

The Changing Occupational Structure of the Amish of the Holmes County, Ohio, Settlement

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The Holmes County, Ohio, Amish settlement attracts increasing numbers of tourists, drawn by the distinctive agricultural landscape of grandfather houses, windmills, draft horses and shocks of grain in the fields, buggies on the roads, and quaintly turned-out “plain people”. But life is changing for the Amish. Less than a quarter of the Amish now gain their living directly from agriculture and the numbers are steadily falling. This paper examines the changes in occupational structure among the Amish of Holmes County, Ohio, the largest Amish settlement in the world. It also investigates differences in occupations among the three leading sects of Amish in this county. Occupations listed by the Amish themselves in the *Ohio Amish Directory* are used to trace the decline in farming, as well as to identify the growing types of non-farm employment. Not only are numbers of Amish in non-agricultural jobs increasing, so also is the range of employment opportunities available.

Keywords: Amish, occupational structure

In popular perception, the Amish are regarded by most non-Amish as part of an agricultural society whose members feel uncomfortable in the modern world. The term “frozen in time” has been used to convey the idea of a backward-looking group unwilling to adjust to the pace, profit and pleasure of the larger society that surrounds them. Landing (1970) has challenged successfully the widely held idea that the Amish have always been a tradition-oriented group. Contrary to popular opinion, the Amish do respond to economic and social changes, but mostly in a controlled and very measured fashion, slowly enough that their traditions are not overturned. To a point they are an anachronism, but life is changing for the Amish.

The Holmes County Amish Settlement

The Amish religious organization is congregational, and each “congregation”, presided over by a bishop, is identified as a church district. Geographically proximate districts, regardless of sect, are referred to as “settlements”. The term “settlement” has no official status, but is merely a widely used and convenient term to identify all the Amish in a geographically homogeneous area. Thus, the Holmes County settlement in Ohio, USA, lies mostly in Holmes County, but spills over into Wayne County to the north and Tuscarawas County to the east (Figure 1).

This settlement may be divided into four major groups. The Schwartzentruber, who occupy the southern part of Wayne County, with a small extension into northeastern Holmes County, are the most conservative. The Andy Weaver Amish, somewhat less conservative, are about equally divided between Wayne County and Holmes County, and recently have begun to colonize areas in Knox County on a modest scale. Old Order Amish represent the largest segment of the Settlement with the Mt. Hope-Berlin-Walnut Creek axis as the rough center of their distribution. The New Order Amish, who are the most liberal of the groups, exist in the same general area as the Old Order, but with a Berlin-Mt. Hope-Maysville axis. They also are slowly colonizing an area in Knox and Coshocton counties.

All four communities are overwhelmingly rural in residence. The Schwartzentruber are so conservative that they will not allow their entries to appear in *The Ohio Amish Directory*, and they appear to be entirely a farming people. The other three sects, although still predominantly agricultural, are beginning to feel the necessity for non-farm employment. In farming, none of the communities use tractors for field work, although both the Old and New Order permit the use of stationary engines.

This article investigates the changes that are occurring in the occupational orientation of the Amish

as they are forced, by changing economic conditions, to modify their traditional life style. An understanding of these modifications may offer insights useful in the study of similar structural changes both in North America and in other parts of the world, and will contribute to the growing literature on economic restructuring (Pandit and Withers 1999, Ayres 1998, Bingham and Eberts c1990). The present study investigates recent occupational shifts in the largest Amish settlement in the USA. By analysing data derived from *The Ohio Amish Directory*¹ for the Holmes County settlement, Amish occupational structure is determined for the years 1973 and 1997 (Tables 1-4).

Changes in The Holmes County Setting

Holmes County lies about halfway on, and slightly south of, a direct line between Cleveland and Columbus in northeast Ohio. Located south of the glacial boundary, its topography is rolling, and its soils are of only fair quality. Nonetheless, they are quite suitable for the labour intensive agriculture of the industrious Amish, who make up almost half the county's total population and a significantly higher proportion of the rural, farm population. The Holmes County Amish settlement (Figure 1) is growing more rapidly than the rural non-Amish population. Unfortunately, farm land prices are also increasing, which acts as a brake on the local expansion of agriculture among the Amish.

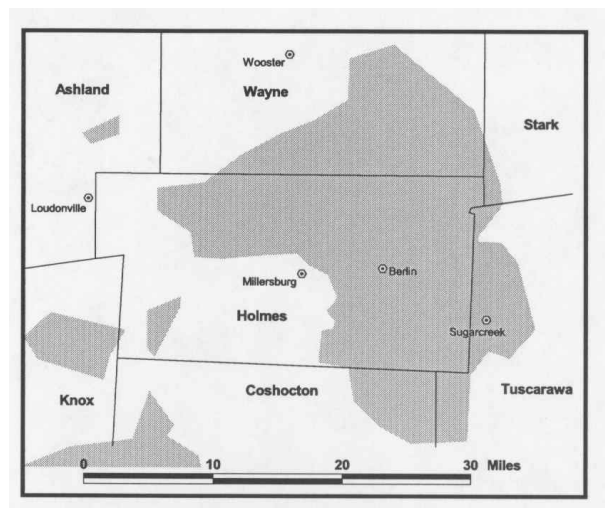


Figure 1: Extent of the Holmes County, Ohio, settlement in 1997

At the same time, tourism and manufacturing are rapidly expanding in this area (though the latter is doing so less rapidly than the former). These conditions provide additional small restrictions to the

expansion of farm land, but at the same time offer employment opportunities as alternatives to traditional Amish vocations.

In the past, the Amish have met both external and internal pressures by adapting strategies that allowed them to keep agricultural pursuits as their most important priority. As families grew generation after generation, they bought up whatever additional farmland they could, to provide places for newly-married children. As farmland prices increased and available land became more scarce, they migrated to new, non-contiguous areas, usually a short distance away, but sometimes in another state or even in another country. By the last quarter of the 20th century, such strategies no longer worked very well because of less flexible land markets and growing population pressures.

Nevertheless, considerable resistance exists within Amish communities to any movement away from traditional occupations. An earlier study of the Old Order Amish in the Geauga County, Ohio, settlement noted that because “factory jobs were both personally unrewarding and economically undependable” (Foster 1984, 79) the number of Amish applying for such work was declining by 1982. Community leaders were quoted, however, as saying that factory work did permit “some young Amish men to finance their way into farming or self-employment” (Foster 1984, 79). The implication was that factory work should be pursued primarily as a temporary expedient to allow a more traditional goal to be attained. Despite these observations, the shift among the Amish away from farming and toward “outside” employment has continued, and it seems the only avenue available for economic support for the growing Amish community. The continuing expansion of such non-farm employment promises to create new tensions within the communities.

Kraybill and Nolt (1995) recently investigated the changing employment situation in the smaller, but better-known Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Amish settlement. They suggest that the shift from farming to profit-making activities, the focus of their study, is the result of encroaching urbanism. In practice, this results in a competition of land uses, which in turn drives up the cost of farm land. The scarcity and high cost of farm land is the engine forcing the Amish into non-farm business. In Holmes County, Ohio, encroaching urbanism plays a smaller part. Instead, steadily developing tourism requires ever more land. In both locations, most of the available farm land is already occupied. While Kraybill and Nolt (1995) studied business ownership, *The Ohio Amish Directory* reveals

employment, and this limits the studies' comparability. However, employment data may be an even more accurate measure of the economic shifts in the Amish community.

Table 1 shows Holmes County Amish occupation groups for 1973 and 1997. In 1973, almost half of all Amish heads of households reported their livelihood to be from agriculture. In 1997, while the total number of workers had almost doubled, the number of farmers was actually smaller than in 1973, and the proportion of all workers in farming was just over one-fifth. In 1973, the number of retired Amish (mostly former farmers) was over 10 percent of all workers, but the same figure was barely eight percent in 1997. What had happened in the roughly quarter century between 1973 and 1997, was a steady increase in employment in manufacturing, secondary wood enterprises and construction. Each of these activities now accounts for between 11 and 15.2 percent of all workers (Table 1). Wood working (both primary and secondary wood activities) demonstrated the greatest increases in terms of percentages of all workers.

Table 1 Amish Occupations, Number and Percentage, 1973 and 1997

By Groups	1973		1997	
	no.	%	no.	%
Agriculture	1138	47.54	933	21.42
Retired	269	11.24	351	8.06
Manufacturing	245	10.23	662	15.20
Construction	196	8.19	502	11.53
Laborers	150	6.27	199	4.57
Amish Services	81	3.38	198	4.57
Secondary Wood	78	3.26	621	14.26
Primary Wood	70	2.92	230	5.28
Widowed	37	1.55	241	5.53
Housework	29	1.21	35	0.80
Unknown	24	1.00	93	2.14
Food Processing	24	1.00	43	0.99
Retail Sales	21	0.88	77	1.77
Crafts	11	0.46	31	0.71
Office/Institutiona	10	0.42	40	0.92
Extractive	9	0.38	23	0.53
Self-Employed	1	0.04	59	1.35
I-W Service	1	0.04	0	0.00
Other	0	0.00	17	0.39
TOTAL	2394	100.00	4355	100.00

Source: Tabulated from data in *The Ohio Amish Directory*

The Decrease in Number of Amish Farmers

The number of Amish farmers has not only decreased as a percentage of all Amish, but in absolute terms as well. Although there were almost 2000 more Amish households in 1997 than in 1973, there were about 200 fewer farmers (Figure 2). Only the New Order Amish sect has maintained a stable number of farmers, with 144 in 1973 and 140 in 1997.

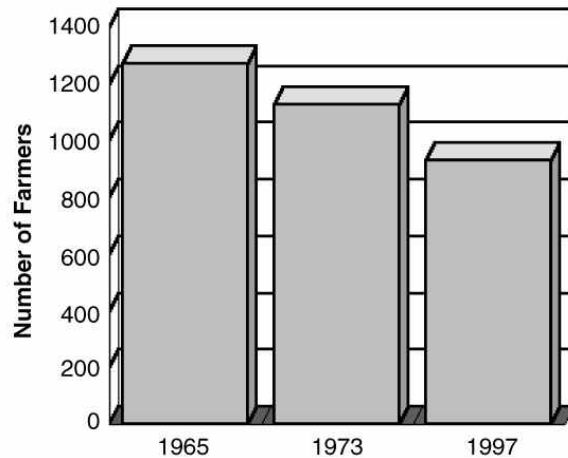


Figure 2: Number of Amish farmers, Holmes County, Ohio, 1965, 1973, 1997

With the rapid expansion of the Amish population in the Holmes County settlement, the relative decline in farming is understandable. However, the absolute decrease is more difficult to explain given the emphasis which Amish culture places on farming and the increase in the land area, albeit minor, of the settlement between 1973 and 1997. As the members of the Swartzentruber sect do not participate in the *Directory*, an accumulation of farms by the Swartzentrubers could be reflected in a decline in farming among the other three sects, and therefore an apparent drop in the number of Amish farmers. Alternatively, the Amish could be following the national trend of farm consolidation.

Agricultural census data support neither thesis. Data for Wayne and Holmes counties were examined for 1969, 1978, 1982, 1987, and 1992 (Table 2). Data from the 1974 Census of Agriculture are not very useful in examining long term trends because the definition of a farm was changed in the 1974 census. This makes information for that year not strictly comparable to other years. Also, the short term fuel crisis in 1973-74 affected reporting. For these reasons we did not include 1974 data in the study. Table 2 shows that the long term pattern was resumed in 1978.

Table 2 Farm Numbers and Size, Holmes and Wayne Counties, 1969-1992

	Holmes Co.	Wayne Co.
<i>Number of Farms</i>		
1969	1537	2051
1978	1527	1874
1982	1574	1866
1987	1518	1734
1992	1443	1582
<i>Average Farm Size (acres)</i>		
1969	128	138
1978	132	147
1982	124	144
1987	123	152
1992	123	156
<i>Farms with Horses</i>		
1969	809	591
1978	598	358
1982	901	506
1987	869	457
1992	855	412

Sources: 1992, 1987, 1982, 1978, 1974 *Census of Agriculture, Vol. I, Geographic Area Series: Ohio*. US GPO. Washington.

The “farms with horses” statistic is used as an indicator of Amish farmers. Although there are a few farms which are dedicated to horse raising or which maintain a horse for pleasure, the statistics for Ohio counties without a significant Amish population are generally two orders of magnitude less than Holmes County. The percentage of farms with horses in Holmes County from 1969 to 1992 has been fairly constant at about 40 percent. If farms were passing into Swartzentruber hands, the percentage should increase as the number of farms with horses remains stable, while the number of farmers decreases. Furthermore, if the national trend toward farm consolidation is affecting the Amish farming rate, farms should be becoming larger. Given the Amish emphasis on using horses for farm field work, it is doubtful that larger farms would give them an advantage in efficiency. Though neighbouring Wayne County has fewer Amish, its farms have become larger, reflecting a consolidation trend. Holmes County actually showed a decreased farm size (Table 2). Generally speaking, farm size in Holmes County is significantly lower than in other counties without large Amish populations.

High land prices probably have the most influence on farming rates. As land values increase, all farmers have

difficulty purchasing land. The Amish would seem especially vulnerable, as their farming methods cannot generate the return per acre that mechanized farming can, especially because of the acreage that must be devoted to forage for horses. Holmes County farmland values have increased more rapidly than the state average, surpassing it in 1987. Just to the north, Wayne County farmland values have also increased more rapidly than the state average (Figure 3).

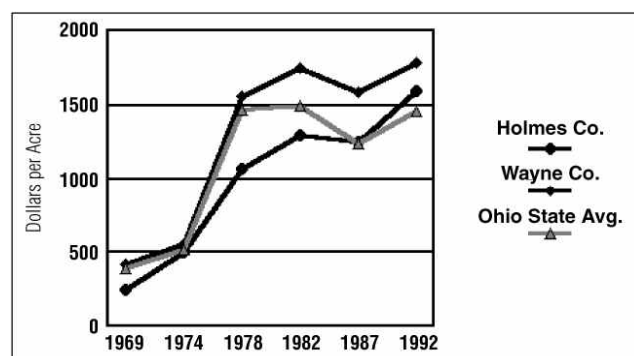


Figure 3: Farmland values, 1969-1992 for Holmes and Wayne counties and Ohio

Changes in Holmes County Amish Occupations

Tables 3 and 4 show occupational listings tabulated from *The Ohio Amish Directory* for the years 1973 and 1997. Some care must be exercised in placing too much confidence in these tables. The entries were completed by the listed individuals themselves, apparently with little initial attempt to standardize or control the recording. Thus, one individual might list an occupation, such as ‘carpenter’, while another might list the type of work performed, such as ‘building repairs’. A third might provide just the type of business, such as ‘cheese house’, and a fourth might indicate the name of his/her employer, such as ‘Wayne Door Company’. We have combined these disparate entries into what we have designated as occupational groups. Another minor problem arises in the few instances where an individual may have more than one occupation. Since only one listing was permitted in the *Directory*, that entry has been used as presumably the most important in the view of the form preparer.

A potentially more serious problem exists when farmers have taken up a non-farm, second occupation. Conceivably, a farmer might list the newer occupation, believing it to be more distinctive than that of farming. In any case, we felt bound by the entries themselves and have based our analysis on them, always keeping in mind their possible inadequacies.

Finally, the willingness of the Amish to record themselves in *The Directory* varies. No Swartzentruber Amish appear in the *Directory*, which is consistent with their desire to remain separate from the rest of the world. Also, the participation of other Amish may have varied so that complete coverage may not have been obtained even of the other groups. For example, Smith et al (1997, 241) noted in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania Amish settlement that residents of the more rural areas were “noticeably more open.”

Table 3 gives the occupational structure of the Amish in Holmes County for 1973. The entries are given as they were provided in *The Ohio Amish Directory* listings. “Farmer” is the traditionally accepted

occupation, but a number of other occupations appeared by 1973. Some of these groupings such as primary wood, secondary wood and wood crafts, other crafts, food processing and Amish services seemed to be primarily the result of an expansion of the community, and secondarily of its increasing orientation to services connected with tourism. The occupations included in retail sales and services, construction, manufacturing, extractive industries, skilled worker/office-institution employment were much less closely connected to the traditional community. The catch-all category of “other,” however, did have a strongly traditional orientation.

Table 3 Amish Occupational Structure, 1973

Primary Wood	Farming	Food Processing	Retail Sales & Service
timber cutter	farmer	meat cutter	clerk
sawmill	farm worker	Foremost Foods manager	saw service
sawmill operator		meat company employee	merchant
log skidder	Amish Services	cheese house	salesman
	buggy shop	cheese factory	store manager
Secondary Wood	harness shop	cheese maker	welder
& Wood Crafts	shoe shop	bologna maker	pottery maker
wood worker	blacksmith	poultry processor	mobile home servicemen
lumber dealer	mechanic	flour miller	Kidron Body Shop
lumber company employee	thrasher	egg handler	
Berlin Wood		egg processor	
chair maker	Construction	baker	Skilled Worker/Office- Institution Employment
hickory rocker maker	carpenter		teacher
cabinet installer	brickyard	Manufacturing	janitor
floor sander	mason	pallet shop	hospital
cabinet shop	contractor	trailer factory	bookkeeper
	construction	elevator manufactory	orderly
Crafts	dozer operator	feed mill	maintenance worker
(except wood-oriented)	silo builder	mill worker	income tax preparer
jeweller	painter	pallet co. employee	
sign painter	roofer	shop foreman	
upholsterer	plumber	Shasta Industries	
rug weaver	bldg. repairs	Wayne Door Co.	
clock maker	excavator	Stark Ceramics	
carpet weaver	brick layer	truck body builder	
book binder	power equip. operator	aluminum plant	
shoe repair	cement finisher	ceramic shop	
	cement worker	engine shop	
Other	sander	machine shop	
retired	spray painter	shop work	
widow	siding applicator	shop owner	
labourer			
house work		Extractive Industries	
farm worker		coal miner	
self-employed		strip mine	
I-W service drafted			

Source: *The Ohio Amish Directory*

Table 4 Amish Occupational Structure 1997

Farming	Secondary Wood & Wood Crafts (cont)	Manufacturing (cont)	Construction
farmer		belt shop	carpenter
Primary Wood	Salt Creek Chair	machine shop	bricklayer
timber cutter/logger	chest shop	truck body buider	construction
sawmill	Manufacturing	shop worker	mason
sawmill operator	Airworks	shop owner	contractor
log skidder	Akro Inc.	manufacturer	dozer operator
Miller Logging	Alpine Aluminum	Maytag Shop	roofer
Semac sawmill	Artwood	Pallet shop	plumber
Secondary Wood & Wood Crafts	A.C. Products	Pattletco.	excavator
lumber dealer	A.R.E.	warehouse	equipment operator
lumber Company	Belden Brick	lift driver	cement finisher
Berlin Wood	Clark Castings	factory worker	builder
Stony Point Lumber	Crawford mfg	leather worker	vinyl floor
Holmes Lumber	Elasto Tec	foundry	All Ohio Builders
Miller Lumber	EPAK	hydraulic brake mfg.	gas line installer
Schlabach Lumber	EZ Seat Co.	door mfg	loader operator
Dry Kiln	EZ Trail mfg	builder of woodworking machines	Eastwood Framing
Yoder Lumber	Fryburg Door	metal shop	Holmes Siding
Hiland Wood	Genie Co.	trailer factory	Holmes Mason
Keim Lumber	Gerber & Sons	feed mill	concrete contractor
Sugarcreek Hardwood	Holmco Container	mill worker	Berlin Construction
Sugarcreek Lumber	H.W. Chair	tool maker	Berlin Contractors
Raber Lumber	Invincible	Crafts	Seamless Siding
Walnut Creek Planing	Kidron Body, Inc.	(except wood-oriented)	Yoder Builders
planing mill	Kidron, Inc.	rug weaver	Spring Hill Construction
77 Coach Supply	Litco	clock maker	Miller Drywall
Southwood Lumber	Louisiana-Pacific	upholsterer	window and siding
Paint Valley Lumber	Mast Leather	seamstress/quilting	J Horst Sand Blasting
Hochstetler Lumber	Mast Lite-n-Tough	broommaker	brickyard
Kauffman Lumber	Maysville Elevator	clock repair	Skilled Worker-
Gross Lumber	Merillat	craft shop	White Collar
Mt Eaton Lumber	Mt Eaton Packaging	country Upholstery	hospital
Coblentz Lumber	New Bedford Elevator	toy shop	bookkeeper
Winesburg Hardwood Lumber	Owens-Brockway	printing	maintenance
Boley Ridge Hardwood	Owens-Illinois	Amish Services	business owner
chairmaker	Paint Valley Equipment	harness shop	writer
hickory Rocker Maker	PalletAll	blacksmith	teacher
cabinet shop	Galion Dump Bodies	mechanic	janitor
woodworker	Pine Pallet	buggy shop	research assistant
Schrock's Woodcrafts	Precision Door & Glass	farrier/horseshoeing	Food Processing
Schrock's Cabinets	Pro-Fab	wheelwright	meat cutter
Krestview Wood Products	Riceland Cabinet	cart mfg	Schlabach Veal
furniture maker	Rockwood Products	windmills	Pearl Valley Cheese
woodshop	Semco Ceramics	small engine repair	cheese house
Holmes Furniture	Skyline	Holmes Wheel	Baltic Meat
Mullet Cabinet	Southwood Mfg.	tool shapener	cheese factory
Yoder Wood Products	Stark Ceramics	Evener shop	Steiner Cheese
Stair turnings	Stark Truss	wheel shop	Miller's Bakery
cabinet maker	Sugarcreek Window and Door	Woodlyn Coach	Strauss Veal
furniture shop	S/S Milkcan	collar shop	L & W Egg Production
Holmes Stair	Uhdren	saddle repair	Sunny Morn Eggs
J & J Woodcraft	Wayne-Dalton	Mount Hope Bicycle Shop	Alpine Cheese
Maple Valley Fence	Weaver Leather	Mount Hope Auction	Gerber Poultry
fence business	Winesburg Pallet	Kidron Auction	wheat miller
	engine shop	welder	

Table 4 Continued

Retail Sales & Service	Retail Sales & Service(cont)	Extractive Industries	Other
store clerk	Berlin Truck Caps	Sugarcreek Clay & Lime	self-employed
salesman	Weaver's Bulk Food	Miller Mining	widow
tile blocks dealer	and Shoe Store	coal tippie	retired
bank teller	Miller's Storage Barns	Holmes Limestone	house work
Becks Mills Store	bookstore	coal miner	labourer
fur buyer	store manager	Shady Bend Sand & Gravel	unknown
antique store	greenhouse	mine worker	
		Carriage Hill Stone	
		oil field	

Source: *The Ohio Amish Directory*

By 1997 the range of occupations had expanded considerably (Table 4). Far more company names were given, indicating the much more pervasive nature of formal employment, and its widespread acceptance. The number of firms providing Amish employment in 1997 was clearly much greater than in 1973, and some companies had become major employers, such as the Wayne-Dalton Company and Belden Brick. By 1997, the Holmes County Amish settlement was no longer oriented primarily to farming, nor even to tourism.

Leading Occupations by Sect

Table 5 reviews the leading occupations for all Amish in 1973 and 1997, and also breaks the data down for three of the four major sects of Amish in Holmes County. The largest group of Holmes County Amish are the Old Order who constitute perhaps three-quarters of all Amish in the area. By contrast, the most liberal sect is generally considered to be the New Order Amish, established only in 1952. They constitute over ten percent of the settlement. A third sect, the Andy Weaver Amish, who are more conservative than the Old Order, comprise between 12 and 15%. The most conservative sect of all is the Schwartzentrubers. Because of their very conservative orientation and their reluctance to have much relationship with others, estimates of their numbers are difficult to make. They provided no information on occupation and are not even listed in *The Ohio Amish Directory*.

We expected that occupational structure would reflect the liberal/conservative nature of the sects, with more traditionally-accepted occupations having higher acceptance in the more conservative sects. Such is not exactly the case (Figure 4). In farming, which may be considered the most traditionally-oriented occupation, the conservative Andy Weaver Amish did have the highest percentage, but the liberal New Order Amish

had a higher percentage than the more conservative Old Order. Furthermore, the Andy Weaver figure was only slightly higher than that of the New Order, while the conservative Andy Weaver sect had a percentage of wood workers almost twice as high as that of either the New Order or the Old Order.

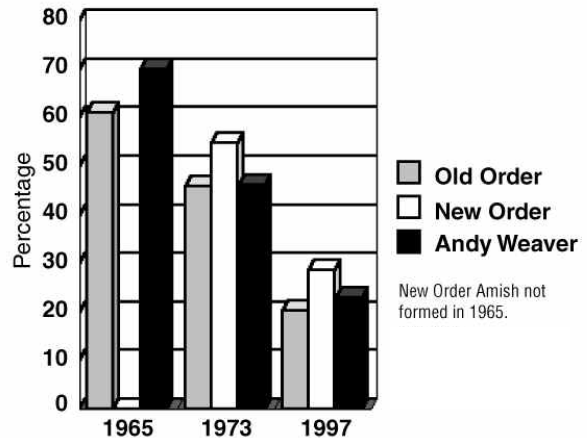


Figure 4: Percent of heads of households who farm, by Amish sect, 1965, 1973, 1997. Sources: Gingerich (1965, 1973); Wengerd (1997)

Finally, the larger number of Old Order Amish who found employment in the Wayne-Dalton Company is noteworthy. Perhaps more important than liberal/conservative orientation of the sect, is the location of the place of employment. The Wayne-Dalton Company factory is situated in the small community of Mt. Hope, which is more or less centrally positioned in the densest area of Old Order settlement. What is operating here is an example of the economists' idea of intervening "economic opportunity."

Table 5 Leading Amish Occupations by Sect, 1973 and 1997

1973			1997			% Change
Occupation	No.	%	Occupation	No.	%	
All Amish	2394			4355		81.91
FARMER	1131	47.24	FARMER	933	21.42	-17.50
RETIRED	269	11.24	RETIRED	351	8.06	
LABOURER	150	6.27	CARPENTER	261	5.99	
CARPENTER	126	5.26	WIDOW	241	5.53	
FACTORY WORKER	59	2.46	WOODWORKER	203	4.66	
PALLET SHOP	43	1.80	LABOURER	199	4.57	
SAWMILL	41	1.71	SAWMILL	159	3.65	
BRICKYARD	40	1.67	WAYNE-DALTON	106	2.43	
WIDOW	37	1.55	UNKNOWN	93	2.14	
Andy Weaver Amish	328			576		75.61
FARMER	208	63.41	FARMER	163	28.30	-21.63
RETIRED	34	10.37	WOODWORKER	45	7.81	
WIDOW	11	3.35	RETIRED	40	6.94	
PALLET SHOP	10	3.05	LABOURER	36	6.25	
LABOURER	7	2.13	CARPENTER	30	5.21	
CARPENTER	6	1.83	WIDOW	30	5.21	
SAWMILL	5	1.52	SAWMILL	23	3.99	
New Order Amish	363			542		49.31
FARMER	144	39.67	FARMER	140	25.83	-2.78
CARPENTER	39	10.74	RETIRED	56	10.33	
RETIRED	34	9.37	WIDOW	37	6.83	
LABOURER	26	7.16	CARPENTER	27	4.98	
BRICKYARD	9	2.48	WOODWORKER	25	4.61	
FACTORY WORK	8	2.20	MASON	14	2.58	
WOODWORKER	8	2.20	LABOURER	13	2.40	
MASON	6	1.65	MECHANIC	11	2.03	
MECHANIC	6	1.65				
CABINET MAKER	5	1.38				
Old Order Amish	1703			3237		90.08
FARMER	779	45.74	FARMER	630	19.46	-19.13
RETIRED	201	11.80	RETIRED	255	7.88	
LABOURER	117	6.87	CARPENTER	204	6.30	
CARPENTER	81	4.76	WIDOW	174	5.38	
FACTORY WORK	51	2.99	LABOURER	150	4.63	
SAWMILL	34	2.00	WOODWORKER	133	4.11	
PALLET SHOP	32	1.88	SAWMILL	130	4.02	
BRICKYARD	31	1.82	WAYNE-DALTON	87	2.69	
HOUSEWORK	28	1.64	UNKNOWN	73	2.26	

Source: Tabulated from *The Ohio Amish Directory*

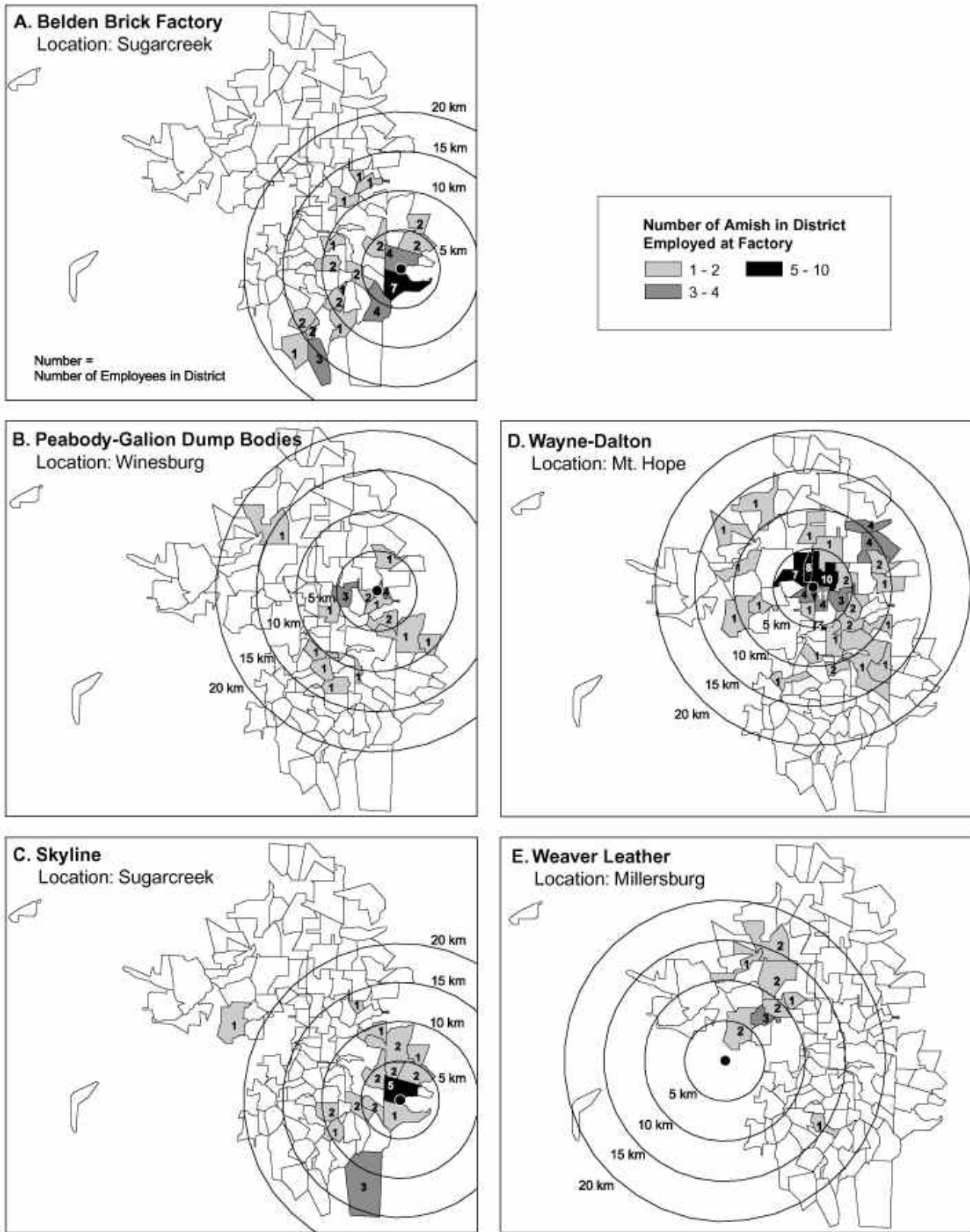
Amish Factory Workers

The manufacturing sector employs 15-20 percent of the Holmes County Amish. Much of the manufacturing in the settlement area is Amish-owned, small scale enterprise, but a significant portion is owned by corporations who intentionally established factories in the area to take advantage of Amish craftsmanship, such as the Merrilat Cabinet factory in Loudonville, or established firms, such as Belden Brick in Sugarcreek. These have absorbed a significant portion of the

expanding Amish work force.

Factories are generally located on the fringes of the Amish settlement, in towns along major transportation routes, although the largest employer of Amish, the Wayne-Dalton door factory, is an exception. It is located in the village of Mt. Hope, near the center of the settlement. Other towns with factories employing fairly large numbers of Amish are Millersburg, Sugarcreek, and Winesburg.

Changing Occupational Structure of the Amish



Figures 5a-5e: Home districts of Old Order Amish employees and distances from factory

The Old Order Amish represent a greater proportion of Amish workers in factories than they do in the entire settlement. Both the Andy Weaver and New Order Amish seem to focus on smaller Amish-owned enterprises, even though the locations of the larger factories are usually in proximity to all three sects. The Old Order Amish employed by five major employers in Sugarcreek, Millersburg, Mt. Hope, and Winesburg were examined (Figures 5 a-e).

The districts where the employees of each of these factories live were plotted, and the distances from the centroid of the districts to the towns with the factories were calculated to the nearest kilometre. The overall mean commuting distance was 13 kilometres, however the median distance was only 5 kilometres. There is variation in the distances that the Old Order Amish travel among the towns (Figure 6), as they appear to travel further to factories in larger towns because most Amish live in rural clusters some distance from most of these towns. Therefore, the median commuting distance varies from 12 kilometers from the factory in Millersburg, the largest town in Holmes County, to only 3.5 kilometers from the factory in the small, centrally located, village of Mt. Hope.

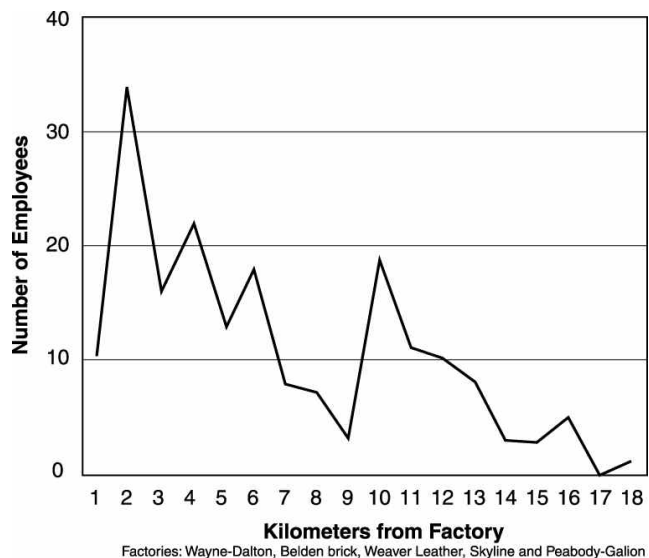


Figure 6: Old Order Amish commuting distances, 1997

The distribution of Amish factory workers' residences does not radiate uniformly from the factory towns. The two towns with the most factory employment are Mt. Hope and Sugarcreek. From Sugarcreek, most workers live to the north and southwest, while the Wayne-Dalton factory in Mt. Hope pulls many of its employees from the east and

southeast. The majority of Old Order Amish employed in the manufacturing sector, which includes metalworking and repair shops as well as large and small factories, are concentrated in districts along the eastern edge of the settlement north to Winesburg, and from Winesburg to Mt. Hope. However, at least one Amish person is employed in the manufacturing sector in over 90 percent of Old Order Amish church districts and over 83 percent of all Amish districts. Manufacturing accounts for the largest non-farm employment in 33 of 153 districts.

In comparison, primary wood activities, such as logging and sawmills (Figure 7), are spread evenly throughout the settlement, while Amish-oriented enterprises, examples of which are buggy making, horse shoeing, and teaching, are somewhat correlated ($r = 0.55, p = 0.0000$) with Amish population density. Both of these sectors, while dispersed throughout the settlement, are present in only 65.36 percent of the districts. The construction and secondary wood sectors are more widespread than the manufacturing sector and both have comparable regional concentrations. Secondary wood industry workers (Figure 8), who make or sell finished and semi-finished wood products, are concentrated in the southern areas of the settlement close to Berlin, Cham, Walnut Creek and Sugarcreek, all of which are centers of tourism. These towns represent the chief market outlets for the products of many of these workers. In contrast, the employees who work in primary wood activities such as logging and sawmilling, while still present in the southern areas, are much more evident in northern Holmes County and in the Wayne County part of the Settlement (Figure 7).

Conclusion

The Amish no longer fit the simple designation of a farming community, as steadily increasing land costs have forced them to look elsewhere for economic support. For example, the occupational pattern of 1997 is significantly more complex than it was in 1973.

One vexing problem is the increasing pressure applied to Amish females to seek work outside the home. A large number of young unmarried girls already work as waitresses, kitchen help and otherwise in the growing number of tourist oriented businesses in Holmes County. Such employment has a relatively long history of acceptance among the Amish, viewed simply as an extension of the earlier pattern of domestically employed girls. The question of employment outside the home for married women is another question entirely and one not investigated in

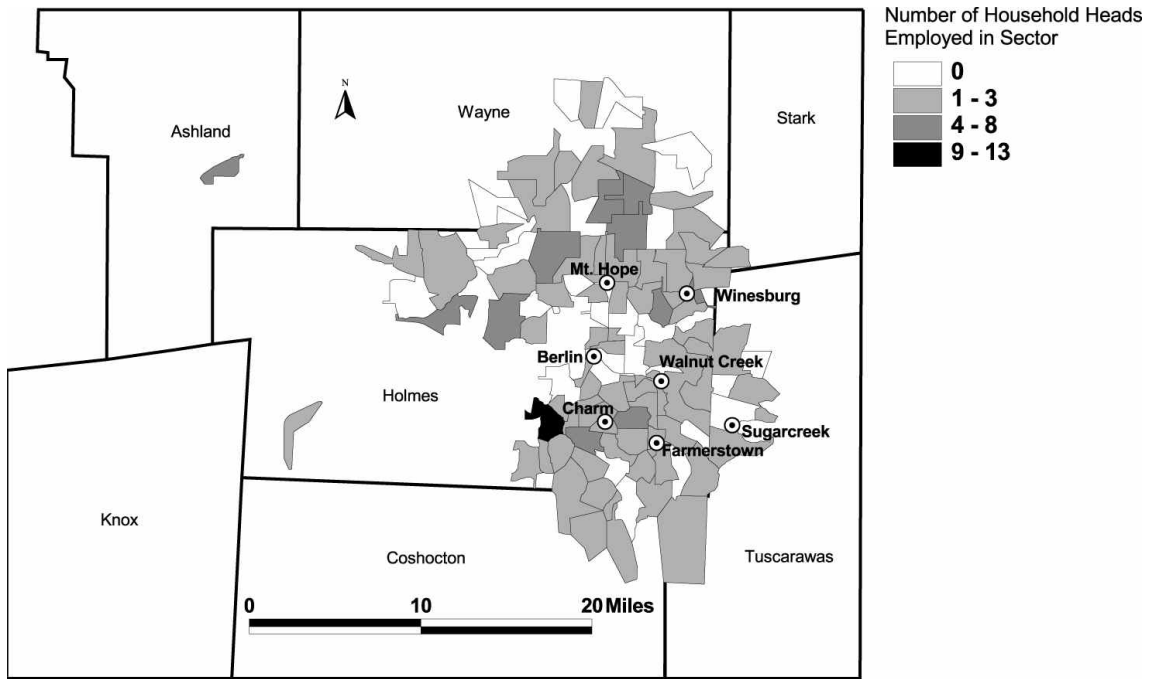


Figure 7: Amish household heads employed in the primary wood sector, 1997

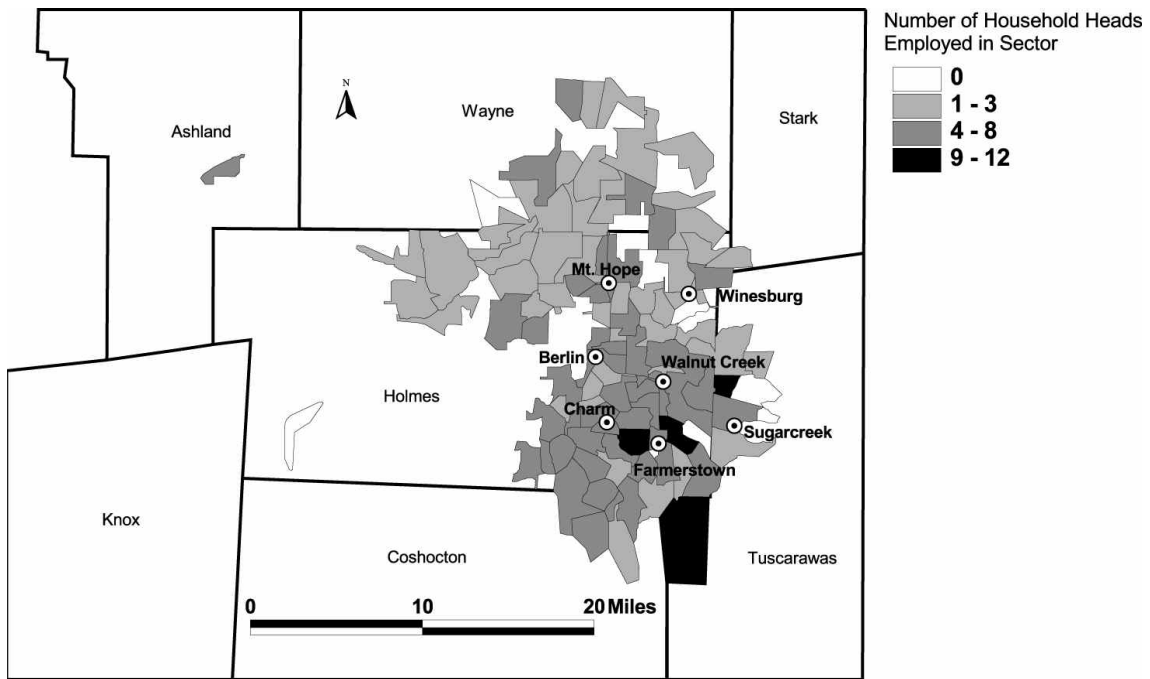


Figure 8: Amish household heads employed in the secondary wood sector

this paper largely because the data in *The Ohio Amish Directory* refers only to heads of households.

Change is coming to Amish country. Indeed it is already well advanced. It remains to be seen whether the Amish religious community can deal successfully with these challenges.

Notes

¹ *The Ohio Amish Directory* is produced in Walnut Creek, Ohio, by the Amish. Similar to a telephone directory, but with more detail, the Directory was started in the 1940s as a means to keep track of friends and relatives in the growing Amish settlement. At one time, it was produced in association with Johns Hopkins University, but since 1997 it has been published locally.

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