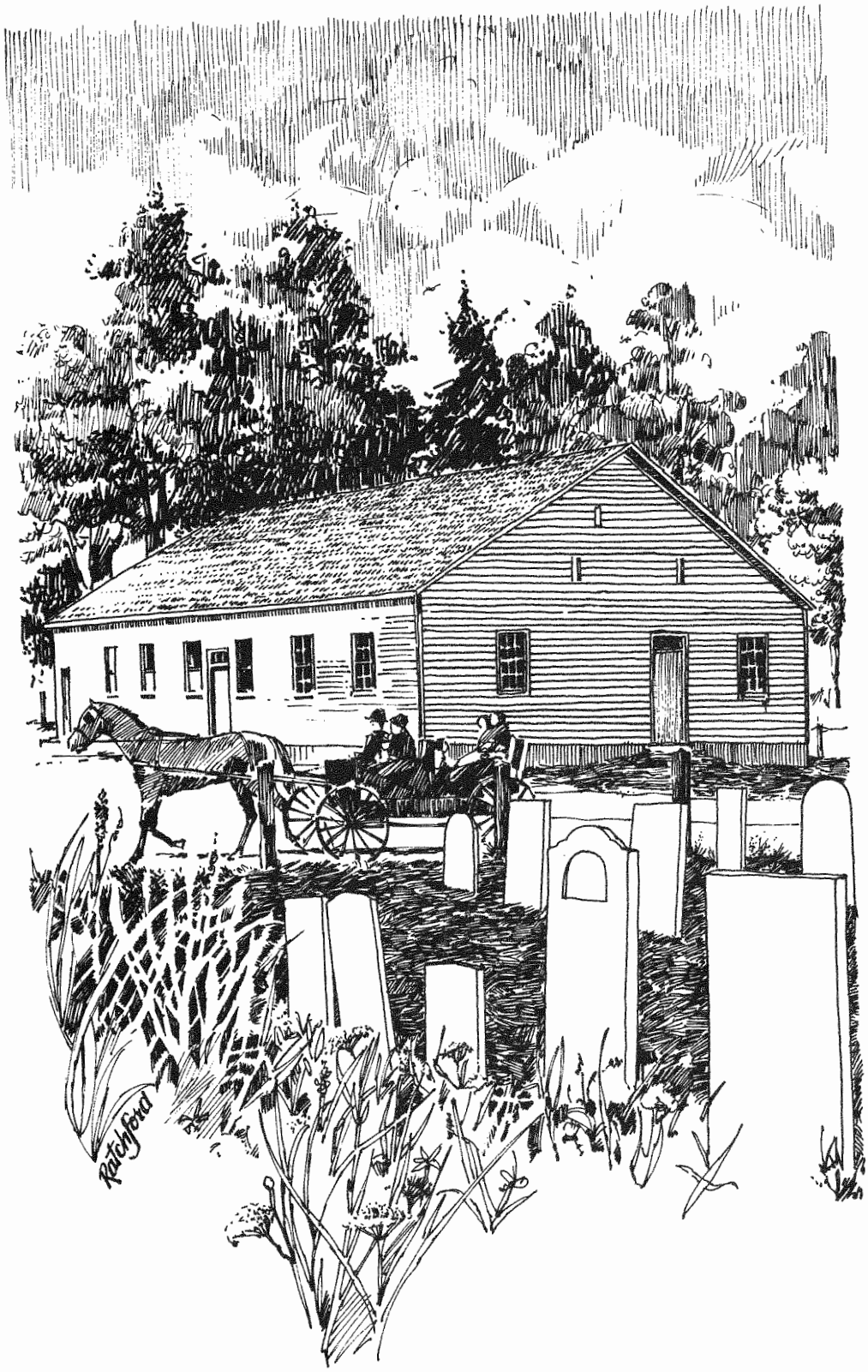
Provenance



Martin's—Home of the Old Order

11. The Stand of the Old Order

The old order groups originated through a reluctance to accept cultural change and the determination not to adopt the newer agencies for Christian education and evangelism
— J. C. WENGER.[1]

THE GREAT awakening of the nineteenth century was not recognized or accepted as such by great numbers of Mennonites, who saw in the manifold adjustments little more than accommodations to strange values and customs. Fearing the destruction of their cherished traditions, they vigorously resisted the gospel of progress, which pressed hard on them from religious and secular sources. The resistance movement became general throughout North America wherever Mennonites were found — including Ontario and Manitoba. But most important for our discussion here is that just as the old Mennonites had resisted the *new* Mennonite movements earlier in the century, the defenders of the *old order* among the old Mennonites started to stand up against their progressive brethren who had been affected in the great awakening. This old order movement became as universal as the awakenings and renewal movements had become.

The reluctance to accept change was, and remains, a universal phenomenon. Times of social transition and rapid secularization,

shifting values and changing styles, have always met with conservative recalcitrance in religious as well as in secular societies. Those who insisted on preserving the old ways were sometimes in the majority, sometimes in the minority. Sometimes they remained within the larger movement as an ever-present conservative force; sometimes there occurred a separation when the conservatives coerced others or were themselves squeezed out.[2] There are many illustrations of this practice in other movements, some distant from and others close to the Mennonites. The Russian Orthodox Church, for instance, had its minority group known as Old Believers. Similarly, the Jewish tradition has always had its Orthodox rabbis, some of them ultra-orthodox. The coming of the first great American awakening and the new Presbyterian movement revealed the residual strength of the old Presbyterian movement.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the conservative Quakers, who held ecclesiastical power in Canada, crossed from their lists hundreds of members who were accepting change much too quickly.[3] Similarly, the fragmented Brethren in Christ, still known at mid-century as River Brethren in the United States and as Tunkers in Canada, gave birth to an old order movement as a reaction to the renewal movement in that group. From the Brethren in Christ, some groups gravitated toward the Mennonite Brethren in Christ or to the Pentecostal Church; others became known as the Yorkers or Old Order Brethren, the conservative group. The Old Order River Brethren refused to build churches, to decorate their homes with art or music, to change even minutely their style of clothing, and to adopt Sunday school.[4]

The particular points of old order dissent among Mennonites have, by non-old-order historians, normally been referred to as "slight differences" or "minor points" — issues of contention only because of clashing personalities, and which might easily have been negotiated, given a less egotistic leadership and a more patient brotherhood.[5] There is some evidence to support this view, particularly from Goshen-Elkhart, Indiana, where the new, the old and the old order movements all crystallized successively in an extended period of congregational conflict. In that controversy the four principal leaders involved were, over a period of time, either discredited, demoted, defrocked or rejected in some other way. One of them was Jacob Wisler, the first old order bishop, after whom those of the order were also called

Wislerites. Bishop Wisler's first opponent, the exuberant and evangelical preacher, Joseph Mohrer, whose Methodist spirit was so offensive to Wisler, left and, like Bishop Jacob Gross at the Twenty in Ontario, joined the Evangelical Church. Then Wisler himself was voted out, at which point the Wislerite old order movement came into being in Indiana. Shortly thereafter Daniel Brenneman, Wisler's chief foe after Mohrer, was also voted out of Conference, which then led, as noted in Chapter 6, to the formulation of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. John F. Funk, who had pronounced the expulsion order on Wisler, was himself suspended as bishop.[6]

It therefore seems that a good case can be made for blaming the emergence of the various new and old movements on strong stubborn personalities with schismatic tendencies. It also seems true, however, that all or most of these leaders or would-be leaders were struggling quite seriously and, in their own minds, sincerely for the best future for the Mennonite church at such a dynamic time. Wisler was not alone in his doubts about the pervasive changes. There were also doubters among the so-called progressives. While Mohrer, Brenneman, and Funk all saw the need for changes, they were not in agreement on them, nor the speed with, or extent to, which they could be adopted. Funk, for instance, also had a passion for some of the old traditions and was anxious to preserve them. Indeed, he was constantly fluctuating between "conservatism and progress" for "he had a deep historical sense" and was anxious to anchor the church more firmly "in its great historical heritage."[7] And, when by 1900 more progressive men were becoming leaders of the church, he was identified as a definite conservative with an authoritarian bent. The latter trait cost him, in 1902, the office of bishop which he had held for 10 years; it was never restored to him.[8]

Wisler's position must, therefore, not be seen as existing entirely outside of the Mennonite world. Although his conservative rigour moved beyond the general tradition, in many ways he stood squarely within the Mennonite theological and cultural traditions. And he had his immediate sympathizers. After his ouster from the church in 1872, he experienced no difficulty in organizing followings in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, and through more local leaders in Ontario, Pennsylvania, and Virginia (see Table 1).[9] In all of these regions the old order followers were also known as Wislerites.

Whether the defenders of the old foresaw some of the ultimate-

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY OLD ORDER OR WISLERITE DIVISIONS IN THE (OLD) MENNONITE CHURCH

LOCATION	DATE	LEADER
Indiana-Ohio	1872	Jacob Wisler
Ontario	1889	Abraham Martin
Pennsylvania	1893	Jonas H. Martin
Virginia	1900	Gabriel D. Heatwole

ly undesirable implications of following the new order, or whether they viewed such results as inevitable, is not entirely clear. It was not one of their strengths, or, from their point of view, weaknesses, to clearly articulate their position and to document it, at least not for the outside world. Yet one must suspect that they sensed at least some of the eventual directions of those who chose progressive ways. In any event, some of those directions led the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and other evangelical groups to minimize Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which for the old order people was the heart of the Scriptures, and to completely neglect the nonresistant position. The new movements also led all the new Mennonites to adopt styles of church architecture and liturgy which militated against the simple and intimate community that since frontier days had characterized the worship of the congregation.

Moreover, the Christianity of the new Mennonites began to express itself increasingly in terms of organization, constitutions, programs, committee meetings, statistics, and reports. By contrast, the old order emphasized attitudes and relationships, a Christianity that was more felt and acted than verbalized. It was one that was local and immediate, one that consisted of people simply living their faith rather than promoting endless layers of church program, which would always be points of contention and whose constant revision might forever sap the spiritual energies of the church. To the old order, the Sunday school had the effect of removing responsibility for Christian instruction from the home. The revival meetings, once begun, required fresh restoration of the spiritual glow, which apparently could not maintain itself apart from revivalism.

It was not foreseen, but perhaps the old order people deeply felt that technological change and innovation would some day produce endless cycles of obsolescence and pollution, that the telephone would some day be man's master as much as his servant, and that the cities would some day prove to be as anti-human as the rural old order thought them to be.

Also unforecast was how the preoccupation of the new movements with "personal salvation, personal ethics, and personal evangelism" would tend to a breakdown of the total community in which the Christian culture was thought to pervade all of life. Increasingly, the new Mennonites would be torn between two worlds with two different cultures, one sacred and one secular, the one requiring personal faithfulness to Christ, the other allowing, sometimes demanding, easy adaptation to the economic, social, educational and political values of surrounding society.[10]

One scholar analysed the changes that came to the Brethren in Christ denomination and their effects on the Christian expression. Martin Schrag observed that, in the period from 1870 to 1910, the Brethren had accepted six major innovations: the Sunday school, revivalism, a church periodical, a formal missionary program, Wesleyan holiness and a church-sponsored educational institution. These six innovations had a profound effect upon the denomination's concept of the church. The early idea of the separated community, an obedient and faithful social organism, was to a large degree replaced by an individualistic understanding of the faith concerned primarily with a salvation that was personalized, an ethic that was internalized, and a community that was millennialized or postponed.[11]

As already indicated, the proponents of the old order had no such sophisticated rationale or explanation of their stance. If they possessed it, it was a deep internal feeling rather than an intellectual analysis or theological statement. In the absence of a clear articulation of what they instinctively felt to be the unwanted direction, the resistance to change and their stubbornness often appeared quite ridiculous, if not stupid. Those unsympathetic with the old order view saw only obstinate bishops, whose clashing personalities and petty power struggles met in silly confrontation over minor issues.

There were many minor issues. If change was to be introduced or resisted, this could be done only at the many specific junctures of human experience. Moreover, the conservatives as well as the progressives created these issues. In fact, the progressives prob-

ably created more minor issues than the conservatives. Progressive insistence on accepting change usually preceded the conservative insistence on resisting it. The plain coat, the German language, singing in unison, and the preaching table became issues for the conservatives only after the suit, the English language, four-part singing, and the pulpit had been made into issues by the progressives. Cultural changes of all sorts made their inroads through small innovations. If change was to be resisted, how else could it be done than on the very same terms that it was promoted, namely on fine points or issues, and the little events of everyday life.

On the other hand, both progressives and conservatives were concerned with major issues. Each side was advocating a fundamentally different way of life and approach to religion. Thus, many minor issues really signified major ones. The language issue, for instance, was more than a language issue. In the social context of the times, the changing language really meant the exchanging of total cultural packages. As Harold S. Bender has written:

> The English language was synonymous with "pride," for "pride" had come to mean to many "being like other people," and society was divided into two classes, the "Dutch" and the "English" or worldly people. In sober fact, the German language really was a barrier of considerable efficacy against the encroachment of "world" society and aid to "separation" from it. It should not be forgotten also that the struggle to maintain the German was the common experience of practically all German-language religious groups.[12]

Not all the "awakened" Mennonites viewed the defenders of the old order with disparagement. Daniel Kauffman, for instance, was careful, at least in his later analysis as editor of the *Gospel Herald*, to give credit where credit was due. Differences in approach did not necessarily mean lower or higher degrees of spirituality if different methods were employed or if different degrees of aggressiveness in "bringing the gospel message to the people were manifested." The old leaders, he said, were not lacking in "zeal and loyalty." On the contrary, there were church leaders whose self-sacrificing zeal for the cause led them to make "sacrifices that most of our present-day active workers would refuse to make." In the course of their duty some bishops tra-

velled for hundreds of miles, either on horse-back or by buggy, sometimes on foot; they paid their own expenses. Their only weakness, in the words of Kauffman, was

> . . . their tendency to cling to old methods — such as meeting monthly instead of weekly, German preaching, not many night meetings, no revival meetings, etc., etc. — when the changed conditions demanded also a change in at least some of these methods.[13]

In Ontario the old order movement had been in preparation for some time; as early as the 1840s, a small old order group of about 10 Waterloo families, all from Woolwich township, was organized into a separate congregation.[14] These old order families worshipped alternately in each other's homes and elected their ministers and a bishop, Jesse S. Bauman. Their main emphasis, in contrast to the Mennonite churches, was on plainness of clothing, simplicity of life, and greater strictness in discipline. It was difficult, however, to exercise this discipline, since the larger church always provided a way of escape for nonconformists. This entire Woolwich old order group, therefore, migrated to Iowa in the years 1887 and 1888, precisely at the time when the larger old order movement under discussion here was taking shape.

In Waterloo County, as in certain parts of the United States, there had for some time been considerable uneasiness about the changes that were being adopted. These included religious changes such as prayer meetings, protracted evening services, Sunday schools, and the use of English in preaching, as well as social-secular changes: new falling-top buggies, new dress styles, and other such innovations. Not infrequently the religious and the social-secular changes appeared simultaneously.

Although the focus of the Ontario movement was in Waterloo County, there were actually three centres of dissent, of which the bishops were the leaders or for which they became the rallying points. They were Christian Gayman of Cayuga, bishop of the Niagara district since 1875; Christian Reesor, bishop of the Markham district since 1867; and Abraham Martin, bishop since 1867 of the Woolwich sub-district, one of the three sub-districts in Waterloo.[15]

Bishop Gayman had been a problem to his colleagues for some time. Meeting in conference, they supported that part of his congregation which had found him "disobedient."[16] Since Gayman and his followers were later found in the old order camp, one

may speculate that it had to do with differences over such issues as language, Sunday school, and protracted meetings. Thereafter, however, the differences in the church came up at almost every annual and semi-annual conference. Repeatedly it was resolved not to divide the church but to attempt to follow through on "a peace resolution" formulated in 1882 and reaffirmed in 1885.[17] Reconciliation at the time concerned not only differences between the old Mennonites and the old order Mennonites but also those between the old Mennonites and the new Mennonites. The church was being pulled very much in two directions. The old Mennonites, flanked by new Mennonites and old order Mennonites, attempted to hold things together.

The departure of members in both directions usually relieved tensions only partially and only temporarily, because not all those who empathized with the old order or with the new order saw fit to leave the church. They hoped to move the church in their direction from within. Thus, the conflict between the old and the new remained. Though the conflict receded whenever people at the extremes of old and new thought left the church, it tended to resurface again and again.

One immediate cause of the division that came to Waterloo County in 1889 seems to have been the protracted meetings conducted in 1885 in a home just north of Waterloo, which resulted in 30 applications for baptism. Most of these converts lived in the district over which Bishop Abraham Martin had the oversight. Martin declined to instruct and baptize the applicants because they were coming to him under the influence of these evening meetings. They then went to Bishop Elias Weber who baptized them at Breslau.[18]

This incorporation of a group of young people into the church by one bishop, after they had been rejected by another bishop, proved to be a major source of irritation. It had happened once before in 1871 when Bishop Hagey refused and Bishop John Lapp consented to baptize those converts prepared for baptism by a revivalist. Such acute differences of opinion could not be held together forever, and in the heated discussions of the semi-annual conference in Berlin in September of 1887, Bishop Abraham W. Martin, supported by a number of ministers and sympathizers, withdrew. In the spring of 1888, Bishop Martin held a separate conference at the Martin meeting-house between Waterloo and St. Jacobs. Four ministers and six deacons stood with him.

Apparently, however, the efforts at reconciliation continued until the full and final break in the spring of 1889, which was precipitated by confusion and disagreement over the dates of the annual conference. The traditional date for meeting was the last Friday in May. That year, however, May had five Fridays, the last of them preceded on Thursday by Ascension Day, traditionally a day on which church services were held. The result was that two conferences were held, one on the fourth Friday and the second on the fifth Friday, both at the Wideman meetinghouse in Markham. The first was attended by Bishops Amos Cressman (Wilmot), Elias E. Weber (Waterloo), and Daniel Wismer (ordained in Kansas, no particular field of assignment), all progressives, and the second by Bishops Christian Reesor, Abraham Martin, and Christian Gayman, conservatives. Both sets of bishops were supported by ministers and deacons, with the majority siding with the former group. Counselling the conservatives, and assisting them in their organization, was Christian Schumm, an associate of Daniel Wismer.[19]

The religious division which resulted did not cut across geographic boundaries. In the Markham and Niagara areas, the majority of the people still left after the Evangelicals, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, and the Pentecostals had reaped their share, sided with the bishops. In Waterloo County, most of the people supporting Bishop Martin were in the township of Woolwich, north of Waterloo.

Since the defenders of the old order were largely in the northern part of Waterloo County (only about 30 families in Woolwich stayed with the old Mennonites) they were referred to in Pennsylvania Dutch as "die Overa" (the Uppers) and those to the south, east and west, were called "die Unera" (the Lowers). The northerners were also called old order or Woolwichers, while the others preferred to call themselves "of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario," though their popular designation remained old Mennonites for a long time.[20]

Neither group ever officially accepted the name which popular usage attached to them. Both groups, the old Mennonites and the old order Mennonites, continued to use the same name, *Mennoniten Gemeinde*, in their respective calendars of appointments. Both continued the same sequential dating of those calendars, which had begun around 1834. Yet, both groups could not avoid living with, and to a certain extent even accepting, the popular names. In the plethora of Mennonite groups, some commonly

accepted identifications were necessary. Slowly but surely the names Old Mennonite and Old Order Mennonite became part of the denominational literature that originated in the United States. As time went on the "Old" of the Old Mennonite was placed in brackets, as (Old) Mennonite. In due course it was dropped in favour of the simple Mennonite Church.[21] In this history, however, the Old and Old Order names will continue to be used for reasons of clarity in identification.

At the time of the Old Order break it was still customary to look upon the membership under a single bishop as a single congregation. Even though a number of meeting-houses might be used, they would not all be used on a single Sunday. Most had meetings every two weeks and some only once a month. The larger number of meeting-houses prevented geographic discrimination against the families farther away from the centre but the fewer number of services prevented the break-up of the congregation into units much too small to be meaningful. It also permitted a limited number of ministers and deacons to work together as teams. The meeting-houses used by the Old Order after the break in the three regions are indicated in Table 2.[22]

The vacancy of some meeting-houses on some Sundays raised the issue of their use by others, notably those (Old) Mennonites in the area who had not gone along with the Old Order or who, having gone along at first, soon had a change of heart and left. In Woolwich there were at least 30 such families. At first they conducted their worship services and Sunday school in an old farm house north of Conestoga. Finding the space too crowded and inconvenient, they soon asked for permission to use the Conestoga Old Order meeting-house, but in vain. Since the (Old) Mennonite group persisted, the Old Order people finally decided in 1892 to give up their building and to build their own half a mile away.

One of the problems which the Old Order groups had was to maintain unanimity of viewpoint on, and uniformity of practice in, the new disciplines and rules of simplicity and orthodoxy that had been adopted. The more specific and detailed these rules were, the greater the potential for division and dissension. The Old Order groups were therefore given even more to internal dissension than some of the new more progressive groups who had accepted change and adjustment.

Those who became dissatisfied went in one of two directions.

TABLE 2

OLD ORDER MEETING-HOUSES IN ONTARIO AFTER 1889

NAME	DATE CONSTRUCTED	LOCATION	1906 MEMBERSHIP
	A. WATERLOO COUNTY		
Martin's	1830	Waterloo Township	160
Conestoga	1848–1892 1894†	Woolwich Township	60
West Woolwich	1853	Woolwich Township	60
North Woolwich	1872	Woolwich Township	60
South Peel	1901	Peel Township	30
	B. YORK COUNTY		
Risser	1848	Markham Township	100
Cedar Grove	1867	Markham Township	
Wideman	1848	Markham Township	
Almira	1860	Markham Township	?*
	C. ONTARIO COUNTY		
Altona	1852	Pickering Township	?*
	D. WELLAND COUNTY		
Bertie	1873	Bertie Township	3
	E. HALDIMAND COUNTY		
Cayuga	1873	South Cayuga	20
Rainham	1850	Rainham Township	?*
	F. HURON COUNTY		
Stanley	1887	Stanley Township	?*
	G. LINCOLN COUNTY		
Moyers	1840	Clinton Township	15

* Indicates unknown memberships. It is very likely that they were very small since they eventually disappeared.

† "Surrendered" to (Old) Mennonites in 1892. Old Order built in 1894 on nearby land donated by George Hoffman.

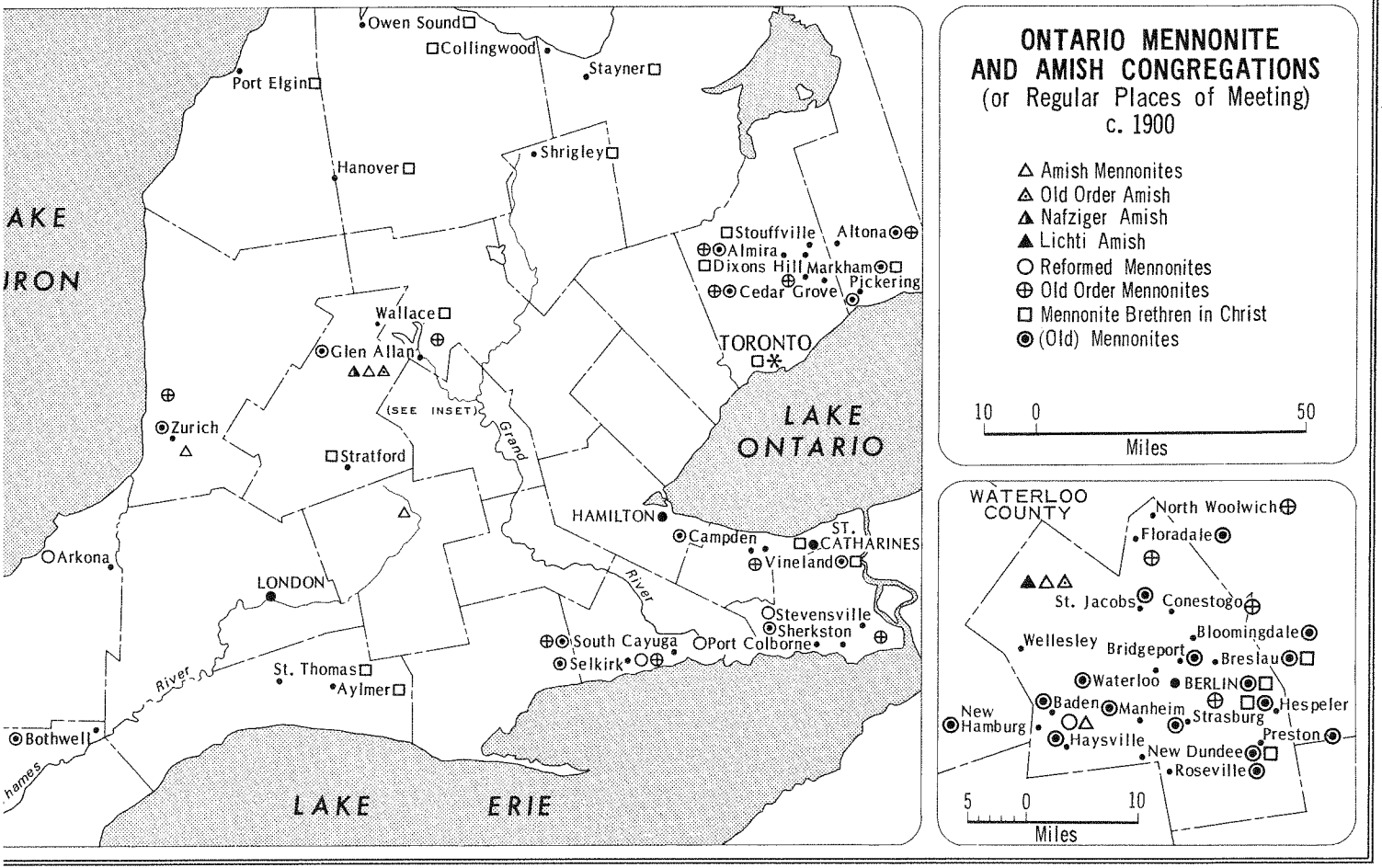
The more progressive-minded Old Order people tended to migrate in their church affiliation toward the (Old) Mennonites. Already in the 1890s the congregation at Conestoga (later at St. Jacobs) was swelling, while a new one was emerging at Floradale, where a meeting-house was constructed in 1895. By 1907 the Woolwich (Old) Mennonites were ready for their first bishop, who was Abraham Gingerich.[23]

The more conservative-minded Old Order, however, tended to split off into ever smaller factions, sometimes migrating to maintain the separation, sometimes only using stricter discipline to maintain their cause. Thus the group that moved from Ontario to Iowa ended up going from there to Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Alberta.[24]

In Waterloo County the church survived a serious 1908 controversy over a government drainage ditch through central Woolwich, the factions aggressively promoting it and those opposing it being about equally divided. The resulting tensions, however, led to a series of breaks for other reasons. Preacher Daniel M. Brubacher supported his married son who had been charged with and excommunicated for "disorderly" affection toward an unmarried girl. Consequently, the new Old Order bishop, Paul Martin, who succeeded Abraham Martin in 1902, excommunicated Daniel Brubacher, who promptly proceeded to conduct his own services with the support of a number of families.

About 15 years later the Brubacher group affiliated with the David Martin group at Wallenstein, which had begun separate services. David B. Martin was a preacher and his son David W. Martin a deacon. The group elected Daniel Brubacher as bishop, his son Menno became a minister, and a meeting-house was built for what became known as the David Martin Old Order group. A few years later Daniel Brubacher "went separate again" because the rules of the David Martins were too strict. The Martins elected Enoch Horst as bishop, but he too left over the question of the ban and excommunication. At that point David W. Martin became bishop and was able thereafter to hold the group together, though it increased only by the baptism of direct descendants.[25]

The net effect of all the separations that occurred in the Ontario Mennonite churches in the nineteenth century was the production of many small congregational units. In the three conference groups — Mennonite Brethren in Christ, (Old) Mennonite Conference of Ontario, and Old Order Mennonites — only four congregations (single places of meeting) had 100 members


ONTARIO MENNONITE
AND AMISH CONGREGATIONS
(or Regular Places of Meeting)
c. 1900
Amish Mennonites
Old Order Amish
Nafziger Amish
Lichti Amish
Reformed Mennonites
Old Order Mennonites
Mennonite Brethren in Christ
(Old) Mennonites
10 0 50
Miles
Owen Sound
Collingwood
Stayner
Port Elgin
Hanover
Shrigley
Stouffville
Altona
Almira
Dixons Hill
Markham
Pickering
Cedar Grove
Wallace
Glen Allan
TORONTO
(SEE INSET)
Grand
Zurich
Stratford
LAKE ONTARIO
HAMILTON
Campden
ST. CATHARINES
Vineland
Arkona
LONDON
River
Stevensville
Sherkston
South Cayuga
Port Colborne
Selkirk
St. Thomas
Aylmer
River
Bothwell
LAKE ERIE
WATERLOO COUNTY
North Woolwich
Floradale
St. Jacobs
Conestogo
Wellesley
Bloomingdale
Bridgeport
Breslau
Waterloo
BERLIN
Baden
Manheim
Strasburg
Hespeler
New Hamburg
Haysville
Preston
New Dundee
Roseville
5 0 10
Miles

or more and the majority of the preaching places had less than 50 (for comparisons see Table 3).[26] The 500 Markham area Mennonites, for instance, were distributed over at least 17 congregational units or preaching places.

TABLE 3

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS FOR THREE MAIN MENNONITE GROUPS IN ONTARIO 1905–06*

GROUP	NO. OF CONGREGATIONS OR PREACHING PLACES	NO. OF MEMBERS
Mennonite Brethren in Christ	48	1,518
(Old) Mennonites	29	1,353
Old Order Mennonites	16	508

* Old Order statistics for 1906 (first year available); others for 1905.

While the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and (Old) Mennonites rearranged their churches to include a pulpit and horizontally arranged Protestant pews, the old order maintained the plain meeting-houses, with benches arranged in a U-pattern, with the preaching table placed in its neck. The Mennonite Brethren in Christ deliberately introduced musical instruments; the Old Order deliberately kept them out.

Thus it was in every area of life. In the new order the weddings were transferred to the church and considerably shortened, though in some ways made more elaborate. For the old order, weddings and flowerless funerals were all-day events, with three-hour ceremonies followed by meals and visiting. For the old order the social circle and the institution of visiting was definitely limited to the community — to friends, relatives, and neighbours, on Sunday afternoons and at barn-raisings and quiltings. The mobility of the new order, on the other hand, introduced Mennonites to conventions, fairs and marketplaces in small and large cities, to the professions and even to public life.

The old order championed the rural way of life, without the new machinery and technology. Farming was done with horses and road transportation limited to buggies. Homes remained simple without curtains, pictures or wallpaper. Clothes stayed plain, homemade, and usually dark, and were not adorned with jewellery. The pantries and cellars, on the other hand, would be

fanciful with hundreds of fruit jars reflecting both the industry and creativity of the home.

The old order resisted education beyond the elementary school level, since it contributed nothing useful or necessary to the rural way of life. All frills and luxuries were avoided, while a premium was placed on productive work during weekends and abundant socializing on Sundays and other church holidays. An existence in many ways austere and limited, the old order way of life none the less produced a people unusually industrious and temperate, peace-loving and tranquil, benevolent and kind, well-mannered and pious. All involvement with the outside world was avoided, and this became possible in an economy nearly self-sufficient and a community both closed and content.

Meanwhile, the struggle of "the new against the old" and "the old against the new" had surfaced also among the Amish of North America, whose settlements by the end of the nineteenth century had spread from Pennsylvania as far west as Oregon, with strong concentrations in Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, and Kansas.[27] A very brave attempt, unprecedented in North American Mennonite circles, to reconcile the emerging differences was made in a series of Amish general conferences, called *Diener-Versammlungen*, over a period of 16 years, but with only partial success.[28] Again, the development of the Amish community in the United States had immediate and long-term implications for the Amish in Canada, and therefore the American background is reported once again.

The discussions of the Diener-Versammlungen, covering a wide range of issues, began with baptismal form and the membership status of those Amish who were accepting government pensions for service in the civil war for which service repentance had already been made. The Versammlungen found church membership and military pensions to be incompatible. They also decided that members should not participate in the erection of memorial monuments to soldiers; that political activity and public office, either judicial or military, requiring the use of force, was to be prohibited; and that attendance at political meetings, flag-pole raisings and even voting was to be discouraged as being unseemly for a nonresistant people. Unequal business alliances were discouraged and business contacts tabooed, including the holding of bank stock and the managing of a store, post office or express office. Other objectionable innovations were lightning rods, lotteries, photographs, insurance and large meeting-houses.[29]

The Diener-Versammlung did not bring complete accord on a number of questions, and so after 1878 the Amish tended to go in three directions. The conservative elements retained all the old traditions and practices and became known as the Old Order Amish, or Conservative Amish if they were less orthodox than the Old Order. There was no complete unanimity among the "progressives" either and they, therefore, also tended in different directions, those same directions which have been observed among the Swiss Mennonites (see comparisons in Table 4).[30]

Nor were the conservative Amish unanimous in their conservatism. One group of congregations, which in 1910 formed the Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference, saw themselves as standing "more closely together in the work of the Lord" somewhere between the more progressive and the Old Order Amish churches.[31] The Old Order Amish, who eventually spread to over 50 settlements in North America with over 225 church districts, each with about 75 baptized members, never organized themselves into conferences. They did, however, maintain an informal relationship because of their similar nonconformist attitudes and resistance to social changes, their strictly rural way of life, their horse-and-buggy culture, their plain dress and their use of a peculiar German dialect. Their nonconformity has been described as follows:

> Among the culture traits which the Old Order Amish have resisted are the following: buttons on coats and vests, wearing of a mustache, men's suspenders in various forms, hats for women, "store" clothes, talon fasteners, "bosom" shirts, detachable collars, modern styles of underwear, patterned dress goods, fine shoes, low shoes, ladies' high-heeled shoes, parted hair, parted hair except in the center, meeting-houses, four-part singing, hymnbooks with printed musical notes, laymen's use of Bibles at preaching services, Sunday schools, revival meetings, high-school education, central heating, carpets, window curtains, storm windows and screens, writing desks, upholstered furniture, brightly painted farm machinery, painted wagons, top-buggies, "falling" buggy tops, buggy springs, rubber-tired buggies, buggy steps, fancy buggies, whipsockets, dashboards, sausage grinders, lawn mowers, bicycles, windmills, sewing machines, steam threshers, tractors with tires, tractors for field work, tractors at all, elaborately decorated harness, musical instruments, telephones, electricity, automobiles, and many others.[32]

TABLE 4

AMISH MENNONITE GROUPS
ARISING IN THE GREAT AWAKENING

NAME AND LOCATION	HISTORY	EVENTUAL AFFILIATION
Defenseless Mennonite Church — Indiana, Ohio, Illinois	Emerged as Egli (after founder) Amish in 1864 but met in regular conference only after 1895 and later known as Evangelical Mennonite Church.	A 1898 breakaway group, the Missionary Association, eventually affiliated with Mennonite Brethren in Christ.
Central Illinois Mennonite Conference	Emerged in stages after 1872, but organized with 12 congregations in 1909.	General Conference Mennonite Church.
Indiana-Michigan Amish Mennonite Conference	Emerged 1889–1919.	(Old) Mennonite Church.
Western Amish (Mennonite Conference (Kansas-Nebraska)	Emerged 1890–1920.	(Old) Mennonite Church.
Eastern Amish Mennonite Conference (Pennsylvania)	Emerged 1893–1925.	(Old) Mennonite Church.

Note: The progressive Amish of Ontario followed the route of the latter three groups, though at a much later date.

The clash between Amish progressives, also called Church-Amish, and the conservatives, also called House-Amish, did not leave the Canadian communities in Ontario untouched. Barely had the Amish migration to Ontario come to an end around 1870 and the original five communities been shaped when the quarrel erupted. As Orland Gingerich, the group's historian, has written:

> The changes which came to the Amish world on the outside and on the inside were not accepted by all, at least not without some complaint and a great deal of internal dissatisfaction. New styles of clothing and grooming, the increasing use of the English language, and differing approaches to worship eventually led to a serious gap between the more progressive and more conservative of the Church.[33]

The more serious differences arose in regard to so-called worship issues, which included church music, Sunday school, and, most importantly of all, meeting-houses. There were several reasons why some wanted meeting-houses. The houses, or even barns, tended to be too small and impractical as meeting places for a variety of reasons. Besides, church buildings were becoming the fashion not only in society generally but also among the Mennonites, whom some Amish were inclined to imitate. The conservatives resisted, precisely for reasons of fashion and the tendency of the Church-Amish to place more importance on buildings than on the gathering of people. Modestly, the progressives referred to their buildings as *Versammlungs-haeuser* (meeting-houses or places of gathering), but conservative names for progressive symbols could not accommodate all the defenders of the old order.

During the period from 1883 to 1886, all the original five settlement-congregations began to worship in meeting-houses (see Table 5).[34] They were plain to be sure and, with one exception, of frame construction. Sheds for the parking of horses and buggies were also erected. The meeting-houses did not immediately lead to such innovations as characterized the Mennonite awakenings — evening services, protracted meetings, Sunday school, etc. In that sense, the progressive Amish of Ontario could be compared not with the progressive Mennonites of Ontario but with the conservatives. In cultural accommodation, the progressive and conservative Amish remained a decade or two "behind"

TABLE 5

SUMMARY OF ORIGINAL AMISH SETTLEMENT-CONGREGATIONS AND EARLY CHURCH BUILDINGS

NAME	DATE OF FOUNDING	COUNTY LOCATION	ORIGIN	FIRST BISHOPS	DATE OF CHURCH BUILDING
Wilmot*	1824	Waterloo	Pennsylvania Europe	Peter Nafziger (1825–1831) John Oesch (1831–1848)	1884 1885 (St. Agatha)
East Zorra	1837	Oxford Perth	Europe Wilmot	Joseph Ruby (1853–1897)	1883
Hay	1848	Huron	Wilmot East Zorra	John Oesch (1818–1850)	1885
Wellesley	1859	Waterloo	Europe Wilmot	John Jantzi (1859–1881)	1886
Mornington	1874	Perth	Europe Wilmot East Zorra	Joseph Gerber (1875–1893)	1886

* Names also indicate township location, since Amish settlements and congregations were known by the townships in which they resided.

their progressive and conservative Mennonite cousins, respectively.

There was one exception to the above, namely the Hay Amish congregation, where Peter Ropp, a Mennonite minister from the Ontario Mennonite Conference congregation in Michigan, used his influence with his father-in-law, John Gascho, the Hay minister, to arrange evening meetings. Ropp's evangelistic meetings resulted in 19 conversions. When the young men in the group refused to wear traditional dress for baptism, a real congregational crisis developed. In the end a Mennonite bishop from Waterloo County baptized the group of new converts and with 50 additional progressive Amish members organized a new Mennonite congregation at Zurich, thus dividing the Hay group.

Although there was opposition to Versammlungs-Haeuser in the East Zorra, Wilmot and Hay congregations, no permanent rift resulted, partly because of wise leadership. Such, however, was not the case in Mornington and Wellesley, where the ordained ministerial leaders were of different opinions. Thus it happened that in those two situations the "House Amish" who insisted on the old ways came to be known as the Old Order Amish. They were also known as "Holmsers" after Holmes County, Ohio, from which the bishop came to serve them until 1891 when they finally "made their own bishops" in each of the two Old Order congregations, Christian L. Kuepfer for Mornington and Peter Jantzi for Wellesley.

The departure of the Old Order, however, did not leave the Mornington and Wellesley congregations without bothersome conservatives. On the contrary, as progress opened the door to other innovations, such as young people's singing and music schools, four-part harmony, English songs, and Sunday School around 1900, the congregations divided once more (see Table 6).[35] Nicholas Nafziger led some conservatives out of the Mornington congregation in 1903, but although they built their own meeting-house they did not otherwise innovate. The same was true in 1911 in Wellesley where Bishop Jacob Lichti vowed "to leave the church precisely as he had received it."[36] For him this meant separating from the main group and building a new, though more conservative, meeting-house. Others escaped the modernizations and tensions by migrating to various Amish communities in such far-flung places as Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Colorado, Virginia, Oregon, New York or western Canada.[37]

TABLE 6

DIVISIONS IN MORNINGTON AND WELLESLEY CONGREGATIONS

DATE	MORNINGTON	WELLESLEY
1886	Old Order	Old Order
	"house churches"	"house churches"
1903	Nafziger congregation	
1911		Lichti congregation

In one way the various Amish church families, however, refused to be separated from one another, namely in their program of mutual aid. The Fire and Storm Aid Union, which had been formed in 1872, grew and continued its service to the entire Amish community under the leadership of a broadly representative board of directors. Whenever human need called the neighbours together the many organizational fragmentations tended to be reversed. Indeed, some day it would be not only mutual aid within the community but also relief action in the international arena which would bring the fragmented Amish and Mennonites into closer fellowship again. Meanwhile, the conflicts between the old ways and new movements surfaced also in Manitoba, and there too they left lasting structural scars on the Mennonite body.

FOOTNOTES

1. J. C. Wenger, "Old Order Mennonites," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV, pp. 47–9.
2. E. K. Francis, "Tradition and Progress Among the Mennonites in Manitoba," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXIV (October 1950), pp. 312–38.
3. As told to the author by Quakers in Conference at Grindstone Island, Portland, Ontario, August 12, 1972.
4. Arthur W. Climenhaga, *History of the Brethren in Christ Church* (Napanee, Ind.: Evangelical Publishing House, 1942), pp. 127–31.
5. See C. N. Hostetter, Jr., "Brethren in Christ," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, pp. 424–25; Climenhaga, *op. cit.*, p. 127ff.
6. The successive controversies are detailed by Helen K. Gates *et al.*, *Bless the Lord, O My Soul: A Biography of Bishop John Fretz Funk, 1835–1930* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1964), pp. 146–

87; John C. Wenger, "Old Order Mennonites," *op. cit.* See also William War Dean, "John F. Funk and the Mennonite Great Awakening" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1965), especially "The Expulsion of Daniel Brenneman," p. 281ff.

7. H. S. Bender, "John Fretz Funk," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II, p. 122.
8. Gates, *op. cit.*, pp. 175–87. See also A. C. Kolb, "John Fretz Funk, 1835–1930: An Appreciation II," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, VI (October 1932), pp. 250–63.
9. Wenger, "Old Order Mennonites," *op. cit.*, p. 47.
10. See Martin Schrag, "The Brethren in Christ Attitude Toward the World" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1967), 388 pp. This "historical study of the movement from separation to an increasing acceptance of American society" in the Brethren in Christ Church has relevance also to the new Mennonite movements, not least of all because the change of orientation in the various Anabaptist renewal groups happened approximately at the same time.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 295–97.
12. H. S. Bender, "New Life Through the Sunday School," in J. C. Wenger, *The Mennonite Church in America* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1966), p. 167.
13. Daniel Kauffman, "48 Years in the Mennonite Church: The Rise of Evangelism," *Gospel Herald*, XXXI (July 21, 1938), p. 1ff. See also Mary Martin, "The Church of Christ and the Old Order Mennonites in Waterloo County" (unpublished manuscript, University of Waterloo, 1970), 47 pp. (CGC).
14. Isaac G. Martin, *The Story of Waterloo-Markham Mennonite Conference*, p. 9.
15. See Table 2, Chapter 6.
16. *Semi-Annual Conference Minutes,* Berlin, September 12, 1884. Nature of disobedience not specified. Minutes of April 18, 1884, and September 14, 1883, not available (CGC).
17. See L. J. Burkholder. *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario* (Markham: Mennonite Conference of Ontario, 1935), p. 198.
18. Isaac G. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
19. Burkholder, *op. cit.*, pp. 199–200.
20. Isaac G. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
21. H. S. Bender, "Mennonite Church," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, III, pp. 611–16. The designation "Mennonite Church" died slowly, however, because there were too many Mennonite Church families to make the identification of any one of them acceptable or practical without at least one adjective in the name.
22. Isaac G. Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6. For membership figures see *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, 1906, p. 57.

23. Isaac G. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10. These events regarding David Martin transpired between 1917 and 1923, somewhat ahead of our story, but they are best told here. A major later division occurred in 1939 (see Volume II).
26. See *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, 1905–06, and *General Journal of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ*, 1905.
27. H. S. Bender, "Amish Mennonite," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, pp. 93–7.
28. C. H. Smith and H. S. Bender, "Diener-Versammlungen," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II, pp. 56–7.
29. *Ibid.*
30. E. E. Rupp, "Evangelical Mennonite Church" (Defenseless Mennonite Church), *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II, pp. 264–66; J. H. Fretz, "Eastern Amish Mennonite Conference," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II, pp. 130–31; W. B. Weaver, "Central Conference Mennonite Church," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, pp. 540–41; J. S. Umble, "Indiana-Michigan Amish Mennonite Conference," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, III, p. 29; M. Gingerich, "Western District," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV, pp. 932–33.
31. Ivan J. Miller, "Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, pp. 700–2.
32. J. A. Hostetler, "Old Order Amish," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV, p. 44.
33. Orland Gingerich, *The Amish of Canada* (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1972), p. 75.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 80–83.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–85.