

Editors' Introduction

Volume 1, Issue 2

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Published March 24, 2021
<https://doi.org/10.18061/jpac.v1i2.8234>

Here we are! Near the end of winter and looking forward to spring. COVID-19 vaccines are rolling out and millions have already received their vaccinations or know their turn is soon to come. This issue of *JPAC* includes a chronicle of COVID-19 events during 2020 and the pandemic's impact on Amish communities, as seen through mass media coverage aggregated on Erik Wesner's *Amish America* website. Woven through his account are about 90 links to news sources organized around themes such as public health outreach to Amish communities, public perceptions—pro and con—of the Amish response to the virus, COVID-19 cases among the Amish, and others. Wesner's article is must reading for anyone interested in the impact of COVID-19 on the Amish, on media coverage of Plain communities, and on the nuanced and diverse reactions of the Amish to the pandemic. In addition, this issue's "Fieldwork and Reflections" section includes the observations of Victor Stoltzfus on COVID-19 and the large Elkhart-LaGrange Amish settlement in northern Indiana. (We expect to include more COVID-related articles in the next issue of *JPAC*, vol. 2, no. 1, Summer 2021.)

Beyond the pandemic, this issue includes a number of articles that will delight aficionados of population studies and those "eggheads" among us who love statistics. With extensive data and careful mapping, John Cross documents recent shifts in Amish dairy farming in Wisconsin against the backdrop of shrinking dairy profits and the growth of mega-dairies. Henry Troyer examines both change and continuity in wedding dates among the Amish in Holmes County, Ohio, discovering that even though the months when weddings are held have changed over time, the days of the week when weddings take place remain the same, namely, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Larry Greksa describes population growth and fertility patterns in the Geauga County, Ohio, settlement. His study is based on the 2014 *Gauga County and Vicinity* directory and follows up his previous analyses of the same settlement from the 1993 directory. Joseph Donnermeyer uses a



variety of sources—the number of settlements, the number of households in end-of-year reports in *The Diary*, and the number of church districts and of ordained men listed annually in *Raber's Almanac*—to calculate Amish population doubling times. All four doubling times calculations supplement the Amish population estimates found on the Young Center's website (<http://groups.etown.edu/amishstudies/statistics/statistics-population-2020/>).

If these demographic studies weren't enough, this issue of *JPAC* includes two more articles. Gabriel Arsenault examines a new phenomenon: the spread of Amish settlements in Canada beyond Ontario and into the provinces of Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Arsenault identifies “political hospitality” as one reason for the spread, especially on Prince Edward Island. Next, Kyle Kopko, Steve Nolt, Berwood Yost, and Jackie Redman look at the impact of a political campaign appropriating the Amish image. While the research team's experiment did not find that associating a candidate with the Amish boosted voter's perceptions of *the candidate*, voters did have a more negative view of *the Amish* when the Amish were associated with an unpopular candidate. Finally, this issue features two book reviews: a review by Jeff Bach of a new book on the Bruderhof Communities, and the second part of a review essay by Joseph Donnermeyer in which he discusses lessons he has learned from books that contributed to his revision of lectures for the Amish Society course he teaches at The Ohio State University.

The *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities* is the direct successor at The Ohio State University of the *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies (JAPAS)*, which was not renewed at OSU. Articles from volumes 1–6 of *JAPAS* can still be accessed, free of charge, in the Knowledge Bank of the OSU Libraries: <https://kb.osu.edu/handle/1811/54888>.

Quoting from the journal's homepage, *JPAC* is dedicated to “publishing both empirical and theoretical work related to Plain Anabaptist communities, including, among others, the Amish, conservative Mennonites, Amish-Mennonites, Apostolic Christians, Brethren, Bruderhof, and Hutterites. *JPAC* articles may include emerging issues associated with Plain Anabaptist communities, diverse theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches to the study of Plain Anabaptist groups, and significant research findings about Plain Anabaptist populations.”

JPAC is a jointly sponsored journal of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, and the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center in Berlin, Ohio.

If you would like to discuss ideas for manuscripts for possible publication in the journal, please contact Joe Donnermeyer (donnermeyer.1@gmail.com) or Steve Nolt (nolts@etown.edu). Visit <https://plainanabaptistjournal.org/about> to access additional detail about *JPAC*, including author guidelines. As these guidelines state: “Submissions should be in Microsoft Word, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, left justification only, and no headers or footers.” We allow prospective authors to select from one of two styles for citations: the American Psychological Association (APA) style (7th edition) and the Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition). In this manner, we recognize the diversity of backgrounds of prospective authors, especially because standard publication formats vary among academic disciplines.