Country farm life by the introduction of mechanization (1930-50).

* SPECIAL NOTICE *

October 20

Historical Association Annual Meeting

Luncheon meeting at Potsdam College. Annual business meeting and election of trustees and officers. Followed by guest speaker, William Merwin, President, Potsdam College.

If you have enjoyed reading **The Quarterly** and are not currently a member of the Historical Association, please consider joining now.

To become a member, simply send a check with your name and address to: St. Lawrence County Historical Association, P.O. Box 8, Canton, NY 13617.

1990 Membership Rates

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