

THE AMISH FARM IN TRANSITION: THE
AMISH RESPONSE TO MODERNIZATION IN
NORTHERN INDIANA, 1900-1929

by

AMY GROVER
B.A. University of Central Florida, 2006

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the responses of Amish agrarians in northern Indiana to the mechanization and modernization of rural life in the early twentieth century. This period was marked by a shift towards agribusiness as well as the increased usage of farm machines. In addition to the increased emphasis on farm efficiency, reformers sought to modernize or update rural life. Within the context of these transformations, the Amish maintained their identity by exploring the necessity and the consequences of adapting to life in the modern world. Their responses to modernization defined not only their cultural boundaries in the modern world but also created their identity in twentieth century America. In stark contrast to the ideal of the independent farmer, the Amish used the strength of their community (both Amish and non-Amish) and their agrarian roots to endure and overcome the challenging events of the early twentieth century.

The purpose of this study was to expand the scholarship of Amish studies in northern Indiana as well as place the Amish experience within the context of agrarian historiography. Resources used to examine this period included Amish writings, farm publications from Indiana and data from the agricultural census.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Throughout the twentieth century, Amish communities in the United States have confronted change and compromised with modernity. While casual observers tend to view Amish culture as a reflection of the past, research reveals that Amish life consists of a delicate balance between the acceptance of change and the adherence to tradition. It is also clear that few Amish communities are alike, as their beliefs and experiences tend to differ based on location and religious sect. In reality, Amish culture, often described as “plain” and “simple,” is a complex social and religious organization that underwent significant transformations throughout the twentieth century.

It is the purpose of this study to expand the scholarship of Amish history by exploring the responses of the Amish communities in northern Indiana to the mechanization and modernization of rural life during the first three decades of the twentieth century. This thesis contends that the Amish responded to the transformative events of this period, not as an isolated religious group, but in a manner that reflected their desire to maintain an agrarian lifestyle. The transitional nature of this period is evident from the increased usage of machines in farming as well as the transition to agribusiness. In the midst of this upheaval, the Amish struggled to maintain their identity by exploring the necessity and the consequences of adopting new technology. This approach defined not only their cultural boundaries in the modern world but also created their identity in twentieth century America. In stark contrast to the ideal of the independent farmer, the Amish used the strength of their community (both Amish and non-Amish) to endure and overcome the challenging events of the early twentieth century.

The region of northern Indiana was selected for this study for several reasons. The area is home to one of the largest Amish populations in the United States. The state is a productive agricultural center that experienced great transformations throughout the industrial period. In addition, while much of the scholarship concerning the Amish focuses on the older communities of Pennsylvania, the Amish experience in Indiana is unique and necessitates attention. It is the intention of this study to demonstrate the unique relationship between the Amish and the transformative events of the early twentieth century within the context of the agrarian communities of northern Indiana.

Before examining this period of change, it is important to define the terms that will be used in this study. Modernization refers to the transformation of society into a highly specialized community that places value on efficiency, organization and freedom of choice. This structure leads to the loosening of community bonds and emphasizes a larger society open to regulation. It also moves the basic functions of life away from the home; for example, in a traditional society the sick were almost always cared for at home, a modern society has hospitals for those in the community who are ill.¹ The successful nature of the modernization of rural America could not have occurred without mechanization. Mechanization refers to the implementation of various machines on farms and in agrarian life. Examples include the use of the tractor and automobile. While in the beginning these machines represented luxuries, they later became essential to the creation of a modern rural society. They both represented advances in efficiency and increased

¹ Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan, eds., *The Amish Struggle with Modernity* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 25-30.

the freedoms offered to farmers. Agents of both modernization and mechanization worked hand in hand during the early twentieth century to transform rural life.

When discussing the transformation of agriculture during the early twentieth century, many authors point to modernization and mechanization as the agents of change. In *Every Farm a Factory*, Deborah Fitzgerald argues that the principles of industrial factories were applied to agriculture after World War I. She contends that the infusion of machinery and a new focus on farm efficiency and standardization ushered farming into the modern era, including an increased emphasis on farm management and the modernization of rural life.² In *The Struggle with Modernity*, Donald Kraybill argues that modernization is the process of social change stimulated by the increasing importance of technology. He also contends that that a modernized society is not always a “better” society and that it should always be open to analysis.³ Both Fitzgerald and Kraybill agree that the process of modernization brought many changes to rural life in the early twentieth century.

In order to fully grasp the Amish experience with modernization and mechanization during the twentieth century, it is crucial to understand their history within the United States and in particular, Indiana. Most of the Amish communities in the United States (nearly one thousand) are located in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio.⁴ However, the Amish sect of Christianity stemmed from the sixteenth century Anabaptist movement in Europe, primarily Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The founders of the Anabaptist sect questioned the practices

² Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 22-28.

³ Kraybill and Olshan, eds., *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*, 22-25.

⁴ Steven M. Nolt, *A History of the Amish* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1992), 280.

and beliefs of both the Catholic and the Protestant churches. They defined the principles of their new faith during a covert meeting in Schleithem (a town near the Swiss-German border) in February of 1527. These tenets, now titled “The Schleithem Articles”, included the baptism of adults, a society that practiced mutual aid, pacifism, the rejection of oaths and the separation from those who did not follow the Anabaptist beliefs. These principals put the Anabaptists in contention with both the Catholic Church and surprisingly, the growing Protestant Church.⁵

The persecution from governments and religious authorities that Anabaptists endured has been documented more thoroughly, but the movement also experienced internal fractures. In 1536, Menno Simmons, a former priest, organized Anabaptist followers who later became known as Mennonites.⁶ Even though Simmons efforts created a unity among Anabaptists in the Netherlands and abroad, many members continued to promote their own interpretations of the Schleithem Articles. Jacob Amman, a leader of the Swiss Mennonites, advocated a strict interpretation of the article concerning “The Ban” or the avoidance of those who faltered in their faith. While many Mennonites interpreted this as only applicable in religious settings, Amman believed that it should also apply to social avoidance. It is this core belief that defines the modern Amish practice of shunning and distinguishes them from the Mennonites. Although the Amish trace their origins to Amman, many possess little admiration for the man. Modern historians have characterized him as a strict leader intent on increasing his own power within the sect, something that places him in stark contrast to the modern Amish ideal of humility.

⁵ John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 28-29.

⁶Ibid., 29.

Nevertheless, the Amish continue to adhere to the practice of strict religious and social shunning of disgraced former members.⁷

During the seventeenth century the governments of Switzerland and the Rhine Valley in Germany first encouraged and then forced the emigration of the Amish. Few Amish communities remained in their places of origin by the eighteenth century.⁸ Many Amish fled to the Netherlands, but North America was also a popular destination.⁹ The two periods in which the largest number of Amish immigrated to the United States were in the mid-eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ In North America, almost all Mennonite and Amish immigrants settled in Pennsylvania, the colony established by William Penn, a Quaker, who promoted religious tolerance.¹¹ Throughout the nineteenth century, the Amish migrated to other states with the most popular being Ohio and Indiana. A few settlements existed in southern states; however, in general, the Amish did not settle in states where slavery was legal.¹² While the Amish did not differ greatly from their neighbors during this period, they did make a concerted effort to establish close-knit communities wherever they settled to preserve their cultural traditions.¹³

The history of Amish settlements in Indiana dates back to the early nineteenth century. The story of their migration is very similar to their non-Amish neighbors during this period.

⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁸ Ibid., 44.

⁹ Ibid., 47.

¹⁰ Donald B. Kraybill, ed., *The Amish and the State*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 6.

¹¹ Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed., 48.

¹² Dorothy O. Pratt, *Shipshewana: an Indiana Amish Community* (Bloomington, IN: Quarry Books, 2004), 4. The reasoning behind their anti-slavery stance was two-fold. Apart from their moral objections, they viewed the lifestyles of slave owners as ostentatious. They also had no need for slaves.

¹³ Ibid., 8.

These similarities have less to do with the religious beliefs and lifestyle of the Amish and more with the universal desire for success. Each settler wanted to find a region that provided agricultural opportunities, access to international markets and a place of social acceptance.¹⁴ During the nineteenth century, the market economy allowed for mobility among the Amish and non-Amish populations. Indiana was a popular destination because it had a vast amount of acreage that promised opportunity and success to early American farmers. Therefore, throughout the nineteenth century, Indiana experienced an immense growth in population. In 1820 the population was 147,178, in 1900 that number increased to 2,516,462.¹⁵

The geographic features of northern Indiana provided an adequate settlement for the agriculturally minded Amish. The region lies in lowland areas. While there is an abundance of fertile soil in the five sub-regions that create the area, much of the land is also prone to flooding that creates marshes. It was not until the improvement of modern drainage systems that the northern counties became suitable for settlement and farming. In fact, Indiana had a poor reputation with settlers because of its damp climate and the high occurrence of diseases such as malaria.¹⁶ This reputation led to the low population figures of the early nineteenth century.

¹⁴ Thomas J. Meyers and Steven M. Nolt, *An Amish Patchwork* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 23.

¹⁵ United States Census Office, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850. Embracing a statistical view of each of the States and Territories, arranged by counties, towns, etc...* (Washington, D.C.: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853) ix. U.S. Census Bureau, accessed 2 October 2011; available from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1850.html>. United States Census Office, *Volume 1: Population: Population of States and Territories* (Washington, D.C.: 1901), xviii. U.S. Census Bureau, accessed 2 October 2011; available from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1900.html>. The data for the population of Indiana in the year 1820 can be found in the 1850 census. The year 1820 was selected because that was the first census taken after Indiana became a state.

¹⁶ John D. Barnhart and Dorothy L. Riker, *Indiana to 1816: The Colonial Period* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana History Society, 1971), 7-8.

In 1840, four Amish men from Pennsylvania set out to explore the Midwest.¹⁷ Using the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers the men traveled to Iowa and found suitable land. On their way back, they changed their route and explored northern Indiana and found that the area presented even better opportunities than Iowa.¹⁸ They reported that the area was suitable for farming and that many of the settlers were happy living in Indiana. Due to this satisfactory report, four young Amish families moved to the area and established what would later be known as the Elkhart-Lagrange settlement (see fig. 1).¹⁹

The new settlement proved to be challenging in many ways for the Amish. At first, the families moved to the Elkhart area but soon realized that the land was too expensive. While moving to LaGrange provided cheaper land prices, creating productive farmland out of the thick forests proved to be difficult. The Amish worked together, burning the forests and planting a few crops at a time. In addition to the deforestation, the Amish contended with draining the marshland that covered the area. The drainage issue affected all farmers in the region. Farmers had to lay tile in their fields and guide the runoff to a nearby stream. If this was not successful, the farmers had to dig ditches to the water source. In some instances, the ditch digging was a county effort organized by a surveyor.²⁰ Progress continued as the settlement expanded and more Amish communities migrated to the area.²¹

¹⁷ Meyers and Nolt, *An Amish Patchwork*, 31.

¹⁸ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 10.

¹⁹ Meyers and Nolt, *An Amish Patchwork*, 129.

²⁰ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 12.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

INDIANA

COUNTIES, PRINCIPAL CITIES, AND RIVERS



Figure 1 A map of Indiana showing county borders. Elkhart and LaGrange are located in north central Indiana and are shaded in the map. Map from the 1930 Census of Population and Housing.

The success of the Amish culture in the United States and in Indiana was contingent upon their economic success.²² For the majority of their history, the Amish relied on farming as their primary source of income and sustenance. Aside from its economic benefits, farming represented an expression of their Christian belief that tilling the soil strengthened their relationship with God.²³ As skilled farmers working together as a community, they practiced crop rotation and diversification, and used the knowledge acquired by their ancestors in Europe to increase production and gain respect from their neighbors.²⁴ The first Amish immigrants in Pennsylvania sought land high in limestone and diligently worked to restore depleted lands, some of which had been abandoned by Scotch-Irish immigrants.²⁵ Along with producing staple crops such as corn, oats, rye, and hay, the Amish preferred farms that included both woodlands and pastures for raising a variety of livestock.²⁶

Even though the Amish maintained a separation from certain aspects of secular society, they fully participated in the secular agricultural market. While they emphasized subsistence agriculture, they also produced and sold cash crops. In 1838, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Amish farmers began growing tobacco to sell for profit; by 1929 eighty-five percent participated in the production of tobacco. During this period, regions with large Amish populations had increased levels of tobacco production due their inclination towards manual labor. The intensive process

²² Ibid., 8.

²³ Donald B. Kraybill and Steven M. Nolt, *Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits (Center Books in Anabaptist Studies)*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 22.

²⁴ Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed., 114. Contemporaries of the Anabaptists in Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century recognized their skills as farmers. As the Anabaptists fled their homelands to escape persecution, they often settled in inhospitable regions. This not only tested their farming skills but also forced them to practice crop rotation as well as planting crops to nourish the soil. Sources detail that when the Anabaptists were expelled from Markkirch in 1712, the area experienced economic setbacks.

²⁵ Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed., 118-119. Kraybill and Nolt, *Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits (Center Books in Anabaptist Studies)*, 2nd ed., 21.

²⁶ Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed., 119.

of cultivating and curing tobacco must be done by hand; therefore, it was an activity that required the participation of the entire family.²⁷ In 1922, the *New York Times* reported that Pennsylvania ranked second in the amount of acres devoted to tobacco production and that Lancaster produced two-thirds of the state's crop. The farmers in Lancaster County produced a dark tobacco used for cigar filler and was often mixed with other varieties.²⁸ The Amish do permit men to smoke cigars and pipes but they do not smoke cigarettes. They reasoned that cigarettes are "worldly" or representative of materialism.²⁹

Some question their involvement in the market of farm products due the Amish tenet of separation from secular society and their rejection of materialism; however, separation should not be confused with a self-imposed exile. While the Amish tend to stay within their own communities, complete isolation from the secular world was impossible and impractical. As with any other citizen, federal, state and local governments required taxes from the Amish and, in times of war, military service. The requirement of military service will be explored later as Amish communities stood up to both government forces as well as societal pressures to obtain the status of conscientious objector and avoid participation in wartime activities. The Amish had other expenses in addition to taxes, including mortgages and various items that could not be produced at home or were more practical to purchase. Today, it is a common assumption that the Amish lifestyle requires no capital; however, while they do not incur debt from modern amenities such as automobiles or electricity, they have always purchased necessities and paid their taxes, both of which require money. The methods by which the Amish earned money and

²⁷ Ibid., 121.

²⁸ "Pennsylvania is 2d Tobacco State," *New York Times*, 21 March 1922, (accessed 2 October 2011). available from: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FB0F1EF7395D14738DDDA80A94DB405B828EF1D3#>.

²⁹ Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed., 165.

the ways in which they spent their incomes during the period under study will be examined within the context of their system of beliefs and practices.

In the early twentieth century, industrialization and modernization revolutionized the lives of most Americans. Industrialization ushered in the era of efficiency, mass production, the widespread availability of goods, and the expansion of cities while modernization employed the use of science and technology to enhance food production, promoted standardization, reformed government institutions, and simplified everyday life with the use of modern conveniences. While many American farm families transitioned cautiously during this period, the Amish faced difficult decisions. They feared that these changes would lead to the demise of their communities and, in turn, their unique set of religious beliefs.

The events of the twentieth century also compromised the status of the Amish within their rural communities. In addition to their struggle with farming, for the first time, the Amish differed from their neighbors in their outward appearance. Their differences in appearance and lifestyle transformed the Amish from quiet neighbors into a curiosity that attracted the attention of mainstream Americans.³⁰ The increased interest in the Amish from secular American society also included a surge in academic studies of the cultural and religious history of the sect. Modern scholars examine the Amish, not as an isolated anomaly, but as a unique culture interacting with their surroundings and modernity on their own terms. They also explore the Amish relationship with agriculture as farming methods transformed during the early twentieth century due to mechanization and the rise in corporate agriculture. This transformation will be explored more in depth in the next chapter.

³⁰ Meyers and Nolt, *An Amish Patchwork: Indiana's Old Orders in the Modern World*, 127.

In the early period of Amish studies, many of the works examined the unique features of Amish culture that set them apart from secular society. It was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that scholars began to explore the complexities of Amish life in the United States. Much of this transition can be attributed to the scholarship of John A. Hostetler, Donald Kraybill, Steven Nolt, Thomas Myers, and Marc Olshan. The following section will examine the historiography of the Amish.

In 1963, John A. Hostetler published *Amish Society*, an in-depth study of the Amish way of life in modern America. After the first edition was published in 1963, Hostetler produced three more editions, with the most recent in 1993; each edition reflects the period in which it was published. For example, when the first edition was published in 1963, many scholars believed that Amish society was on the decline and that by the new millennium, it would cease to exist. However, by the fourth edition in 1993, it was clear that the Amish communities in the United States were growing rather than disappearing.³¹ Hostetler argued that there were several misconceptions regarding Amish culture and he sought to provide a clear examination of Amish life and beliefs. While most of the study concentrated on the unique aspects of Amish culture, Hostetler did explore the ways the Amish dealt with modernity, something he defined as “the acceptance of technology and material culture, as distinguished from assimilation, meaning the absorption of the group into the dominate society.”³² He argued that all Amish settlements have had to come to terms with modernization and make certain concessions in response to the changes occurring inside and outside of their communities. The increased use of technology in

³¹ Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed., ix.

³²Ibid., 364.

the United States caused conflicts in many Amish churches. Some of the more conservative Amish left their settlements to found new churches based on their strict beliefs.³³ An example of this is the split of the Beachy church over acceptance of the automobile and electricity. The split occurred in 1927 and many Amish converted to the Beachy church in order to have more freedom to integrate technology into their lives such as the automobile and the telephone.³⁴ Many authors who published after Hostetler continued his approach, clarifying common misconceptions about the Amish.

In 1989, Donald Kraybill published *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, a study that examined the growth of Amish culture in the modern world. Kraybill argued that the Amish have dealt with modernity by compromising when necessary, accepting reasonable changes and resisting unacceptable reforms. His approach is unique in that he not only explored the “riddle” of how the Amish exist in the modern world but also the “riddle” the Amish see when they examine progress. He argues that the Amish are just as perplexed when examining secular society that demonstrates a high regard for material things even at the expense of damaging the environment and the loss of community and traditional values. By exploring the Amish view of American culture, Kraybill attempted to provide a better understanding of both the Amish and their neighbors.³⁵ While similar to Hostetler in that he closely examined Amish culture, he also spent an equal amount of time dedicated to the study of the relationship between the Amish and modernization, including their relationship with technology. The authors also differ in that while

³³ Ibid., 365.

³⁴ Ibid., 283.

³⁵ Donald Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), vii.

Hostetler provided an analysis of all the Amish communities in the United States, Kraybill only examined Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Kraybill's more recent works concentrated less on the cultural uniqueness of the Amish and more on their interactions during the twentieth century. For example, in 1993, he edited a collection of essays entitled, *The Amish and the State*. These essays explored the tumultuous relationship between governments and the Amish. The text includes essays concerning education, social security and other issues related to taxation. The authors aimed to treat the study of the Amish with "serious attention" rather than observations on the simplicity of Amish life.³⁶ Similar to their Anabaptist ancestors' conflicts with authority, each author maintained that the Amish are extremely active in their quest to freely practice their religion. For example, in the essay "Education and Schooling" Thomas Meyers demonstrated that many Amish families went to court to protect their system of education, which employs the traditional one room schoolhouse and no compulsory education after the eighth grade.³⁷ Beyond education, the Amish sued over issues such as the social security tax and conflicts with the IRS. The essays of this text differ from earlier works in that they demonstrated the agency of the Amish. It is clear that the Amish could not have survived the twentieth century if they had not fought to uphold their beliefs when so many of their views contrasted with official policies.

Shortly after editing and contributing to *The Amish and the State*, Kraybill (with Marc Olshan) edited another volume entitled *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*. This text explored the compromises the Amish have made with modernity (the authors define modernity as

³⁶ Kraybill, ed., *The Amish and the State*, 2nd ed., ix.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

scientific advancement or progress) and the consequences of those decisions. Similar to *The Amish and the State*, this text examined both the reactions of the Amish to change and their actions in response to those transformations. For example, in the essay “Lunch Pails and Factories,” Thomas Meyers explored the increasing number of Indiana Amish working in recreational vehicle factories. In the essay, he argued that due to population growth and the scarcity of land, many Amish left the farm to work in the factory. However, he also demonstrates their move to factory work, although not desirable, was a necessary factor in their survival.³⁸

In *Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits*, Donald Kraybill and Steven Nolt examine the Amish exodus off the farm and into the workplace. The authors argue that several factors, including the limited availability of farmland, growing population and increasing land prices, encouraged the Amish to abandon farming and move into other forms of employment.³⁹ Similar to Kraybill’s earlier text, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, this text only examined the Amish settlements in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. One of the most important themes of the text is the juxtaposition of Amish participation in the market economy and the determination to remain humble and loyal to their religious beliefs. The authors also compare the small Amish businesses to non-Amish small businesses; few Amish enterprises fail even though small business ownership is often filled with risks.⁴⁰

Aside from the contributions of Donald Kraybill, several other authors have published important texts in the study of the Amish. In 1992, Steven Nolt produced a narrative study

³⁸ Kraybill and Olshan, ed. *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*, 180.

³⁹ Kraybill and Nolt, *Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits*, 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xi.

entitled, *A History of the Amish*. While the scope of this text is a broad study of the Amish as a whole (it includes all Amish communities in the United States), the author provides an interesting analysis of the Amish experience through their three hundred year history. While in organization, this text is very similar to Hostetler's *Amish Society*; it differs in that it examined the Amish within the context of their surroundings. For example, when discussing the World War I, Nolt not only assesses Amish objections to the war but he also explored the anti-German sentiment that caused many Americans to believe the Amish were sympathetic to the German cause. It is this type of analysis that allows the reader to fully understand twentieth century Amish history.⁴¹

While these studies have expanded the scope of Amish history, most of their attention concerns the Amish of Pennsylvania. Few studies examine the Amish communities of Indiana; however, two recent studies have added to the historiography. In 2004, Dorothy Pratt published *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community* and in 2005, Steven Nolt and Thomas Myers published *An Amish Patchwork*. Both of these works are narratives that examine the history of the Amish in northern Indiana. In *Shipshewana*, Pratt attempted to create a better understanding of Amish culture in LaGrange County and demonstrated how they not only “survived” but also continue to “thrive.”⁴² One unique aspect of her argument is that she views the Amish as an ethnic group rather than a religious group, stating that this method “opens valuable avenues of analysis, particularly regarding their resistance to change.”⁴³ The other text, *An Amish Patchwork*, provides a shorter narrative of the Amish culture and history in Indiana. The short

⁴¹ Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, 226.

⁴² Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

text attempts to define Amish culture in a time when many people question several Amish practices. For example, the authors describe the numerous horses and buggies that travel to Wal-Mart every day.⁴⁴

In the larger context of agrarian historiography, the experiences of the Amish are rarely recounted. However, it is crucial to examine these works when discussing the Amish in order to understand the agrarian perspective. Texts used in this study include: *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture* by Dennis Nordin and Roy V. Scott, *Mixed Harvest: The Second Great Transformation in the Rural North 1870-1930* by Hal S. Burton and *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* by Deborah Fitzgerald. These studies examined the transformations that occurred in farming and rural life throughout the twentieth century in various regions of the United States. Despite their examination of different geographic regions, all of these texts explored common themes: the consequences of mechanization on agriculture and rural life, the modernization of farming (mainly the transition to agribusiness) and the emphasis on rural reform in the early twentieth century. While all of these issues greatly impacted the Amish, they received little to no attention in the literature. By examining the Amish accounts and corroborating their experiences and responses to these issues with those of other agrarians, it is clear the Amish deserve a place in agrarian historiography.

In addition to the secondary resources listed above, this study will utilize several primary source documents to further the scholarship of Amish studies. Some of the most valuable sources used are the personal stories of Amish men and women who lived in northern Indiana in the

⁴⁴ Meyers and Nolt, *An Amish Patchwork*, 1.

early twentieth century. These accounts have been preserved by two Amish editors, Freeman Yoder and Lizzie Yoder, in a book titled, *Echoes of the Past*. The collection holds approximately 100 entries that provide a unique insight into the daily lives of the Amish residents of northern Indiana (as well as other locations across the country) during the period from 1910-1940. In reading these accounts, the agrarian identity of the Amish is clear. Many of the participants recollect their experiences on the farm, including farming methods. They also recounted their experiences with education, daily diets and relationships with their communities (Amish and non-Amish). Interestingly, they rarely recall specific experiences regarding their faith, instead choosing to focus on the transformations that occurred in agriculture and rural communities during this period. While the specific details of these accounts are relative to their location in northern Indiana, in general, they are representative of Amish experiences in other parts of the country. This is evidenced by the facts that a few of the reports included in the collections were actually written by Amish men and women who were raised in other parts of the United States.

Along with the Amish records, other primary sources will be used to better understand the agrarian experience in northern Indiana during this period. The United States Census of Population and Housing will be used to collect data regarding the development of agriculture during the early twentieth century. The census provides statistics for farm property, machinery, population and other important data sets. *The Indiana Farmer*, a publication based in Indianapolis also provided several insights into the experiences and the actions of the farm communities of Indiana. These sources, when examined together, provided a clear examination of Amish life in early twentieth century Indiana.

While the general historiography of the Amish is extensive, there are several gaps in relation to the Amish of Indiana and their development during the early twentieth century. The events of this period not only transformed agrarian life but also defined the Amish identity of the modern era. In order to comprehend the Amish sect, it is crucial to examine their agency concerning the changes spurred on by modernization and mechanization. In addition, studies of the Amish have neglected to examine their interactions with the non-Amish neighbors. While the Amish relied on their communities for survival, they were also part of larger rural communities. These interactions provide valuable information about the Amish relationship with modernity.

This study will fill several of the gaps mentioned above in agrarian and Amish historiography. It demonstrates the responses of small farmers (including the Amish) to the transformative events of the early twentieth century. The Amish provide an important perspective in the overall historiography of rural reform as their responses were based in their religious and agrarian ideals. Many agrarians experienced similar dilemmas and studies of the Amish can contribute to a better overall understanding of their responses during this period. In addition, this study will also facilitate a better understanding of the present Amish communities in Indiana and the United States. Due to their huge success as entrepreneurs in several industries, including tourism and manufacturing, the Amish have garnered a large amount of interest from the public at large. In order to fully grasp their identity in the twenty-first century, it is crucial to examine the early twentieth century. Their agency in the current century is reflective of their responses to the transformative events of the previous century.

It is the intention of this study to explore the Amish of northern Indiana during the early twentieth century by examining their responses to modernization and mechanization as well as their relationships with their non-Amish neighbors. The following chapters will examine the Amish experience during this period within the context of agrarian history. The second chapter will explore the period from 1900-1920, examining the economic status of farming during the “Golden Age” of agriculture as well as the innovations of farm machinery. The third chapter will examine the twenties, including the economic downturn following World War I as well as the social implications of modernization on rural life. Finally, the conclusion will analyze the Amish experience in the early twentieth century and seek to understand how these developments transformed the Amish identity in modern America.

CHAPTER II: 1900-1920: The “Golden Age” of Farming

The transformative nature of the nineteenth century continued into the twentieth. Modernization not only challenged the techniques used by farmers but also created new ideas of what it meant to live an agrarian lifestyle.⁴⁵ As new innovations promised easier and more productive work environments, farming in the United States began to transition from a way of life to a way to make a living.⁴⁶ Midwestern agrarians weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the modern life full of innovation and reform as they struggled to maintain their existence. The Amish experienced the shift to modernity as farmers struggling to maintain their way of life, including upholding their religious doctrines.⁴⁷

It is not the intention of this study to devalue the cultural differences between the Amish and secular farmers but rather to argue that despite their differences in lifestyle, their experiences of and reactions to change were remarkably similar. Modernization meant the introduction of new technology, such as the tractor and the automobile and the social shifts that accompanied the innovations. In addition to the mechanization of farming, modernization included the increase of governmental regulation in rural life. The best example of this is the education reform of rural schools during the early twentieth century. It is the intention of this chapter to examine the actions of the Amish communities of northern Indiana in response to the transformations of the early twentieth century in American rural life. The study of the development of midwestern

⁴⁵ Hal S. Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 8. Dennis S. Nordin and Roy V. Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 8.

⁴⁶ Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 8.

⁴⁷ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 8.

agriculture during the period from 1900 to 1920 is essential to the understanding of how the Amish related and responded to the economic hardships faced during the twenties and beyond.

Similar to their neighbors, the Amish grappled with the issue of mechanization during an unstable economic period in the Midwest. The period between 1900 and 1920 is often referred to as the “golden age” in agriculture.⁴⁸ This outlook is supported by the increase in farm prices and land values.⁴⁹ In Indiana, data from the 1920 census supports this claim. In 1900, all farm property in the state was valued at roughly one billion dollars; by 1920, that number tripled. In addition, the value of crops increased significantly from 1910 to 1920. For example, in 1910, wheat was valued at sixteen dollars per acre; by 1920 it was valued at thirty-five dollars per acre.⁵⁰ However, in *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur*, Dennis Nordin and Roy Scott describe this period as merely a façade of high prices and increasing land values hiding a time of uncertainty for midwestern farmers.⁵¹ Nordin and Scott argue that although prices and land value did increase, when other variables are examined, it is clear that not everyone prospered during this period.

For example, Nordin and Scott explore the tenancy rates of the Midwest. In 1900, 39.5 percent of the farmers in the region were tenants. By 1920, that number increased to 45.7

⁴⁸ Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (Yale Agrarian Studies Series) (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 17.

⁴⁹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 5: Agriculture: General Report and Analytical Tables* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 32. U.S. Census Bureau, (accessed 2 October 2011); available from:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1920.html>. The average value of all farm property nearly quadrupled from 1900 to 1920. R. Douglas Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R Dee, 2003), 10.

⁵⁰ ⁵⁰ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 6. Agriculture. Report for the states, with statistics for counties and a summary for the United States and the North, South, and West.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 325, 332. U.S. Census Bureau, (accessed 2 October 2011); available from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1920.html>.

⁵¹ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 28-29.

percent.⁵² Census data for Indiana confirms this trend towards tenancy. In 1910, 64,687 farmers were tenants. That number increased to 65,587 in 1920. While that increase may be minimal, it is telling when examining the data of farm owners. In 1910 there were 148,501 farm owners in the state. In 1920 the number of farm owners decreased to 137,210.⁵³

Farmers received advice regarding tenancy from publications such as *The Indiana Farmer*. An article from 1908 titled “Landlord and Tenant” provided suggestions for a successful relationship between the landlord and the tenant. The advice included having a longer contracted rental period rather than a short lease, equal investment from both parties for farm implements and stock, and flexibility. The article contended that if these suggestions were followed, the tenant would be more invested in the success of the farm and the upkeep of the land, profiting themselves and the landlord.⁵⁴ Another article, published in 1911, blamed “cash tenants” (tenants who paid rent in cash instead of crops or livestock) for ruining the land because they were focused on profits instead of tending the soil. This article also promoted the mutual investment from landlord and tenant in order to receive the best results.⁵⁵

Most of the articles published in *The Indiana Farmer* regarding tenant farming approached the subject in the same manner. Farmers had to follow a set of guidelines carefully as tenant farming could ruin all parties involved, including the land. The Amish also participated in tenant farming. Many Amish families rented farms as a step towards ownership. However, most

⁵² Ibid., 28.

⁵³ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 6. Agriculture*, 17, 326.

⁵⁴ “Landlord and Tenant,” *The Indiana Farmer*, February 15, 1908, Vol. 63, No. 7, Pg. 8. Purdue University Libraries. (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

⁵⁵ “The Tenant Farmer,” *The Indiana Farmer*, October, 1911. Vol. 66, No. 40, Pg. 8. Purdue University Libraries. (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

families rented from another Amish family and in many cases, they rented from close relatives. Renting seemed to be common among young families as they saved before purchasing their first farm.⁵⁶ The relationship between landlord and tenant as described in *The Indiana Farmer* and by the Amish differ in that while the *Farmer* feared tenants ruined the land and offered several suggestions for the protection of both parties, the Amish accounts describe the experience as more of a familial duty rather than a business relationship.

In addition to the increase in tenancy rates in the Midwest, farm ownership decreased as many farmers chose different occupations away from the farm. The trend of farmers opting for other careers began in the late nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth.⁵⁷ The 1920 census indicates that the urban population of the United States increased by twenty-eight percent from 1910 to 1920; however, the rural population increased by only three percent during the same period. In Indiana, the rural population declined by seven percent from 1910 to 1920, indicating that less than half of the state's population was rural at that time.⁵⁸ One reason for this decline in rural population was the introduction of the Ford Model T in 1908. The introduction of a less expensive vehicle made moving to the city an attainable goal for rural residents. The social implications of this shift will be explored later in this section. In addition, R. Douglas Hurt points out that being a farmer and living in a rural part of the state do not necessarily go hand in hand and that the decline in the farm population began well before the twentieth century.⁵⁹ This argument is supported by the definition of rural included in the 1920 census. The census defines

⁵⁶ Emma Byler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 129. David Hostetler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 241. Sarah Hostetler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 242.

⁵⁷ Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 3.

⁵⁸ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 6. Agriculture*, 323.

⁵⁹ Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 3.

rural as being any person living outside of an incorporated area with 2,500 or more residents. While the definition is included in the section of the census dedicated to the recording of agricultural data, the Census Bureau admits that by that definition not all residents considered rural in the census were farmers.⁶⁰

In addition to the contemplation of increasing tenancy rates and the decline of farm ownership, Nordin and Scott also examine the increase of taxes along with land values. It is important to note the rise in taxes because unlike the purchase of automobiles and farm machinery, the Amish had to raise enough capital to pay taxes to the federal and state governments. Higher taxes forced farmers to move to less expensive areas or find another occupation. One reason for the increase in taxes was the increase in the average size of farms. Farmers purchased more land to keep up with increased demand and as they purchased more land, they had to pay larger taxes.⁶¹ However, in the Midwest, the tax rates were increasing along with land purchases. For example, in 1900 the average rate was twenty-six cents per acre and increased to \$1.10 per acre by 1920.⁶² Even with accounting for inflation, farmers felt the strain of taxation during this period. In 1908, *The Indiana Farmer* encouraged farmers to “make noise” about high taxes. The article stated that taxation cost farmers’ a third of their income. Another article blamed too many public works (such as new buildings and paved roads) for the increasing taxes.⁶³ The taxes increased to stay on par with rising land values.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 5: Agriculture*, 23.

⁶¹ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 29.

⁶² Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 28.

⁶³ “Taxes Too High,” *The Indiana Farmer*, April 6, 1908. Vol. 63, No. 14, Pg. 10. Purdue University Libraries. (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

⁶⁴ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 28.

On the surface it seems as though Indiana farmers accrued a large amount of debt during this period. According to the United States Census Bureau's agricultural census, in 1900, the amount of farm debt in Indiana was \$46,751,153 and it increased to \$57,486,582 in 1910. By 1920, the total amount of farm debt was \$105,256,239.⁶⁵ There is some argument in the literature as to how the farmers accrued this debt. Nordin and Scott suggest that most of their capital was spent on farm improvements such as land gain and farm buildings rather than home conveniences and technological innovations.⁶⁶ This assertion is supported by Deborah Fitzgerald who argues that prior to the 1920s farmers were not spending money on new inventions, rather they continued using more traditional methods such as farm animals or hired hands.⁶⁷ However, census data for the state of Indiana does not fully support this argument. The value of farm implements and machinery in the state went from \$27,330,370 in 1900 to \$127,403,086 in 1920.⁶⁸ In addition to the increasing value of farm implements, farm tenants were also spending more on farm improvements. While the number of acres improved by farm owners decreased by 8.4 percent from 1910 to 1920; the number of acres improved by tenants increased by 11.7 percent in the same period. The decrease in the number of acres improved by farm owners can be explained by an overall decline in the number of acres farmed by owners and a large increase in the number of acres farmed by tenants.⁶⁹ It is clear, when examining the census data that Indiana farmers were spending money to improve their land and production.

⁶⁵ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 6. Agriculture*, 327.

⁶⁶ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 42.

⁶⁷ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 17. Fitzgerald also asserts that the tractor was not usable during this period as well.

⁶⁸ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 6. Agriculture*, 325.

⁶⁹ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 6*, 145.

Despite the evidence that the “Golden Age” of farming was not as prosperous as its name implies, most farmers in the Midwest were pleased with their economic situations.⁷⁰ Even though farm values do not represent the entire story, farmers in the United States saw their farm values nearly double in the decade from 1910 to 1920 and their futures seemed secure.⁷¹ Farmers believed they were doing well and continued to increase production.

In contrast to Nordin and Scott’s argument that the Midwest was not as profitable during this period as it appears, R. Douglas Hurt argues that midwestern farmers experienced the most prosperity when compared to other farmers in the United States. He contends that midwestern farmers were content with their situation but he does admit that they usually omitted their wage or cost of labor and thus it appeared their profits were greater.⁷² In Indiana, this is an accurate assessment as labor costs increased by a little over \$15,000,000 from 1910 to 1920. This was not necessarily because farmers were hiring more laborers; farm wages increased significantly during this period.⁷³ One Indiana farmer blamed the high cost of labor on increased movement to cities. He wrote a letter to *The Indiana Farmer* in response to a boycott of meat over high prices. In his letter he explained that as farm costs, such as labor, machinery, livestock, and land, increased, the prices of farm products also increased. He encouraged people complaining about prices to abandon the city and try farming themselves.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, farms in the Midwest produced more and earned more during this time than any period prior.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 28-29.

⁷¹ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 5: Agriculture*, 24.

⁷² Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 9.

⁷³ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 6. Agriculture*, 327.

⁷⁴ “Back to the Farm,” *The Indiana Farmer*, February 26, 190. Vol. 65, No. 9, Pg. 7. Purdue University Libraries. (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

⁷⁵ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 6. Agriculture*, 331.

This increase in production was met with success for several reasons. During the early twentieth century, the trend towards urbanization continued with many young Americans moving into city centers rather than staying on the farm. For example, in 1910, 54.2 percent of the population was rural compared to 48.6 percent in 1920.⁷⁶ As previously noted, in Indiana, the rural population saw a seven percent decrease during the same period.⁷⁷ Many young adults left the farm for city jobs that required fewer working hours and higher pay.⁷⁸ As more and more people moved to cities, there was a higher demand for food and farm products.⁷⁹ Farmers across America increased their efforts to expand production in order to meet the high demand. Their efforts were further encouraged by the onset of World War I. In Europe, many farmers left their homes and farms to fight in the war. The war led to an increased demand for American products overseas. A subsequent increase in profits and cash for investment encouraged farmers to spend more on improving production.⁸⁰

This emphasis on farm production and efficiency produced a new philosophy for American agriculture. The goal of this new brand of farming was not subsistence, but rather to treat farming as a modern business.⁸¹ In fact, while most farmers continued to farm using traditional methods, their mentality shifted towards commercial agriculture.⁸² As a modern

⁷⁶ *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 5: Agriculture*, 24.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁷⁸ Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 9.

⁷⁹ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 17. Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 43.

⁸⁰ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 19.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁸² Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 1.

business, the traits of efficiency and standardization were prized.⁸³ Farming “should not only be a scientific occupation but a successful business.”⁸⁴ The promoters of this ideology included “bankers, insurance executives, and federal agents...as well as new professional groups coming out of agricultural colleges.”⁸⁵ Farmers were assured that there were markets available for their products and that if their farms were efficient, they would produce more and be successful.⁸⁶

Agricultural colleges promoted the use of science to modernize the farm. Midwestern farmers demonstrated enthusiasm for these programs as enrollment numbers grew and the universities expanded and added new programs.⁸⁷ Nowhere was the importance of farm education clearer than in the pages of *The Indiana Farmer*. The front page of the January 1900 edition included a lengthy article concerning the necessity of education for farmers. The article explained that farmers needed an education, not in the classics, but in the way to properly run a farm and secure their interests. While the author noted the unpopularity of education among farmers in previous years, he argued that it was due to the impractical nature of education and not resentment towards learning on the part of the farmer.⁸⁸

One of the greatest innovations of agricultural education in the early twentieth century was the Cooperative Extension Service. The Service was created by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914

⁸³ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 21.

⁸⁴ “Methods of Marketing,” *The Indiana Farmer*, December 11, 1915. Vol. 70, No. 11, Pg. 15. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011). available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

⁸⁵ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 22.

⁸⁶ “Producing Bigger Yields of Food Crops,” *The Indiana Farmer* May 12, 1908. Vol. 72, No. 19, Pg. 1. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

⁸⁷ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 31.

⁸⁸ “The Educated Farmer,” *The Indiana Farmer*, January 6, 1900. Vol. 55, No. 1. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

and aimed to bring agricultural educators to farms in order to increase the knowledge of scientific as well as efficient farming.⁸⁹ In contrast with previous years, the act assigned an agricultural agent to each county instead of educators working on a lecture circuit. It was the responsibility of the county agent to provide the farms of that area with up-to-date practices and techniques.⁹⁰ The county agents were connected to land grant universities, which conducted farm experiments. The universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) gained useful information from these experiments and it was passed on to individual farmers through the agents in the form of demonstrations. This method was thought to be a more successful teaching method than the use of periodic farm institutes or the distribution of informational pamphlets.⁹¹ Farmers also received advice from agricultural colleges through reports found in *The Indiana Farmer*. Articles included information on marketing tools, advice on orchards, facts about fertilizers, and solutions for farm issues.⁹²

In addition to the promotion of scientific farming, those focused on transforming agriculture into a business sought to bring the same techniques used in factories to the farm. In *Every Farm a Factory*, Deborah Fitzgerald examines the five components of a factory: “large-scale production, specialized machines, standardization of processes and products, reliance on managerial (rather than artisan) expertise, and a continual evocation of “efficiency” as a

⁸⁹ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 34.

⁹⁰ John L. Shover, *First Majority, Last Minority: the Transforming of Rural Life in America* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 231.

⁹¹ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 35.

⁹² “Market Apples in Baskets,” *The Indiana Farmer*, October 21, 1916. Vol. 71, No. 43, Pg. 5. Purdue University Libraries. (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>. “Stop Winter Killing by Hardening Trees,” *The Indiana Farmer*, October 14, 1916. Vol. 71, No. 42, Pg. 7. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>. “Use 3-12 Fertilizer for Wheat Crop,” *The Indiana Farmer*, August 26, 1916. Vol. 71, No. 35, Pg. 18. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

production mandate.”⁹³ She argues that those in favor of an industrialized approach to business viewed agriculture as a “nest of chaos” in the early twentieth century.⁹⁴ While there were few changes in the day-to-day practice of agriculture during this period, it is clear that farmers began to acknowledge the transformations. Farmers interested in expanding their business sought the hybrid seeds that were usually produced using techniques gained from experiments conducted by land grant universities.⁹⁵ This change is also apparent when reading *The Indiana Farmer*. As the first two decades of the twentieth century progressed, many articles encouraged further education for farmers as well as a more business-minded approach to farm management. The publication clearly tells farmers that in order to be successful, they must adapt to this new style of farming.⁹⁶ In the early decades of the twentieth century, the Golden Age of agriculture represented not only a growth in profits and production but also fundamental changes in the practice and philosophy of farming.

The growing departure from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture transformed the nature of rural life in Indiana. This change was significant for the Midwest region where farming was multigenerational and viewed as a heritage and in contrast to the West, where most of the farmers were new to agriculture and viewed farming as a business from the start.⁹⁷ This is not to imply that midwestern farmers resented western success or did not wish to make profits;

⁹³ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 23.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁹⁵ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 45.

⁹⁶ “Farm Management: Education and Business Methods Count in Successful Farming,” *The Indiana Farmer*, February 28, 1914. Vol. 69, No. 9, Pg. 5. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

⁹⁷ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 15.

however, this shift in the nature of farming had a profound effect on agrarian culture and its influence in the decades since is clear.⁹⁸

The shift from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture had far reaching effects on the Amish communities and their neighbors of northern Indiana. Both groups expressed concerns about the transformations of rural life and many times, those concerns had the same roots. While the Amish are frequently viewed as a culturally isolated group, their experiences and reactions during this period reflect those of their neighbors in most cases. The following portion of this chapter will examine the Amish response to the transformations of the early twentieth century and their decisions during this period influenced their experiences and actions post World War I. It will also examine the internal struggles the Amish endured to define their identity.

For the Indiana Amish, the period prior to World War I represented a time of intense decision-making. As modernization crept into rural life, Amish communities had to decide where they stood on several points.⁹⁹ The Amish concerns over modernization were rooted in their belief that modernity would fracture their small communities.¹⁰⁰ In *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, Dorothy Pratt characterizes this period as a time when the Amish began establishing a sort of “cultural fence.” They developed religious resolves that instituted boundaries for those who wished to remain Amish.¹⁰¹ Their resistance to modernization can be divided in two categories: the need for separation from the secular world and the need to

⁹⁸ Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 11.

⁹⁹ Dorothy O. Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community* (Bloomington, IN: Quarry Books, 2004), 25.

¹⁰⁰ Donald Kraybill and Marc Olshan, eds., *The Struggle With Modernity*, (Hanover, NH: The University Press of New England, 1994), 21.

¹⁰¹ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 25.

strengthen obedience to their Amish faith and communities. Separation from the secular world, viewed as materialistic and sinful, was an Amish practice long before the twentieth century. In Europe, separation was a necessity for survival and in America it was necessary to sustain the faith and community.

It must be noted, however, that the Amish ideals of separation from society and materialism differed greatly in theory and practice. In reality, separation from secular society was not practical as the complex Amish relationship with their neighbors in northern Indiana demonstrated. According to reports, the Amish frequently worked with their neighbors, attended schools taught by non-Amish teachers, and depended on secular markets to purchase their products. Instead of separating themselves from people, the Amish separated themselves from goods and services that posed a threat to the structure of their communities.

The phrase “the Amish resistance to modernity” encompasses a broad spectrum that is in reality too complex to describe in such few words. The Amish relationship with the advancements in technology and science, governmental reforms and the increased consumerism that developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consisted of countless calculated decisions made by individual church and community leaders. It is this inconsistency that often confuses the observer of the Amish. It is common to hear the Amish described as “hypocritical” when an outsider views them talking on a telephone or riding in a vehicle. However, as each new “modern convenience” made its way onto the American market, the leaders of each Amish community made a group decision regarding its acceptance in their community. The rigid

reputation of the Amish systems of beliefs lacks the consistency of policy that many outsiders have come to expect.

Despite their religious ideals of maintaining a faith-based community separate from the secular world, the basis of the Amish trepidations concerning modernity was common among all farmers. The Amish wished to maintain their identity in a time when standardization and conformity began to enter rural life. While they rationalized this desire through their faith, it was by no means limited to the Amish. Many farmers in Indiana and the Midwest feared the loss of their identities as well as control over their farms and daily lives. When examining the Amish response to the increasing emphasis of industrial agriculture and governmental reforms of rural life during the early twentieth century, it is evident that their experiences and actions closely resembled other farmers in the region.

As discussed previously, the period from 1900-1920 represented a time in American agriculture when land values and crop prices were on the rise. Similar to other farmers, the Amish enjoyed this buoyant period.¹⁰² However, the shifts that accompanied this success were cause for concern. One of the most noted characteristics of the Amish lifestyle is their avoidance of technology. While this may seem to be a simple lifestyle choice, the reasoning and application of this rule are far more complex. In addition, while on the surface this may seem to be the cause for their distinction from secular society, other factors play a far more prominent role in keeping the Amish culturally separate from their neighbors. While there were definite changes in agriculture during this period, for most farmers, the use of technology on the farm was not the issue. Most farmers, along with the Amish, continued farming much as they had in the past.

¹⁰² Steven M. Nolt, *A History of the Amish* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1992), 259.

When they had extra income, it was spent on gaining land and expansion rather than mechanization. In addition, during this period the innovations themselves were not fine-tuned enough to be used widespread.

For example, the promotion of the tractor began early in the twentieth century. The tractor would have worked well on the farms of the Midwest, as they were large and mostly flat, but most farmers did not purchase the tractor prior to the twenties. The tractors developed during this period were large, cumbersome and not dependable. Most farmers chose to stick with manual and animal power instead, as evidenced by the fact that in 1920 only 3.6 percent of farmers owned a tractor.¹⁰³ However, there is evidence that the tractor would become an influence in the future. In 1911, *The Indiana Farmer* published a front-page article that outlined the advantages of using a tractor. It noted that while the tractor was popular in the West, it would be just as useful in Indiana. As farmers became more familiar and educated with the benefits of using a tractor, it seemed that its implementation would make Indiana farming more “prosperous”. The article also compared farming to other industries such as railroads and argued that a more powerful farm (that used machinery instead of manual labor) was a more successful farm.¹⁰⁴ Even though the article does not report on how many farmers purchased and used tractors, it is clear pressure was being applied to farmers to use mechanical power on their farms.

¹⁰³ Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 10. *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 5: Agriculture*, 22.

¹⁰⁴ “Traction Farming,” *The Indiana Farmer*, August 26, 1911. Vol. 66, No. 34, Pg. 1. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

In contrast to popular belief and demonstrative of the Amish relationship with technology, most Amish did not immediately ban the use of the tractor.¹⁰⁵ In Lancaster, Pennsylvania, several Amish farmers used the tractor in the early twenties.¹⁰⁶ However, as is the case with many Amish lifestyle choices, not all groups were supportive of the tractor. For example, a very conservative sect in Ohio formed in 1913 and rejected most forms of modern technology, including the tractor. The adoption of the tractor by the Amish in the early twentieth century depended on each individual community. In many cases, if members of the community disagreed with the action, they left and either joined or formed another community.¹⁰⁷ In northern Indiana, tractors replaced the steam engines that powered the threshing machines. According to Arvilla Weaver, an Amish woman from Goshen, Indiana, for much of the early twentieth century, tractors were only used in barns for threshing and most people in the area did not own a tractor, including the non-Amish.¹⁰⁸

As the machine rose in popularity, the Amish communities banned the use of a tractor in their fields but not in their barns (for threshing). The leaders deemed the invention as an unnecessary expense that represented “decadence.”¹⁰⁹ Horses were the preferred alternative because they were less expensive and provided farmers with a source of fertilizer.¹¹⁰ The final blow against the tractor was its similarity to the automobile. Leaders warned that purchasing

¹⁰⁵ Donald Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 172.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁰⁷ Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, 265. Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, 173. One example of this is an Amish farmer in Lancaster, PA. He began using the tractor and the commotion angered his neighbor, who happened to be a deacon of the church. The deacon went to his brother who was the Bishop and the farmer was approached and instructed to confess in church. However, the farmer decided to leave that community and join a community that allowed tractors.

¹⁰⁸ Arvilla Weaver, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 66.

¹⁰⁹ Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, 173.

¹¹⁰ John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 4th ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 124.

tractors would lead to the acceptance of the car,¹¹¹ introduced into Lancaster at the turn of the century and simultaneously banned by the Amish as too “worldly.”¹¹² The term worldly refers to anything or idea that represents the materialism of secular society. In 1923, Amish leaders in Lancaster followed Amish communities in the Midwest and banned the use of a tractor in the fields. They rationalized that if the larger farms of the Midwest did not utilize the tractor, the smaller farms in the East certainly did not require the machine.¹¹³

The Amish explained the ban of the tractor by declaring that it was too worldly, or represented materialism. However, when examining the Lancaster communities, there is evidence that points to deeper social motivations. In 1910, a large portion of the Old Order Amish community in Lancaster split from the church over disagreements concerning the strict practice of shunning. The new church or the “Peachey” church did not advocate shunning or banning members from the church. In addition to lessening the severity of shunning, the Peachey church allowed the use of telephones and electricity in the home.¹¹⁴

The Peachey church members also used the tractor on their farms. While, the Old Order Amish of Lancaster had yet to make any concrete decisions regarding the innovations used by the Peachey, the Bishops of Lancaster looked upon the tractor with disdain. If the Peachey, a group they believed had strayed from the true faith, condoned the use of such things, then it would be a mistake for the Old Order communities to allow them.¹¹⁵ While the Peachey conflict

¹¹¹ Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, 173.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 165.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹¹⁵ Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, 173.

and split occurred in the East, it demonstrates that the independent Amish communities frequently compared themselves to other sects in policy making.¹¹⁶

Donald Kraybill contends that the Amish were also concerned by the proliferation of new farm equipment already in use on Amish farms. For example, many farms had mechanical manure spreaders, hay loaders and silos. Leaders feared the Amish taste for the newest additions in farm machinery and equipment would get out of control and make them obedient to convenience and undermine their faith that promoted hard, manual labor.¹¹⁷ This fear was not completely unfounded. As farm implements increased in efficiency, farmers relied less on hired help or community networks.¹¹⁸ The Amish of northern Indiana did not readily express their concerns about the threat of technology to the community. Instead they argued that they did not need the technology to maintain their farms. They exalted the benefits of horses in place of tractors and only allowed the use of tractors in barns. While Kraybill's account renders the Amish fearful, an alternative interpretation suggests they were convinced these advancements were unnecessary.

Even inventions created for the purpose of connection and communication faced scrutiny by the Amish. The telephone provides an example of the Amish reluctance to accept advancements in communication. Similar to the tractor debate, the Amish of northern Indiana did not immediately ban the telephone in their communities. While the Lancaster settlement looked to the communities in the Midwest to make a decision regarding the tractor, the Indiana

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 172.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 173.

¹¹⁸ Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 9.

communities looked east to analyze the repercussions of the telephone.¹¹⁹ The telephone presented a threat to the home-based social rituals of the Amish faith. Amish life consisted of close-knit groups that worshipped and socialized in face-to-face gatherings in each other's homes. Silence also marked Amish practices; services began in silence, members who disobeyed were not spoken to and non-religious oaths were not permitted. Most communication in the Amish community occurred during "visiting." Formal visits included church meetings and meals, while on casual visits members went to each other's homes to catch up on news. Regardless of the style of visit, the Amish held a belief that interaction strengthened community bonds. The beliefs of the church controlled Amish communication prior to the advent of the telephone.¹²⁰

In the early years of the twentieth century, the Amish of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, made no clear decisions regarding the telephone. Prior to the widespread installation of phone lines, farmers could install local telephone lines to communicate with neighbors. In fact, during this period several Amish homes utilized telephones. In 1910 the Amish church decided to ban the telephone in the home, causing friction that later resulted in a previously mentioned split regarding the tractor. The church reasoned that the telephone was a "worldly" distraction that could lead members to gossip. While the church did not deny that the telephone could be useful in emergencies and even for business, its threat to the community and the control of the church led to its ban from the Amish home.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 37.

¹²⁰ Kraybill and Olshan, ed. *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*, 99-100.

¹²¹ Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, 102-104.

Secular farmers did not share the concerns of the telephone with the Amish. One farm community in northern Indiana installed a system of telephones that connected several farms. They promoted its usefulness in regards to farm management as well as its social benefits. The farmers enjoyed the convenience and efficiency it provided at a minimal cost.¹²² *The Indiana Farmer* characterized the telephone as a necessity for any successful farm business. Telephone connection allowed farmers to be more active in the market and up to speed on the latest prices. Even for social occasions, the phone permitted more planning and flexibility. The article allowed that some farmers might be hesitant to install a phone but that their regret would be short lived. It is clear that in the opinion of the publication, a farmer would not be as successful without a telephone.¹²³

The automobile, also known for its ability to connect, faced a similar fate to the telephone. Throughout the early twentieth century, farmers purchased the automobile.¹²⁴ While some farmers readily accepted and purchased the automobile during the early twentieth century, the Amish were not the only rural residents who viewed the automobile as an urban luxury and resented its disruption of rural life. They complained that the automobile “spooked horses and hit and killed livestock.” One rural resident reported that buggy horses were so spooked by the automobile that they broke loose and caused a great deal of damage. In addition, the new automobiles were not the most affordable or reliable. One Indiana farmer remarked after seeing a

¹²² “Value of the Mutual Telephone System,” *The Indiana Farmer*, February 4, 1911. Vol. 66, No. 5, Pg. 1. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

¹²³ “The Farm Telephone: The Best Things on the Farm,” *The Indiana Farmer*, February 4, 1911. Vol. 66, No. 5, Pg. 5. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

¹²⁴ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 40.

vehicle in poor condition that the driver probably purchased it in a Chicago dime store. In response, many rural farmers in the Midwest demanded strict speed limits and protested against those who owned automobiles. In Indiana, the speed limit in town was eight miles an hour and in rural areas it was twenty. In many ways, the Amish farmers and the secular farmers disliked early automobiles for similar reasons: they were representative of a “worldly” or in secular terms, urban culture.

Nevertheless, by 1920, with the advent of the inexpensive Ford Model-T, many farmers lost their distaste for the automobile. The number of farmers who owned an automobile rose from 85,000 in 1911 to 2, 146,512 in 1920. In Indiana, the number of cars increased from 66,400 in 1914 to 333, 067 in 1920. Based on the population of nearly three million, eleven percent of Indianans owned a vehicle compared to approximately two percent in 1914. One possibility for the change of the rural heart towards automobiles could be that Henry Ford had been raised as a farmer and designed the car with the needs of farm life in mind.¹²⁵

Throughout the early twentieth century, the appeal of the automobile and its ability to widen the rural social circle continued to entice farmers to become drivers. Inventions that increased communication were the most attractive to farmers. The convenient mobility of the automobile allowed rural communities to feel less isolated. Rural citizens could travel further distances faster and they began taking advantage of the luxuries of larger towns such as larger stores with cheaper prices and a wider variety. Dennis Nordin and Roy Scott argue that the

¹²⁵ Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 195. Hope Kessler, In *Buggies and Bad Times*, ed. by Eleanor Arnold (Indianapolis, IN: The Indiana Extension Homemakers Association, 1985), 30. Clifton J Phillips, *Indiana in Transition the Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1968), 265-66.

automobile directly led to the decline of the country store.¹²⁶ In addition, auto transportation facilitated a faster and more efficient rural mail delivery system that encouraged farmers to order goods out of catalogs such as Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward.

In rural Indiana, the introduction of the automobile often caused a spectacle. Country residents reported that when autos came into their region, people lined the streets to watch the show. Some recalled being frightened while most looked on with awe. On race days in Indianapolis, farm children hurried their chores in order to be able to watch the racecars pass the farm. For young adults, the car represented a new form of freedom. The autos accommodated large groups of friends or a couple on a date; regardless, it gave young people the ability to venture away from the farm and increase their social lives. The increased ease of mobility also allowed young rural residents an easier transition from the farm to the city. Young adults no longer had to choose between the advantages of city life and the comfort of their rural roots; with the automobile, they could have both.¹²⁷

Aside from social changes due to the automobile, it also ushered in government action. In addition to imposing speed limits, Indiana state government also required all vehicles to be registered with the secretary of state. In 1913, the state began annually charging owners for their registration. The price of registration depended on the horsepower of the vehicle with \$20.00 being the largest charge. The government also became involved in improving the state highway

¹²⁶ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 41. Mary C. Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940 (Revisiting Rural America)* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 197.

¹²⁷ Blanch Heaton, Pearl Snider, Lois Wagoner, etc., In *Buggies and Bad Times* ed. by Eleanor Arnold (Indianapolis, IN: The Indiana Extension Homemakers Association, 1985), 32-39. Mary C. Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940 (Revisiting Rural America)* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 259.

system. In 1910 the Indiana Good Roads Association was created to improve the state's highways. When federal funds were released to pay for better roads for mail delivery in 1916, the state created the Indiana Highway Commission in 1917. By the twenties, the commission had planned a highway system that would affect ten percent of the roads in the state.¹²⁸ The construction of rural roads in Indiana continued throughout the twenties and will be explored further in the next chapter.

The Amish regarded the automobile carefully and in 1915 most decided that it was too materialistic and should not be purchased. It should be noted that while several communities made this decision around the same time, it was not a universal decree.¹²⁹ The mobility that other rural residents enjoyed threatened church members. Cars allowed individuals to drive away from home and church and into urban centers of sin. The Amish worried that the car would separate the community and cause membership to decline. While their level of isolation from society is debatable, the automobile certainly violated their perceived isolation from the outside world. In addition, the Amish resented the car for its ability to bring urban "pleasure seekers" to the country. However, as previously noted, this was not only an Amish concern. Other rural residents disliked the urban invasion of rural life and for many of the same reasons: to farmers, urban dwellers lived an indulgent life. In 1909, *The Indiana Farmer* published a report of a sermon given by an Indianapolis pastor. The sermon focused on the growing number of young people moving from rural areas to towns. The pastor blamed the automobile for encouraging this movement and suggested that many rural citizens were living beyond their means by owning an

¹²⁸ Phillips, *Indiana in Transition the Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920*, 269.

¹²⁹ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 37. Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, 165.

auto. The Amish worries over the departure of their youth were also shared by their neighbors and in reality, a very valid concern.¹³⁰

While the Amish carefully constructed cultural barriers throughout the early twentieth century, one of the biggest challenges to their beliefs came with the United State's entrance into World War I in April, 1917.¹³¹ As pacifists, the Amish did not support American involvement in World War I. However, more important than their stance against war, the Amish feared the effects of the war in their communities. As conscientious objectors, the Amish sought to find protection in legislation in order to escape the draft. They hoped to be exempted from military service through the Selective Service Act of 1917, which allowed exemptions for both farmers and members of religious groups that forbid participation in war.¹³² To that end, the Amish dispatched a group to meet with the Secretary of War, Newton Baker, in August of 1917 in order to inform him of their pacifist convictions.

Amish men registered for the draft, hoping exemptions based on their religious beliefs would save them from military service.¹³³ Despite the legal accommodations set forth, conscientious objectors were not saved from scrutiny. Theodore Roosevelt suggested that those who refused to fight should be placed in positions that featured danger, such as mine sweepers. This reflected a growing attitude that concerned the Amish. They wished to maintain their

¹³⁰ Kraybill and Olshan, ed. *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*, 165. Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940*, 259. "Stay on the Farm," *The Indiana Farmer*, October 20, 1911. Vol. 64, No. 39, Pg. 10. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

¹³¹ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 48.

¹³² Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 40.

¹³³ Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, 268.

religious convictions yet at the same time they did not want to seem anti-American.¹³⁴ The Amish were not the only farmers who did not wish to go to war. Secular farmers in the Midwest felt that they were most needed on the farm. In fact, the federal government issued propaganda encouraging that sentiment: their food was essential to victory. Nevertheless, after a period of six months, farmers were no longer protected by farm deferments and many were drafted into the war effort as soldiers.

Many Amish men in Indiana were drafted and went to training camps, where there was confusion as to how to deal with the conscientious objectors. The Secretary of War, Newton Baker allowed for CO's but their specific treatment in the military was left to the war department.¹³⁵ Some suggest that the government hoped that once away from community pressures, the men would abandon their beliefs and join fighting positions.¹³⁶ Many in the community feared for the physical and spiritual safety of the young men as they left home. In these camps, the men had to carefully avoid military training and at the same time be useful. According to Pratt, their first conflicts came with the dress code. From the beginning, the Amish (and Mennonites as well as Hutterites) were exempt from wearing the military uniform according to a directive by the Secretary of War, Newton Baker. However, this did not save them from harassment and several Amish men were subjected to beatings and forced to cut their hair.

¹³⁴ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 44.

¹³⁵ Kraybill and Olshan, ed. *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*, 47. "Secretary of Agriculture on Farm Labor Problems," *The Indiana Farmer*, December 1, 1917. Vol. 72, No. 48, Pg. 2. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

¹³⁶ Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, 268.

This treatment was indicative of the soldiers' feelings towards conscientious objectors but also demonstrates the Amish desire to maintain their identity even amidst such opposition.¹³⁷

In general, the Amish experience at training camps varied from place to place. Some men reported few problems, while others reported being targeted and harshly treated for their objections. The experiences ranged from boredom to reports of some Amish being tarred and feathered, denied adequate food, brutally beaten and in some instances, threatened with death.¹³⁸ In 1918, as the Spanish Influenza spread through the ranks, one man reported that the CO's were the last to receive medicine, after the "regular" soldiers.¹³⁹ However, even in cases where the perpetrators were placed on trial for their actions, the Amish did not testify against them, maintaining that they did not want the church to be viewed negatively and they wished to stay away from the legal system.¹⁴⁰

The men at the camps not only faced strict consequences from the military if they disobeyed orders but also endured pressure from their home communities. An Amish man sent to camp faced excommunication or shunning if they did not adhere to the guidelines established at home. Those generally included not aiding the military in any acts of violence. The church viewed their refusal to aid the "war machine" as a higher calling, something that would benefit

¹³⁷ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 46-47. Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, 269. Ezra Bontreger reported being the only objector at his camp and kicked until he passed out. Four men held down Abe Weaver and shaved his head. The officers in Abe's case were punished.

¹³⁸ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 47-49. Amelia Whetstone, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 263. Donald B. Kraybill, ed., *The Amish and the State*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 46.

¹³⁹ Dan A. Hochstetler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 161.

¹⁴⁰ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 47-49.

the church in the future.¹⁴¹ In addition to maintaining their beliefs, the Amish were also maintaining their identity. During this period, many ethnic groups in the United States began experiencing pressure to “Americanize” or assimilate into American culture. For the Amish, assimilation was not possible as their doctrines started to diverge from American culture. While their resistance to the war machine was rooted in their strong belief of pacifism, in reality, it also required them to define their cultural barriers.¹⁴² From the military standpoint, if any were convicted of not sincerely being a religious objector, they would be sent to prison. Nonetheless, most of the Amish men went to camp and then returned home to remain Amish.¹⁴³

Aside from sending their young men to war, the Amish communities also faced scrutiny at home. The German speaking Amish faced criticism due to their resistance to war. Many confused their stance as being pro-German rather than rooted in religious doctrine. This reluctance to support the war extended to the purchase of war bonds. The Amish (and Mennonite) refusal to purchase war bonds automatically relegated them to the status of German war supporters.¹⁴⁴ An article published in 1917 in *The Indiana Farmer* notes concerns over “disloyal” citizens in Indiana not participating in the war effort. While the Amish are not directly mentioned, it is clear that anyone who opposed the war in Indiana faced backlash.¹⁴⁵

The Amish were not the only group being accused of German sympathies during this period. Other German speaking churches experienced similar backlash and were forced to

¹⁴¹ Kraybill, ed., *The Amish and the State*, 2nd ed., 47.

¹⁴² Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940*, 84.

¹⁴³ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 53.

¹⁴⁴ Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, 270-271.

¹⁴⁵ “Disloyalty Stalks Indiana.” *The Indiana Farmer*, November 24, 1917. Vol. 72, No. 47, Pg. 2. Purdue University Libraries, (accessed October 5, 2011); available from: <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/collections/indianafarmer/>.

proclaim their patriotism. The Quakers also refused to purchase war bonds. An Iowa Quaker admitted to facing similar scrutiny for not purchasing a bond and houses of those who did not support the war were sometimes painted yellow. In addition to churches, anyone of German descent was suspected by overzealous, war-supporting neighbors. Those who disagreed with the war could be arrested, jailed, and tried for treason. Dennis Nordin and Roy Scott claim the worst anti-German sentiment occurred in Iowa.¹⁴⁶ Certainly the war presented the Amish with more trials than their neighbors. As pacifists, they faced criticism and pressures that went beyond the experiences of most farmers. In some ways, the war period represented a time when the Amish were separate, whether at home defending their position or in training camps trying to survive.

The first two decades of the twentieth century represented great changes in the way of life of American farmers. As farming transitioned into a business, farmers began to consider their position in the rural sphere. While high prices and demand enticed farmers to produce more at the end of the period, it was also a time when farmers struggled with shifts in technology, politics and society. Farmers gained the ability to work faster, produce more, and expand their horizons but this was accompanied by increased regulation and standardization. In the midst of this transition, the Amish of Indiana sought to maintain their control over their way of life as well as their communities. Decisions made during this period, while rationalized using religious texts, reflect the Amish need for a small, contained community. The Amish emphasis on maintaining their social structure during this period of transformation provided a base for future

¹⁴⁶ Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940 (Revisiting Rural America)*, 83. Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 48-50.

struggles with modernity as well as the trials presented by the economic hardships during the twenties.

CHAPTER III: 1920-1929: Recession and Reform on the Farm

The development in technology and the progressive reforms of the first two decades of the twentieth century started a process that would alter the landscape of rural America. While many of the instruments of modernization were implemented in the early twentieth century, their effects became more apparent in the twenties as their presence in the countryside increased. These instruments included improvements in farm machinery and transportation, rural electrification, and the reformation of rural education. In addition to the changes in the methods of farming and rural life, farmers also contended with an unstable economy that presented many challenges throughout the decade. In a decade full of transformations, agrarians fought to maintain control of their farms and their lives.

In the previous two decades, the Amish farmers of northern Indiana recognized these developments and responded with a complex system of rules regarding their application. The events of the twenties required the Amish to adhere to their decisions and in many cases defend their practices and beliefs. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: the first is to examine the economic struggles and transformations that occurred in the agricultural sector during the period from 1920 to 1929. The second is to examine the modernization and mechanization of rural life during the same period. In both sections the responses of both Amish and non-Amish farmers to the challenges presented will be explored as it was during this decade that the Amish became not only more visible in American society but also more defiant in protecting their way of life.

The economic climate of the twenties proved to be strenuous for agriculture as prices fluctuated throughout the decade. Immediately following World War I, farmers continued to sell

their products for higher prices. In 1919, in Indiana, the value of cereals (wheat, corn, oats, etc.) increased to \$378,981,813 from \$151,898,146 in 1909. The value of dairy products in the state rose from \$16,666,374 in 1909 to \$44,072,646 in 1919.¹⁴⁷ As Europe rebuilt, the international need for American farm goods continued; farmers met the demand by continuing to produce at high levels. This system of production matched the modern farm ideal, which valued a more business-like approach to farming that promoted efficiency as well as production. As discussed in the previous chapter, the “Golden Age” of American farming seemed to have survived the war. Midwestern farmers continued to expand and improve their farms in order to capitalize on the good market and high prices of farm commodities.

However, the wartime bubble lasted approximately at year and a half. If the “Golden Age” of agriculture had been a façade during the first two decades of the twentieth century, all traces of it disappeared at the dawn of the twenties. Farmers in the Midwest and across the nation dealt with declining profits and increasing expenditures. As agrarian communities struggled, the issues of modernization that had perplexed farmers since the beginning of the century came to the forefront. Farmers had a tough choice: embrace modern farming (technology and agribusiness) or abandon farming altogether. The transformations that had been on the horizon for the past half century became evident as farming transitioned into a commercial enterprise rather than a lifestyle.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ United States Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1920, Volume 5: Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 331. U.S. Census Bureau, (accessed 2 October 2011); available from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1920.html>.

¹⁴⁸ Dorothy O. Pratt, *Shipshewana: an Indiana Amish Community* (Bloomington, IN: Quarry Books, 2004), 87.

Farm prices dramatically fell at the start of the twenties. In June of 1920 wheat garnered \$2.56 per bushel and corn received \$1.88 per bushel. By October of that same year prices dropped to \$.35 and \$.34 per bushel respectively. Due to the decrease in prices, farm profits dropped from \$9 billion in 1919 to \$3.3 billion in 1921. There are several arguments concerning the cause of this dramatic decline. One argument blames the resurgence of European agriculture after the war. As European markets began to rebuild, their dependence on American products waned. Another argument is that the wartime necessity of overproduction continued, despite the declining markets. In Indiana, just over thirty-three million bushels of wheat were harvested before the war in 1909. Ten years later in 1919 that level increased by nearly twelve million to forty-five million bushels of wheat. Initial fears of postwar shortages were never realized and the market was inundated with produce. Farmers, aided by modern machinery, continued to produce at wartime levels without a wartime market. Finally, Americans acclimated to wartime rationing did not readjust their habits even after the war was over. All of these factors combined to produce dramatic decreases in prices and a harsh reality for American farmers, especially those with loans.¹⁴⁹

In order to compensate for their reduction in income, farmers continued to produce at high levels to earn more money. Farmers did not want to compromise their standard of living, and they produced more in order to buy more. Their ability to produce so much resulted from the

¹⁴⁹ Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 19. Dennis S. Nordin and Roy V. Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 54. R. Douglas Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth century* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R Dee, 2003), 45. United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1930, Volume 2: Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1930), 482. U.S. Census Bureau, (accessed 2 October 2011); available from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1930.html>.

mechanization of farming. While in the first two decades Americans did not readily purchase tractors, by the twenties they had become a common addition to many midwestern farms. Mechanization led to overproduction because farmers yielded more at a quicker pace and used fewer horses, so they could transform acres formerly devoted to growing feed to profitable crops. The American farm increased its efficiency faster than the market increased its capacity. In addition to assisting production on the farm, technology also benefited consumers in the preservation of food products. Better transportation systems also ensured that more products arrived at their location at their peak. The efficiency that allowed farmers to produce larger amounts also lessened the need.¹⁵⁰ The philosophy behind more production gained support from the federal government as well. Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace encouraged farmers to, “Produce as much as you can...spend as little as you can.”¹⁵¹

The consequences of flooding the market with products and dramatically falling prices of farm commodities created an agricultural recession at the start of the twenties. Farmers, who during wartime easily paid their bills, struggled to pay their mortgages and loans. When prices were high, farmers improved and expanded their land, often funding these projects with mortgages or loans. After the decline of the market, paying back these loans became a major issue. Many farms fell into foreclosure and the farmers had to find new sources of income.¹⁵² In many cases the lenders were blamed, with many believing they should have known better than to

¹⁵⁰ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 54. Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 42. Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 88.

¹⁵¹ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 19. Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 55.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 56.

lend so much to the farmers, whose income fluctuated depending on the time of year or natural events such as droughts or floods.¹⁵³

Loan payments troubled Amish farmers throughout the twenties. Emma Miller recalled her father mortgaging two horses and two cows in order to purchase a threshing rig. When he could not make the payments, the animals were repossessed, causing great distress for the family. Another Amish woman, Susie Yutzy, remembered her father not being able to make the payments for their farm. She stated that he made arrangements so that he would only have to pay the interest until he could manage full payments. Throughout the economic recession of the twenties, despite their reliance on their communities for support, the Amish still faced financial concerns.¹⁵⁴

As the agricultural sector faced recession, several solutions came to the forefront. The most obvious was crop reduction. Reducing the amount of goods for sale would create a greater demand and naturally increase prices. However, this approach required a national effort and the participation of all American farmers. Another solution supported government intervention and the regulation of prices. Farmers and their advocates in the federal government formulated a plan that would match the prices farmers received for their commodities with the prices they paid for goods. Many farmers viewed this program, called parity, as a fair solution. Agrarians felt the differences between the prices they earned and the prices they paid were vastly different and

¹⁵³ Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)*, 19.

¹⁵⁴ Emma Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 38. Susie Yutzy, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 190.

unfair.¹⁵⁵ Under this plan, government agents would take the surplus and sell it on the international market, creating a demand and elevating prices in the United States. The idea gained support and a bill, the McNary-Haugen proposal, advocating parity passed both the house and senate but it was vetoed by President Coolidge. While the bill was defeated, it remained a popular idea with farmers. Both parity and price regulation required direct government intervention, a progressive approach to agricultural policy.¹⁵⁶

While the president vetoed the parity bill, legislation was enacted to assist farmers during the recession of the early twenties. In 1922 Congress passed the Capper-Volstead Act, which protected cooperatives from antitrust regulations. The act allowed farmers to produce and market farm products together without violating antitrust laws. To assist farmers with the acquisition of longer-termed loans, congress created the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank in 1923. The availability of intermediate loans was crucial to many farmers who could not meet the demands of short-term loans. In short, farmers needed more time to pay their debts due to the seasonal schedule of farming.¹⁵⁷

In northern Indiana, Amish farmers tried various strategies to weather the recession. In order to combat the over production of cereals, many grew mint as a cash crop.¹⁵⁸ The oil derived from mint can be easily stored and saved, which helped in the case of surplus. In addition to mint, some Amish farmers grew potatoes and popcorn as cash crops. Simon Graber

¹⁵⁵ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 57. Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 59.

¹⁵⁶ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 58. Citing several sources, Nordin argues that such a bill would not have been effective. It was based on too many assumptions. Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth century*, 48.

¹⁵⁷ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 59. Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 43.

¹⁵⁸ Milo M. Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 212.

noted that his family sold potatoes to the local grocery store to earn extra money. However, the Amish did not accept the idea that a surplus was the reason for the recession. Similar to other farmers, the Amish viewed a good harvest as a positive rather than a negative. They contended that a surplus only affected perishable items, not staples such as wheat and that a reduction in the wheat crops would hurt prices. Their religious beliefs also influenced their perspective; it seemed un-Christian to reject a successful harvest.¹⁵⁹

While federal policy towards agriculture shifted throughout the twenties and tended to blame overproduction as the cause of the recession, the federal government counteracted that philosophy by supporting programs that assisted farmers with increasing their farm production. One of these programs was the agricultural extension service established in 1914 by the Smith-Lever Act. Throughout the twenties the extension service provided support and assistance to the farmers of Elkhart and LaGrange counties as well as counties across the Midwest. Land grant colleges supplied the service with the necessary resources to run the program. In northern Indiana, Purdue University sent educated agents to work with local farmers. The goal of the service was to organize farmers and educate them in the most modern methods of farming. While some extension agents reported meeting resistance from farmers, the programs of northern Indiana seemed to be successful, albeit the organization of local farmers was their biggest challenge. The extension service in northern Indiana implemented programs that focused on improving soil quality as well as improving the conditions for raising dairy cattle within the

¹⁵⁹ Simon Graber, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 24. Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 90.

area.¹⁶⁰ The following section will examine the work of the extension service in the counties of Elkhart and LaGrange during the twenties.

In 1920, in Elkhart, the goals of the extension service included encouraging local farmers to form a farm bureau and improving the soil. The service wanted the farmers to create an organization through which the agent could work and assist them with projects. A report conducted by the county extension agent suggested that forming the bureau took longer than expected due to the various religious beliefs and commitments of the members. However, they were able to organize during the fall and began to promote membership.¹⁶¹ The agent also implemented projects to improve the soil quality in the northern region of the county. Due to its sandy nature, the agent came up with two ways to improve its productivity. One method was directed towards the poorer farmers of the county and included a crop rotation that produced a cash crop to help pay the farmers' loans. The second method was directed towards farmers who could afford to make improvements without a cash crop. This method encouraged them to plant soy beans first and then rye and finally alfalfa. Phosphorous and limestone were only to be added when necessary. The agent reported that these methods were the best in that they allowed the farm to plan crops that could be used to feed livestock and rehabilitate the soil at the same time.¹⁶²

While the report does not include information about Amish participants in the program, it is clear that the agent dealt with not only religious conflicts but also the financial concerns of the

¹⁶⁰ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 81.

¹⁶¹ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, Jan. 1, 1920 to Nov. 30, 1920*.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

farmers. In addition, the goals of the extension service matched those of Amish farmers at the time. As previously noted, in order to earn more capital, many Amish farmers grew cash crops such as mint, potatoes and popcorn. Also, the Amish preferred approaches that encouraged productivity rather than reduction. Finally, the agent's solutions included areas to grow feed for livestock. Therefore, even though there is no direct mention of the Amish, it is evident from Amish sources that the advice of the Extension Service would have been useful to them.

The 1923 report indicated that the county agent had the same goals as in 1920. He wanted to strengthen the organization of the farmers because he believed that the only way to be successful in his projects was to have the full cooperation of the farmers. He continued that in order for the projects conducted by the extension agent to thrive, the organization of farmers had to be committed to seeing them out. The soil improvement projects also continued during this year with an added emphasis on the inclusion of limestone to neutralize the soil acidity. The agent reported that the farmers were shown that they needed to use more limestone to better their results, especially in the growing of alfalfa. The report also mentions that soy beans became very popular because they were not only useful for improving the soil but also for feeding livestock and other farm animals. Feed for livestock was important as the county was one of the largest dairy producers in the state. At the conclusion of his report, the county extension agent remarked, "it must said that Elkhart County Agriculture is a very permanent institution."¹⁶³

The 1924 extension service report for LaGrange County Indiana contains similar goals and programs. The agent reported that farmers were beginning to accept the presence of the

¹⁶³ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, for the year ending November 30, 1923.*

service and were growing interested in the programs it offered. He also noted the need for limestone to improve soil quality. The report discusses the encouragement of alfalfa production and the number of projects geared towards its success. The report also promotes the dairy industry by including lengthy sections concerning cow testing and tuberculosis. While there is no specific information regarding Amish participation in the testing program, it is possible based on their participation in the service's other programs. The LaGrange report includes information noticeably absent from the Elkhart report; it mentions the inclusion of Amish farmers during an alfalfa tour of the county. According to the report, the farm of an Amish man was visited and he was not only successful in his crop but also one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the initiative in the county. In many other projects, men with Amish names such as Yoder or Hostettler are mentioned as participants. While it cannot be sure if these men were Amish, it is likely considering that they were listed as residents of Shipshewana (a large Amish settlement).¹⁶⁴

In his 1926 report, the agent indicated large scale changes in the organization of the farmers' groups in Elkhart County. As he indicated in previous reports, organization was imperative to the success of the extension service in the area. The restructuring led to a growth in membership (730 members) as well as regular meetings in each township and active programs. The report also emphasizes the importance of growing alfalfa as well as adding limestone to the soil. It is clear in this report that the goal of Elkhart farming is to grow feed for the developing dairy industry. In fact, during this year the agent specifies that the dairy projects, which include

¹⁶⁴ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of LaGrange County, for the year ending November 30, 1924.*

cow testing, dairy organization and tuberculosis eradication, are the most important projects of the extension service in the county.¹⁶⁵ As with the records of previous years, there is no mention of the Amish in these reports. However, the Amish did actively participate in the dairy industry of the area.

In 1928 the agent continued to stress the importance of organization but he also referenced the conflicts between the several farm organizations in the county. While the extension service worked through the farm bureau, other organizations such as the Grange competed for their membership. In 1926 the agent noted that the groups were cooperating with each other; however, in 1928 this was not the case. He stated that because of these conflicts and divided loyalties, it was difficult to provide extension education to every community in the county. In order to address this issue, the county established the County Board of Agriculture, which included members from all of the organizations. It was the purpose of the board to ensure that all of the organizations worked together to assist the county agent in helping to promote the agricultural development of the county.¹⁶⁶

The 1928 report also continued the fervor for soil improvement in the county. The agent reported that the slogan for the county was “Lime, Legumes and Livestock.” Most of the projects during this time were geared towards those three things. One legume that was growing in popularity throughout the Midwest was the soybean. As the report indicates, legumes were used not only to help improve soil quality but also as feed for livestock. The agent’s support of this

¹⁶⁵ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, for the year ending November 30, 1926.*

¹⁶⁶ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, for the year ending November 30, 1926.* United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, for the year ending November 30, 1928.*

legume is representative of a larger trend in the Midwest in favor of planting the crop. In 196, 1,000 acres were planted compared to 410,000 in 1930. In addition to soil improvement projects, the 1928 report demonstrates a growth in community activities. For example, several “short courses” involving subjects such as home economics, dairying, soils and crops. Some of these courses were given by Purdue lecturers. They also instituted a banker-farmer tour, taking bankers to local farms and demonstrating their successes.¹⁶⁷

The success of the projects promoted by the extension service is evident in the 1930 agricultural census. In relation to the use of limestone and other fertilizers used to improve the soil quality, the census shows a dramatic increase in the purchase of these goods. For example, in 1909 just over two million dollars were spent on fertilizers in Indiana. By 1929 that number increased to seven million dollars. The service also encouraged farmers to plant alfalfa and the census shows increases in the crop throughout the twenties. In Elkhart County the census reported that in 1919 just over 2,000 acres of alfalfa were planted; by 1929 that number had increased to over 10,000 acres. The same can be said for the services emphasis on dairy production. The 1930 census shows that in the twenties the amount of whole milk sold in Indiana went from forty five million gallons in 1919 to 142 million gallons in 1929. However, as telling of the times, the amount of churned butter sold declined drastically during this period. At the turn of the century, farms sold twenty-seven million pounds of butter compared to the just two million pounds sold by 1929.¹⁶⁸ As indicated by the Amish reports, many families separated and churned their butter at home. Ben Miller, an Amish man from Shipshewana, reported that in

¹⁶⁷ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, for the year ending November 30, 1928*. Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 71.

¹⁶⁸ *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1930, Volume 2: Agriculture*, 542.

1930 his family and other Amish families from the area would sell their milk to cheese houses in the area.¹⁶⁹ The 1930 census report confirms that the extension service was not only a presence in the state but also that farmers, both Amish and non-Amish, were following their advice.

The agent's report indicated several things about the state of agriculture in Elkhart and LaGrange during this period. It recognized that some farmers in the area would need to borrow money and produce cash crops in order to improve their land. This idea of poor farmers borrowing money would later be criticized as many farmers struggled to pay back their debts. It also did not take into account the risky nature of farming. The reports also indicated the rising importance of dairy production in the area. Even when trying to rehabilitate the soil, the agent promoted the growth of feed crops.

The extension service was not limited to work outside on the land; Home Extension Service agents worked with women to teach them skills for the home. The purpose of their programs were to instruct women in home management skills such as sewing, cooking, nutrition, gardening, child care, crafts and several other areas of home economics. They also encouraged women to create and sell products to earn profits. One distinction of the home economics clubs of the twenties from previous women's clubs was the focus on work inside of the home rather than community activities. While both the farm and the home extension programs sought to modernize farms, the home economics programs were marginalized compared to the farm programs in both support and funding.¹⁷⁰ Even though there is no direct mention of Amish

¹⁶⁹ Ben Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 96.

¹⁷⁰ Mary C. Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940 (Revisiting Rural America)* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 137-139.

women participating in these programs, some surnames of the participants match common Amish names. Examples include the popular Amish names: Yoder, Miller and Hochstetler.

The extension reports from Elkhart and LaGrange counties evidence the disparity between the two programs. The majority of the reports concern the activities of the farm programs with just a small mention of the women's programs. Even in the space dedicated to the women's activities, there are few details about the program. It does include information about sewing courses, designed to teach women how to make clothes as well as home decorations such as rugs and window coverings. In 1926 the Elkhart Extension Service Home Economics Club hosted a program to show off their millinery skills. The female agent from Purdue also conducted a home management program where she inspected the kitchens of the farm-women and instructed them on ways to modernize their homes. In general, the women's programs in northern Indiana fell short only when it came to the attention they received from agents. In some cases, the women organized the courses without an agent present.¹⁷¹

The actions of the federal government provided some assistance but many farmers thought the legislation was too moderate. The independent attitude of farmers started to shift when they began to form producer-run cooperatives to maximize their presence in the market. These cooperatives allowed farmers to organize and control the output of commodities, thus allowing them control over prices rather than handing it over to a "middleman." In 1922 there were over 14,000 cooperatives in the United States compared to just over 1,000 at the turn of the century. More specifically, in Indiana in 1920 close to thirteen million dollars' worth of farm

¹⁷¹ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, for the years 1920-1928*. United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of LaGrange County, for the year ending November 30, 1924*.

products were sold using cooperative marketing compared to seventeen million in 1924. This approach endorsed two things: farmers were more successful when working together rather than as individuals and the notion that farmers were entrepreneurs who could control the market with limited government intervention. However, only the largest cooperatives (for example: Land O' Lakes Creamery) were successful in the large-scale control of prices.¹⁷² In the Midwest, the most popular cooperatives were the grain elevators. These community-based structures were important representations of the farmers' desire to have more control over their markets.¹⁷³

According to the 1926 report of the county extension service report, in Elkhart County, Indiana, dairy farmers in the area sold their products to three cooperatives located in New Paris, Middlebury and Wakarusa. He stated that the New Paris cooperative was expecting to sell 40,000 pounds of whole milk per day in Chicago, earning \$2.60 per hundred pounds. If sold at this price, the cooperative would earn \$.35 more per hundred pounds than anywhere else in the county. The county farm bureau also hired a County Manager and Purchasing agent to sell and buy products for local farmers. By purchasing \$36, 600 worth of items for the farmers, he saved them a total of \$3800.¹⁷⁴ It is clear by his report that throughout the twenties the farmers increased their reliance on cooperative marketing.

¹⁷² Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 61-62. Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 52. Hal S. Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 106. United States Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1930, Volume 2: Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1930), 555. U.S. Census Bureau, (accessed 2 October 2011); available from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1930.html>.

¹⁷³ Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 108.

¹⁷⁴ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, for the years 1920-1928*. United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of LaGrange County, for the year ending November 30, 1924*.

Amish communities had a long history of cooperative work, if not the formalized cooperative organization favored by market-oriented farmers. They shared tools and labor and assisted each other with the harvest. It was not uncommon for Amish boys to work for wages on non-Amish farms.¹⁷⁵ Neighbors assisted with the butchering of animals, as groups would gather and work in an assembly line fashion cleaning and preparing the animals.¹⁷⁶ Neighbors also worked together to ensure that everyone had fresh meat in the Amish community. They formed what they termed a “beef ring”, several neighbors would agree to supply a cow to be butchered so that there was one every week. There was a local butcher who would butcher the cow and divide the meat between the families, ensuring that everyone got a share. This process also made up for the fact that there was no refrigeration to store food for long periods.¹⁷⁷

While many farmers wanted the government to assist them with prices at the same time they also held on to traditional values such as hard work as the best solution. This traditional attitude benefited farmers in other ways as well. When markets crashed, Progressive farmers and those who had readily embraced technology (along with debt) were the first to lose their farms. Agrarians with a more traditional ideology rather than a business approach had the least amount of failure.¹⁷⁸ R. Douglas Hurt described midwestern farmers as more successful than Southern farmers because there was a lower rate of tenancy in the Midwest.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Sarah Monroe Kauffman, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 67.

¹⁷⁶ Kauffman, In *Echoes of the Past*, 68. Urias U. Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 158.

¹⁷⁷ Levi D. Graber, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 90

¹⁷⁸ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 60-61.

¹⁷⁹ Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: the American Farmer in the Twentieth Century*, 42.

Nevertheless, there were indicators of recession during the twenties in the Amish communities of northern Indiana. Many reported having very little in terms of cash and largely subsisting on the output of their farms. The Amish noticed the struggles of those around them as well. This included the presence of “tramps” walking along the highways of northern Indiana. Many were headed towards larger cities and stopped in Amish communities along the way. Some asked for meals or a night’s stay in the barn. Their treatment depended on the family; some households set aside a room inside equipped with a rope bed and a straw mattress where travelers could stay. In Holmes County, Ohio, (home to a large Amish population) there was a peddler who would stop in the area once a year. He sold goods to the locals and was very popular in the area. The Amish considered it a tenet of their religion to assist those in need, including tramps and peddlers, and this gentleman was always offered a place to stay. However, the Amish did report that these travelers frightened them and they feared going into the barn and finding a stranger sleeping. While they would always assist those in need, they also expected their “visitors” to work for their stay. One Amish man reported that when men walking along the highway towards Chicago or other larger cities looking for work would stop, his mother would test how hungry they were by having them chop wood before she would provide food. The Amish were kind but they expected these strangers to earn their keep.¹⁸⁰

One man remarked that his family did not eat at restaurants because they did not have the money to do so. It was not uncommon for Amish families to eat at restaurants when they had extra money; however, most of their food came from their farm or their garden. Aside from products such as sugar and flour, very few things were purchased. As far as preserving food,

¹⁸⁰ David Yoder, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 14.

during the twenties, they did not utilize motor operated refrigeration. Most of their food preservation involved either canning or salting.¹⁸¹ Early forms of refrigeration included utilizing ice-houses (ice was stored underground and covered with sawdust) or using cold spring water in tubs.¹⁸² Food limitations varied by group; some Amish report never having been without treats such as candy while others reported that they only had the bare necessities and fruits such as bananas were a rarely enjoyed indulgence. Dewey Gingerich, an Amish man from Middlebury, IN, remembered, “Corn flakes, bananas and oranges were a luxury.”¹⁸³

In order to supplement their income and earn money, the Amish explored other ways of earning income. In some cases children caught skunks to sell their furs. One man reported mowing the lawn of his non-Amish neighbors to earn extra money. It was very common for young children to work for their neighbors, doing odd jobs to help the family earn more income.¹⁸⁴ Amish girls worked outside of the home taking care of children and cleaning houses. Nora Wingard recounted her experiences working for an non-Amish family that required her to speak perfect English at all times in front of their son.

“At sixteen years old I started working for rich people in Millersburg. People named Blums. Here I did not like it too well. The English language had to be spoken perfectly on account of their three year old son which I was in charge of. The wages there would triple other places and my folks needed it, so I tried to hang on to the job. After six

¹⁸¹ Alvin J. Miller and Polly Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 183.

¹⁸² U. Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, , 157. Katie Hochstetler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 166.

¹⁸³ A. Miller and P. Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, 183.

¹⁸⁴ L.Grabner, In *Echoes of the Past*, 90. Dewey Gingerich, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 23.

months the mistress took me to a seamstress and had special dresses made for me. My father said, "That's enough!" I felt like I had gotten out of the reformatory!"¹⁸⁵

The common occurrence of Amish men and women and sometimes children working for the non-Amish demonstrates their lack of isolation in society and disputes the theory that the Amish wanted to maintain closed off communities.

Despite attributing many of their decisions regarding modernity to their unique set of beliefs, the Amish response to the economic hardships of the twenties clearly reflected their agrarian nature. Their accounts regarding this period are remarkably similar to non-Amish farmers. They had realistic concerns over finances and combated those concerns in similar ways to their non-Amish neighbors. They grew cash crops and worked with their fellow farmers, sharing tools as well as labor. They sold their products locally as well as in larger markets in places like Chicago. They worked with the Extension Service to increase their productivity. When families needed extra money, children often worked outside of the home in both Amish and non-Amish placements. It is evident that even though their belief systems defined their outward appearance, the Amish of northern Indiana also identified with agrarian concerns.

The outward dissimilarities between the Amish and their neighbors also became more apparent in the twenties as the landscape of rural America transformed. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, several new forms of mechanization were introduced to rural society; however, it was not until the twenties that these innovations began to transform life on the farm. For the first time in their history, the Amish could no longer blend into larger American society

¹⁸⁵ Nora M. Wingard, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 109. 117.

without compromising their beliefs. The beliefs included protecting their communities from outside influences deemed inappropriate or threatening and maintaining a sense of equality within their communities. The choices they made during this period have influenced their entire modern identity within American society. The remainder of this chapter will explore the transformations that occurred in agricultural communities that resulted from modernization. It will also examine how the Amish stood fast and at times defiant towards the changes that threatened their way of life and belief system. The areas that will be discussed include the increased popularity of the automobile, the reshaping of rural education, and the process of rural electrification.

As discussed in chapter two, the automobile made its way to rural America in the first two decades of twentieth century. During this period, many farmers saw the automobile as a modern nuisance, a disruption of quiet rural life. However, as the automobile increased in popularity, many farmers became less hesitant and more excited about the possibilities offered by increased mobility. Even though the automobile was introduced in the first two decades of the twentieth century, its effect on rural life can only clearly be examined when studying the twenties.

Rural opinion began to shift when automobiles became not only more efficient but also purposeful. Farmers initially resented automobiles as toys for the idle rich. In order to appeal to farmers, advertisers promoted the car as useful business tools. They were sold as farm implements rather than for personal use.¹⁸⁶ The success of that shift in emphasis can be seen in the increased sales figures. In 1920 forty-six percent of Indiana farms had a car. That number

¹⁸⁶ Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 196.

jumped to nearly eighty percent by 1930. There was also an increase in the purchase of trucks in the area. As noted earlier, Indiana dairy farming became the center of agriculture in the state and the truck was a popular method of shipping cattle. In 1920, 2.6 percent of farms had a truck compared to 17.5 percent in 1930.¹⁸⁷ Farmers were sold on the idea that the automobile would improve their success.

The tractor also became more common on Midwestern farms during the twenties. Farmers increasingly replaced horses with mechanized equipment. In 1920, four percent of farms in Indiana owned a tractor compared to twenty-two percent in 1930. In 1924 the Farmall tractor produced by International Harvester became the most efficient means of mechanized plowing and cultivating. Companies continued to produce tractors that were affordable yet efficient throughout the twenties. This increased usage of the tractor and automobile produced a decline in the use of horses. Even though many of the Amish in northern Indiana recounted that their neighbors continued to use horses on the farm and for transportation well into the twenties and thirties, the 1930 census reports shows a dramatic decline in the number of horses utilized by farmers. In 1910, there were 813, 644 horses on Indiana farms; by 1930 that number had dropped to 443, 411. Most of the horses that were disposed of were sent to factories that produced dog food, leather and glue.¹⁸⁸

Regardless of the reason for purchase, the automobile did become more prevalent on farms. This led to several changes in the rural landscape, including the rise of consumerism,

¹⁸⁷ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 66-67.

¹⁸⁸ Arvilla Weaver, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 67. Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 68, 124. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1930, Volume 2: Agriculture*, 555.

construction of hard-surfaced, rural roads, government intervention in rural life and the independence of rural children. The increased usage of the car led to several changes in consumerism for rural residents. As farmers could go farther faster they could also patronize better-stocked shops in larger cities. Many general stores declined as people chose to shop in stores with more variety. As Hal Barron states in *Mixed Harvest*, the village center declined as farmers looked towards larger cities for their needs.¹⁸⁹ Even in larger cities, there was always competition to get the best price. As consumerism expanded, chain stores replaced smaller stores in towns.¹⁹⁰

The general store was not the only casualty of the automobile; interest in catalogue and mail delivery sources waned as farmers enjoyed going to larger cities for their needs. Whereas farmers once anticipated receiving the Sears Roebuck catalog, they now preferred to shop in stores. In this instance the Amish differed from their neighbors. Due to their ban of the automobile the Amish continued to order from catalogues when they could afford to do so. One woman recalled that the “highlight of their year” was when their father ordered treats from the catalogue. Even when they could not purchase items, they enjoyed keeping the catalogues and looking at the images (as going to the stores was more difficult). One Amish man reminisced about using the catalogues as “wish books” and remembered cutting out the images to save.¹⁹¹

As rural citizens expanded their shopping habits, the idea of a rural community transformed from a small, close-knit group to one that had a further reach. People no longer

¹⁸⁹ Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 198.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁹¹ William Mast and Ida Mast, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999),16. Weaver, In *Echoes of the Past*, 67.

relied on their town to meet their needs. If they sought entertainment, they went wherever it was offered. Stores were not the only entities that faced competition, cities and towns encouraged their citizens to “stay home.”¹⁹² As Barron states, “farmers defined their own communities,” meaning they now had the mobility to travel further to meet their needs and their social circles expanded, giving them more freedom to choose their associates.¹⁹³ The independence promised by the automobile concerned the Amish, who worried that as the city and the country became more connected, their communities, built around the concept of mutual aid among neighbors, would disappear.

One of the most noticeable changes that the automobile brought to rural areas was the building of roads. In the mid-twenties highway US 20 was constructed by local farmers in northern Indiana.¹⁹⁴ Despite their ban concerning the purchase of automobiles, the Amish participated by helping to grade and level the road alongside the non-Amish farmers. At this time the roads consisted of gravel rather than concrete. In return for their service to the roads in the area, the farmers were paid with real estate tax credit.¹⁹⁵ This system relieved cash-poor farmers, including the Amish.

Even though the Amish did not purchase the automobile, this did not necessarily mean that they would not use it. Many rode with neighbors in their automobiles. The Amish also utilized car transportation to travel. Beginning in the twenties, the Amish became tourists, traveling to Florida in the winter months to escape the colder temperatures of the north. They

¹⁹² Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 203.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁹⁴ A. Miller and P. Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, , 13.

¹⁹⁵ L. Graber, In *Echoes of the Past*, 86. D. Hochstetler, In *Echoes of the Past*, 163.

eventually set up a settlement near Tampa, Florida, where members from Amish communities in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana visited. The settlement was called Pinecraft and continues to be a popular Amish destination today.

As more Indianans strove to bring the benefits of city life to the country, electric lines slowly spread throughout rural communities. However, rural citizens did not embrace electricity as enthusiastically as they did the automobile in the twenties. In 1920, ten percent of farms in Indiana had electricity; by 1930 that number increased to only 16.7 percent. Those percentages are confirmed by Amish reports throughout the twenties and even into the thirties that their neighbors did not have electricity. Nevertheless, the presence of electricity on rural farms forced the Amish to take a stand concerning their acceptance of the technology.¹⁹⁶

Before addressing the Amish concerns and response to electrification, it is important to clarify why rural electrification was such a slow process. Dennis Nordin and Roy Scott argue that the electric companies did not feel it made fiscal sense to set up electric systems in rural areas with less population density. Instead they focused their efforts on more populated regions or industrial centers. For farmers or residents living in more rural regions, companies marketed “home electric plants...that used storage batteries, gasoline engines, or generators...”¹⁹⁷

However, these plants were very expensive and farmers questioned their utility on the farm. Advertisers directed their campaigns towards women, hoping to capitalize on their interest in managing a “modern” home (meaning a home equipped with the newest technological conveniences). In some cases, it was for this reason that electricity was not as popular as the

¹⁹⁶ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 65.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

automobile or tractor. While farm men could justify the usefulness of the previous implements on the farm, electricity was deemed to be a luxury and not a necessity.¹⁹⁸

In the early twentieth century most Amish communities in the United States banned the connection of private homes to public power grids. The Amish (and other rural citizens) struggled to grasp the concept of electrical lines and were concerned about connecting to a larger power grid. They feared it would lead to a stronger relationship and dependence between the Amish and corporations in general. In addition to their arguments that connecting to a grid would expose them to unwanted influence, the Old Order Amish also rejected this type of power because the Peachy Amish, a group that split over the debate concerning the tractor, accepted it and the Old Order did not want to follow in their footsteps. The ban of electricity did not extend to all types of power. The Amish used battery power as well as gasoline powered generators. In Amish communities across the United States, debates arose over what types of power were acceptable and what types should be banned.¹⁹⁹ In the northern Indiana settlements, the use of battery power as well as generator power was acceptable but it was not until later in the century that the Amish had devices that utilized these sources of power, including gasoline powered lamps, refrigerators, etc. The most common type of power found on Amish farms was the engine in tractors used to thresh wheat.

With the automobile and rural electrification, the Amish bans were decisions that they enforced among themselves. One of the greatest challenges the Amish faced during the twentieth century was the reformation of public schools and in many cases, these changes to education

¹⁹⁸ Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 211-212.

¹⁹⁹ Donald Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 151-153.

were out of their hands and under the control of state and federal governments. In the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the education of rural children was left to the local community. Small, one-room schools dotted rural communities and took into account the demands of farming, including its erratic schedule and the necessity of children as farm laborers. The goals of the reformers were to make rural education equal to urban education. Reformers sought to centralize rural school systems, streamline the length of school time (both with attendance and the school year) and consolidate small schools into larger ones. The Amish were not the only farmers who resisted the reformation of education during the twenties. For farmers, the education of older children was impractical because their children were expected to continue working the family farm.²⁰⁰

In *Mixed Harvest*, Hal Barron discusses the responses of rural citizens to the education reforms of the early twentieth century. He argues that the centralization of schools limited the control of the individual farm communities over the education of their children. They also disliked the idea of a consolidated school as children had to travel further distances and would be away from home for a longer portion of the day. The parents also expressed their concerns over their children being exposed to bad influences as they traveled to these schools (a fear that is often attributed to the Amish but in reality represented the broader population of rural citizens). In summation, the agrarian communities felt that the loss of their schools represented a threat to their traditions as well as their communities.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Nordin and Scott, *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: the Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture*, 80. Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 44.

²⁰¹ Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930*, 72.

The reforms that most challenged the Amish were the compulsory attendance laws. Laws mandating the attendance of students and the ages at which they could stop schooling started to take effect in the rural countryside during the early twentieth century. In Ohio, the Bing Act was passed in 1921, requiring children to attend school until the age of sixteen.²⁰² Indiana enacted similar legislation in the same year. In addition to their issues with compulsory attendance past the age of fourteen, many Amish parents disagreed with the curriculum taught as well. Subjects included history, geography and physical fitness, all topics that the Amish viewed as unnecessary. In response to the school reforms, many Amish parents kept their children at home.²⁰³

Levi Gingerich recalled his parents' resistance to send him to high school. After a visit by the local sheriff, his parents relented but they did not take his education seriously. He remembered his father often keeping him out of school to complete farm chores. Due to this, he struggled to maintain his grades and often disappointed his teacher. He spoke of the struggle he felt between the two worlds.²⁰⁴ While he spoke kindly about his teachers and principal, he also noted that they did not understand the position of this family. This was made clear after the death of his mother. His father stated that the situation necessitated him to stay at home and tend to the farm. However, school officials maintained their stance and the boy continued to attend until he

²⁰² Donald B. Kraybill, ed., *The Amish and the State*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 88.

²⁰³ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 74.

²⁰⁴ Levi Gingerich, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 45-46.

was sixteen. In the end, the superintendent did pass on advice that would later transform the education of Amish children. He said, “What you people need is your own schools.”²⁰⁵

This story was not uncommon, throughout the twenties the Amish continued to resist sending their children to school, especially when they were needed to work at home. Authorities continued to pressure Amish parents to send their children to school.²⁰⁶ The Amish frequently met with local authorities to discuss the possibility of a compromise. For example, in 1921 in Shipshewana, the county and state education superintendents met with Amish representatives to address their concerns. Education officials suggested that the Amish focus on the agricultural courses offered at the school and not take the more controversial subjects. While the meeting was very calm (even the local paper predicted a peaceful resolution to the education issue because of the Amish character), the Amish were reminded that if necessary, the law would be upheld and violators would face consequences.²⁰⁷ Even though the meeting provided some temporary relief, public education continued to concern the Amish.

Dorothy Pratt argues that the major Amish concern regarding the reformation of schools was the exposure of Amish children to modern ideas such as clothing, automobiles, electricity and smoking. However, this was not always the case according the Amish reports.²⁰⁸ Many recounted enjoying school and having few issues with their education. During this period, most Amish children went to the school closest to their home and many children attended public

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 47.

²⁰⁶ L. Graber, In *Echoes of the Past*, 88.

²⁰⁷ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 75.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 77.

schools or other religious schools such as those operated by the Lutherans.²⁰⁹ Most of the time, the children walked to school or rode in a wagon. In a few cases they even rode to school in a Model-T Ford that transported the children (according to one Amish man several trips were required to get everyone to school). While the English children outnumbered the Amish children, they had few difficulties. Sometimes the Amish children were teased for their differences, including their clothing and the fact that many Amish children did not speak English.²¹⁰ Overall, while Amish children attended schools with non-Amish children well before the twenties, parents were concerned about sending their children to schools in communities located further away from their homes.

In contrast to a modern classroom in a public school, the Amish fit in well with the public education of the early twentieth century. Christianity was not only accepted as the de facto religion but it was also promoted through bible readings and prayer. However, even in a Christian classroom the Amish faced religious conflicts with the English. For example, during Christmas the other students and teachers conducted plays and decorated Christmas trees. The Amish viewed this as a waste of time and resources.²¹¹ Another example concerns the taking of school pictures. An Amish woman recalled showing a picture the teacher had taken of the class to her parents when she was in the first grade. She stated that his father warned her against photography and promptly burned the image.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Weaver, In *Echoes of the Past*, 66.

²¹⁰ Lester Byler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 128. Mose Miller and Abbie Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 132. Susie Yoder, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 140.

²¹¹ Ella Byler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 130.

²¹² S. Yoder, In *Echoes of the Past*, 140.

To avoid conflict with education authorities, many Amish communities built their own one-room schoolhouses and educated their children according to their beliefs and standards. The Amish defiance of education laws demonstrates their willingness to act on tough issues, even at the risk of arrest. In their responses to the issues of modernity and mechanization lies the basic desire for survival. An Amish man named Rufus Beachy best sums up the Amish attitude of the twenties:

We are living in a progressive age, in which times and way of doing things are changing most rapidly, and we as a people are passing through a transition period, and being a conservative people we will have to move very carefully if we want to preserve the church and keep our people together as we must do if we wish to continue our existence.²¹³

The Amish fears regarding survival were not isolated to their communities. While the Amish response to modernity and mechanization may have been influenced by their beliefs, other farmers shared their fears over the transformation of rural America. However, the combination of their belief system and their defiance of modernization helped to define their identity in modern America separate from farming and created the current image of a community bent on separation from society. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by their willingness to work with their neighbors, cooperate with the government to a degree and even utilize technology (albeit with caveats), the Amish did not aim for this separation, but it was a consequence. As many farmers succumbed to the effects of modernization and mechanization and left farming for good, the Amish maintained their beliefs even though eventually they left farming. The changes in

²¹³ Pratt, *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*, 85.

rural life meant that for the first time, the outward appearance and lifestyle of the Amish made them “different” compared to their neighbors. This widening gap as well as the continued defiance of the Amish regarding the transformations of rural life that continued into the thirties will be addressed in the conclusion.

CHAPTER IV: Conclusion

In the early twentieth century several events transformed agrarian life in the United States. Shifts occurred not only in the methods of farming but also in the structure of rural society. The effects of industrialization were no longer confined to urban centers and factories as machination and modernization spread throughout rural America. In addition to the changes in the appearance of farming and farm life, agrarians also contended with an unstable economy that fluctuated from a Golden Age to a recession in a matter of years. Farmers struggled to maintain their way of life as agriculture in the Midwest transformed into agribusiness.

This thesis contends that the Amish responded to the transformative events of this period, not as an isolated religious group, but in a manner that reflected their desire to maintain an agrarian identity. Similar to most agrarians during this period, much of their focus was surviving and providing for their families. They feared the loss of their farms, community and more importantly, the loss of control over their day-to-day lives. These fears led them to respond to the challenges of modernity in a calculated and complex manner. While these decisions tended to be based in their religious doctrines, they also reinforced the Amish desire to continue an agrarian lifestyle. Nevertheless, the Amish faced two separate issues during this period: the modernization and mechanization of agriculture as well as the need to maintain their Amish communities. The following section will examine the Amish (and non-Amish) response to the transformative events of the early twentieth century as well as an analysis of how decisions made in this period have shaped the Amish perspective in the United States.

During the early twentieth century, agriculture entered what many have termed a “Golden Age” or a time of high prices and increased values. However, some authors argue that this period was not prosperous for all farmers. One key point of evidence for this argument is the increase in farm tenancy rates. Evidence from Indiana supports this claim as tenancy rates increased in the state during the period from 1900-1920. According to their reports, the Amish were no exception, as many families rented farms prior to owning. This demonstrates that the Amish, along with non-Amish farmers, when lacking the capital to purchase a farm, chose to continue farming by renting.²¹⁴

In addition to the increasing tenancy rates, farmers also struggled to pay the costs of maintaining a farm during this period. Both Amish and non-Amish farmers required a steady source of income to pay expenses such as taxes, improvements to the farm and mortgages or rents. As tax rates increased due in part to rising land values, Amish and non-Amish farmers worked to pave local roads to receive credits for their taxes. Nevertheless, Indiana agrarians voiced concerns over the increasing costs of farming in publications such as *The Indiana Farmer*. While there is no account of the Amish perspective in the publication, according to their reports, they experienced similar frustrations. Paying farm expenses such as was a common concern for all farmers during this period.

In order to compensate for their growing costs, farmers produced at higher rates to meet the demands of a growing urban population and eventually, a nation at war. This trend represented a larger shift away from agriculture and towards agribusiness. Proponents for

²¹⁴ Emma Byler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 129. David Hostetler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 241. Sarah Hostetler, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 242.

agricultural reforms encouraged farmers to adopt the practices of a factory, including standardization, a business approach to farm management and an emphasis on efficiency. While this philosophy seems to contradict the Amish adherence to subsistence farming, they actually embraced some aspects of agribusiness. As mentioned previously, the Amish sold their products for profits and regardless of their rejection of materialism, required capital for farm and daily expenses.

One major concern for both Amish and secular farmers during this period was the instability of farm prices. As prices rose and then faltered, they worked strenuously to earn a suitable income. As explained in chapter two, there was a rise in tenancy rates during this period and Amish farmers were no exception. For the most part, the Amish were tenants of their relatives; however, they still shared the experience of renting, rather than owning, a farm. Also, many farmers grew cash crops to help with costs. The Amish grew mint and popcorn to supplement their income. Extension agents encouraged secular farmers to do the same.²¹⁵ Amish children worked outside of the home to earn extra money and in many cases, they worked for non-Amish families. They formed cooperatives to get the best prices for their goods and worked together to lower the cost of machinery. The concept of mutual aid did not begin and end with the Amish; instead it seemed to be a hallmark of the Indiana farm community.²¹⁶

Despite their many similarities, there were differences between the Amish and secular farmers in Indiana. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, most farmers did not own a tractor and few owned an automobile. As the century progressed, many farmers began utilizing

²¹⁵ Milo M. Miller, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 212.

²¹⁶ Nora M. Wingard, In *Echoes of the Past*, ed. by Freeman L. Yoder and Lizzie Yoder (Middlebury, IN: 1999), 109. 117.

both machines. A more efficient tractor produced in the twenties allowed farmers to save on labor costs as well as utilize more acres for crops instead of feed. The automobile provided rural citizens with more freedom to travel and a better connection to urban life. The Amish banned the tractor and the automobile in the late 1910s, reasoning that they were both materialistic and a threat to the structure of their communities. While most agrarians utilized the tractor and the automobile heavily throughout the latter twentieth century, the Amish never amended their bans and do not currently use either machine in their fields or for transportation.

In addition to their rejection of the tractor and automobile, the Amish also disagreed with their neighbors over war time participation. As pacifists, the Amish refused to join the military. The Amish continued to be conscientious objectors throughout the conflicts of the twentieth century. In World War II many Amish men served in the Civilian Public Service, travelling across the United States working in hospitals and work camps. However, their experiences during the Second World War were not as hostile as the first.²¹⁷ They based their objector status on their desire to maintain their agrarian lifestyle and therefore protect their religious communities.

The Amish concerns seemed to be founded in reality as many agrarians in Indiana began exploring options outside of the farm. Increasing costs (mechanization, taxation and increasing land values) coupled with tumultuous prices caused many rural citizens during this period to look towards urban areas for stable employment opportunities. Throughout the twenties and beyond

²¹⁷ Steven M. Nolt, *A History of the Amish* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1992), 288.

rural populations steadily declined as the number of farms in Indiana and the rest of the United States dwindled.²¹⁸

While the Amish initially resisted leaving the farm for outside employment, as the twentieth century progressed, they were left with few options. Around the end of World War II, many Amish men began to leave farming and work in factories. In general, the ideological shifts that promoted a business-like approach to agricultural transformed farming into a corporate venture. It was nearly impossible for small farms operated by the Amish to compete with the technology and the capital produced by these companies. This resulted in many Americans abandoning farming all together and choosing a more stable way to earn an income. For the Amish in northern Indiana, this meant working in local recreational vehicle factories. However, in recent years, the Extension Service has started programs to encourage the Amish to return to the farm. In 2000, agents from the Purdue Extension Service helped the Amish organize an auction to sell their produce. In 2011, the auction grossed more than \$1 million. This cooperation between the Amish and the Extension Service has allowed many Amish farmers to return to farming, an initiative they fully support. Junior Miller, an Amish farmer, who remarked, “In this economic downturn it’s brought more people back to their two to five acres, to get a living off that. And it’s a good way to preserve the Amish lifestyle and way of thinking.”²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Hal S. Barron, *Mixed Harvest: the Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 195. Hope Kessler, In *Buggies and Bad Times* ed. by Eleanor Arnold (Indianapolis, IN: The Indiana Extension Homemakers Association, 1985), 30. Clifton J Phillips, *Indiana in Transition the Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1968), 265-66.

²¹⁹ Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan, eds., *The Amish Struggle with Modernity* (Hanover, NH.: UPNE, 1994), 170-171. Purdue Extension, Produce Auction Gets Amish Back to Family Farms, [online], available from: <http://www.ag.purdue.edu/extension/makingadifference/pages/story29.aspx>. 1 February 2012.

In addition to the economic struggles of the twenties, farmers in northern Indiana also contended with rural reforms that often encroached on their land and their ideals. These reforms sought to modernize rural life and make farming more efficient. Some of these reforms were accepted by farmers while others were viewed as too disruptive to rural traditions. One example of a successful reform in northern Indiana was the Agricultural Extension Service organized by Purdue University. Agents taught courses to farmers about farm management, scientific farming and other useful topics. In the counties of Elkhart and LaGrange, agents encouraged the farmers to organize cooperatives to produce and sell their products.²²⁰ Both Amish and secular farmers participated in the programs offered by the service and continue to do so today.

One program pushed by the state of Indiana that the Amish did not support was the reformation of rural education. Rural reformers perceived many faults in rural education in the early twentieth century. They sought to standardize rural education to bring the schools up to the level of urban schools. The reforms established included mandatory high school education, school consolidation, and larger schools with more teachers and modern school buildings. Many of these reforms were turned into state laws. Whereas, schools used to be community affairs, they transitioned to streamlined centers of learning operated by the state government. The Amish conflicted with the laws by arguing that education should accommodate the agrarian lifestyle. In some cases Amish men were arrested over their refusal to send their children to school past the age of fourteen and on a regular basis. While many had to pay fines, some Amish men spent a few days in jail. The debate over education continued long after the twenties. It was not until

²²⁰ United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of Elkhart County, for the years 1920-1928*. United States Extension Service, *Annual Report of County Agricultural Agent of LaGrange County, for the year ending November 30, 1924*.

1972 that legislation was passed allowing Amish children to leave school at fourteen and participate in an “apprenticeship” for the following two years.²²¹ While the Amish and their neighbors initially fought education reform together, many secular farmers adapted to the changes faster than the Amish.

Overall, this study found that the Amish and non-Amish response to the transformation of agriculture during the early twentieth century was very similar. They sought ways to improve their farms and methods to increase their production. They worked cooperatively to receive and pay the most reasonable prices for farm products and goods. They participated in programs to enhance their knowledge of scientific farming. In times of financial struggle, they worked inside and outside of the home to earn extra income. They farmed as tenants and owners. They resisted government intervention in rural life, including the consolidation of schools and compulsory attendance laws. They resisted technology unless it had a proper use on the farm. Aside from a few differences, the Amish response to modernity was rooted in agrarian ideals cloaked in religious doctrine.

The Amish response to modernization and mechanization foreshadowed their responses to transformations in rural life that occurred after the twenties. The economic instability of the twenties led to the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression of the thirties. Many Americans looked for government assistance during such difficult times, not necessarily aid but for the government intervention to solve the crisis. The Amish system relied on mutual aid in the community to survive harsh times. If a member of the community was in need, the community

221 Nolt, *A History of the Amish*, 274.

assisted the individual. They did not feel it was the state or federal government's place to intervene in community affairs, especially if it challenged their doctrines and way of life.

The Amish of northern Indiana survived the financial crisis of the thirties in good condition. At times they struggled to pay their taxes, mortgages and other bills and in some cases, Amish farmers lost their farms. Overall, their reluctance to purchase farm machinery with loans protected them from large amounts of debt and many went unscathed (albeit, hungry at times).

Despite their willingness to assist others, they opposed several programs enacted during the depression era that were established to help farmers recover. One example was the Agricultural Adjustment Act that required farmers to reduce their crops in return for government payments. The Amish disagreed with the notion that part of one's crop would be wasted, especially when so many Americans were going hungry at this point. In northern Indiana this presented problems because the Amish had the best wheat crops in the area. While they complied with the request to reduce their crops, they refused payments from the government.

Even though they opposed the AAA, the Amish did rely on some assistance programs to aid them during this period. They participated in the Federal Land Bank Loan program and relied on other loans to assist with debt. There were two issues that concerned the Amish use of the programs: first, in order to participate they had to show proof that they were participating in the AAA (something that was difficult for most farmers) and they had to show proof of insurance. The Amish did not participate in insurance programs because of their belief in mutual aid (the responsibility of the community to help those in need). In order to bypass these regulations, the Amish sent representatives to negotiate a deal. They were able to create a plan that would protect

the Amish communities of Indiana and Michigan from losing their farms without jeopardizing their structure.²²²

Other New Deal programs also caused conflicts between the Amish and the government. As mentioned previously, electricity did not present much of a threat to the Amish in the twenties because most rural communities were not electrified. This began to change with the advent of the Rural Electrification Administration. The government offered loans to companies to bring service to the countryside. The government rationalized that this would not only benefit farmers by allowing them use of modern conveniences but it would also assist the economy as farmers purchased new items for their homes. While many farmers in northern Indiana joined with the REA, Amish farmers did not, citing their previous ban of electricity due to their desire to remain unconnected from the power grid as well as electric companies.²²³

Similar to the AAA and the REA, the Amish disagreed with the Social Security System in later years. In the 1950s, the IRS required all employed citizens to pay the Social Security Tax. The Amish did not and in some cases had their farm animals confiscated and sold to pay for back taxes. In 1965 legislation was passed that exempted self-employed men and women with religious objections to Social Security. However, any Amish person working for another person must pay the Social Security Tax. Similar to their beliefs regarding insurance, the Amish do not receive Social Security benefits because they believe it is the task of the community to take care of those in need. Conflicts between the government and the Amish demonstrate not only their ability to compromise but also their strong defiance when necessary.²²⁴

222 Dorothy O. Pratt, *Shipshewana: an Indiana Amish Community* (Bloomington, IN.: Quarry Books, 2004), 96.

223 *Ibid.*, 97-98.

224 *Ibid.*, 93.

The combined efforts of the Amish in response to government intervention represented a shift in Amish culture. While most Amish communities in the United States shared a system of beliefs, their individual church districts were largely autonomous. The decisions regarding the acceptance and implementation of mechanization and modernity were left up to each church district. Most districts agreed with and were influenced by the decisions made by other groups but in the end, they could set their own standards. However, in order to defend their lifestyle against government interventions in rural life, the Amish united their efforts. An example of this is the National Amish Steering Committee, an organization created in the 1960s that consists of Amish representatives from each church district. The committee represents the interests of the Amish in national matters; examples include the debate over education and issues concerning the military draft. Throughout the twentieth century the Amish fought to maintain their lifestyle and remain in accordance with their beliefs.

The most noticeable transformation concerning the Amish way of life occurred outside of their communities. As they made their compromises with the government and their decisions regarding the ownership and use of certain products, other rural Americans made their own choices and compromises. Their neighbors, without similar limitations, became consumers of products that the Amish considered “worldly”. Increasing numbers of farmers purchased cars throughout the twenties and traded horses for tractors. Urban life fascinated many rural citizens as they left the countryside and moved into the city. Electricity transformed the home into a center of mechanization that included refrigeration and machine washers and later would include radios and televisions. At first, the Amish and other rural citizens fought together against education reforms, but eventually most farmers relented and accepted the more bureaucratic

education system. While the Amish bans on mechanization and challenges to modernization occurred in the twenties, the consequences of these decisions are apparent today.

In the mid-twentieth century, the Amish were noticeably different from their neighbors. Previously, little subtleties might have revealed their religious preference, such as their beards or their lack of buttons. But in modern America, the differences between the Amish and other rural citizens were immediately evident. The Amish style of dress, once common in rural areas, was now outdated. Simple fabrics have been replaced by more intricate designs and styles. The Amish did not follow the fashion trends because they represented two things the Amish rejected: materialism and status. As roads became crowded with cars, the Amish and their buggies not only stuck out but also became a hazard. Due to the stark contrast between the Amish and secular society, many maintain the mistaken belief that they Amish are “stuck in time”, or that they represent a romantic ideal of the past.

The effect of this perception has been tremendous in regards to the reception of the Amish by modern America. The Amish culture and lifestyle captured the attention of mainstream America in the 1950s, first with a play titled *Plain and Fancy*, a musical that played on Broadway. As American interest in the Amish sparked, their settlements in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio became tourist destinations. In Lancaster, PA in 1963 1.5 million people visited the Amish settlements and related attractions in the area. As David Weaver-Zercher points out, many tourists visit Amish settlements and attractions anticipating the simplicity of Amish life. However, he also argues that while outsiders visited the settlements with this hope, in many cases, as more tourists frequented the area, non-Amish entrepreneurs created outlets that obscured traditional Amish culture. An example is Dutch Wonderland, a theme park in

Lancaster, PA. While tourists who visit the area enjoy it, the theme park itself opposes the major beliefs as well as the lifestyle of the Amish.²²⁵

The counties of Elkhart and LaGrange Indiana have also become popular tourist destinations for those seeking out the Amish. Tourists visit attractions that mimic Amish farms and restaurants that in many cases hire Amish men and women as cooks and servers to provide an authentic experience. The rise in tourism has been a positive addition to the economy in northern Indiana, with tourists spending close to \$300 million in the counties of Elkhart and LaGrange at the end of the twentieth century. In Shipshewana, Indiana, nearly 30,000 people visit each week, shopping at a local flea market or visiting the Menno Hof, a visitor center that explains many aspects Amish and Mennonite life.²²⁶ The increase in visitors and tourism in northern Indiana has provided much needed employment for not only the Amish but also the non-Amish as farming in the region has declined.

As the Amish rose in popularity in the second half of the century, their reputation translated into a popular brand. Beginning in the 1930s, magazines began to advertise the benefits of buying Amish.²²⁷ Anything produced by the Amish automatically increased in value as “Amish” became synonymous with quality. Americans eagerly purchased furniture, food products, quilts and other items that they deemed superior to manufactured products.²²⁸ While some Amish have resented this foray into commercialism, others have embraced their position in the limelight. Some view it as an opportunity to promote their culture and way of life. As Donald

225 David Weaver-Zercher, *The Amish in the American Imagination* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 83-84.

226 Thomas J. Meyers and Steven M. Nolt, *An Amish Patchwork* (Bloomington Indiana University Press, 2005), 128.

227 Weaver-Zercher, *The Amish in the American Imagination*, 85.

228 Weaver-Zercher, *The Amish in the American Imagination*, 88-90. Meyers and Nolt, *An Amish Patchwork*, 130.

Kraybill explains, "...they take a quiet satisfaction in knowing that their culture is worth such respect."²²⁹

The drastic difference between the American perception of the Amish before and after the 1930s demonstrates the profound effects of the transformative events of the early twentieth century. The Amish defined their modern identity through a series of complex decisions regarding their acceptance modernization. Their resistance of the transitions that dominated rural life during this period provides evidence of their tenacity when defending their lifestyle and their determination to maintain their religious group. It is this attitude that has allowed them to not only continue their existence in an increasingly modern United States but also thrive past the twentieth century and into the present.

229 Meyers and Nolt, *An Amish Patchwork*, 132.

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