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## Putting the Amish to Work: Mennonites and the Amish Culture Market, 1950-1975

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## PUTTING THE AMISH TO WORK: MENNONITES AND THE AMISH CULTURE MARKET, 1950-1975

In May 1951, Mennonite churchman Grant Stoltzfus profiled the rising renown of Lancaster County's sectarian groups for readers of the Lancaster-based Pennsylvania Dutchman. In his "Memorandum to Persons Interested in Disseminating Information about Mennonites and Amish and Their Way of Life," Stoltzfus described how, in recent years, the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce had been inundated with requests for information about the county's Mennonite and Amish residents. Even more significant--and, to Stoltzfus, more unsettling--was the commerce in information that transpired outside the chamber's walls. Stoltzfus characterized what he saw being sold in Lancaster's bus station as "cheap, tawdry literature on the Amish and Mennonites," and he complained that similar materials were available throughout southeastern Pennsylvania. Stoltzfus concluded his memo with a rhetorical question and a call to action: "Can we blame these businesses for handling [this literature] until we take some positive steps to provide something better?" Scholarly works have their place, wrote Stoltzfus, but the hour's most pressing need was the production of "some good popular pamphlets on Mennonite and Amish life."<sup>(n1)</sup>

Stoltzfus issued his call to action in the Pennsylvania Dutchman, the bimonthly publication of the recently established Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center.<sup>(n2)</sup> But unlike many whose words graced the pages of the Dutchman, Stoltzfus was more than an ethnically conscious descendant of Pennsylvania German immigrants. Stoltzfus was a Mennonite, a rising leader in this religious group that historically, theologically, and geographically stood adjacent to the Old Order Amish.<sup>(n3)</sup> While his call for "some good popular pamphlets" on the Mennonites and the Amish sanctioned the nascent agenda of the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center, it likewise mapped a course for Stoltzfus's Mennonite colleagues who, until this juncture, had rarely considered the Amish culture mart worth their while. With the exceptions of Joseph W. Yoder's *Rosanna of the Amish* (1940) and its sequel, *Rosanna's Boys* (1948), Mennonite

representations of the Amish prior to 1950 could hardly be characterized as marketable, let alone popular.<sup>(n4)</sup> But in the decades following Stoltzfus's memorandum--that is, in concert with the rising popular renown of the Amish in post-World War II America--Mennonites devoted increasing time and energy to the process of representing their "cousins" to a culture-consuming American public.<sup>(n5)</sup>

This article analyzes Mennonite representations of the Amish during the third quarter of the twentieth century. More specifically, it examines representations produced by Herald Press, the book publishing division of the Mennonite Publishing House in Scottdale, Pennsylvania.<sup>(n6)</sup> Compared to many denominational book concerns, Herald Press was a modest operation. Still, its publications constituted the most official and arguably the most influential means by which Mennonites represented the Amish from 1950-1975, a period of burgeoning national interest in Amish life and culture. During these years, Mennonites and non-Mennonites alike turned to Herald Press to satisfy their curiosity about the Old Order Amish, a people who were as puzzling as they were picturesque. For the price of a book or pamphlet, Herald Press's customers received not only information, but explicit assurances that the descriptions of the Amish they were buying were "authentic" and "true-to-life," assurances implying sharp distinctions from the supposedly inauthentic representations of the Amish then in circulation.

There was more, however, to Herald Press's representational mission than correcting the public record on the Old Order Amish. In addition to this remedial objective, Herald Press's entry into the Amish culture market provided Mennonite writers and editors with a means to examine their own social trajectory and, in the course of that self-examination, to define the Christian faith for the press's mostly Mennonite readership. To be sure, the desire to define the faith was not altogether new for midcentury Mennonites, but it was particularly intense at this time as Mennonites saw their distinctly sectarian ways--plain clothing, rural living, endogamous mating, and Pennsylvania Dutch speaking--fast on the wane. Sociologist Peter Marris, writing about the effects of social change, observes that such transformations often evoke contradictory impulses in those experiencing the change: the desire to return to the

past and the desire to dismiss the past altogether.(n7) This study confirms Marris's observation. On the one hand, midcentury Mennonites championed their break with tradition as spiritually helpful, an assertion that required castigating old practices as worthless, even deleterious. On the other hand, they mourned the loss of tradition and feared that, in the wake of abandoning what they once held sacred, they might now be in peril. How do these discrepant responses pertain to Herald Press's portrayals of the Old Order Amish? Whether celebrating the escape from tradition or mourning the loss of it, Mennonites found their socially conservative cousins a useful foil by which to express hopes and fears in a time of social disruption. Mennonites--and more specifically, those producing popular literature via Herald Press--thus domesticated the Amish, utilizing them to negotiate social change and, in the midst of that activity, delineate the contours of the true Christian faith.(n8)

### **I. NEIGHBORLY BUT ESTRANGED**

Mennonite representations of the Amish ensued from a long history of Amish-Mennonite relations. The content of these relations varied according to time and place, but as a matter of course we see two ecclesiastical groups that were always neighborly but nevertheless estranged. That is, although Mennonites and Amish lived in constant geographical and theological proximity, they conceived of themselves as sufficiently different to preclude ecclesiastical reunion. This ecclesiastically sensitive situation nurtured Mennonite ambitions to portray the Old Order Amish and, once the representational process was in motion, influenced the character of their portrayals.

By the time Grant Stoltzfus issued his Pennsylvania Dutchman memorandum in 1951, two and a half centuries had passed since the initial Amish-Mennonite division in 1693. This division occurred when Jacob Ammann, an elder in the Alsatian Mennonite church, concluded that Swiss Mennonites had grown lukewarm in their Christian faith and lax in their congregational discipline. In light of his conviction that spiritual vitality demanded moral probity, Ammann instituted a revitalization program that demanded stricter standards of morality and more rigorous punishments for those who violated those standards. This latter aspect of Ammann's program--his call for the "shunning" of excommunicated church members--dismayed Mennonite leaders in Switzerland, most of

whom advocated a more lenient application of the ban. When the rift between Ammann and his Swiss counterparts could not be healed, the Amish church was born.(n9)

While the 1693 division generated distinct ecclesiastical parties, the Mennonites and the Amish remained in most respects similar over the next two centuries, even to the close of the nineteenth century.(n10) As theological descendants of Swiss Anabaptists who vowed to remain "separated from the world," both Mennonites and Amish manifested a desire to create peculiar Christian communities that were distinct from the world around them.(n11) Moreover, both groups expressed their world-forsaking theologies in similar ways. Rhetorically, both the Amish and the Mennonites espoused simplicity, humility, and nonresistance. Practically, both groups lived relatively isolated rural existences, donned distinctive clothing, and avoided most political involvements, including military service. Even their body language denoted a people set apart. Historian James Juhnke notes that, if it were possible to recover Mennonite and Amish patterns of voice and gesture from the late nineteenth century, one would find them "holding their heads somewhat lower, modestly diverting their eyes, and speaking more softly" than most of their American neighbors.(n12)

Despite these similarities, the Mennonites and the Amish persisted in their churchly estrangement, a situation that reflected the essence of their inaugural conflict: disciplinary rigor versus cultural accommodation. With two hundred years of history to support their case, the Amish believed that Mennonites condoned a dangerous degree of worldliness in their willingness to adopt practices of society at large.(n13) This tendency toward worldliness, fraught as it was with eternal consequences, was itself worthy of condemnation, but Amish leaders found it even more appalling when it enticed Amish people to leave the Amish church. And from an Amish point of view, that was precisely what Mennonites did. Indeed, in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when Amish people withdrew from the Amish church, they frequently found spiritual homes among Mennonites, where the theology and the culture were familiar though somewhat less conservative.(n14) So consistent has been this pattern of ecclesiastical migration that some scholars have described a metaphorical Anabaptist

"ladder" that hoists Amish and Mennonite persons from more conservative, world-resisting groups to more liberal, world-embracing ones.(n15)

Although Mennonites rarely shinnied down the Anabaptist ladder to join Amish churches, the theological misgivings between the Old Order Amish and their Mennonite cousins flowed both ways. Whereas the Amish critique of the Mennonites focused on "worldliness," Mennonites condemned the Amish for sanctifying religious traditions that, in their view, had no essential connection to the Christian life. Daniel Kauffman epitomized this Mennonite perspective in a late nineteenth-century Herald of Truth editorial, alleging that the Amish clung to "old customs" (for example, proscribing buttons) instead of "Gospel principles." The problem with sanctifying these customs went beyond formalizing the wrong things, Kauffman said, for it paved the road to spiritual devastation. As Amish people came to realize their religious traditions had no scriptural basis, they would "break loose" from them and, before long, would regard all regulations as optional. That being the case, the erstwhile Amish person would soon be "delivered, body and soul, to the world."(n16)

While Kauffman's condemnation of Amish formalism reflected a long-held Mennonite viewpoint, he wrote at a time when the Mennonites and the Old Order Amish were embarking upon radically different social trajectories.(n17) Even as the Old Order Amish dug in their antimodern heels, late-nineteenth-century Mennonites sanctioned Sunday schools, revivalism, and missions, practices that signaled the Mennonites' shift toward America's Protestant mainstream. Even more indicative of late-nineteenth-century Mennonite acculturation vis-a-vis the Amish was the diminishing use of German in Mennonite churches and homes.(n18) The cultural divergence between the Mennonites and their Old Order Amish neighbors gaped even wider in the years 1900 to 1950, as Mennonites bought automobiles, embraced electricity, and placed telephones in their homes. Mennonite assimilation assumed nontechnological forms as well. With respect to selecting clergy, twentieth-century Mennonites began to replace casting lots with more rational selection processes, a trend accompanied by a rising emphasis on clerical training. And in concert with another societal trend, Mennonites increasingly

exchanged their farm-based existences for the activities and occupations of America's middle class.(n19)

These social changes did not mean that twentieth-century Mennonites renounced the Anabaptist ideal of separation from the world. Like their Old Order Amish neighbors, twentieth-century Mennonites continued to view themselves as conscientious heirs of the dualistic, world-resisting Anabaptist tradition.(n20) Yet by 1950 it was clear, both to the Old Order Amish and to the Mennonites, that their respective notions of what it meant to be world-resisting Anabaptists differed drastically, and increasingly so. Returning to the metaphor of estranged neighbors, the decades between 1875 and 1950 generated a social bifurcation of vast proportions. Although they continued to inhabit many of the same neighborhoods, the Mennonites and the Amish in 1950 occupied sociological territories that, in many respects, were worlds apart.(n21)

## **II. SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT**

Despite the sociological distance separating the Mennonites and Amish in 1950, the terms "Amish" and "Mennonites" were often synonymous to outsiders. This confusion rankled some Mennonites, provoking in them a desire to clarify the distinctions between themselves and their Amish cousins. More than that, Mennonites wished to offer a more nuanced interpretation of Amish life than those they often saw in circulation. Indeed, as midcentury Mennonites assessed the Amish-theme literature that filled newspaper stands and tourist venues, they saw portrayals of the Amish that were sometimes degrading, sometimes romantic, and rarely as accurate as they could be. As the more assimilated and public relations-minded cousins of the Old Order Amish, Mennonites concluded that they occupied an auspicious position to interpret their Amish cousins to the larger world.

As offensive as it might have been to Amish and Mennonite people, their conflation by outsiders is easily understood. In addition to their geographical proximity, both Mennonites and Amish in 1950 attired themselves in distinctive clothing that included caped dresses and head coverings for the women and dark, unadorned clothing for the men. Although Mennonites at this time were fast abandoning these cultural markers, many Mennonites in 1950 attired themselves in ways that, to the

uninitiated, looked Amish.(n22) A second factor that contributed to the public's conflation of the Amish and the Mennonites was the messiness of ecclesiastical reality. To the befuddlement of many, the Old Order Mennonites behaved more like the Old Order Amish than they did like Mennonites who comprised the Mennonite Church; and the Beachy Amish acted more like Mennonites of the Mennonite Church than they did like the Old Order Amish. Naturally, this complex and sometimes convoluted church nomenclature made it hard for outsiders to keep the distinctions straight.(n23) Still another factor contributing to the confusion of the Amish and the Mennonites was the widespread use of the word "plain" to distinguish the Amish and Mennonites from the "fancy" Pennsylvania Dutch religious groups, such as Lutherans and German Reformed. Indeed, many who marketed Pennsylvania Dutch culture at midcentury employed this dualistic terminology to guide consumers through the jumble of Pennsylvania Dutch religious groups, an act that further obscured the distinctions between Amish and Mennonite groups.(n24)

While some Mennonites at midcentury welcomed the label "plain," many had grown tired of being mistaken for their increasingly exotic cousins. In an editorial for *Gospel Herald*, the official organ of the Mennonite Church, Paul Erb observed that Mennonites resented being identified with the Amish, "who by their picturesque appearance and way of life attract so much attention." Erb did not detail the reasons for that resentment, but his editorial signaled deep-seated tensions between the Mennonites and their plainer counterparts, tensions he sought to allay. "[Mennonites] have a special call to apply our doctrine of love to our Amish brethren," urged Erb. "We have so much in common that we should learn to be respectful and appreciative of each other in our differences." But along with encouraging "warm personal relations" with the Amish, Erb maintained that midcentury Mennonites were more than justified in trying to correct the public's identification of Mennonites with the Amish. Particularly because the Amish do not write very much, "the Mennonites should help to interpret them to our society."(n25)

The existence of lampooning literature provided further impetus to transform this idea into action. Indeed, Grant Stoltzfus was not the only midcentury Mennonite who



found popular literature on the Amish depressing to behold. Six years before Stoltzfus's call for improved literature on the Amish, Elizabeth Horsch Bender cited and censured a novel about the Amish that, in her words, "aroused considerable interest" among Mennonites and non-Mennonites alike.<sup>(n26)</sup> It is difficult to know the extent to which Ruth Dobson's *Straw in the Wind* (1937) was actually read, but it is not difficult to see how the book, set in a northern Indiana Amish settlement, might have offended those who felt a certain kinship with the Amish.<sup>(n27)</sup> *Straw in the Wind* spun a tale about a money-grubbing Amish bishop who tyrannizes nearly everyone he knows. Among other things, Moses Bontrager curses a neighboring farmer who refuses to sell him land, excommunicates his daughter for listening to dance music, and accuses his long-suffering wife of laziness when she takes to bed with a fatal illness. So overdrawn is the bishop's character that, at first glance, it is hard to take seriously Bender's concern that some might accept the story as typical of the Amish. But Bender offered evidence to support that claim, citing a *New York Times* review that complimented the author for demonstrating an impressive knowledge "of this strange, rural cranny of American life."<sup>(n28)</sup> Again, it is hard to know the extent of the novel's influence, but *Straw in the Wind* clearly shaped some Americans' impressions of the Old Order Amish.

More Americans, however, were formulating their views of the Amish through a different medium, the garish folklore booklets of Ammon Monroe Aurand Jr. Most of Aurand's booklets addressed aspects of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture broadly conceived and, correspondingly, drew denunciations from the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center. But one Aurand publication, *Little Known Facts about the Amish and the Mennonites*, focused on the plainer segment of Pennsylvania Dutch culture, thereby drawing responses from Mennonite critics.<sup>(n29)</sup> Grant Stoltzfus's condemnation of "tawdry literature" in Lancaster's bus station came in response to Aurand's pamphlets. So too did the work of John Hostetler, a Mennonite sociologist who, throughout the 1950s, worked at the Mennonite Publishing House in a variety of editorial capacities. Never one to mince words, Hostetler branded Aurand's portrayals of the Amish as "foul, filthy and obscene," presumably because of salacious descriptions of Amish bundling, a courtship practice in which lovers laid in bed together fully clothed--or, depending on

the story at hand, not so fully clothed.(n30) In the late 1940s, in a short-lived attempt to squelch Aurand's portrayals, Hostetler launched a crusade to block their distribution. But guessing that salesmanship might serve his purposes better than censorship, Hostetler switched strategies and, in 1952, published *Amish Life* through Herald Press. Forty-five years and nearly 800,000 copies later, *Amish Life* continued to be Herald Press's all-time best-seller.(n31)

Whether Hostetler would have produced *Amish Life* in the absence of Aurand's literature is not certain, but it is likely. In an article he wrote shortly after Stoltzfus's call for better literature on the Amish, Hostetler complained not only about Aurand's pamphlets but also about articles that "romanticize[d] by-gone days" and crowned the Amish with "a sort of `divine' halo."(n32) Hostetler's double-edged disgruntlement with both Aurand's caricatures and idealized portraits drove him into the business of popular representations. More significantly, it signified the tension that plagued midcentury Mennonites as they sought to represent the Amish to a culture-consuming American public. For as much as Hostetler hoped for positive portrayals of the Amish, he also wanted accurate ones, twin concerns he shared with most of his Mennonite colleagues. As we shall see, however, balancing these concerns proved a difficult and conflict-laden task for midcentury Mennonites. Predictably enough, even these who stood closest to the Amish could not agree on suitable representations of them.

### **III. THE AMISH AS PROPHETIC REMNANT**

John Hostetler's dissatisfaction with existing representations of the Amish eventuated in a long career as America's premier interpreter of Amish life, a reputation he secured with the publication of *Amish Society* in 1963.(n33) With a doctorate in rural sociology, Hostetler oriented much of his work to scholarly audiences. But even as he gained scholarly renown, Hostetler refused to sequester himself in the academy. From the initial stages of his career, when he sought to suppress Ammon Aurand's pamphlets on the Amish, to the late stages, when he endeavored to derail the movie *Witness*, Hostetler knew that popular portrayals of the Amish possessed great power.(n34) Therefore, rather than limiting himself to academic studies of Amish life, Hostetler cast his message in forms that the nonspecialist would consume and enjoy. These popular

presentations, including *Amish Life*, countered Aurandlike treatments of the Amish by stressing the religious underpinnings and sociological integrity of Amish life. But even as Hostetler delineated his understanding of the Amish way, he could not resist being an evangelist for it. Worried about the survival of the world in which he lived and more specifically about the future of the Mennonite subculture, Hostetler proclaimed the Amish way of life a prophetic alternative to a "hurried, worried and fearful world."(n35)

In order to understand Hostetler's work on the Amish, we must first consider his family background and religious heritage. Born into an Old Order Amish family in 1918, Hostetler climbed the Anabaptist ladder into the Mennonite Church in his late teens, having concluded that he could not make the requisite vow to uphold the discipline of the Amish church. In an autobiographical sketch published in 1992, Hostetler described this journey as profoundly troubling, fraught with physical ailments and psychological distress. But the alternative of undergoing baptism and joining the Amish church held potential for even greater pain. On the one hand, Hostetler longed for a more thoroughgoing education than his Amish community would allow. On the other, Hostetler understood the hard consequences of taking, then breaking, the Amish baptismal vow. Years earlier, he had seen his father excommunicated from an Amish community in central Pennsylvania. Even though the Hostetler family maintained its affiliation with the Amish church by migrating to Iowa, Hostetler resolved never to revisit the trauma of those earlier days. On the first day of baptismal classes for six of his Amish peers, Hostetler drove his horse and buggy to a nearby Mennonite church, which he eventually joined.(n36)

Fifteen years later Hostetler published *Amish Life*, a 32-page booklet for dilettantes of Amish culture. The booklet, which featured photographs and drawings as well as text, explained numerous aspects of Amish life, from the sect's religious roots to its contemporary courting practices. Commonly asked questions headed the book's main sections, a nod toward curious tourists and, in some cases, a strategy for responding to popular myths. After answering these significant but relatively mundane questions, Hostetler concluded his work on a normative note, asking, "What Good Are They?" In an earlier section, Hostetler cited the social reclusiveness of the Amish, but

he now informed his readers that the Amish held great public value. "Their mission to America," he wrote, "is to bring healing to a human society and to witness to a higher way of life." Echoing the message proclaimed by other American proponents of small communities, Hostetler concluded that "small brotherhoods" like those of the Amish were absolutely necessary to America's well-being, for they served as breeding grounds for virtue and public-spiritedness.(n37)

With comments like these, Hostetler sought to neutralize the influence of Ammon Aurand. In the course of doing so, however, the Amish-turned-Mennonite scholar pushed a different boundary he wished to avoid. Just prior to publishing *Amish Life*, Hostetler expressed displeasure with romanticized treatments of the Amish and, in the course of identifying the perpetrators, pointed his finger at people much like himself: "the educated sectarian, or the individual who left the sect and is only remotely attached to his kind and community."(n38) Those were the people, wrote Hostetler, who placed halos atop Amish heads. As they looked back upon the life they had left behind, nostalgia sprung from their hearts and took control of their heads. Thus, rather than presenting the Amish in responsible fashion, they made Amish society into heaven on earth, and the Amish themselves into walking angels. Hostetler never identified these so-called romanticizers, though he probably had in mind Joseph Yoder, the Amish-turned-Mennonite publisher whose idyllic *Rosanna of the Amish* appeared in 1940. For our purposes, however, the more important question is: How could Hostetler, himself an educated sectarian who forsook his Amish roots, imagine himself unfettered by the biases he abhorred?

The answer to that question lies in the optimistic milieu of midcentury social science departments. Coming of age in an era that celebrated empiricism, Hostetler believed the scientific safeguards of sociology enabled him to interpret the Amish in an unbiased way. Indeed, in the same article in which he castigated the romanticizers, Hostetler wrote that "an objective understanding" of sectarianism can be gained only by "that branch of knowledge which studies social phenomena scientifically," that is, sociology.(n39) Operating according to the canons of that discipline, Hostetler pursued what he called an "unbiased" interpretation of the Old Order Amish, an interpretation

that found its most complete expression in *Amish Society*, its most popular expression in *Amish Life*. Indeed, the shorter work impressed both Hostetler's graduate school advisor and his Mennonite publishers as an objective, even true, piece of scholarship. According to Professor William Mather's introduction, *Amish Life* provided "at a popular price the true story of this much-misunderstood people." For its part, Herald Press advertised the booklet under the heading, "The Truth about the Amish," noting that Hostetler relayed the essentials of Amish life with "considerate impartiality."<sup>(n40)</sup>

Considerate or not, we must finally recognize that Hostetler's ideological concerns, which he shared with other sociologically-minded Mennonites, shaped his rendering of Amish life. As we have noted, the forces of urbanization tugged hard at the midcentury Mennonite Church, a pull that many Mennonites found distressing. In fact, some Mennonite leaders warned that the erosion of the church's rural base threatened its very survival.<sup>(n41)</sup> J. Winfield Fretz, a chief architect of the Mennonites' rural-life movement, went even further, claiming that this drift to the city was bad not only for Mennonites but for the nation as a whole, because rural communities best fostered the values of "neighborliness, honesty [and] self-reliance." Fortunately, said Fretz, Mennonites were at last recognizing the value of rural community and were now taking steps to strengthen it. As evidence, Fretz cited two recently implemented strategies for countering the scourge of urbanization, the founding of the Mennonite Community Association in 1945 and the inauguration of the association's journal, *Mennonite Community*.<sup>(n42)</sup>

From our vantage point, Fretz's midcentury optimism with respect to Mennonite rural life appears unfounded, but in 1950 John Hostetler thought otherwise. As a Mennonite trained in rural sociology, Hostetler became a prominent advocate of Mennonite rural life.<sup>(n43)</sup> And to further that agenda, he quickly seized upon the Amish as a pedagogical model. Like other Mennonite champions of rural life, Hostetler drew inspiration from Walter Kollmorgen's 1942 study that deemed the Amish the most stable rural community in America.<sup>(n44)</sup> More than his colleagues, however, Hostetler aggressively proclaimed this view of the Amish as a model for rural stability, broadcasting it not just to Mennonites but to Americans at large. For instance, in a 1951

Pennsylvania Dutchman article, Hostetler detailed the disintegration of rural life as evidenced through declining farm population, advancing unemployment, and rising divorce rates. "Compare this to the Amish system!" Hostetler admonished his readers, and he immediately proceeded to do so. In addition to celebrating Amish family life, Hostetler reminded his readers of higher education's tendency to pilfer talent from America's rural communities and argued that, when seen in that light, Amish resistance to higher education was actually quite reasonable. Hostetler placed a similarly positive spin on the sectarians' attitudes toward wealth. Unlike some farmers who perished in their greed, "the Amishman wants no more land than he and his family can properly farm." While acknowledging the Amish were largely ignorant of economic theory, Hostetler branded their agrarian practices "sound to the core," for they "conformed to the basic principles of a sound economic system."(n45)

Not surprisingly, this laudatory view of the Amish informed Hostetler's most popular work, *Amish Life*. Although much of *Amish Life* addressed commonly asked questions about Amish culture, Hostetler determined to "look beneath the surface" of Amish culture to identify those elements that produced "stability and contentment." The factors Hostetler identified in this regard echoed the message he and others were proclaiming in their rural-life work: the Amish maintained contented communities by fostering person-to-person interdependence, a method of relating that was fast vanishing in America's bureaucratic cities. For instance, in contrast to most Americans, who depended upon the government for their financial security, the Amish relied upon their fellow church members. "If [the Amishman's] barn burns down, his neighbors help him build a new one. If he becomes ill, they do his work." To illustrate this theme of Amish interdependence, the frontispiece of *Amish Life* featured the most picturesque form of it, an Amish barn raising. Just as America's frontier farmers offered their neighbors mutual assistance, the caption proclaimed, the Amish continued to assist one another in time of need.(n46)

In all of this, Hostetler sounded much like Arthur Morgan, Baker Brownell, and others who, in the 1940s and 1950s, advocated the small community as the antidote to America's ills.(n47) By reiterating their vision of the small community, Hostetler sought

to make the Amish relevant, not only to Mennonites, but also to non-Mennonites whose knowledge about the Amish was limited. The Amish had not achieved utopia, Hostetler admitted, but their style of living bore witness to a way of life that Americans should seek to preserve. "Where better can such virtues as neighborliness, self-control, good will, and cooperation be found than in small communities?" he asked in Amish Life's concluding paragraph. Since civilizations "thrive where these qualities are found, and... break down wherever they cease to exist," the "hurried, worried, and fearful world" would be wise to "learn something from the Amish." And what was that something? It was the same idea that drove the Mennonite rural-life movement, indeed, the small community movement as a whole: that small communities produced contented, virtuous people to a greater degree than large communities. In Amish Life, then, Hostetler sought not only to correct misconceptions about the Amish, but also to make a point, domesticating the Amish to confer value to rural life in an age of rural decline.(n48)

The irony, of course, is that Hostetler and many of his Mennonite rural-life colleagues augmented the very situation they decried. By leaving their parents' farms for college educations, and by pursuing the professions of America's middle class, they contributed to the Mennonite migration from rural life as much as they stemmed it.(n49) Few epitomized this trend as clearly as Hostetler, who was born and reared in an Amish home and retired a full professor from Philadelphia's Temple University. This incongruity between preaching and practice helps to explain the reverent tones that some Mennonites employed when portraying the Amish to the public. Most midcentury Mennonites felt deeply the loss of rural community, but as much as they experienced grief and guilt, most were unwilling to forgo the white-collar world of publishing houses and universities for the grit and grime of the farm. Fortunately for them, partial compensation could be made by praising the Old Order Amish, the prophetic Anabaptist remnant that resisted modern allures and stayed home to tend the cows.

As one might expect, Hostetler's "truth" about the Amish found a warm reception among Mennonite proponents of rural life.(n50) Nonetheless, few would follow the advice he offered. By the time Hostetler delivered his midcentury message about

learning from the Amish, American Mennonites had taken long strides toward the city, and despite their nostalgic tributes to rural life, few showed much willingness to reverse that course. But alongside the allures of suburbia, there existed another reason midcentury Mennonites found it difficult to learn from the Amish. While Mennonites yearned for the stable community life of their Amish cousins, they knew this stability came at a price: a commitment to ecclesiastical tradition they were not ready to make. Indeed, some midcentury Mennonites believed the Amish commitment to tradition was so excessive that, contrary to Hostetler's view, the Amish ought to be learning from the Mennonites. Herald Press's next foray into popular Amish literature expressed this position well.

#### **IV. THE AMISH AS MISGUIDED FORMALISTS**

Ten years after the release of *Amish Life*, Herald Press produced its second popular treatment of the Old Order Amish, this time in the form of a novel. Clara Bernice Miller's book *The Crying Heart* constituted the first of four novels that Miller would publish with the Mennonite publishing concern, three of them in the 1960s, the last one in 1977. While none of Miller's novels rivaled the renown of *Amish Life*, the first two sold a combined 200,000 copies, most of them in paperback reprints through the evangelical Moody Press.<sup>(n51)</sup> Written in roughly the same historical context as John Hostetler's work, Miller's novels highlighted the problem that so occupied Hostetler: the tension between tradition and change. But in contrast to Hostetler's paean to Amish life, Miller treated Amish-style traditionalism with marked disdain. The contrast could not be sharper. In Hostetler we see a Mennonite who portrayed the Amish as the prophetic remnant of a passing good. For Miller, the Amish functioned in the opposite respect, exemplifying a spiritually perilous way of life.

Given their different perspectives on Amish life, Miller and Hostetler shared remarkably similar backgrounds. Both spent their adolescent years among the Old Order Amish in Iowa. Both knew firsthand the severity of Amish-style discipline, since both had fathers who suffered excommunication. As adolescents, both Hostetler and Miller found reading a frequently forbidden pleasure and, in the course of that activity, found the outside world alluring. Here their paths took different turns, if only for a time.



In contrast to Hostetler, whose adolescent misgivings about the Amish faith precluded his joining the church, Miller took the Amish baptismal vow as a teenager. Nevertheless, she and her husband later left the Amish church, breaking free, as she recalled, from "the bondage of the Ordnung." (n52) Once having fled the Amish fold, Miller cast about for a spiritual home, associating for a time with the Beachy Amish, then with some independent churches, before finally settling into Hostetler's ecclesial home, the Mennonite Church. (n53)

Miller's writings reveal her deeply rooted disaffection with the Old Order Amish. In her opinion, the Amish lived in darkness, blindly committed to tradition and oblivious to Christianity's essence. And what was that essence? According to Miller, true Christianity required a personal relationship with Christ, rooted in a distinct conversion experience. Predictably, most of Miller's Amish protagonists lived out the same spiritual trajectory as Miller did in her life, becoming disillusioned with Amish rules and opting for a heartfelt faith. For instance, in the autobiographical *Katie*, teenager Katie Miller joins the Amish church despite her un-Christian state. When she later becomes converted, she does so not through the influence of Amish preaching, but by reading Christian fiction penned by non-Amish writers. Sadly; Miller tells us, few of Katie's people "would have thought [her conversion] anything special." After suffering through a period of turmoil, spawned by the dissonance between her newfound faith and the demands of her church, Katie finally concludes that her experiential faith must take priority over Amish regulations. While acknowledging that religious traditions are not wrong in and of themselves, Katie deems them so when they command people's affections. "There's nothing wrong with the old," she admits at one point. "The wrong comes when you take the old culture and make it your religion." (n54)

In Miller's novels, then, the Amish religion represents the deadly formalism that Daniel Kauffman condemned in 1896, a theological wrongheadedness that, because of its rotten core, nurtures immorality. In *Katie*, Miller centers this moral deficit in the heart of Katie's bishop, the novel's chief proponent of Amish legalism. Even as Bishop Eli Hershberger admonishes his people to "love the rules of the church," Miller portrays him to be dishonest and greedy. (n55) Moreover, the church he oversees oozes with

sinful behavior, a waywardness that is particularly acute among the youth. Drunken binges, fornication, even a pregnancy involving an Amish girl who cannot pinpoint the identity of her child's father--this is standard fare among Katie's Amish teenagers. All this led some readers to complain that the Amish were being slandered, but according to Miller, formulating these vice-laden scenes for her novels did not tax her imagination. In fact, she said, her descriptions of Amish life were really quite charitable.<sup>(n56)</sup> Miller's writings thus took precisely the opposite tack as John Hostetler's work. Whereas Hostetler praised the Amish witness to a higher way of life, Miller castigated their debased spiritual estate, an estate made all the worse by their self-righteous delusions.

The idea that two Amish-turned-Mennonite writers would portray their former religion differently is hardly remarkable, but the publication of their divergent views through the same Mennonite press demands our consideration, particularly so in view of the editor who nurtured Miller's work, Paul Erb. This was the same Paul Erb who, in the Gospel Herald editorial cited above, urged his fellow Mennonites to pursue friendly relations with the Amish and, as best as they could, correct popular distortions about them. In that editorial, which appeared the same year as Miller's first novel (1962), Erb cited Joseph Yoder's *Rosanna of the Amish* and John Hostetler's *Amish Life* as models for educating the public, and he inferred that more works like that were needed. Given that goal, the willingness of Erb and his colleagues to publish Miller's assaults on the Amish demands an explanation.

The roots to this publishing paradox can be located in the doublemindedness of midcentury Mennonites. Simply put, many Mennonites wished to have it both ways. On the one hand, they wanted to defend their Amish cousins (and, by association, themselves) by highlighting their spiritual insights and sociological relevance. On the other hand, they wanted their cousins to be a little less Amish and a little more Mennonite. Indeed, when midcentury Mennonites observed and then represented the Amish, they often identified what Daniel Kauffman did in 1896, namely, that Amish formalism ran counter to true Christianity. Surprisingly, even John Hostetler contributed to this antiformalist critique. Writing in a Mennonite magazine in 1954, Hostetler detailed a spiritual awakening that, according to him, was transforming the "degenerate

spiritual life" of some Old Order Amish settlements.(n57) With phrasing that could easily have come from Clara Miller's pen, Hostetler's article "God Visits the Amish" described how evangelistic messages were providing "release from the power of sin and overbearing traditions." To be sure, this particular article constituted an exception to Hostetler's usual Amish fare, but it nonetheless demonstrates the breadth of Mennonite ambivalence toward Amish formalism and the immorality their formalism supposedly spawned. Predictably, when Herald Press published that antiformalist message via Clara Miller's novels, Mennonite reviewers responded with words of approbation.(n58)

More than revealing Mennonite reservations about the Amish, however, these critiques of Amish formalism revealed Mennonite concerns about themselves. Although Miller hoped her books would be read by Amish people and thereby bring them to faith, her books also served Mennonites by providing theological direction in the midst of sociological change. As we have seen, midcentury Mennonites were fast moving away from their more socially distinctive past, a pilgrimage that produced marked spiritual anxiety. In the 1940s and 1950s, John Hostetler and his fellow rural-life proponents offered one solution to that anxiety, seeking to reinvigorate Mennonite life by strengthening Mennonite rural communities. By the 1960s, however, that solution seemed increasingly untenable. The pressures of modernization were too strong, and Mennonites were not re-embracing their rural culture. That being the case, Miller's novels provided a second solution to the problem of social change, a theologically therapeutic one. By reminding Mennonites where they would be without such changes--namely, standing beside their Amish cousins, placing their trust in wrong things--Miller's writings assured Mennonites that, despite their anxieties, they possessed the essence of the Christian faith. In that sense, Miller's novels served the Mennonite Church as a kind of theological salve, soothing the pain that accompanied social change and preparing the way for more.

But this theological salve, we must remember, possessed a particular content, that of pietistic American evangelicalism. As midcentury Mennonites moved away from their culturally distinctive past, they wished to plant their feet somewhere, and Miller's novels argued that heartfelt, evangelical Christianity provided safe and solid

ground.(n59) Just what did it mean to be a Christian? wondered some midcentury Mennonites. If it no longer meant a conspicuous separation from the world, how should faithfulness be defined? Miller's novels epitomized a prevalent Mennonite answer to that question, suggesting that Christian faithfulness meant, above all, establishing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Moreover, this conception of Christian faithfulness assumed a moral code that paralleled the larger evangelical subculture, a perspective on godliness that helps to explain mounting Mennonite discomfort with two Amish practices, bundling and tobacco use.(n60) Of course, not every Mennonite at midcentury affirmed this particular conception of the Christian life, and most sought to maintain some degree of Anabaptist distinctiveness. Still, there is little question that, in publishing and distributing Miller's Amish novels, Herald Press disseminated a peculiarly evangelical understanding of the faith to its Mennonite constituency.

Along with serving this ideological function, Miller's novels provided Herald Press with something more mundane but no less useful: the means to market "authentic" accounts of the Amish to curious consumers, particularly those with an evangelical bent. With an eye toward this burgeoning market, Herald Press highlighted Miller's claim to be offering an inside account of Amish life. In fact, the advance material for Miller's first novel exaggerated that claim, wholly ignoring that the "Amish" author was no longer a member of the Amish church. Miller reiterated this dubious claim in a chatty foreword, attesting that "this is a story of my people, the Amish."(n61) With assertions such as these, non-Mennonite readers took for granted the veracity of Miller's novels. "Since Mrs. Miller is Amish," wrote one non-Mennonite reviewer, "I felt [The Crying Heart] to be a reliable portrayal of these people." Another remarked that, because Miller was reared in an Amish home, "her pictures and descriptions are authentic." These non-Mennonite reviewers, writing for evangelical publications, often cited the ideological contours of Miller's novels and commended the author for her conversion-centered messages. But the reviewers seemed equally pleased with the medium in which her messages came: "accurate and beguiling" accounts of Amish life.(n62)

Such praise confirmed Herald Press's sense that the Amish could serve a capital function as well as an ideological one. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as the Old

Order Amish gained in popular renown, entrepreneurs of all stripes sought to capitalize on the Amish chic. Herald Press, which functioned as a business as well as a distributor of ideas, was no different. And while Herald Press's editions of Miller's novels sold modestly at best, they provide a clear example of Mennonites capitalizing on the Amish commercially as well as ideologically, a domesticating strategy that would become more obvious in the 1970s.

#### **V. THE AMISH AS RELIGIOUS PERSECUTORS**

In 1971, a 24-year-old Bible-college graduate submitted an Amish-theme novel to Herald Press for review and possible publication. The press's editorial board responded quickly and enthusiastically, and by the summer of 1973 Dan Neidermyer's *Jonathan* appeared in Christian bookstores and Amish-related tourist venues throughout the country. As the beneficiary of Herald Press's most extensive promotional campaign ever, *Jonathan* sold well from the start, gratifying both its non-Mennonite author and his Mennonite publishers. Soon, however, visions of a best-seller gave way to red flags and red ink. Owing to complaints about the novel's portrayal of the Amish, Herald Press canceled its plans for a second run of the book and, a few months later, destroyed all first-run copies still on hand. The controversy surrounding *Jonathan* tells much about Mennonites who, by 1973, had served for more than two decades as principal mediators of the Amish image. On the one hand, it demonstrates the lengths to which Herald Press would go in the early 1970s to capitalize on their cousins, both ideologically and commercially. On the other, it demonstrates the limits of Herald Press's ability to do that, constraints imposed by the continuing neighborly sentiments Mennonites held toward their Old Order cousins.

Dan Neidermyer's *Jonathan* details the spiritual struggles of an Amish teenager, Jonathan King. Reminiscent of Clara Miller's protagonists, Jonathan questions both the foundations and the relevance of his church's traditions, challenging for instance the Amish prohibition of tractors for field use. But unlike Miller's protagonists, whose searchings always revealed evangelically attuned hearts, Jonathan demonstrates a deep skepticism toward Christianity itself. Early in the novel we find our disgruntled protagonist in an Amish church service, bored stiff as his minister drones on about

dress regulations, wishing instead to explore the more pressing issues of his day: war, hunger, and poverty. Jonathan is not quite a secular humanist, but he exhibits the tendencies of the stereotypical teenager of his day who cited the church's irrelevance and bemoaned its unwillingness to consider fresh answers to old questions. When Jonathan's father confronts his son about his ongoing spiritual defiance, Jonathan defends himself by invoking the mantra of the Me Generation: "I want to be me." (n63)

If Jonathan represents the stereotypically disillusioned American teenager, his church--irrelevant, hypocritical, and authoritarian--provides ample justification for his disenchantment. At one point, Jonathan imagines himself the preacher, fantasizing that, instead of playing on peoples' fears, he would implore them to spread their message of nonviolence throughout the world. Jonathan knows that this will never happen in his church, for his purity-obsessed people recoil from all worldly engagements. Still, despite their moral obsessiveness, Jonathan perceives immorality all around him. His Amish peers wear obedient facades, but they raise hell more frequently than they raise barns. And while the elders preach piety, they act like Pharisees, emphasizing the letter of the law but missing its spirit. When Jonathan suffers excommunication for questioning Amish traditions, an Amish minister performs the task with ravenous delight. Later, the author-narrator inserts a brief but scathing commentary on Amish discipline, likening it to the persecution suffered by their sixteenth-century Anabaptist forebears.

More so than even Clara Miller's works, Neidermyer's portrayal of Amish life was harsh, even contemptuous. Still, Neidermyer assured his Herald Press editors that his portrait mirrored reality. Neidermyer did not grow up Amish and, unlike Clara Miller, he did not leave the church disillusioned. He did, however, provide the requisite claim to authenticity. In his second letter to Herald Press, Neidermyer noted that, although he was not Amish himself, he was reared on a Lancaster County farm "surrounded by Amish farmers." Moreover, he had devoted six months to interviewing people from Lancaster County's Anabaptist churches, including numerous Old Order Amish teenagers. What he discovered, he said, was profound dissatisfaction among Amish youth, especially the boys. "I began to meet youths who had been excommunicated from their district churches," Neidermyer wrote, and on the basis of their stories,

shaped the life of Jonathan. "Much of the book is true," he assured his Herald Press editor, "although true actually of 'hundreds of individuals' rather than any one particular person."(n64)

With statements such as these, Neidermyer advanced his claim to authenticity. At the same time, he complicated this claim by admitting his real agenda. Indeed, correspondence between Neidermyer and Herald Press officials shows the author was mostly using the Amish to protest the oppressiveness of the evangelical subculture. In his first letter to Herald Press, Neidermyer suggested that his story typified the problem of "today's evangelical teen searching, questioning, and oftentimes being rebuffed by his congregation."(n65) Neidermyer believed he had reason to know. As a graduate of the Philadelphia College of the Bible and a broadcaster for Lancaster's evangelical radio station, Neidermyer had witnessed the vilification of young people who questioned the authority of their fundamentalist-evangelical churches. Therefore, in a fit of youthful hubris, he offered advice via Jonathan to evangelical church leaders who, in his mind, persecuted freethinking teenagers: practice tolerance, he said, and embrace those who question authority. Neidermyer must have realized the perils of preaching tolerance in conservative theological circles, but here is where the Amish served him most fully. By making the Amish his foil, Neidermyer inoculated himself against charges of liberalism, enervating the boundary question that often follows pleas for ecclesiastical tolerance. In Jonathan, the Amish church vilifies a teenaged boy for asking why using horses is more spiritual than using tractors, hardly a controversial issue in the churches Neidermyer hoped to affect. Jonathan thus served its author as a safe and strategic means by which to advocate ecclesiastical tolerance.

Neidermyer's ideological intentions stand clear, but the more interesting question is: Why would Herald Press sanction a novel that so denigrated church authority? And why would a Mennonite publisher produce a work that overtly linked ecclesiastical abuses to a group so readily confused with Mennonites? To be sure, the works of Clara Miller criticized the Amish, but Jonathan did not offer the pious corrective that Miller's novels offered. Moreover, Jonathan exhibited far greater contempt for Amish life and Amish leaders, hardly a surprise considering the sources Neidermyer used to develop

his ideas. Indeed, one would think that Neidermyer's reliance upon disenchanted Amish teenagers might have given his Mennonite publishers reason for pause. To the contrary, Herald Press's editors seemed satisfied with Neidermyer's assurance that some "former Amish" had reviewed his manuscript and found it "favorable."(n66)

While Herald Press's acceptance of Jonathan stemmed from a confluence of factors, the primary one was the book's perceived market potential. As an entree into the booming Amish culture industry, Jonathan generated high hopes at Herald Press. Not only did the publishing house promise Neidermyer its largest promotional campaign ever, it printed an unusually large number of first-run books and, in an effort to capitalize on the tourist market, advanced Jonathan's release date to early summer.(n67) The strategies seemed to work, at least at first. Two days before the novel's release, Neidermyer's editor reported to him that orders had begun to flow in. Moreover, the Los Angeles-based producers of ABC's *Movie of the Week* had contacted the publishing house about securing rights to Jonathan, as had a paperback company in New York City. In light of these successes, Neidermyer's editor encouraged him to redouble his efforts to "draw the attention of the book-buying public" to Jonathan.(n68) That this marketing preoccupation did not manifest itself in Herald Press's correspondence with Clara Miller indicates that Herald Press was rethinking and expanding its target market. By 1973, Herald Press officials had arrived at a reasonable and market-minded conclusion: mediating the Amish via popular novels possessed great potential for tapping the wallets of non-Mennonite readers.

Of course, given its commitment to publish books conducive to spiritual growth, Herald Press needed to consider theological felicity as well as economic viability when evaluating manuscripts. Herald Press's method for determining Jonathan's aptness is not clear, but the nascent sense at Herald Press that "realistic" fiction could contribute to the reader's spiritual betterment no doubt facilitated the manuscript's approval. A number of Herald Press's novels in the early 1970s offered realistic views of Mennonite life, books that, according to one Herald Press official, "portray man as he really is."(n69) While Jonathan proved the first and last Herald Press novel in the 1970s to critique the Amish in this way, the contention by Herald Press officials that Jonathan



was "true-to-life" indicates how these Mennonite mediators perceived the actual deficiencies of Amish life. Indeed, one Herald Press editor confided to Neidermyer that he knew a number of Amish teenagers who experienced "exactly the same problems as Jonathan."(n70) While there is no indication this editor understood Jonathan in the sense that Neidermyer desired--as an allegory of the intolerant evangelical subculture--he affirmed Neidermyer's use of the Amish to illustrate the consequences of religious formalism. More than a mere attempt to capitalize on the Amish, Jonathan thus represented a Mennonite effort to portray "realistically" the shortcomings they beheld in their Amish cousins.

But even as the perceived market potential of Jonathan enticed Herald Press to publish Neidermyer's novel, market considerations contributed to Jonathan's demise. In the months following the book's June 1973 release, Herald Press received numerous letters of complaint, most of them from Mennonites decrying the novel's portrayal of Amish life, especially its vilification of Amish leaders. "The author does not disguise his opinion that the Amish are odd, ignorant, narrow-minded and dirty," complained one reader. "Jonathan has stripped the Amish naked," wrote another, who then asked, "Who are the Mennonites--i.e., Herald Press--to so uncloth our Anabaptist brothers?"(n71) This reference to the Mennonites' responsibility to portray the Amish charitably recurred throughout the Jonathan controversy, confounding publishing house officials who, from all indications, believed that Neidermyer wrote "authentically and sensitively" about the Amish.(n72) As complaints mounted, however, Herald Press's claims to authorial sensitivity gave way to acknowledgments that readers were having "mixed reactions" to the book, then finally to admissions that Jonathan did not "measure up" to Herald Press standards.(n73) In May 1974, eleven months after Jonathan's cheerful release, Herald Press canceled plans for a second printing. Four months later, it washed its hands of the entire episode, shredding every copy of the book left in stock. The book was never reprinted.(n74)

While the Jonathan fiasco curbed Herald Press's growing ambitions to produce Amish-theme fiction, a concurrent controversy involving a second manuscript indicates how high the publisher's hopes had risen. In May of 1973, just one month prior to

Jonathan's release, a young Mennonite writer submitted his *Amish Soldier* manuscript to Herald Press for review and publication. Like Dan Neidermyer before him, Kenneth Reed claimed to present a realistic view of Amish life, replete with dogmatic leaders and disenchanting teenagers. In the heady atmosphere spawned by Jonathan's early success, Herald Press rushed the manuscript toward publication. Unlike Jonathan, however, *Amish Soldier* never made it to press. When John Hostetler learned of the manuscript's content, he marshaled an antipublication campaign involving Mennonite and Amish leaders. Drawing on contacts he had in the Old Order Amish community, Hostetler even convinced some Amish leaders to threaten a boycott of Herald Press. Herald Press's response to *Amish Soldier*'s detractors mirrored its response to Jonathan's critics, beginning with staunch defenses of the manuscript before finally admitting that, as a portrait of Amish life, it possessed numerous problems. In an effort to defuse the controversy and avert financial loss, Herald Press encouraged the author to rewrite his novel with Mennonite characters instead of Amish ones. The converted novel, *Mennonite Soldier*, reached bookstores in late 1974.<sup>(n75)</sup>

*Jonathan and Amish Soldier* demonstrate the lengths to which Mennonites in the early 1970s would go to capitalize on the Old Order Amish. Influenced by a combination of economic hopes, ideological biases, and artistic ideals, the Herald Press officials who authorized the publication of *Jonathan and Amish Soldier* disregarded Paul Erb's ten-year-old admonition to create a favorable public image of the Amish, sanctioning instead two disparaging--though some would argue "realistic"--portraits of the Amish.<sup>(n76)</sup> But even as these episodes show the lengths to which Herald Press would go to capitalize on the Amish, they also reveal the constituency-based limits imposed on that length. As much as some Mennonites felt comfortable publishing what they believed were realistic portraits, many Mennonites believed that charity, not realism, ought to be the primary consideration when Herald Press represented their Amish cousins. Herald Press officials, closely attuned to the economic and political implications of their products, responded quickly when these err-on-the-side-of-charity Mennonites condemned publications that reflected poorly on the Amish. Therefore, despite possessing strong desires to capitalize on America's fascination with the Old Order

Amish, Herald Press found its hands tied with respect to realistic fiction about their eccentric cousins. In the future, Herald Press would need to look in different directions to capitalize on these people Mennonites claimed to know so well.

## **VI. MENNONITE MEDIATORS AND THE LIMITS OF AUTHENTICITY**

With respect to representing the Old Order Amish, Mennonites occupied an auspicious position in the third quarter of the twentieth century. As we have seen, assimilation into America's social mainstream propelled mid-century Mennonites into a mediating position between the Old Order Amish and American consumers. At the same time, staunch resistance to modernity made the Amish ever more conspicuous on the American landscape, presenting a situation in which curious Americans desired more and more information about these exotic people. Given this situation, a host of entrepreneurs emerged in the 1940s and 1950s to capitalize on the Amish mystique, and while different entrepreneurs represented the Amish in different ways, they frequently did so in ways that Mennonites found troubling, even offensive. This melange of factors--Mennonite assimilation, Amish exoticism, entrepreneurial ambition, and perceptions of cultural insensitivity--led Mennonites to conclude that distancing themselves from the culture market was no longer in their best interests. Therefore, instead of simply criticizing the products on the market, Mennonites created their own portraits of the Amish, a project sanctioned by officials who oversaw their denominational publishing concern.

Presenting authentic pictures of the Amish proved easier said than done, however. The problem stemmed from Herald Press's diverse, and sometimes divergent, commitments. On the one hand, Herald Press espoused a commitment to truthfulness, a commitment that prohibited it from portraying the Amish as ideal Christians. The Mennonites' long and conflict-ridden relationship with the Amish confirmed this notion that the Amish were not the halo-topped sectarians that some Americans imagined, and it is therefore not surprising that Herald Press produced less-than-flattering portraits like Clara Miller's Katie and Dan Neidermyer's Jonathan. Had truthfulness constituted the only criterion for evaluating and publishing manuscripts, Herald Press's task of representing the Amish would have been difficult enough, but further complicating the

representational process was Herald Press's commitment to charity, the belief that Mennonites should produce publications that created favorable public impressions of the Amish. Although some Herald Press officials never committed themselves to that restriction, complaints from Mennonite book buyers--Herald Press's primary market base--reminded these officials that many Mennonites privileged charity over truthfulness. Herald Press's sensitivity to these complaints betrayed a third commitment that constrained the Mennonite publishers, a commitment to financial solvency. For even as it functioned to disseminate particular truths, Herald Press possessed concerns about the bottom line. As such, Herald Press offended its consumer base at its own peril.

Herald Press's difficulty in holding these commitments together manifested itself most clearly in the realm of realistic fiction. Novels like *Jonathan and Amish Soldier* sought to portray problems that Amish youth might face in real-life situations, for instance, disenchantment with certain traditions, the temptation to engage in sexual activity, and the seeming hypocrisy of those who exacted discipline. *Jonathan and Amish Soldier* likewise sought to represent real-life deficiencies in the Amish ecclesiastical system, namely, the lack of rational answers for those who questioned tradition and the difficulty of meting out church discipline equitably. Most students of Amish culture would have agreed that these dilemmas were not fabricated by their authors and, at least for a time, Herald Press officials believed that the exploration of these issues corresponded to the press's objective of producing truthful publications. Before long, however, these same officials decided differently. This change of heart resulted not so much from a recognition of inaccuracies in the novels, but rather from the realization that much of Herald Press's market would not tolerate these displays of uncharitableness. In the cases of *Jonathan and Amish Soldier*, then, a broad-based Mennonite commitment to charity combined with Herald Press's economic concerns to determine the final outcome: the withdrawal of these Amish-theme novels from the market.

In the future, Herald Press would opt for safer means by which to make the Amish useful, most notably by publishing happy-ending Amish-theme romances aimed

at an adolescent and senior female readership.(n77) In that sense, at least, the ideological usefulness of the Amish to Herald Press finally took a backseat to their economic usefulness, a significant turn of events for a publisher that, at one point in its history, vowed to disseminate "the truth about the Amish" to the book-buying public. To be sure, consumers could still procure information about the Amish from Herald Press, but those who desired a candidly critical examination of Amish life would now need to look elsewhere. That is not to say that Mennonites as a whole had become indiscriminately approving of Amish life. In fact, twenty-five years after Jonathan's brief release, many Mennonites continued to define themselves vis-a-vis their ecclesiastical cousins, a process in which the Old Order Amish sometimes functioned as a wonderfully negative foil.(n78) But even as Mennonite lay people continued to criticize their Amish cousins, the economics of knowledge distribution restricted Herald Press's ability to circulate unflattering portraits--a commodity that mediators with no family ties, and sometimes little conscience, were not so willing to forswear.(n79)

(n1.) Grant M. Stoltzfus, "Memorandum to Persons Interested in Disseminating Information about the Mennonites and Amish and Their Way of Life," Pennsylvania Dutchman, 1 May 1951, 7.

(n2.) The brainchild of Franklin and Marshall folklore professor Alfred L. Shoemaker, the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center was founded in 1949 with the intention of certifying and proclaiming the greatness of Pennsylvania Dutch culture. In 1959, the center's name was changed to the Pennsylvania Folklife Society.

(n3.) Stoltzfus was a member of the Old Mennonites (also called the Mennonite Church), at that time the largest Mennonite body in North America and, like the Old Order Amish, comprised mostly of persons of south German or Swiss origin. Unless otherwise noted, the term "Mennonites" in this article refers to persons in this particular Mennonite body which, among American Mennonite groups, took the lead in mediating the Amish to other Americans.

(n4.) Joseph W. Yoder, *Rosanna of the Amish* (Huntington, Pa.: Yoder Publishing, 1940); and idem, *Rosanna's Boys* (Huntington, Pa.: Yoder Publishing, 1948). For a discussion of Yoder's works, see Julia M. Kasdorf, "Fixing Tradition: The Cultural

Work of Joseph W. Yoder and His Relationship with the Amish Community of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1997).

(n5.) Mennonites have often invoked the relational motif of "cousins" to justify their representations of the Amish, a designation based upon shared ethnic and theological ancestry. Of course, some Mennonites can claim Amish cousins in a strictly biological sense, sharing common grandparents or great-grandparents.

(n6.) To be sure, midcentury Mennonites mediated the Old Order Amish through channels other than their publishing house, channels ranging from word of mouth and privately owned tourist enterprises to the church-sponsored Mennonite Information Center near Lancaster, which was founded in 1958.

(n7.) Peter Marris, *Loss and Change* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 151.

(n8.) By domesticating the Amish via popular literature, Mennonites participated in the great American religious tradition that R. Laurence Moore and others have called "commodification." Long resistant to fiction as a dishonest and frivolous form of entertainment, Mennonites changed course at midcentury, conceding that popular literature, including fiction, could carry important messages to those who bought and read it. Given the high level of public interest in the Old Order Amish, it is hardly surprising that Herald Press soon hitched its religious concerns to the Amish buggy. See R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

(n9.) See John D. Roth, ed., *Letters of the Amish Division: A Sourcebook* (Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 1993); and Steven M. Nolt, *A History of the Amish* (Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 1992), 23-41.

(n10.) The Amish developed two distinct factions during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, a conservative "Old Order Amish" faction and a more progressive "Amish Mennonite" faction. In this article, when used in a pre-1870 context, the term "Amish" refers to the group prior to its conservative-progressive bifurcation, whereas in a post-1870 context, the term "Amish" refers to the people generally known as the Old Order Amish. My contention that the Mennonites and the Amish were similar at the close of the nineteenth century refers to the Old Order Amish although, in retrospect, it

is clear the Mennonites and the Old Order Amish had embarked upon very different trajectories prior to this time. See Paton Yoder, *Tradition and Transition: Amish Mennonites and Old Order Amish, 1800-1900* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1991), 207--260.

(n11.) This quotation appeared in a cover letter to the 1527 Schleithem Confession, the first written confession of the Anabaptist movement. See *The Schleithem Confession*, trans. and ed. John Howard Yoder (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1977), 8.

(n12.) James C. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1989), 36. Some of these traits would have been prevalent among other Pennsylvania German religious groups, not just the Amish and the Mennonites. For a discussion of shared Pennsylvania German cultural traits, see Steven M. Nolt, "Finding a Context for Mennonite History: Pennsylvania German Ethnicity and (Old) Mennonite Experience," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 21 (October 1998): 2-14.

(n13.) Mennonite practices that the Amish considered worldly varied according to time and place. In the eighteenth century, when Mennonites fastened their clothing with buttons, the Amish, who fastened their clothing with hooks and eyes, targeted that Mennonite practice as worldly. In the nineteenth century, the Amish perceived Mennonite worldliness in the Mennonites' construction of meetinghouses for worship, their growing acceptance of Sunday schools and their embrace of missionary activities. In the twentieth century, Mennonite worldliness showed itself in the ready acceptance of the automobile, electricity, and other modern technologies.

(n14.) Yoder, *Tradition and Transition*, 109. Mennonite editor Paul Erb noted the persistence of this pattern in the early 1960s, writing, "there is a certain amount of tension between the Amish and Mennonites because of the movement of members from the Amish to the Mennonites." Paul Erb, "Mennonites and Amish," *Gospel Herald*, 5 June 1962, 507.

(n15.) See, for instance, Leo Driedger, "The Anabaptist Identification Ladder: Plain-Urbane Continuity in Diversity," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 51 (1977): 278-91. As Donald Kraybill points out, the Amish would not oppose this seemingly ethnocentric

metaphor. Given the Amish emphasis on Christian humility, they often describe those who leave the Amish church for a more liberal church as having "gone high." For a discussion of the ladder metaphor, see Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan, eds., *The Amish Struggle with Modernity* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1994), 266-67.

(n16.) Daniel Kauffman, "Our Iowa Field," *Herald of Truth*, 15 July 1896, 209. Kauffman later tried to reverse fields, writing that he was unfairly "charged with saying that the `old order' branch of the Amish church was `plunging headlong into worldliness.'" Daniel Kauffman, "Our Iowa Field," *Herald of Truth*, 15 September 1896, 275.

(n17.) My statement about the Mennonites and the Old Order Amish traveling different trajectories at the turn of the century would not apply to certain other groups that went by the name Mennonite at that time, for example, the various Old Order Mennonite groups. For parallels between the various Old Order groups, see Beulah Stauffer Hostetler, "The Formation of the Old Orders," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 65 (1992): 5-25.

(n18.) See Theron F. Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation: Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1988), 295-321.

(n19.) Mennonites continued to be more rurally oriented than Americans as a whole, though much less so than the Old Order Amish. As late as 1972, 38 percent of Mennonites still lived on farms of three acres or more. J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1975), 284.

(n20.) For a mid-twentieth-century Mennonite statement on nonconformity, see Harold S. Bender, "Mennonite Church," in *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1957), 3: 615.

(n21.) Amish groups varied in their degrees of conservatism, as did Mennonite conferences, so the levels of neighborliness and estrangement often varied according to geography. For a more geographically focused picture, see Donald B. Kraybill, "At the Crossroads of Modernity: Amish, Mennonites, and Brethren in Lancaster County in



1880," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 10 (January 1987): 2-12; and Donald B. Kraybill and Donald R. Fitzkee, "Amish, Mennonites, and Brethren in the Modern Era," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 10 (April 1987): 2-11.

(n22.) For dress distinctions between various Amish and Mennonite groups, see Melvin Gingerich, *Mennonite Attire through Four Centuries* (Breinigsville, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1970).

(n23.) For example, the Old Order Mennonites drove horses and buggies at midcentury (as did the Old Order Amish), but the Beachy Amish drove cars (as did Mennonites in the Mennonite Church). For a concise history of the Beachy Amish, who separated from the Old Order Amish in the late 1920s, see Nolt, *History of the Amish*, 233--36.

(n24.) Writers sometimes expressed this dualism in different words, for instance, "plain and worldly," "plain and gay," and "sect and church." See, for instance, Don Yoder, "Plain Dutch and Gay Dutch: Two Worlds in the Dutch Country," *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, Summer 1956, 34-55.

(n25.) Paul Erb, "Mennonites and Amish," *Gospel Herald*, 5 July 1962, 507.

(n26.) Elizabeth Horsch Bender, "Three Amish Novels," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 19 (1945): 275. The other two novels Bender considered were Helen Reimensnyder Martin's *Sabina, A Story of the Amish*, published in 1905, and Joseph Yoder's *Rosanna of the Amish*, published in 1940.

(n27.) Ruth Lininger Dobson, *Straw in the Wind* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1937). Dobson wrote the novel while a student at the University of Michigan, where it won the Hopwood Contest for Fiction in 1936.

(n28.) Stanley Young, "Indiana Patriarch," *New York Times Book Review*, 21 February 1937, 6. Another reviewer, reflecting a similar progressive bias, wrote that *Straw in the Wind* deftly portrayed Indiana's Amish community, "where superstition and bigotry still survive." *M. S. U.*, review of *Straw in the Wind*, by Ruth L. Dobson, *Saturday Review of Literature*, 1 May 1937, 18.

(n29.) Ammon Monroe Aurand Jr., *Little Known Facts about the Amish and the Mennonites: A Study of Pennsylvania's "Plain People"* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Aurand, 1938).

(n30.) John A. Hostetler to Paul Erb, 28 July 1953, in book editor's files, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania [hereafter, MPH]. The nature of bundling among the Old Order Amish, past and present, has been difficult to determine, in part because of variations between settlements. Throughout the twentieth century, some Amish communities have condemned bundling and rigorously guarded against it. Others have defended the practice as a time-honored and worthy tradition. Since the Amish communities that condone bundling tend to be more secluded, students of Amish culture have failed to establish the extent and the effects of the practice, for instance, the degree of chastity maintained by those who bundle. For the most careful midcentury discussion of this practice, see Elmer Lewis Smith, *The Amish Today: An Analysis of Their Beliefs, Behavior and Contemporary Problems* (Allentown, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1961), 88-92.

(n31.) For details on Hostetler's response to Aurand's publications, see John A. Hostetler, "An Amish Beginning," *American Scholar* 61 (1992): 558. In 1983, Hostetler and Herald Press released a different booklet titled *Amish Life*, and the original was retitled *The Amish*. The 800,000 sales figure pertains to the original *Amish Life* and its successor, *The Amish*.

(n32.) John A. Hostetler, "Toward a New Interpretation of Sectarian Life in America," *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, 15 June 1951, 1.

(n33.) John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

(n34.) For Hostetler's activities with respect to *Witness*, see **David L. Zercher**, "Homespun American Saints: The Discovery and Domestication of the Old Order Amish" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997), 238--49.

(n35.) Hostetler, *Amish Life*, 31; also, John A. Hostetler, "The Amish in American Culture," *American Heritage* 3 (Summer 1952): 8.

(n36.) Hostetler, "An Amish Beginning," 554-55; and idem, *Amish Society*, 82.

(n37.) Hostetler, *Amish Life*, 30 ("What Good Are They?"), 31. Cf. Arthur E. Morgan, *The Small Community: Foundation of Democratic Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942). Morgan wrote: "For the preservation and transmission of the

fundamentals of civilization, vigorous, wholesome community life is imperative. Unless many people live and work in the intimate relationships of community life, there never can emerge a truly unified nation, or a community of mankind" (19).

(n38.) Hostetler, "Toward a New Interpretation of Sectarian Life in America," 1.

(n39.) Hostetler, "Toward a New Interpretation of Sectarian Life in America," 7.

For a general discussion of post-World War II scientific optimism, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 295-300.

(n40.) William G. Mather, introduction to *Amish Life*, v; and *Amish Life* advertisement in *Pennsylvania Dutchman*, December 1952, 6.

(n41.) Midcentury Mennonite writing on rural life is voluminous. For representative pieces, see J. Winfield Fretz, "Mennonites and Their Economic Problems," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 14 (1940): 195-213; Guy Franklin Hershberger, "Maintaining the Mennonite Rural Community," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 14 (1940): 214-23; and Melvin Gingerich, "Rural Life Problems and the Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 16 (1942): 167-73. See also Theron F. Schlabach, "To Focus a Mennonite Vision," in *Kingdom, Cross and Community*, ed. John Richard Burkholder and Calvin Redekop (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1976), 35-38.

(n42.) J. Winfield Fretz, "Community," in *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1955), 1: 657-58. The objectives of the Mennonite rural-life movement of the 1940s and 1950s mirrored the objectives of the earlier and more broadly based Country Life Movement that stretched back to the late nineteenth century. Because Mennonites underwent urbanization later than many Americans, their rural-life movement started comparatively late. For general accounts of rural problems, see **David B. Danbom**, *The Resisted Revolution: Urban America and the Industrialization of Agriculture, 1900-1930* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979); and William L. Bowers, *The Country Life Movement in America, 1900-1920* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1974).

(n43.) Hostetler sat on the editorial committee of *Mennonite Community* for almost three years (1950, 1952-53). When *Christian Living* superseded *Mennonite*

Community in 1954, Hostetler served as the new periodical's community life editor for five years, until 1959.

(n44.) In contrast to the long-held assumption that the Amish comprised a disappearing remnant, Kollmorgen demonstrated the opposite, and he attributed this strength to a faith that enabled the Amish to withstand the community-shattering assaults of technology and urbanization. See Walter M. Kollmorgen, *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1942).

(n45.) Hostetler, "Toward a New Interpretation of Sectarian Life in America," 1-2, 7.

(n46.) Hostetler, *Amish Life*, 10-11.

(n47.) See, for example, Morgan, *Small Community*; Baker Brownell, *Tile Human Community* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950); and Earle Hitch, *Rebuilding Rural America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950). For secondary analyses, see Philip Jeffrey Nelson, "An Elusive Balance: The Small Community in Mass Society, 1940-1960" (Ph.D. diss., Iowa State University, 1996); and **David** E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 215-4;7.

(n48.) Hostetler, *Amish Life*, 31.

(n49.) According to Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1996), of the Mennonite leaders who met in 1945 to form the Mennonite Community Association, none farmed (195).

(n50.) Grant Stoltzfus, the editor of *Mennonite Community*, who in 1951 called for improved literature on the Mennonites and the Amish, reviewed *Amish Life* shortly after its release. He noted that "many will rejoice that at last something like this has appeared," something that provides the public with "the truth" about the Amish. Grant M. Stoltzfus, review of *Amish Life*, by John A. Hostetler, *Gospel Herald*, 11 November 1952, 1118-19.

(n51.) Miller's novels were *The Crying Heart* (1962); *Katie* (1966); *The Tender Herb* (1968); and *To All Generations* (1977). According to Herald Press sales records, the four novels sold a total of 31,819 copies in Herald Press hardback editions. Chicago-based Moody Press reprinted *The Crying Heart* in 1965 and *Katie* in 1974, selling 116,404 and 62,299 copies respectively.

(n52.) Clara Bernice Miller to Ellrose Zook, 9 June 1965, in MPH book editor's files. The Ordnung is the orally based set of rules and regulations of a particular Amish community.

(n53.) For biographical information on Clara Bernice Miller, see Vesta Miller to Paul Erb, 28 March 1961; Clara Bernice Miller to "Sirs," 7 July 1961; and Ervin N. Hershberger to Paul Erb, 19 February 1962. All letters are in MPH book editor's files.

(n54.) Miller, *Katie*, 72 ("would have thought"), 269 ("nothing wrong with the old").

(n55.) Miller, *Katie*, 83.

(n56.) Clara Bernice Miller to Ellrose Zook, 9 June 1965 ("Things are heartbreaking enough within the framework of the Amish without exaggeration"); Clara Bernice Miller to Ellrose Zook, 11 August 1965 ("Far be it from me to slander the Amish .... [T]he manuscript shows a true picture of the average Amishman's spiritual light"); and Clara Bernice Miller to Maynard Shetler, 10 February 1967 ("[I]f the Amish fuss too much I'll write a book about them that is much worse. And true, too."). All letters in MPH book editor's file.

(n57.) John A. Hostetler, "God Visits the Amish," *Christian Living*, March 1954, 6-7, 40-41.

(n58.) For positive Mennonite reviews of *The Crying Heart*, see J. C. Wenger, *Gospel Herald*, 21 August 1962, 747; *Gospel Evangel*, September-October 1962, 16; and Melvin Gingerich, "On My Desk," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, 1 November 1962, 4. For positive reviews of *Katie*, see Melvin Gingerich, "On My Desk," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, 19 January 1967, 4; and Elmer S. Yoder, *Missionary Bulletin*, May 1967, 8. *Missionary Bulletin* was a publication of the Conservative Mennonite Conference, a group closely affiliated with the Old Mennonites.

(n59.) To be sure, this language of heartfelt conversion was not new to midcentury Mennonites, but it assumed added significance in this time of waning cultural distinctiveness. See Toews, *Mennonites and American Society*, 214-28; and Beulah Stauffer Hostetler, *American Mennonites and Protestant Movements: A Community Paradigm* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1987), 279-87. Hostetler and Toews both cite William McLoughlin's revitalization thesis, which contends that religious awakenings occur during times of cultural disorientation. See William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

(n60.) As noted above, the prevalence of bundling among the Amish varied from place to place. Still, the survival of this close-body, sexually charged custom scandalized midcentury Mennonites, even as most American evangelicals were scandalized by dancing. Mennonites were further chagrined by Amish tobacco use, which midcentury Mennonites had largely abandoned. For a snide Mennonite commentary on tobacco usage, see the picture of a cigar-smoking Amishman, captioned "photo without comment," in *Christian Living*, September 1968, 9. On Mennonite and Amish views on tobacco, see Harold S. Bender, "Tobacco," in *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1959), 4: 732-34.

(n61.) Miller, *Crying Heart*, 7. Paul Erb, who edited *The Crying Heart*, Miller's first novel, knew from the start that Miller was no longer Old Order Amish. Still, the book jacket read: "There have been many books about the Amish, but here is one written by an Amish woman. And because it comes from one inside the group, it is an authentic picture of the Amish in Iowa."

(n62.) Sharon Sue Ketcherside, review of *The Crying Heart*, by Clara Bernice Miller ("reliable portrayal"); Ronald L. Peterson, review of *The Crying Heart*, by Clara B. Miller, *The Banner*, 15 October 1965, 24 ("pictures and descriptions"); and Edythe M. Daehling, review of *The Tender Herb*, by Clara Bernice Miller, *Lutheran Women*, November 1968, 29 ("accurate and beguiling"). Ketcherside, who wrote for the *Mission Messenger*, sent her review to Herald Press, where it can be found in MPH book editor's files.

(n63.) Dan Neidermyer, Jonathan (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1973), 46.

(n64.) Dan Neidermyer to Ellrose D. Zook, May 1971, in MPH book editor's file.

(n65.) Dan Neidermyer to Charles Shenk, 14 April 1971, in MPH book editors file.

See also "Neidermyer Book to Debut Shortly," Lancaster (Pa.) Sunday News, 10 June 1973, 29.

(n66.) Ellrose Zook to Dan Neidermyer, 3 May 1971 ("we would appreciate your counseling us as to what the Amish reactions may be"); Dan Neidermyer to Ellrose Zook, May 1971 ("Two former Amish read JONATHAN; reaction was very favorable"); and Ellrose Zook to Dan Neidermyer, 6 June 1972 ("I believe you had some former Amish read it and they felt it was OK"). All letters in MPH book editor's files.

(n67.) See Paul M. Schrock to Dan Neidermyer, 16 October 1972; and Richard H. Crockett to Dan Neidermyer, 1 November 1972. Both letters in MPH book editor's file.

(n68.) Paul M. Schrock to Dan Neidermyer, 7 June 1973, in MPH book editor's file. Schrock replaced Ellrose Zook as the Herald Press book editor in 1972.

(n69.) See Maynard W. Shetler to Mrs. Carl E. Yoder, 26 June 1973; and Maynard W. Shetler to Anna **Weaver**, 5 September 1973, both in MPH book editor's file. In addition to Jonathan, Herald Press's realistic offerings included Omar Eby, *The Sons of Adam* (1970); Merle Good, *Happy as the Grass is Green* (1971); Omar Eby, *How Full the River* (1972) and *A Covenant of Despair* (1973); and Kenneth Reed, *Mennonite Soldier* (1974).

(n70.) Ellrose D. Zook to Dan Neidermyer, 27 May 1971 ("exactly the same problem"); and Maynard Shetler to Mrs. Carl E. Yoder, 26 June 1973 ("true-to-life"). Both letters in MPH book editor's file.

(n71.) Joseph Stoll to Dan Neidermyer, 24 August 1973 ("odd, ignorant"); and Roseanne S. Brennaman to Paul M. Schrock, 22 May 1974 ("stripped the Amish naked"). Both letters in MPH book editor's file.

(n72.) Paul M. Schrock to Maggie Duffy, 29 May 1973. Letter in VI-6--2, box 3, "Paul Schrock, 1973-74" file, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

(n73.) Paul M. Schrock to C. W. Boyer, 26 September 1973 ("mixed reactions"); and Paul M. Schrock to Roseanne S. Brennaman, 24 May 1974 ("measure up"). Letters in MPH book editor's file.

(n74.) Amish parties paid Herald Press nearly four thousand dollars to purchase 2,595 copies of *Jonathan*, with the understanding that Herald Press would then destroy those copies. Maynard W. Shetler to **David** Wagler, 6 September 1974. Letter and canceled check in "Jonathan" file at Heritage Historical Library, Aylmer, Ontario.

(n75.) Kenneth Reed, *Mennonite Soldier* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1974).

(n76.) Long after *Jonathan* had been pulled from publication, Herald Press's publishing agent continued to defend the novel's truthful nature. Ben Cutrell claimed the shredding decision was made "in Christian consideration" to the Amish, who found the book's portrayals of Amish immorality "offensive." But, wrote Cutrell, "I cannot agree that the book is evil and should not have been published .... As a steward of God and responsible person at Mennonite Publishing House, I want to continue to 'speak the truth in love' through literature by the power of the Holy Spirit." Ben Cutrell to C. W. Boyer, 6 November 1974, in MPH book editor's file.

(n77.) In A. Martha Denlinger's *Real People: Amish and Mennonites in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* (1975), Herald Press returned to the genre that John Hostetler introduced twenty years earlier, the tourist-oriented descriptive booklet. With the exceptions of Clara Miller's *To All Generations* (1977) and Barbara Smucker's *Amish Adventure* (1983), Herald Press avoided the realm of Amish-theme fiction for fifteen years, until the inauguration of Mary Borntrager's ten-volume "Ellie's People" series in 1988. Borntrager's novels demonstrated the acquired reticence of Herald Press to explore Amish life in a realistic fashion, as did another Herald Press endeavor, Carrie Bender's five-volume "Miriam's Journal" series, launched in 1993. The novels sold quickly. According to Herald Press's 1996-97 catalog, nearly 450,000 "Ellie's People" books were in print, and over 80,000 "Miriam's Journal" books were in print. For the year ending 31 January 1997, twelve Bender or Borntrager novels placed among Herald Press's twenty-five best-selling titles.



(n78.) Of course, some Mennonites continue to use the Amish as a positive foil, that is, as a way to critique Mennonite life. See, for instance, Rich Preheim, "Identity, Complacency and Making Headlines in This World," *The Mennonite*, 1 September 1998, 16.

(n79.) A recent example of a commercially driven, uncharitable representation of the Amish was "The Secret Life of the Amish," a journalistic expose that debuted on ABC's 20/20 on 21 February 1997. In "Secret Life," 20/20 countered idealized images of the Amish by citing examples of child abuse and psychological cruelty in an Ohio Amish settlement. While the incidents cited were not fabricated, the presentation as a whole was unbalanced, giving disenchanted ex-members the first and last word on Amish life. For a critique of 20/20's expose, see Dan W. Lehman, "Graven Images and the (Re)presentation of Amish Trauma," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 72 (1998): 577-87.