

German Among Ontario's Old Order Mennonites

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Conventional knowledge would hold that the German language and its teaching are relatively standardized, with value criteria and language objectives largely determined by the European homeland. While this is a valid assumption for the great majority of learners and language teaching institutions, it does not pertain to the Old Order Mennonite community of Waterloo County and the surrounding regions of southern Ontario. Here not only the people and their way of life are "separate and peculiar," but also their use and teaching of German. In the following I shall summarize my findings based on observations in their distinctive schools and research into the use of German among the "plain folk in Ontario."¹

In order to understand the peculiarities of this community, it is necessary to be aware of its historical background, as well as its current social and linguistic situation. The Old Order Mennonites of Ontario are descendants of Anabaptist Mennonites who emigrated from south-western Germany to Pennsylvania in the early eighteenth century and from there to Ontario a hundred years later. Here they established prosperous farms and were able to maintain their religiously determined way of life. They are the ultra-conservative group among Mennonites, advocating rigid separation of church and state as well as maintaining themselves visibly separate from the outside world. As it manifests itself today, their lifestyle is

characterized by pious simplicity in dress and demeanor, driving horse-drawn buggies for local transportation, and operating family farms with relatively few modern or technological conveniences. Approximately six hundred families reside in the vicinity north of Waterloo, and they constitute a well-defined group within the region.

Linguistically they are distinguished by steadfastly maintaining their traditional language, a dialect of German that is commonly called Pennsylvania Dutch, more accurately Pennsylvania German, and resembles most closely the dialect or folk speech of the eastern Palatinate (Buffington 286). In informal conversation with members of the family or within the Mennonite community this is virtually the only language spoken. With people outside of their community as well as in school they use English. And in the church services or on other ceremonial occasions the prescribed language is standard High German, partly because all the written texts used (such as the Bible, hymnal, and ceremonial prayers) are only available in that language.

Such use of three tongues among the Amish in Pennsylvania has prompted linguists to characterize these people as trilingual (Hostetler 139). Yet neither this common term nor the more linguistic concepts of diglossia or triglossia (Raith 31-33) would seem to do justice to the complex linguistic situation of the Old Order Mennonites in Ontario. Their use of English and the Pennsylvania German dialect corresponds to that attributed to the Amish and related German Mennonite groups in the United States (Raith, Rein, Enninger), however the use of High German among the Old Order Mennonites in Ontario would seem to differ considerably from that of their Pennsylvania relatives.

The tradition-conscious Mennonite "plain folk" are continuing the linguistic practice of their European ancestors, who spoke their regional dialect in the family and community, while using High German in religious services, schools, and with outsiders. There the standard language was maintained by being continuously reinforced among them by society as well as the schools. In their communities in North America they continued the practice of using the two languages, in spite of the fact that the nature of their respective dialects as well as the language of society around them had changed.² Since they chose to live apart from the rest of society, this linguistic eccentricity was inconsequential for them. In the middle of the nineteenth century in Pennsylvania, Costello states, Mennonites still employed standard High German "for worship, personal letters, newspapers, and poetry; in addition, it was used for religious instruction, schooling, fiction, and non-fiction" (4). Their knowledge of the language was nurtured by a comprehensive school system, while members of the group avoided extensive contact with the English-speaking world around them. Since Canadian Mennonites were similar to those in Pennsylvania in every other respect, it would be reasonable to conclude that in the nineteenth century High German was held in similar high esteem among them.

This state of affairs had changed quite drastically by the middle of the twentieth century, both in Canada and the United States. In his detailed account of contemporary use of High German among the American Amish, Werner Enninger

concludes that in the last one hundred years that language

has shifted its sociolinguistic status from that of a productive standard variety to that of a classic variety, at least for the majority of its users.... The reduced communicative demands plus the fact that the potential audience or readership understands also AE (Amish English) and PG (Pennsylvania German) makes understandable why the producers of novel AHG (Amish High German) texts can, as it were, 'afford' to collapse many old distinctions along the structural guidelines of the other contact varieties ("Aspects" 102).

Nevertheless, Enninger is able to enumerate a considerable number of written texts in standard High German compiled for use in the Amish community between 1964 and 1985 ("Aspects" 63-64), and his survey indicated that about one quarter of the respondents retained some active use of that language ("Aspects" 67).

Although the Old Order Mennonites in Ontario are a large enough group to have maintained their language for nearly two centuries, they are very small as a linguistic community, even compared to the American group (ca. six thousand members,³ as opposed to twice that number in the United States, and an additional forty thousand related Old Order Amish). By virtue of numbers alone it may be assumed that their retention of two distinctive languages could not be upheld as well as among their American brethren. The facts verify just that. Here only a small number, all of advanced age, are still able to speak what they call "High German," and their use of the language indicates profound interference from both English and their Pennsylvania German dialect. As for writing, I was not able to find a single member who claimed to still master that skill. One reason for the latter may be, that codified High German is exclusively associated with Fraktur or Gothic, which some members of the community still use, but as an art form, rather than for purposes of communication.

As stated before, High German is essentially confined to the church service. This does not mean, as Bausenhart seems to imply, that the entire service is in High German (17). All Bible readings, hymns and traditional prayers utilize the standard High German texts which have come down from their ancestors, and they therefore require a certain mastery of that language, at least on the part of readers. It must be noted, however, that in these instances pronunciation frequently deviates from the norm, being closer to the dialect than to High German of contemporary European convention. The sermons, given by several preachers speaking without notes, are in a conversant style, therefore they are delivered entirely in the Pennsylvania German dialect. Only when referring to specific Biblical or theological allusions, for which there are no dialect equivalents, will the speaker use High German terms, phrases, or entire passages (just as he will freely use English equivalents for contemporary domestic references). This narrowly circumscribed use of High German indicates the state of High German among Old Order Mennonites in the present, and represents a considerable decline from the more widespread use even one or two generations ago.

But even this restricted use of High German still requires that every adult member of the community have a minimal mastery of the language in order to

participate meaningfully in the regular worship services. In the nineteenth century, as we have seen, their schools fulfilled that need adequately. However, in the course of the twentieth century, when English became the compulsory language of instruction in schools and their children were required to attend public schools, the educational system no longer met that need. And while some children may have been taught at home to read the pre-1922 edition of the Luther Bible or other religiously significant documents from the past, they rarely acquire an adequate knowledge of High German. Unlike the dialect, which parents are able to convey effectively to their children through daily use, High German is a morphologically complex and rather abstract language, which by its very nature is not easily taught on the farm in North America. Moreover, many parents themselves have great difficulties with the language. As a result, a considerable number of young people were beginning to have difficulty following even the limited use of High German in the church service. And since the Old Order community is still committed to using only the German Bible during church services (although translations are used on other occasions), it sought other means by which to acquaint its offsprings with High German.

Schools have traditionally provided that knowledge. But there are a number of factors which have always complicated the relationship of the Old Order Mennonites to the school system. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the Mennonite community divided into more progressive and traditional factions, the issue of schools was one major factor separating the two groups. Most schools, especially the advanced ones, were located in larger population centres and offered innovative educational programs. The ultra-conservative Old Order Mennonites, who were farmers, suspicious of progress, and concerned about the threat of assimilation into mass society, perceived the schools as an outright threat to their religion and their way of life. Ever since they have been rather suspicious of the entire educational system. Through most of this century, both in Canada and the United States, there have been repeated tensions between various government officials and the separatist Old Order communities (see Hostetler 193-208).

Moreover, Old Order Mennonites have always been apprehensive about the compulsory aspect of public education, since they perceive the task of training children as being essentially the responsibility of parents and the church. They complied, albeit reluctantly, with attendance requirements up to the eighth grade. But when the requirement was raised to age sixteen, which implied attending high school, there were many instances of open defiance and conflict with the authorities.⁴ In Ontario this was eventually resolved by a special agreement with the government, whereby children of Old Order families were only required to obtain an elementary education, on condition that "they are receiving satisfactory instruction at home."⁵ While this arrangement was deemed to be tolerable, they still faced a situation in which formal education prepared children for the needs of the outside world — which they reject. Meanwhile some of their own needs, such as teaching moral values and German, were neglected by the public school system.

A further escalation of discontent occurred in the 1960s, when County School

Boards and consolidated schools were introduced in Ontario. Having their children transported by bus to centralized schools in towns, where they would be required to participate in all the leisure activities and be exposed to the lifestyle of urban society, was seen as an encroachment that would jeopardize their very existence as a distinctive and separate community. At this point the Old Order church leaders made representation to the provincial government, which eventually allowed them to withdraw from the public school system. Just as the Amish and Old Order Mennonites in various states of the United States had done before them, they proceeded to set up their own privately funded registered parochial schools.

The Old Order parochial schools continue to follow the patterns established in the traditional one room country schools. Nearly all have but one or two rooms, and they are scattered through the rural countryside so as to be accessible to children of nearby farming residents. Either four or eight grades are taught in one room by a single teacher. The curriculum emphasizes the basic subjects, and these subjects are taught and learned at least as well as in other schools. Some noteworthy differences are discernable in the strict discipline in the classroom, a certain austerity of educational aids, as well as commitment to religious and moral instruction. Beyond this, the great majority of the forty schools in the region north of Waterloo teach German for about one hour once every week.

German instruction is something all the parochial School Boards desire for their children, but it is limited by the availability of even minimally qualified teachers. It is important to note here, that for obvious reasons and wherever possible the Boards seek to obtain teaching staff from their Old Order community, and since that community limits education to the elementary grades, the teachers themselves normally have only grade eight standing, with perhaps some correspondence upgrading in one or two subjects. While this does not necessarily mean that teachers are inferior, it does mean that they are not highly qualified pedagogically. In the case of German this is quite apparent. None of the teachers have any training in this field beyond what they may have gleaned from home or acquired by means of reading and personal upgrading. In a few instances, they don't even feel confident to do the minimal work, and either have a person from the community instruct the German class or they dispense with the teaching of German altogether. Most teachers regard the teaching of German not as an academic subject analogous to other subjects, but as an extra service they perform for the community.

What is taught in German classes is not standard High German as public schools and other institutions teach it, but High German for the limited use in the community's religious life. This means passive knowledge of the language only, for reading German texts and understanding spoken German. Since all the printed German texts available in the Old Order community are in Fraktur (or Gothic black-letter type), this typeset is inexorably associated with the German language. The children initially learn the old alphabet, then the sounding of syllables and words, and eventually phrases and sentences. Ultimately these exercises lead to reading and understanding entire passages, occasionally even to oral questions and answers. Only rarely, and then on the most advanced level, are students required to

write German words into a work book, but this is strictly limited to copying answers from the reading book. English cursive seems to be generally accepted for such writing, although some of the books still teach the old German calligraphy as the written equivalent of Fraktur.

One fundamental difference to be noted in the German instruction is the nature of the language being taught. That language has in other contexts been called "Pennsylvania High German," "Amish High German," "liturgical High German," "Mennonite High German," or in German "Lutherdeutsch." On the one hand these designations point to the restricted and obsolete vocabulary used, consisting essentially of Biblical expressions as found in the nineteenth century Luther Bible. Non-Biblical High German vocabulary of everyday life is here confined to concepts familiar to the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the names for this peculiar language signify a sociological distinction, indicating that High German in this community has been greatly affected by influences from the other languages used in the community, i.e., the oral dialect and contemporary English.

There is no standardized curriculum for the teaching of German in these schools, therefore teachers may utilize whatever materials or methods they consider suitable. In the absence of formal teacher training, where certain approaches to the subject would be introduced, the parochial teachers make use of a wide network of experienced teachers for information and advice. Within the region north of Waterloo training sessions are held annually, in which experienced teachers provide helpful information for new and insecure colleagues. Beyond this, teachers may tap into sources explored by a wider network of parochial teachers in the United States, where Amish and Old Order Mennonite schools have been operating on a similar basis for a longer period of time. Valuable information is exchanged through personal contacts as well as with a regularly published journal,⁶ where teachers gain hints on various subjects, including the teaching of German. All this takes place without any aid or direction from the Ministry of Education or any of its agencies.

In the absence of a formal curriculum, teachers organize their German instruction around a series of textbooks. These are not, as Heinz Kloss stated in 1977, "altmodische lutherische Schulbücher aus dem 19. Jahrhundert" (97),⁷ but books published specifically for Amish and Old Order Mennonite parochial schools by publishers in the United States and Ontario. All German texts in these books are in Fraktur print, while English instructions and explanations are in standard Latin or Antiqua type. The short stories and occasional poems are permeated by a distinctly moral flavour, accompanied by dated vocabulary and structures. The foreword to one of the readers states the following: "The vocabulary for both books has been carefully chosen. Most of the words introduced and taught are words which are found in the New Testament."⁸ Besides obviously religious stories and those dealing with Reformation history, the great majority deal with life on the farm. There is no mention in any of the stories or passages of contemporary urban society or its diverse social or technological activities.

There are five such books used in the schools, any three or four of which are

normally used sequentially through the more advanced grades in elementary school. The first is either *German Phonics/Deutsche Lautlehre* (East Earl, Pa.: Schoolaid, 1983) or *Let's Learn German* (Aylmer, Ont.: Pathway, 1974). Both are conceived as workbooks to introduce beginning students to the letters and sounds of German. Normally work in these books is accompanied by flashcards, whereby recognition of the printed Fraktur letters is drilled. The second and most commonly used is *Let's Read German* (Aylmer, Ontario: Pathway, 1975), a reader with simple stories and dialogues from rural life in an Amish/Mennonite setting. The third and least used is a Bible story book called *Wir lesen Geschichten aus der Heiligen Schrift* (East Earl, Pa.: Schoolaid, 1981). And in the most advanced grades the common book is *Wir lesen und sprechen Deutsch* (East Earl, Pa.: Schoolaid, 1984).

German is usually introduced in the fourth grade, once students are able to read English easily. The early books and workbooks concentrate on letter recognition and phonetic sounding of the alphabet, with a great deal of time expended on distinguishing the visual forms of the Fraktur alphabet. (Some teachers are obviously uneasy about allocating so much time to an alphabet which is now obsolete, but they are bound by the demands of the community.) Later short words are sounded, and this is followed by word recognition for meaning. In the more advanced grades there is a shift of emphasis to broader comprehension. The purpose is made clear in the introduction to the most advanced book: "Our goal is reading for comprehension." And the content is most selectively compiled, as the authors state clearly: "The stories were written by teachers, examined and approved by ministers and bishops of various denominations, and finally proofread by a German professor and minister to assure soundness of language and grammar as well as scripture." (A preliminary observation on the German program would be, that while teachers are performing credibly under adverse conditions, there is good reason to question the competence of the professor who was responsible for "soundness of language and grammar.")

All of these books, as well as the accompanying classroom instructions of the teachers, indicate a number of deviations from standard High German. Werner Enninger has sought to enumerate such deviations as he encountered them among the Amish in the United States (in part based on text books which are also used in the Old Order parochial schools in Ontario). His findings correspond in large part with those I was able to discern in the Ontario community and its schools. However, there are significant differences as well. One difference arises from the fact that Enninger examines the language used in his texts as a relatively consistent system, constituting a variant of High German which he calls Amish High German. It is difficult to make such a claim for the High German used among the "plain folk" in Ontario. The deviant forms found in the text books are neither consistently used, nor are there standardized norms for this "language." On the other hand, it would be an oversimplification to regard the deviations found in the language as simply an indication of the "Tiefstand der Deutschkenntnisse," as Kloss claims (97).

The books contain numerous inconsistent deviations, which we will not discuss here, since they stem from a general insecurity about contemporary

German. The relatively consistent deviations I have encountered in the textbooks as well as in the classes may be summarized into three categories. First, there are the obsolete forms, words no longer found in contemporary High German usage, or only used infrequently with very specific meaning. Besides these, there are influences from English, and incursions from the conversational Pennsylvania German dialect.

Old forms, mostly from the south-western part of the German language region, or from old Biblical sources, include nouns like *Bauerei* (farm), *Scheuer* (hayloft or barn), *Stätte* (building), *Schuldigkeit* (duty), *Botschaft* (information), *Taler* (dollar), *Trank* (a drink), *Nebenbuhler* (a rival), *Rock* (dress), *Erwählung* (choice), *Angesicht* (face), *Mägdlein* (girl), *Pilger* (traveller), *Morgenessen* (breakfast), *Weib* (wife), *Widersacher* (opponent), *Erdwall* (mound), *Mahl* (meal), *Knabe* (boy), *Sabbat* (Sunday), *Gaul* (horse), *Zoll* (inch), *Mähsal* (difficulty), *Scheuerhof* (yard), *Pforte* (gate), *Haupt* (head), *Schelle* (bell), *Namenwörter* (nouns), and *Tunwörter* (verbs). But in some instances one is also able to find, besides these, the equivalent contemporary forms, such as: *Scheuer - Scheune*, *Knabe - Junge*, *Gaul - Pferd*, *das Eck - die Ecke*, *Rock - Kleid*, *Sabbat - Sonntag*, *die Worte - die Wörter*. Other archaic or somewhat dated forms include *wahrlich*, *fühhwahr*, *darnach*, *keuchen*, *getreu*, *hinternach*, *vernehmen*, *hernach*, *wandeln*, *allezeit*, *schicklich*, *gewahr*, *gedachte*, *langmütig*, *unmutig*, *heutigestages*, *siehe*, *wandeln*, *that*, *mich dünkt's*, *es deuchte mir*, or addressing older relatives as *ihr* and *euch*.

Lexical borrowing from English is not nearly as widespread as one might imagine, particularly since it is so common in the dialect. The few examples found in the books involve specific designations such as *Van*, *Mall*, *Dissenter*, *Fuss* (for measure), *Automobil*, *Meile*, *Eiscreme*, *Schnappschildkröte*, *Quart*, *Veranda*, and *okay*. But there are a large number of more subtle influences that are clearly traced to English. This is especially true in phrases and expressions such as: *ausfinden*, *Schreibbücher*, *eine gute Zeit*, *eine fröhliche Zeit*, *harte Wörter*, *viele Jahre zurück*, *fühlte gut*, *dies ist ein Platz*, *in 1644*, *auf Pferderücken*, *ein Ding ist sicher*, *einen Weg zum abkühlen*. Such English-oriented usage may also be seen in the use of the verb *gehen* (for driving, riding, flying), and using the pronoun *sie* where standard High German uses *man*. In addition the choice of pronoun as well as criteria for word order are frequently derived from English. One thus finds entire sentences which in their structure are determined by the other language. *Er wird dir ein Ding oder zwei zeigen*. *Du hast die Taube lieb, hast du nicht*. *Ich bin müde von der Schule*. *Was ist dein Name*. *Ich muss viel Holz tragen in Winter*. *Es war der letzte Tag von dem Schuljahr*. *Ich dachte zu mir selbst*. *Er kann es nicht helfen*. *Er hat niemand, ihm zu helfen*.

Influences from the Pennsylvania German dialect seem to permeate all the written texts, although they are not easily listed. Obvious instances are the use of the pronoun *du* in addressing strangers (even where it is followed or preceded by the highly formal word *Herr*). Other examples are, omitting the final "e" in first person singular conjugations (*hab*, *tät*, *lieb*, *seh*, *glaub*, *wünscht*), as well as in nouns (*Ruh*, *Erd*, *Lieb*, *Ochs*), and in adjectives (*lang* - for long time), omitting the

reflexives, or using the pronoun *mir* for *wir*. But most of all this influence is discernible in the grammatical simplification that omits the endings determined by case and gender, which govern High German adjectives, nouns and pronouns. A variation thereof might be instances where such endings are inserted, in the nature of compensation, but they don't correspond to contemporary usage. A few examples of this are: *hat ein Streich gespielt, Rahel begegnete sie, zu ihre Heimat, manchen von diese, ihm wurde gewahr, eines des furchtbarsten, einer der sonderbarsten Lebens-geschichte, eines der Freiheiten, alle seiner Blätter, zu einigen seiner Indianerfreunden.*

In addition to these, there are numerous minor deviations or inconsistencies which simply indicate a lack of familiarity with German grammar. They include using the indicative mood in indirect speech, prepositional phrases for the Genitive case, omitting *zu* with the independent infinitive, not contracting prepositions with the article, not capitalizing after such contractions, and forms of plural nouns (especially in the Dative case). In the realm of style, the simple past tense is used almost exclusively, even in informal dialogue situations (*warum tat ihr das?*). One also finds frequent misspelling, particularly involving "z" and "tz" or where the Fraktur letters look similar, such as in "f" and "s", or "G" and "S", but also in spacing, compounding, and using the umlaut.

Since all of these deviations from standard High German are contained in books the children use to learn German, it must be assumed that either the authors display gross carelessness, or that they are not concerned about correct contemporary usage. The instructions contained in the most advanced reader provide an answer to that question. Here the stated objectives of the German lessons are summarized as follows: "A dialogue is to be studied until the student understands and can read fluently." The accompanying exercises "center on word-meaning and comprehension of German phraseology, rather than discussion of the stories." The result of such emphasis is that there are hardly any efforts made to use the language actively or learn correct forms. Grammar is not taught at all. The sole objective of the German program is reading for comprehension. The authors state explicitly: "we touch on German grammar only as we need it to get the meaning from our reading." Within these objectives of language learning, many details which are emphasized in other schools are totally irrelevant.

Finally, there is the matter of pronunciation. In general, standard High German sounding is used in the classroom. But there are certain deviations, which again can be attributed to the influence of dialect. Classroom practice as well as the pronunciation key given in most of the books indicate two areas of deviation. One is the sounding of the "s." In combination with "p" and "t" it is *always* pronounced as "sh," not only at the beginning of a word (thus *Nest* is pronounced "nesht"). In all other instances — including at the beginning of a word — the "s" is voiceless, just as in English. The other area are the umlauts, which are always unrounded. Both "ä" and "ö" are sounded so as to rhyme with English "say," while "ü" rhymes with "see." In another instance a rather unusual option is practiced by teachers. The pronunciation key in two books finds alternate pronunciations equally acceptable.

After giving the standard sounding for “eu” and “äu,” it states: “Some teachers prefer to use the dialectal sound of long i instead of oy. Whichever way you teach it, teach one way only. Do not confuse the child with two different pronunciations [sic].”⁹ And since it is the more familiar, nearly all teachers prefer the former.

I would conclude this discussion on German in the Old Order Mennonite community in Ontario with the following observations. It is clear, that German, like all other subjects, may be taught or maintained with differing goals and objectives in mind. In this case the reasons for preserving or learning the language are determined by some specific requirements of the community. There is no demand whatsoever for active sentence-generating skills, since members of the Old Order community have no aspirations to communicate with other Germans. Therefore the entire realm of grammar and stylistics, as well as standard pronunciation, are essentially irrelevant. What German the children need to know for participation in the community’s life, they acquire to a sufficient degree in school, and the schools convey this well.

Moreover, there is not the slightest intention among these “plain folk” to emulate the writing or speaking conventions of people in Germany. One of the teachers summarized the language objectives as follows: “The only reason why I teach High German is to prepare my children to participate meaningfully in the church service.” Another indicated that the conventions of Germans didn’t interest him. The Old Order Mennonite community, we must conclude, is a fellowship of believers which seeks to be separate and nonconformist, not only from the society which surrounds it, but also from the wider society from which its ancestors came. Thus German is for them not a language which is valuable in itself, but the traditional language they inherited and which has kept them distinct from the rest of North American society. It is this language, their own version of German with all its deviations and flaws, which they are quite content to maintain in its limited use. Beyond such passive and limited knowledge, the normal Old Order Mennonite in Waterloo County regards German as just another foreign language.

Finally, there is the question whether High German will survive under these circumstances. Enninger speaks of High German as being subjected to “phenomena which forbode language extinction” among the Amish in the United States (“Aspects” 102). Among Canadian Old Order Mennonites, it seems to me, this process is more advanced. The purely ceremonial function or “classic variety” of High German has reached the point where we may regard it as being virtually extinct as an active language. And in this case the schools, at least under the adverse circumstances that prevail, are no longer able to reverse that situation. Passive knowledge of a language cannot be retained for any length of time, more so if it is used so infrequently. On the other hand, it is apparent that the High German reading during the church service is not of primary importance to the group’s theology or its cherished distinctiveness. After all, the distinctive language of the Old Order Mennonites is their Pennsylvania German dialect, and that they have no difficulty retaining. High German has lost its relevance. It would not surprise me therefore, if the Old Order churches in the Waterloo region would introduce English in their

services, as some of their churches in the United States as well as their related Markham Mennonites have already done. To quote Enninger once more: "Languages are instruments which are made to serve particular societal purposes" ("Aspects" 63). This maxim not only explains why languages change, but also why they become extinct.

But then, such a conclusion may be totally invalid. One must remember that the Old Order Mennonites have defied all reason by maintaining their distinctiveness and some form of High German through two centuries in North America. It would not surprise me if they were to continue to do so.

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Notes

¹ For the great majority of observations and insights contained in this paper I am indebted to the community of Old Order Mennonites in Waterloo County. Over a period of three months I was allowed to visit their schools, as well as having lengthy conversations with teachers, students, administrators, leaders, and members of the community.

² The various dialects spoken by German immigrants to Pennsylvania went through a general levelling process to produce what is called Pennsylvania German (PaG), which is the relatively standardized dialect spoken in the Old Order communities in the United States and in Ontario.

³ Numerical references to Old Order Mennonites vary considerably, depending on whether one includes or excludes groups that have separated from the main group, but have retained certain obvious attributes of the community. The number given includes the Markhams, but not the David Martins.

⁴ In Canada such instances of conflict have not been documented in detail, although they did occur, as mentioned by Winfield Fretz. For the United States see: Clyde S. Stine, "The Pennsylvania Germans and the School," *The Pennsylvania Germans*, ed. Ralph Wood (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1942).

⁵ A provision allowed by the Ontario Education Act, but created specifically to accommodate the Old Order Mennonite community in Ontario.

⁶ *Opera 374 A; CW 818. The Blackboard Bulletin*, a pamphlet for Amish and Old Order Mennonite teachers, has been published in LaGrange, Indiana since 1957 and at present has a circulation of over 2,500. Here teachers are able to exchange methods and valuable teaching hints, especially in fields where there is no curriculum.

⁷ In fairness it should be noted that Kloss refers only to Amish schools. But since in Ontario these are indistinguishable from Old Order Mennonite schools in terms of aim, organization, administration, and text books, the remarks are still valid.

⁸ *Let's Read German* (Aylmer, Ont.: Pathway Publishers, 1975). The foreword is attributed to Elizabeth Miller; but in this book as well as all the others, there is no stated author. Presumably modesty prevents the responsible persons from listing their names.

⁹ Most comments on pronunciation are based on my own observations in the classroom. Verification of this, as well as the said quote, are contained in the pronunciation key to *Wir lesen und sprechen Deutsch*, 261-63.