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The Holmes County Amish Settlement 1956-1996:
Examining Complexities and Emerging Districts

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The Amish are Christians that deliberately live apart from larger society. They are popularly known for driving horse and buggy and wearing bonnets. There are many more features of Amish society that distinguish them from the rest of society. Instead of tractors they use horses for farming; all married men wear beards; there are no chapels because they worship in the church members' homes; they do not allow public electricity into their homes; they do not have internet or phone access in their homes; they generally do not promote education higher than the eighth grade; and they do not speak English at home (they speak Pennsylvania Dutch at home and learn English when they go to school).¹ The ways of the church are ultimately enforced by shunning and excommunicating those who do not abide by them.

Many of these practices seem quaint and old-fashioned, which could lead someone to think that the Amish are stagnant and unchanging. However, that notion is false. Steven Nolt's *The History of the Amish*, first published in 1992, shows change in all of the Amish in the United States; it refutes any ideas that the Amish have not changed over time. Much of Donald Kraybill's work illuminates how the Amish have experienced change, such as *The Amish Struggle with Modernity* (1994), and *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (2001), and *The Amish and the State* (2003). The Amish conversation also includes the works of David Luthy, who documents Amish movement across North America in *Amish in America: Settlements That Failed, 1840-1960* (1986) and *Why Some Amish Communities Fail: Extinct Settlements, 1961-2007* (2007); David Weaver-Zercher,

¹ Donald B. Kraybill, "War Against Progress: Coping with Social Change" in Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan, ed. *The Amish Struggle with Modernity* (Hanover, NH :University Press of New England, 1994), 54. See also Charles E. Hurst and David L. McConnell, *An Amish Paradox: Diversity and Change in the World's Largest Amish Community* (Baltimore : The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 18. Of course with the Amish there are always exceptions here and there.

whose works relate Amish experiences to non-Amish things, e.g. *The Amish in the American Imagination* (2001) and *The Amish and the Media* (2008); and John Hostetler, one of the first Amish historians, whose book *Amish Society* (1963), describes almost all aspects of being Amish. It is noteworthy that all of these writers were living and writing at the same time. The conversation is new and lively, having just begun in the mid-twentieth century.

The historiography beyond these writers is rather thin.² The scholarly works about the Amish are predominantly based on the Pennsylvania Amish, even though the Holmes County Settlement in Ohio is home to the largest Amish population in the world.³ As the scholarly community begins to recognize the significance of the Ohio Amish, Ohioans are still oblivious to the Amish. In much of my research I found that Amish are either not considered part of Ohio history or are regarded as just a picturesque side note to rural histories. In Ohio county libraries there are far more cook-books and romance novels about the Amish than there are scholarly works. Charles E. Hurst and David L. McConnell address this deficiency in their book *An Amish Paradox*, recently published in 2010. Hurst and McConnell write about the sociological aspects of the Holmes County settlement and seek to show the complexity of the Holmes County Settlement. *The Amish Paradox* delves into how the different Amish affiliations split away from the Old Order Amish and how various Amish communities adapt over time.

² My theory for this lack of history: if the Amish do not go to school past the eighth grade, and work is focused on farming or (now more recently) family business, then there is no opportunity for writing histories. Moreover, if someone did write a history, it would not be easily published because the Amish keep themselves separated from the rest of the world. When I was at the Ohio Amish Library in Millersburg, Ohio I noticed that historical preservation was not a pressing issue. There were one-hundred-year old books just sitting on shelves and articles simply pinned to a cork board by the door.

³ Charles E. Hurst and David L. McConnell, *An Amish Paradox: Diversity and Change in the World's Largest Amish Community* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), ix.

They use descriptions and characterizations of the different affiliations to thoroughly portray the diversity within the settlement.

This paper studies the Holmes County Settlement between 1956 and 1996. It specifically uses the Holmes County *Church Directories* to examine the changing landscape of church districts. My primary research is essentially creating a snapshot of emerging church districts between 1956 and 1996. This snapshot deepens our understanding of Amish population changes by showing that the changes are more profound and complex than mere growth in population. Using the *Church Directories* enables one to create the snapshot with terms and ideas that the Amish themselves use, because the *Directories* are put together by the Amish. The Amish population becomes more diverse as membership grows within the rather fixed boundaries of the Holmes County Settlement. In 1956 the Holmes County Settlement had thirty-five church districts associated with roughly five affiliations and by 1996 it had one hundred fifty-three districts associated with seven affiliations.

Since the 1950s the Amish experience in Ohio has been more thoroughly documented, and I have centered my primary research on one of the rare forms of that documentation: the *Church Directory*. Scholars have looked at the *Church Directories* before, but none have focused on them as their chief primary source. Martha J. Bailey and William J. Collins investigate the use of modern household appliances as the cause of the baby boom and they use Amish as the control group because the Amish do not use modern household appliances.⁴ Sean Lowery and Allen G. Noble examine changes in Amish occupations, but they do not use the *Church Directories* as their chief primary

⁴ Martha J. Bailey and William J. Collins, "Did Improvements in Household Technology Cause the Baby Boom? Evidence from the Electrification, Appliance Diffusion, and The Amish," *National Bureau of Economic Research* (January 2009): 1-59.

source.⁵ My extensive use of the *Church Directories* adds a new dimension to the Amish scholarly discussion. I use the *Church Directories* to analyze changes in district membership and emerging districts. After that analysis I then turn to the sociological trends in the settlement to explain the data.

My work confirms and enhances the work of Charles Hurst and David McConnell. *An Amish Paradox* is written to illuminate the diversity within the Holmes County Amish Settlement.⁶ Hurst and McConnell's work responds to the issues of neglect and misconception. They recognize early that scholars overlook the Amish of Ohio and so their work is centered on the Amish of Ohio to redress that neglect. They write to challenge the false notions propagated about Amish simplicity and homogenous cultural appearance. They show that "[t]he Holmes County Settlement is rife with diversity, internal disagreements, and varying adaptation to the conflicting forces."⁷ My work counters the same neglect and falsehoods; the emerging district snapshot I create illuminates the same dynamics and frictions; and my extensive research enriches the picture of diversity that Hurst and McConnell present in *An Amish Paradox*.

My observations and analyses about the Settlement's complexities deepens Hurst's and McConnell's because I thoroughly analyze the *Church Directory*. *An Amish Paradox* examines the Holmes County settlement with an emphasis on interviews, surveys, and observations. Hurst and McConnell do refer to the *Church Directory*, but only cursorily; in the eight pages of methodology there are two sentences that have the word *Church Directory*. They use the *Directory* only with regard to changes in

⁵ Sean Lowery and Allen G. Noble, "The Changing Occupational Structure of the Amish of Holmes County, Ohio, Settlement," *The Great Lakes Geographer* 7 (2001): 26-37.

⁶ Hurst and McConnell, *x-xi*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

occupations and their analysis is not based on the *Directory*.⁸ I thoroughly comb through each *Directory* published from 1955 until 1996 and analyze change in each district. I look to the *Directory*, not for Amish occupation information, but for the number of members in each district.

The *Holmes County Church Directory* is one of the only forms of accountability for the history of the Amish membership. Before 1955, other than local newspaper stories and land deeds, there is no useful documentation of the Amish population.⁹ Accounts of the Amish in Ohio refer to the district and the settlement as the forms of structure and organization since the Amish arrive in the early nineteenth century.¹⁰ The *Church Directory* shows that the head of an Amish household is normally the father, and in exceptional cases it is the widow(er), the spinster, or the bachelor. It shows that family is fundamental to the Amish organization because each head of house is listed with his family. It also shows how important the district is to the Amish. The *Directories* organize the Settlement into Amish categories, and there is a clear emphasis on the district after the family.

The oldest *Holmes County Church Directory* I found was from 1955. The *1955 Directory* was put together by Ervin Gingerich, an Amish man of Holmes County; he is the author of the *Directories* between 1955 and 1988. The *1955 Directory* roughly maps the outlines of the church districts within the Settlement and lists all of the heads of households by district.¹¹ After 1955 the *Directory* is published in 1956, 1958, 1960 and

⁸ Hurst and McConnell, "Methodology," 291-298.

⁹ I did look into U.S. Censuses, 1950-2000, but they were not useful to me because I could not locate information that pertained only to the five counties of the Holmes County Settlement. The census data information was about the total population of the state, not just the Amish.

¹⁰ Steven M. Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, Rev. ed. (Intercourse, Pennsylvania: Good Books, 2003), 120.

¹¹ Ervin Gingerich, *1955 Ohio Amish Directory*, no publisher given (viewed by Shannon Shaw on July 12, 2010 at The Ohio Amish Library in Millersburg, Ohio).

1965.¹² The *1965 Directory* is bound nicely, has maps for each district, and in addition to listing the heads of households by district and counting the baptized members it lists the occupation of each head of household, the name of the head's wife, and documents the marriage status of their children. This format and type of information is the standard for *Church Directories*, although publication of maps is inconsistent.¹³ There were so many districts by 1981 that the *1981 Directory* has three pages of maps. The Settlement's borders do not expand, but within the settlement the districts' borders overlap.¹⁴

Methodology:

I went through each Church Directory between 1955 and 1996 and I counted the number of members by district and put that data into a Microsoft Excel spread sheet (see Appendix I). When I exhausted the Church Directories I was left with spaces of information-less time between publications. To fill in those gaps and find out when a district emerged, I looked through *Raber's Almanacs*.¹⁵ The *Almanac* is published every year, and it lists the bishops and ministers for each district, so I was able to determine if a district existed or not, based on whether or not it was listed. To double check the information gathered from *Raber's Almanac* and fill in more gaps, I used the Amish lineage chart from the *1981 Church Directory* to trace the existence of districts from 1981 back to 1956.

History of the Amish

The Amish are the descendants of Swiss Brethren, a group that emerged from the

¹² For publication information, see the bibliography.

¹³ Ervin Gingerich, *1973 Ohio Amish Directory: Holmes County and Vicinity* (Baltimore, MD: Division of Medical Genetics Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, 1973).

¹⁴ Ervin Gingerich, *Ohio Amish Directory: Holmes County and Vicinity 1981 ed.* (Millersburg, OH: Ohio Amish Directory Inc, 1981).

¹⁵ The *Raber's Almanac* from 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1995.

European Anabaptist movement in 1525 in Zurich, Switzerland. By the end of the 1600's there was a wave of renewed spirituality among the Swiss Brethren, spear-headed by the bishop Jacob Amman, on the Southern Rhine and in Switzerland.¹⁶ As early as 1693, Amman promoted ideas that were not in line with the existing leadership: more frequent communion and a closer following of Church discipline.¹⁷ The Amish following finally split away from the Swiss Brethren because of a personal dispute between Amman and another Swiss Brethren bishop, Hans Reist. Amman and Reist could not agree on how strictly to practice shunning and social avoidance. The Amish emerged from the split more adherent to strong shunning and keeping humble.¹⁸

Living Separately

The Amish distrust of non-Amish society and their suspicion of government is from their heritage: the Amish have a deep memory of the violent persecution that their ancestors experienced in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁹ The *Ausbund* and *Martyr's Mirror* retell the stories and accounts of how their religious forefathers were mistreated.²⁰ The *Ausbund* is a hymn book used during church services. The *Martyr's Mirror*, a traditional wedding gift, is a thousand-page book of stories. The stories tell about the torture and suffering Anabaptists experienced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at the hands of the government and other citizens.²¹

¹⁶ Steven M. Nolt, *The History of the Amish* (Intercourse, Pennsylvania: Good Books, 1992), 26.

¹⁷ Nolt, 27 and 35.

¹⁸ Nolt, 27-28. The story goes that the dispute ended when Amman was disgusted with Reist's aloofness, and so he became decidedly humble.

¹⁹ Hurst McConnell 14-16.

²⁰ Nolt, 16 and 17.

²¹ John S. Oyer and Robert Kreider, "Compassion for the Enemy: Dirk Willems, Asperen, 1569," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*. http://www.goshen.edu/mqr/Dirk_Willems.html (accessed December 15, 2010). Example: The story goes that in 1569 Dirk Willems was put in prison in the Netherlands for being an Anabaptist. He escaped from prison, and as he was running away a guard started chasing after him. The guard fell into a frozen pond and started yelling for help. Willems went back to help the guard. As soon as

The Amish are instilled with a strong “sense of Christ’s call to be ‘in’ the world but not ‘of’ the world.”²² Amish rules dictate that the Amish live every day differently from the “English.”²³ Some rules are for just that- to be different from their Amish neighbors; that is, a rule may not be for keeping the community together or living humbly but simply to be separate.

Amish farmers typically do not use pipeline milkers to pump milk directly from the cows to cooling tanks via glass pipelines. However, oil pumped under high pressure in hoses, is widely used to power hydraulic machinery in Amish shops. ..[An Amish man explained the distinction:] “By using hydraulic,” he said, “we are not like the English shop owners, who use electricity, and so the non-conformity or separation from the world is preserved. But if an Amish farmer uses a pipeline milker, he is just like an English farmer and the separation would be lost, that’s the difference.”²⁴

Being too integrated into a non-Amish surrounding society distracts the Amish from being Amish. During the Vietnam draft, in 1966, after the young Amish men received conscientious objector status, they were then required to serve two years of alternative service. The young men served in urban hospitals among the “English.” Once exposed to all of the new ideas and pastimes associated with the non-Amish world (i.e. higher education, fame, fortune, driving, phones, movies, television etc...) they no longer lived the Amish way. When it was time for the young men to return home, some did not and of those that did, many were dissatisfied because they could not assimilate and so they, too, left the Amish.²⁵

Perhaps the more different the Amish are from the non-Amish, the stronger the bond amongst the Amish themselves becomes. The rushing rate of the change around

Willems pulled the guard out, the guard put Willems back in prison in worse conditions. Derk Willems was later publicly burned to death.

²² Nolt, 43.

²³ The Amish refer to non-Amish as “English.”

²⁴ Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan, ed. *The Amish Struggle with Modernity* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 44

²⁵ Kraybill and Olshan, ed., 202-204

them brings the community closer together. The Amish, because of the different language they speak at home (Pennsylvania Dutch), the purposefully slowed rate of progress at which they choose to live, and the symbols they live by, are drawn towards one another within the church. The culture they create as a family and as a community is different from that of their non-Amish neighbors. To be different is to be more together, one of America's oldest counter-cultures.

The Church, The *Ordnung*, and the Leadership

There is no structure to identify the Amish. There is no universal or national hierarchy of Amish leadership²⁶ and there are no buildings devoted solely to the church. For the Amish, church is a community of fellow Christians committed to the same values and tenets of belief. The members of the church are committed to one another, they rely on each other, and they expect each other to be faithful.²⁷ Church is not only a congregation of worshippers but also a community of families and a network of leadership.

There term community not only means church but also church district and congregation. The *Ordnung* is the set of rules that a community lives by. It is “a *Zaun*, a fence, against the outside world, and obedience to it is a symbol of love for the church.”²⁸ The *Ordnung* lays out what is considered acceptable and what is not. It is not normally a published document, but usually rather a tacitly understood and orally transmitted set of rules. Parents teach their children how to live and follow the rules by living and working

²⁶ Marc A. Olshan, “The Old Order Amish Steering Committee: A Case Study in Organizational Evolution,” *Social Forces* 69 (December 1990), 605.

²⁷ Nolt, 20.

²⁸ Karen M. Johnson-Weiner, *New York Amish: Life in the Plain Communities of the Empire State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 19-20.

with the rules alongside their children.²⁹ The community leadership consciously and actively creates the rules of the community. The rules for a community are adopted, adapted, and deleted autonomously by each community. The *Ordnung* evolves over time “as the group [responds] to changing circumstances...[and] because no two communities have faced the same set of circumstances, no two Amish congregations have exactly the same *Ordnung*.”³⁰ The intangibility of the *Ordnung* and the overlapping borders of church districts increases the complexity of the Amish organization.

There is a formal structure of leadership within each district. Deacons are in charge of the material needs of the church members, and they arrange marriages. Each community has a minister of the book who is in charge of preaching and counseling. The ministers are decided upon by a sort of lottery. The Bishop is the minister with full powers; he performs weddings, baptisms, excommunications and funerals.³¹ A church district must have a minister or a bishop in order to be recognized as a legitimate district.³² If a group does not agree with the church and their disagreement impels them to stop worshipping with the rest of the church, they must convince a minister or bishop to lead them so that the group will be legitimate. Samson W. Wasao and Joseph F. Donnermeyer’s study, “An Analysis of Factors Related to Parity among the Amish of Northeast Ohio,” finds that the Amish experienced three significant changes in the twentieth century: rapid growth, rapid change in employment, and growing difference between liberal and conservative Amish.³³ Their investigation found that the major actors

²⁹ Donald B. Kraybill, “The Amish Encounter with Modernity,” in *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*, ed., Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 29.

³⁰ Karen M. Johnson-Weiner, *New York Amish: Life in the Plain Communities of the Empire State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 19.

³¹ Johnson-Weiner, 23-27.

³² *Ibid.*, 20.

³³ Samson W. Wasao and Joseph F. Donnermeyer, “An Analysis of Factors Related to Parity among the

in the church- the bishops, ministers, and deacons- are more likely to have more children than unofficial leaders of the church. The more conservative affiliations also have more children, and households with fathers that work at home have more children. The study concludes that those families with less children are more influenced by non-Amish ideals, and that is why they have less children.³⁴

An Amish Settlement

In 1809 the Amish arrived in what is now the Holmes County settlement. The Holmes County settlement was established by Amish that were from Western Pennsylvania. Some of the families moved “west to preserve a more traditional church and family lifestyle,” while others moved for financial and land opportunities.³⁵ Jacob Miller, an Amish preacher, and his family arrived in Tuscarawas County in 1809, and his family soon moved to areas of Holmes County (Sugarcreek and Walnutcreek). Jacob Miller and Johnas Stutzman (Stutzman was Miller’s nephew) were part of a westward movement known as “Ohio fever.” The fever ran high among the Amish of Western Pennsylvania in the early 1800s as the Amish of Eastern Pennsylvania begin moving west.³⁶

By the mid-twentieth century the Holmes County Settlement was spread throughout parts of five counties: Wayne, Stark, Holmes, Tuscarawas, and Coshocton. The Settlement encompasses roughly 446,515 acres (see Appendix II), about the size of the Hawaiian island of Maui. The largest structure of Amish organization is a settlement, which describes an area in which Amish communities and families live near one another.

Amish in Northeast Ohio,” *Population Studies* 50 (July 1996), 235-236.

³⁴ Wasao and Donnermeyer, 239.

³⁵ Nolt, 92-93.

³⁶ Hurst and McConnell, 25-27.

A new settlement may consist of only one family, whereas a well-established settlement, like the Holmes County settlement, encompasses more than one hundred church districts.³⁷ There are different types of Amish, and “affiliation” is the term for a type of Amish. A church district is of one affiliation, but the church districts within a settlement do not all have to be of the same affiliation. As of 2001, the Holmes County Settlement included eleven different affiliations, but “over ninety percent of the Amish are affiliated with four major groups: Swartzentruber, Andy Weaver, Old Order, and New Order.”³⁸ I will discuss only those four affiliations in the paper.

The different members of all the affiliations consider themselves to be Amish; they just practice differently or live by variations of similar rules. In some cases the Amish of different affiliations harmoniously live as neighbors, sharing schools and other public facilities, but that is not always the case. One example of affiliation disagreement in Holmes County has to do with a school building. There are “two Amish private schools, one on each side of the road, a visible reminder of the accidental burning of a school in 2001 and the ensuing conflict between Swartzentruber and Old Order parents. When the groups were unable to agree on the size of the basement for the new school, the Swartzentrubers built their own school no more than three hundred yards away, with a more modest basement and with hooks and helves instead of cubbies for coats and lunch pails.”³⁹ The details that outsiders may consider small are what keep these affiliations separate and add to the complexity of Amish diversity.

Non-Amish live amongst the Amish, but the relationships between those of

³⁷ Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan, ed., *The Amish Struggle with Modernity* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 3.

³⁸ Kraybill and Olshan, 54.

³⁹ Hurst and McConnell, 4-5.

different affiliations is not the same as a relationship with an English community. An Old Order Amish man recognizes that there is a difference between the Old Order Amish and Swartzentrubers, and he may “make fun of the long hair and untrimmed beards of Swartzentruber men and boys, calling them *gnudle Woola*, after kinks found in sheep’s wool before shearing,”⁴⁰ but he also recognizes a that there is difference between the Amish as a whole and the “English.”

Church Districts and how they Split, Divide, and Grow

Within the boundaries of the settlement discipline is instilled and enforced by the church districts.⁴¹ All members of the same district abide by the same *Ordnung*, worship in the same house, attend the same weddings and funerals, and identify themselves with the same affiliation.⁴² Decisions regarding specific technology use, youth discipline, apparel, and individual Sunday services are made at the church district level. The health and existence of a church district depends on how the church district deals with internal and external pressures and changes.⁴³

There are many reasons why a new district forms, but from now on I will classify all new districts as either the product of a split or a division. If the members of the newly formed district consider themselves to be a part of a different affiliation, then the district is considered the product of a split. The members split from their old district in order to apply different practices or teach different ideals. On the other hand, the result of a division is a new district with new territorial boundaries but members that still consider themselves to be part of the Amish affiliation from which they divided. The district

⁴⁰ Johnson-Weiner, 58.

⁴¹ Ibid., 23.

⁴² Hurst and McConnell, 17.

⁴³ Johnson-Weiner, 29.

divides, but still practices the same way and teaches the same ideals.

I compare Amish affiliations in terms of being conservative and liberal. The Amish have their own terms for this classification:

The Amish themselves use the terms low and high to classify churches and affiliations in terms of their degree of worldliness. In general, the lower, or the more conservative, churches observe stricter discipline, separation from the world, and social avoidance, whereas the higher, or more progressive, churches have made more compromises with technology and emphasize a more personal and reflective religious experience.⁴⁴

The 'high' to 'low' classification can be applied all the way down to different families in the same church district.

Determining the cause of a split is difficult. A split may occur over an ideological difference or a certain practice, but sometimes a split happens because of a personality. It is most likely that a split is a result of a combination of factors. Splitting of districts does not necessarily mean that the churches are straying from the Amish faith. In some cases a group of members split from their district in order to pursue more traditional practices.⁴⁵ This further compounds the complexity of the settlement.

Divisions are primarily driven by numbers and personalities. If a district is too large then it must divide.⁴⁶ The physical size of the church district is limited by the distance between members' houses so that the distance can easily be covered with horse and buggy. The number of members in a church is limited by the size of members' homes and barns (where Sunday services are held). A divide may come to pass because of a difference between members' personalities. In some cases if the conflicting members fail to get along after multiple attempts at remediation and unity is still not possible, the

⁴⁴ Hurst and McConnell, 35.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 55-57.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 40.

church will divide to settle the conflicting sides.⁴⁷

Splits and divisions before 1956⁴⁸ (See Appendix III.)

In the early 1850s not all Amish members agreed on issues such as shunning and the legitimacy of river baptisms. In Holmes County in 1865 thirty-four conservative church leaders drafted a proposal stating their stand against worldly things such as “carnivals, fancy clothing, commercial insurance, unnecessary household furnishings, and the singing of catchy, popular hymns.”⁴⁹ The Old Order Amish emerged, more conservative, from a bitter split between high and low Amish regarding the circumstances of changing the *Ordnung*, in 1865.⁵⁰ The four main affiliations that I will discuss in this paper originate from the Old Order Amish. The Swartzentruber Church split off toward a more conservative way at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Andy Weaver Church split off after WWII, also toward a path that was more conservative than the Old Order Amish. Finally, the New Order Amish split off from the Old Order Amish between 1969 and 1970.⁵¹

Swartzentruber split

Within the Holmes County Settlement, between 1913 and 1917 the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 55-57.

⁴⁸ Interview with Mr. Stephen Scott, September 24, 2010. There is an ongoing discussion about whether or not splinter groups of the Old Order Amish should be considered ‘groups of Old Order Amish’ or entirely different groups or churches. I do not consider the new affiliations that emerged to be subsets of the Old Order Amish, but they are from the Old Order Amish. I include all the numbers from the Church Directories, whether Old Order, New Order, Swartzentruber or Andy Weaver. Although the expressions of differences between some of the affiliations are minute, e.g. suspender strap material, bonnet construction, or rear windows in buggies, the Amish consider themselves to be significant, and so I take them to be.

⁴⁹ Hurst and McConnell, 27.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 25-27. The debate is whether or not the *Ordnung* is a living document, meant to be changed with the times, or a set of rules that are to be lived by with little to no regard for current events.

⁵¹ John A. Hostetler, “Old Order Amish Survival,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 51 (October 1977), 354.

Swartzentruber Amish split from the Old Order Amish. They split because they thought it was correct to excommunicate and shun members that left to worship somewhere other than the church they were baptized into.⁵² The Swartzentrubers, led by Sam Yoder, began shunning members that left regardless of whether the straying member joined an Amish, Mennonite, or non-Anabaptist church. Even after the outside intervention from other bishops, Sam Yoder and two districts in his following split from the Old Order Amish in 1913, and in 1917 the split was final. The name Swartzentruber came from a bishop that followed Sam Yoder, and after Yoder's death in 1932 the members of the churches that followed Yoder began to go by Swartzentruber.⁵³ The Swartzentrubers consider themselves lower (more conservative) than the Old Order Amish, and they are considered more conservative by the other Amish affiliations. They submit themselves to stricter rules against modern conveniences and associate further from mainstream America.

Andy Weaver Split

The Andy Weaver affiliation split away from the Old Order Amish in 1952.⁵⁴ The split came to be because of a dispute over the application of shunning. Bishop Andrew J. Weaver helped lead the conservative group that agreed upon shunning and excommunicating members that left the Old Order church, even if the church they joined was an Anabaptist church.⁵⁵ The Andy Weaver Amish enforce a stricter excommunication and shun for acts that would not normally warrant excommunication or

⁵² Johnson-Weiner, 55.

⁵³ Ibid., 56-57.

⁵⁴ Hurst and McConnell, 45. The Andy Weaver affiliation can also be called the Dan Church. The term "Dan Church" is used because when the first Andy Weaver churches split away from the Old Order there was a church that was led by men that all had the first name of Dan. Now, all churches of the Andy Weaver affiliation can be called Dan Churches.

⁵⁵ Johnson-Weiner, 111.

shunning by Old Order standards (e.g., when a member owns a vehicle, the Andy Weaver church will excommunicate him whereas the Old Order church may have some leniency). Up until the late 1980's the Andy Weaver and Old Order Churches allowed roughly the same technologies into the church members' lives, but since then there has been a relative change. The Andy Weaver church is now more conservative with respect to technology use; they do not use many farming machines the Old Order Amish have adopted, and they do not allow members to use "bicycles, power lawnmowers, garden tillers, [or] rental freezers."⁵⁶

Analyzing the Church Directories of the Holmes County Settlement ,1956-1996

Initially, looking just at membership numbers from the *Church Directory*, the 1956 *Amish Church Directory* counts 3,834 members⁵⁷ and by 1996 the *Directory* counts 9,513 members. That is a 148 percent increase (average of 3.7 percent per year). The membership data from the *Church Directories*, between 1955 and 1996, shows that the Amish membership doubled in about thirty-two years. From 1956 until 1996 about one hundred-forty members joined per year.⁵⁸ The trend in Amish membership between 1956 and 1996 appears to have been steady and increasing.

⁵⁶ Hurst and McConnell, 47.

⁵⁷ This number may not accurately represent the number of people within the area of the Holmes County Settlement who consider themselves Amish. The Swartzentruber do not reliably respond to surveys, because they find surveys too much a part of the "English" world. But the survey did get some data on Swartzentrubers, Andy Weaver, Old Order, Stutzman-Troyer, Hostetler (Tobe), and New Order Amish (1982 directory chart).

⁵⁸ Hurst and McConnell, 61. The data only counts members – i.e. those that have been baptized. Members are baptized once they are adults. I have ruled out non-Amish adults joining the church as any significant contribution to the data, because there are so few cases of them. As of 2010 less than one hundred members were non-Amish born converts.

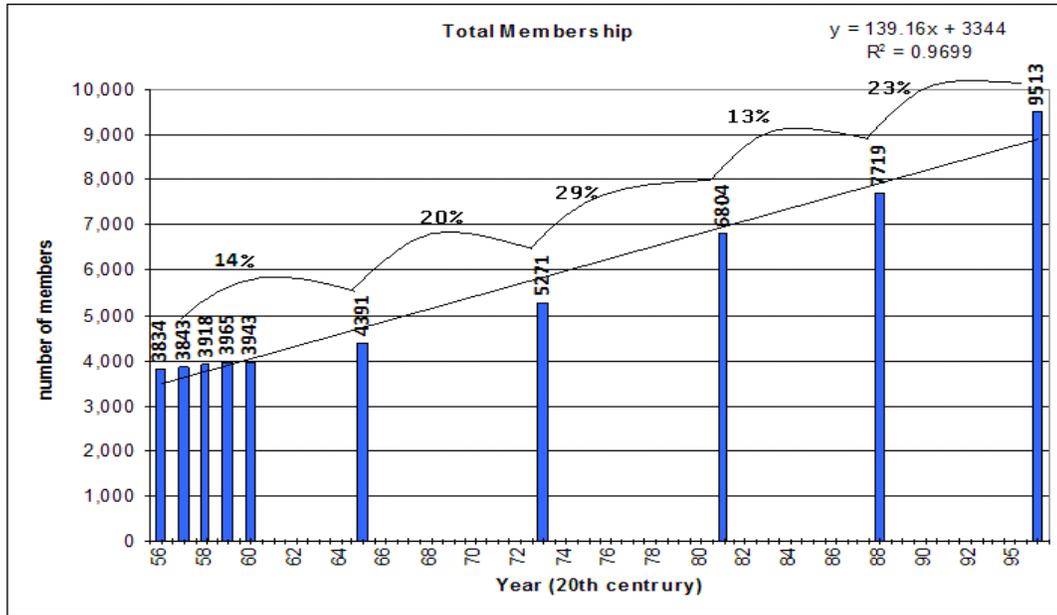


Figure 1. Membership Data. Data from *Church Directories*.

In 1956 there were thirty-five church districts within the Holmes County Amish Settlement and forty years later, in 1996 there were one-hundred fifty-six districts. The *Church Directory* was published in 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1965, 1973, 1981, 1988, and 1996. When the *Church Directory* data is combined with the *Raber's Almanac* data, the years in which that the *Directory* is published appear to show spikes in the number of districts. Perhaps Ervin Gingerich, the organizer of the *Directories*, was more successful in getting more conservative Amish to respond, or perhaps the official *Church Directory* had more funds and resources available to collect data than *Raber's Almanac*. The data plotted for years in which a directory was not published come from either *Raber's Almanac* or a district lineage chart in the *1981 Holmes County Church Directory*. Regardless of those peaks, the number of church districts appears to have increased at a steady rate: about three districts a year.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ However, while more people became Amish and more districts came into existence, the size of the district was decreasing (see Appendix IV).

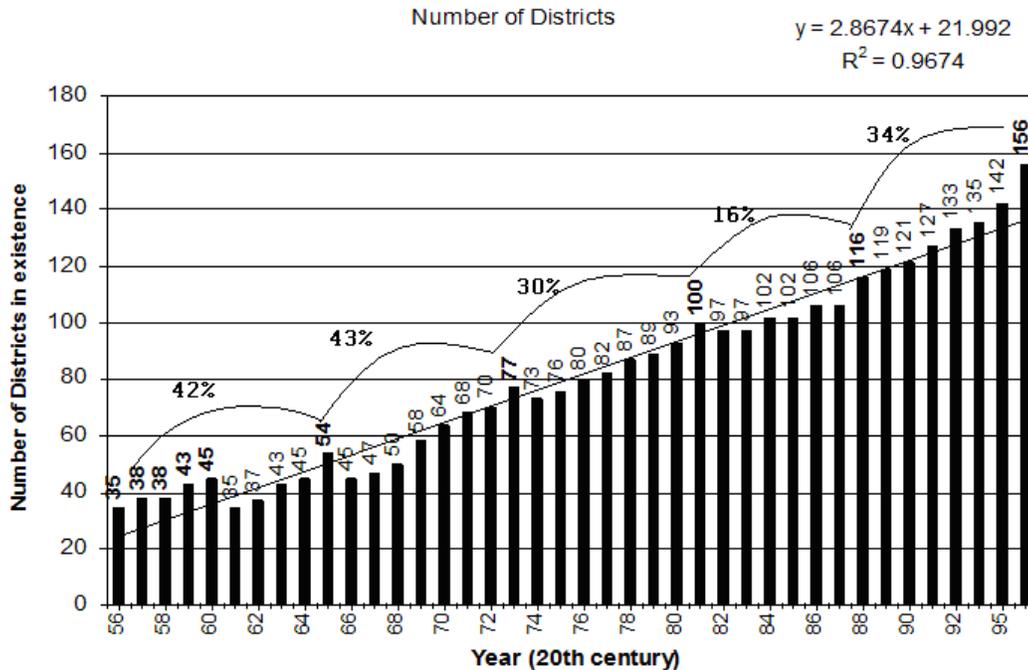


Figure 2. Number of Districts. Data from *Church Directories* and *Raber's Almanacs*.

To better understand the similar looking membership and district graphs, I compare percent changes over equal time intervals. The percent increases in members and districts are similar in two out of the five eight-year-intervals. From 1965 to 1973 both data sets increased by about 30 percent and from 1981 to 1988 both increased by about 14.5 percent. In the other three time increments, 1957-1965, 1965-1973 and 1988-1996, districts emerged faster than total membership grew. From 1957 to 1965 Amish membership increased at a rate of 14 percent and during the same time the number of districts increased three times faster, at a rate of 42 percent. From 1965 to 1973 Amish membership increased by 20 percent and the number of districts increased twice as fast, at 43 percent. Then again from 1981 to 1988 Amish membership increased by 23 percent and the number of districts increased by 34 percent. This could mean that districts split

more and districts divided sooner than before, which would explain why the number of members per district decreased (See Appendix IV).

Studying membership per church district as it changes over time illuminates how districts function- e.g., seeing that divisions are related to the number of members in a district.⁶⁰ Looking at the number of districts per settlement illuminates the complexity and larger social movements on a larger scale, within a settlement or affiliation. As membership per church district steadily decreased over the course of forty years, the number of new districts spiked and dipped at inconsistent rates. Following the membership ups and downs of every district, within the Settlement, between 1956 and 1996 would have been too much for this project, so I looked to a larger scale, the Settlement, to measure change. I extracted from the published data when church districts emerged and then I looked to secondary sources to see what sociological story supports the data.

From 1965 until 1973, the number of church districts grew twice as fast as the number of members and there was a spike in the number of emerging districts. Again from 1988 until 1996, the number of districts grew faster than the number of members and again there was a spike in the number of new districts that formed.⁶¹ Although the plot of number of new districts does not fit a linear equation, it does seem to have a

⁶⁰ Erik Wesner, "The Amish Church District," Amish America, http://amishamerica.com/the_amish_church/ (accessed March 8, 2011).

⁶¹The graph depicts new districts and affiliation changes between 1956 and 1996. The Data is from the *Church Directories* of 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1965, 1973, 1981, 1988, and 1996; the directory chart in the 1981 *Church Directory* and the *Raber's Almanacs* of 1982-1996. The *Directories* provide the number of married and single members per district, while the chart and almanac sources simply verify that a district exists. The chart and *Directories* also provide information regarding affiliation changes. I went through the *Directories* and collected the population size of each district. By 1981, when there are multiple maps, the maps of the districts are divided by affiliation, but according to Stephen Scott the map distinction is not clearly articulated in the *Church Directory*. I then used the chart from the 1981 *Directory* to trace a district's existence from 1982 backwards to 1956. The chart showed affiliation association for each district. Finally I went through the *Almanacs* of 1982-1996 just to verify that a district existed, which showed when a district came into existence.

pattern (see figure 3). After a large number of new districts formed (over roughly six districts quantifies a large number), there was a severe decrease in the number of districts formed the next year. Simply put, the number of districts that emerged jumped and subsequently dropped off. The spikes in 1969 and 1970 were most likely caused by the affiliation split from Old Order Amish to New Order Amish and the spike in 1996 was most likely caused by the splits that occurred within the Swartzentruber affiliation. These spikes are right in alignment with the sociological movements that concurrently occurred within the Settlement. The 1988 data is likely an outlier. I do not yet know the reasons for the spike in 1988; perhaps the *Directory* collected information differently which lead to more responses or there could be a fluke.

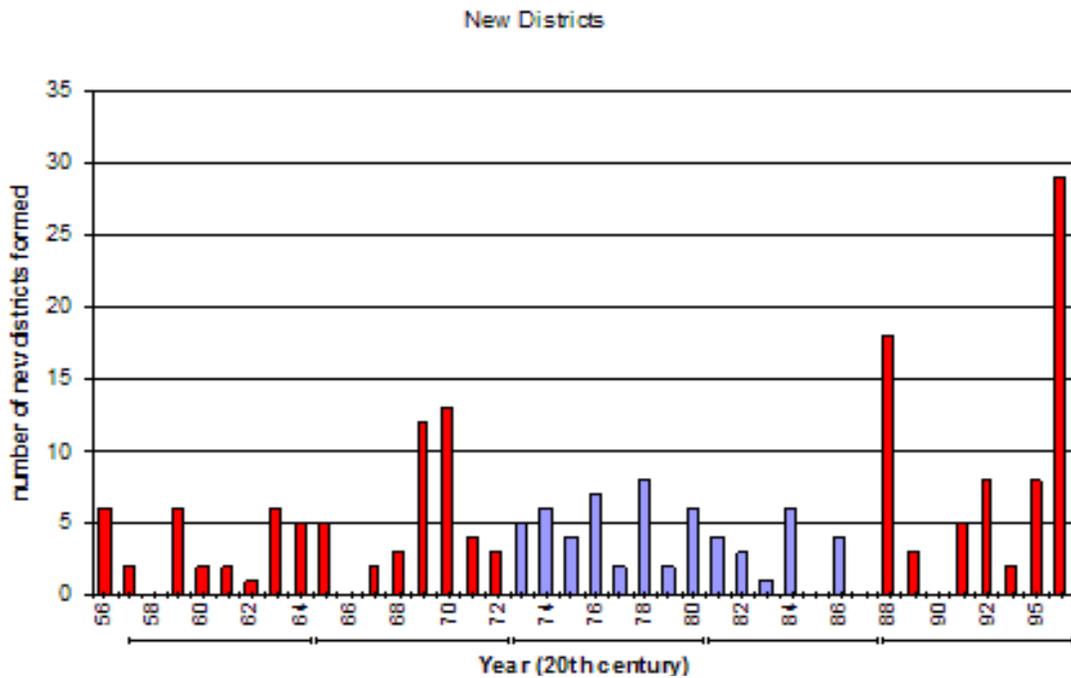


Figure 3. Snapshot of emerging church districts. Created from data analyzed by Shannon Shaw.

1969-1970 Spike: New Order Amish

The makings of the New Order Amish was brewing in the 1940's, when Old Order Amish church members started discussing the issues of tobacco and spirituality. The "spiritual pulse among the Old Order Amish show[ed] signs of alertness and awakening."⁶² In local news papers, there was an increase in Amish published articles. The discussions continued into the 1950s but became a bit more formal. Members began to meet every other Sunday, when there was to official Church service, to discuss different ideas of doctrine, the reasons for traditions, and their spiritual environment.⁶³ The every other Sunday meetings were called fellowship meetings. In addition to fellowship meetings some communities started Bible study programs with their youth. The post-WWII evangelical buzz that was amid the Mennonites began to spread to the Amish of Holmes County Ohio. The Mennonites began preaching to the Amish, "[a]t the tent meetings of George Brunk in 1959 west of Berlin, some Amish would park their buggies across the road and listen from there. Others would move into the corn fields adjoining the tent to listen. George would occasionally address, "those people out there in the corn field."⁶⁴ Sometimes the sermons were referred to as cornfield sermons. Conflicts over how traditional protocols were carried out led to three different committee meetings: 1963, 1965, and 1966. In 1969 the first New Order Amish church split away and church districts continued to split from Old Order to New Order into the 1970s.⁶⁵

The New Order Amish are still considered Amish, they continue to drive horse

⁶² Edward A. Kline and Monroe L. Beachy, "History and Dynamics of the New Order Amish of Holmes County, Ohio," *Old Order Notes* 18 (Fall-Winter 1998):8.

⁶³ Kline and Beachy, 10.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Marc A. Olshan, "The Old Order Amish Steering Committee: A Case Study in Organizational Evolution," *Social Forces* 69 (December 1990), 603-616 and Hurst and McConnell, 16. The protocol was the holy kiss, a kiss between church leaders, on the lips, at the beginning of services.

and buggy, worship in members' homes, speak Pennsylvania Dutch, practice shunning, and prohibit public electricity lines into the home. Unlike the Old Order Amish they "promote more spiritual awareness" and do not practice bundling or use tobacco.⁶⁶ The Old Order Amish still practice bundling and use tobacco because the two practices are "traditional to the old way."⁶⁷ In order to maintain the conservative counter-point to the liberal Amish-Mennonites, the Old Order Amish continue to bundle and use tobacco, which the Amish-Mennonites are against. One New Order Amish man put it, "We believe the original Anabaptist vision, and likewise the concerns of Jacob Amman, embraced a spiritual awareness and salvation by faith as well as personal holiness, which to some degree had been lost. We like to think that we strive to regain that "old" position."⁶⁸ The New Order split to be more traditional in their spiritual practices and they saw themselves as aspiring traditionalists. In a way they saw themselves as more conservative because they are living in more authentic to their religious roots. They were termed "new" because they are more accepting of modern conveniences and technologies.

By the late 1970s there was a pronounced difference in the Amish community as a whole. Across affiliations, throughout the settlement there was a change. The change was put into words by Amish historian John A. Hostetler: there was a "new Amishness emerging on the modern scene, [which included]... a sense of worth as measured by outside standards. The traditional virtues of restraint and moderation are combined with a new sense of diversity and self-realization."⁶⁹ The New Order Amish cultivated

⁶⁶ Kline and Beachy, 8.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Kline and Beachy, 8

⁶⁹ John A. Hostetler, "Old Order Amish Survival," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 51 (October 1977), 359.

questions of spirituality and practices which then blossomed into a community-wide self-awareness. The Amish man's status was based on productivity, self-accountability, and his necessity to his community.⁷⁰ The changes that began in the late 1960s were more than just affiliation splits. The number of new church districts was an indicator of change: at the tail end of the 1960s, as seen in figure 3, there was a spike in the emergence of new church districts and not all of the new districts were products of New Order splits (some were due to divisional growth). The Settlement, as Hostetler wrote, had as a whole gone through a transformation, and by the 1970s there was a new Amish aura.

The 1990s: Splits within the Swartzentrubers

The spike in new church districts in 1996, as seen in figure 3, was most likely caused by splits within the Swartzentruber Amish. In the 1990s the Swartzentruber churches went through a very painful and bitter split. (Swartzentruber is an affiliation, but I am using the term churches to represent all the churches that make up the affiliation) the issue at the root of the split was dealt with the control of the youth, more specifically teenagers. From the disputes, two parent labels emerged: *demütig* and *lass*. The *demütig* parents were more conservative in that they did not allow their children to stray far from Amish rules during Rumspringa, whereas the *lass* parents were said to be “unconcerned” with the youth situation.⁷¹

The situation boiled over when young Amish boys provoked a ‘*demütig*’ minister when they blasted radio music outside of his house. The prank turned violent when one of the teenagers hit the minister. The police were then called, the youth fled, and the

⁷⁰ Hostetler, “Old Order Amish Survival,” 359.

⁷¹ Hurst and David L. McConnell, 41-42

minister could not identify any of them. The abused minister eventually recognized one of the violent teens and he did not want to baptize the youth into the church. Members of the church stepped forward in opposition to the minister's decision, thus starting the splits within the Swartzentruber churches.⁷² Eli Hersberger and Mose Miller led those in support of the minister's decisions while Joe Troyer and others wanted to accept the youth. Once the split was final, the larger group became the Joe Troyer Amish and the small became known as the Mosy Mosies. Members of both groups consider themselves to be Swartzentruber and there is still a debate over which group is more observant of the true Amish ways.⁷³

Both the New Order split and the splits within the Swartzentruber church came from differences of conservativeness and liberalism. Both were from disputes over how rules should be enforced. Both can be witnessed by looking at the number of new church districts that emerged during the time of the split and both produced pronounced differences in the Amish community.

Growth and redistribution with respect to internal forces

Forces Pulling from within for Retention

The Amish must stick together to survive; mutual aid amongst the church is vital. The Amish have their own internal social security. The members support one another in financial needs and in emotional needs.⁷⁴ The support structure is ever present, and losing that alone would be frightening. The church is not just a once a week visit, it is a community, and within that community it is a network of friends.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 41-42

⁷⁴ Victor Stoltzfus, "Reward and Sanction: The Adaptive Continuity of Amish Life," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 51 (October 1977), 309-310.

One of the strongest connections to the church may be the tie to family. Amish children stop going to school in the eighth grade in order to work and live at home more. Official schooling may stop after the eighth grade, but education does not stop. The education shifts to learning more about how to live Amish. The children become vital workers in their homes, every person within a family has a job and is useful. As the older children are learning in the home the parents come more to appreciate the traditions that they are instilling in their family. The parents find it satisfying to see their values lived out by their children and then their own children's' families.⁷⁵ It is not the goal of Amish parents to see their child move away and start a career elsewhere. As children grow up, start families, and live nearby the parents get to enjoy being a part of that growth. That hope of future fulfillment has the potential to be something that may keep someone from leaving.

The Amish youth grow up with strong family values that emphasize work and realistically attainable goals. Without goals based on materialism, the Amish hope to achieve a debt free life with the ability to provide "food, clothing, and shelter" for their families.⁷⁶ The Amish, in line with their ideas of community, also hope to have enough money to helping others.⁷⁷ The goals set for the Amish are realistically attainable and so there are greater chances of achievement.⁷⁸ The prestige of an individual is not based on his material symbols or academic achievements but on the strength and well being of his community. With such a set pattern of growth, education, family, and work it is easier for an Amish youth to "integrate...images of himself into a whole that makes sense, [w]ithin

⁷⁵ Stoltzfus, "Reward and Sanction," 309.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 309-310.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 312-313.

his family and community.” He knows who he is; what his values are; where he is from; and what his future holds.⁷⁹ The sturdy structure of growing up is socially rewarding and has the potential to keep members from leaving.

The magnitude of the community’s social rewards may change relatively as the youth exposure to the non-Amish world changes. But, Amish church membership continues to increase, meaning that people continue to join the church. This leads to the conclusion that in the Amish social structures for retention continue to work.

Forces Pushing from within for Change

Donald Kraybill and Marc Olshan discuss the Amish growth and redistribution with regards to internal initiatives in *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*. They categorize the changes along five axes: convenience and comfort, idealism, population growth, authority structure, and land availability.⁸⁰ These changes result in divisions, splits, migration, and even separation from the Amish Church all together.

As “Each generation of Americans draws new lines between luxury and convenience, [so do] the Amish.” As the next generations lives with what used to be luxuries and conveniences they grow to consider them standards, and so the push for more convenience cycles.⁸¹ Eventually a member is not comfortable with the progress of the church and the discomfort will cause conflict, and if the issue is not solvable it will result in a split. I am not able to pin-point every split that is due to discomfort because of conveniences in my data set, but the comprehension of how a split like that may happen is useful in order to understand the nature of splits.

The New Order affiliation was the result of a split due to idealism. The New

⁷⁹ Ibid., 313.

⁸⁰ Kraybill and Olshan, ed., 40-42.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Order Amish were on a quest, as like minded people, to become more at one with their roots. They were looking for fresh, spiritual relationships. Their quest led them to split from the Old Order Amish.⁸² This shows that splits occur not only because individuals can be convincing, but also that the Settlement is a large community that allows the spreading of ideas.

Divisions arise from population growth due to logistical aspects of the church. An average church is usually twenty-five to forty families.⁸³ When the church members can no longer fit inside a member's average size house, the church is ready for a division. If the members of the district are spreading so far away from each other that the buggy ride from one members' house to another's takes too long for a Sunday morning trip, the church is ready for a division. When looking at the members per district data it is sometimes predictable when a church will divide. Following the division the two churches usually have similar names, e.g. Sugarcreek South and Sugarcreek North. Although, making these predictions is relatively simple, verifying that the divisions occur solely because of membership overflow is not simple. Each new district has its own story. This difficulty in pin-pointing the exact reason a church divides is a factor that compounds the complexity of Amish settlement.

There is no national or universal authority structure and so there are no standard rules to apply to all districts. As a district adapts to its respective surroundings it is changing in different ways from any other district, including its neighboring districts.⁸⁴ Those differences in adapting grow wider and then districts grow more distinct. The lack of a formal authority for all of the Settlement, allows for changes and redistributions and

⁸² Kline and Beachy, 7-17.

⁸³ Hurst and McConnell, 16.

⁸⁴ Kraybill and Olshan, 40-42.

allows for each district to make individual decisions.

Land availability affects the Amish in more than one way. If there is not enough land for the Amish to at least have a house, they must move. That concept is universal, a lack of land leads to migration. But, not all situations involving a shortage of land involve migration. Some Amish change the way they live in order to stay in the same place. They may change occupations or change affiliations (e.g. if a Swartzentruber Amish man has cows, but he no longer has enough land to survive off of grain farming, he may turn to dairy production. If the Swartzentruber church will not allow him to use the technology and machinery he needs in order to maintain a livelihood it is likely that he will leave the church for a more liberal church.)⁸⁵ Land may become scarce because the boundaries of a settlement are not expanding, but the population is. Within the static boundaries of the Holmes County settlement the districts continue to multiply, and so the boundaries of the districts begin to overlap. This overlapping of districts may promote an overlapping of communication lines as well. The communication between Amish of different districts would be easier if the members lived in the same area, so movements may spread faster. The static land availability may be an enzyme for Amish social movements; this could why there are spikes in district emergence.

Conclusion

My work is in response to the uneducated view of the Holmes County Settlement. The initial scene may look like a bunch of simple, monolithic, never-changing Amish people, but that view is wrong. Even the term Amish is complex. It denotes a religion, a people, and a culture that encompasses different flavors, sorts and

⁸⁵ Hurst and McConnell, 190-192.

varieties. The research from this paper could be used as an appendix for *An Amish Paradox* to show the diversities and complexities within the Holmes County Settlement. The extensive use of the Church Directories deepens and reinforces Hurst and McConnell's argument. The analysis of the emerging church districts illuminates and helps explain the changes within the Holmes County Settlement. The picture of emerging church districts shows that the changes are more profound and complex than mere growth in population and that the surges of district emergence align with cultural trends and changes within the settlement. Other scholars, notably Charles E. Hurst and David L. McConnell, have noted Amish growth and diversification by citing stories, affiliation changes, or technological adoptions, whereas I examined the changes in Amish population, from 1956 to 1996, by examining the emergence of new church districts through analysis of the Church Directories. The Directories are valuable because they are the creation of the Amish and they describe the Amish in Amish terms and categories.

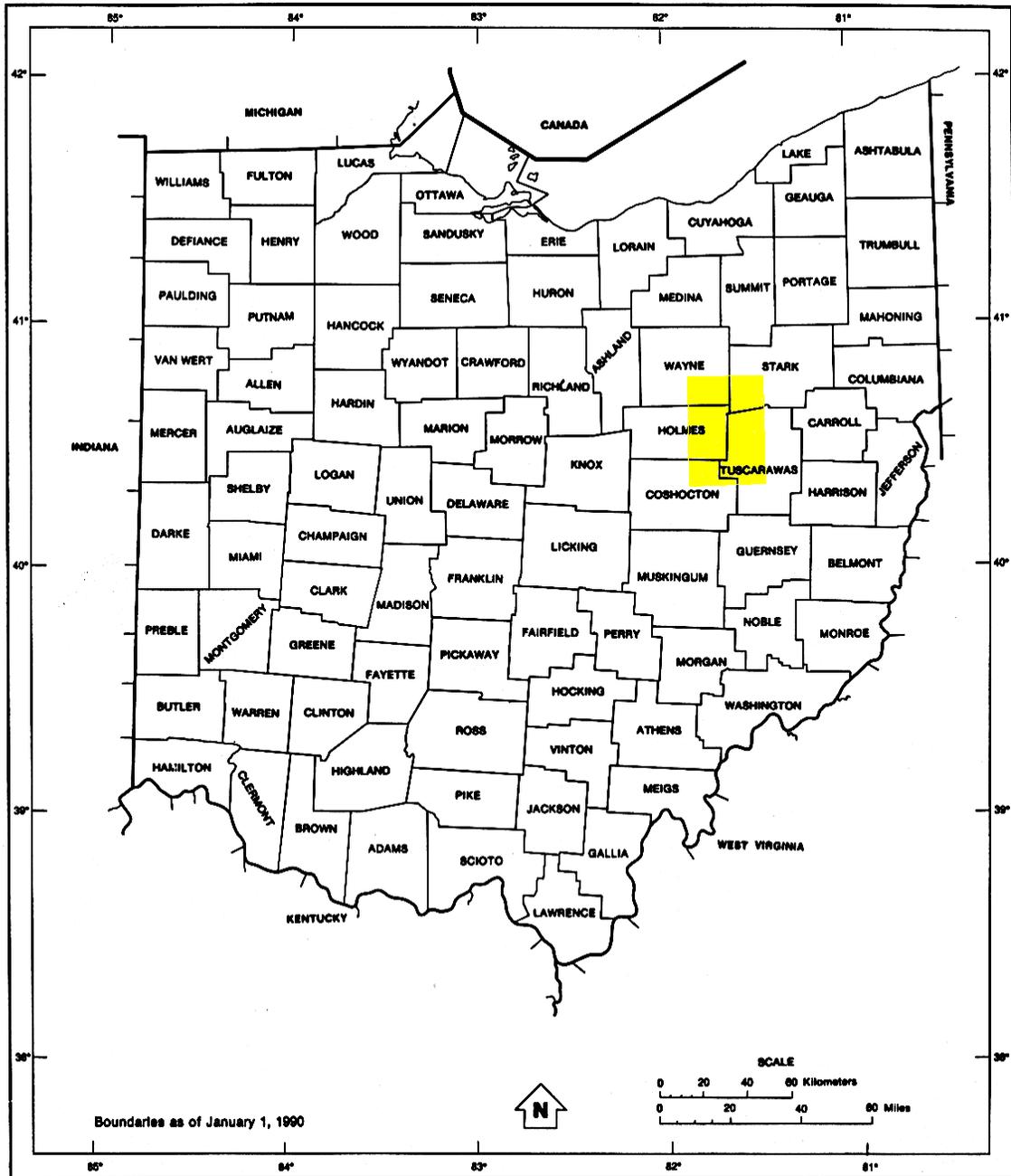
Our understanding of the Holmes County Amish will be stronger when it ties into Ohio history. The history of the Amish needs to be studied with regards to external forces. Donald Kraybill starts this process by identifying five external forces that promote change within Amish societies: economic incentives, legal factors, structural shifts, social ties, and technology changes.⁸⁶ These five are just a few of the many external forces the Amish face. There must be many more: e.g., traffic patterns, weather patterns, taxes, inflation rates, local evangelicalism, and war. The difficulty is that each external force needs to be applied to each district separately because each district responds to forces or changes independently. There are a great many responses to document and understand;

⁸⁶ Kraybill and Olshan, 38-40.

the situation is elaborately complex. I initially attempted to weave the Amish history into external histories and understand the effects of the external forces, but it is a far larger undertaking than I anticipated. I hope to continue this work in the future in order to bridge the gaps between Amish history and Ohio history.

APPENDIX II

Counties

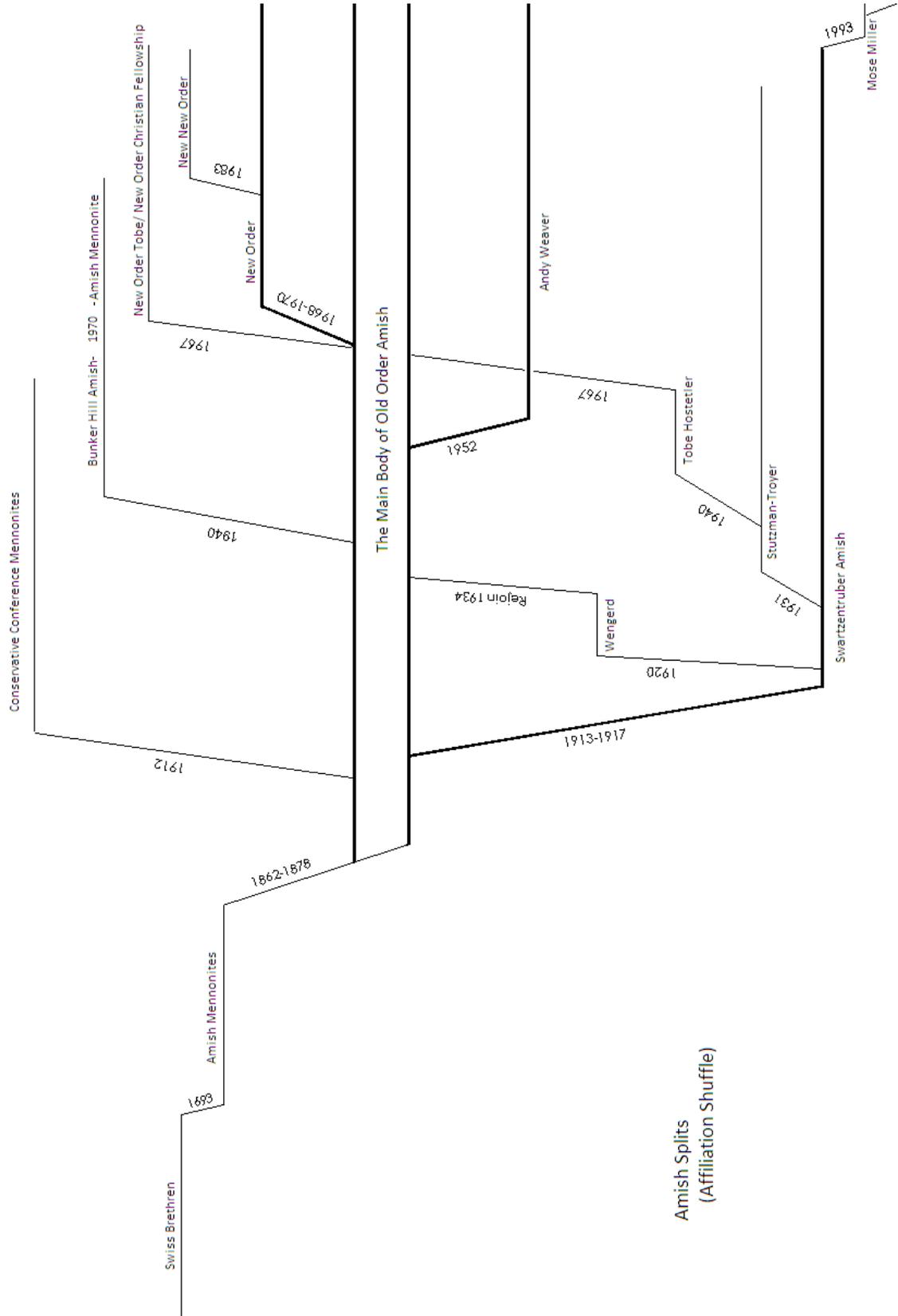


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE Economics and Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census
MAPS

OHIO G-1

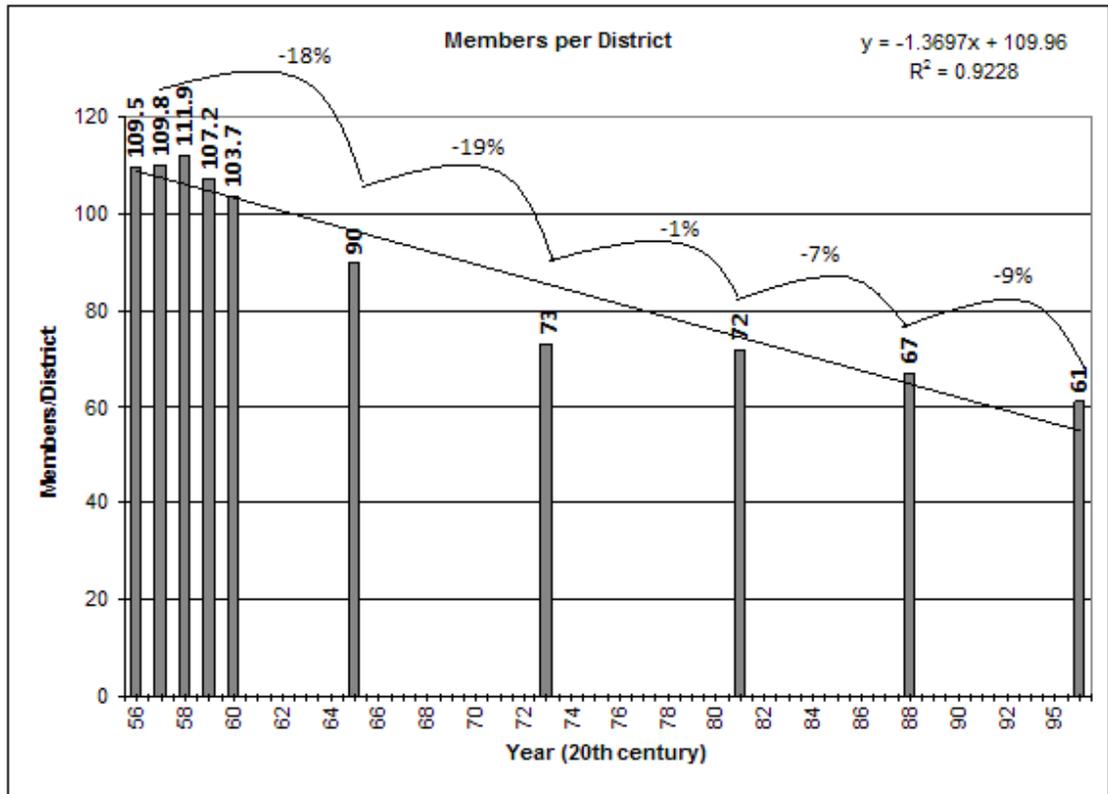
US Census Bureau, "File:Ohio Counties.gif," Wikipedia Commons.
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APPENDIX III



Amish Splits
(Affiliation Shuffle)

APPENDIX IV



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