

Editors' Introduction

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Plain Anabaptist communities are, of course, distinctive in many ways, and the scholarship devoted to them frequently focuses on their distinguishing characteristics. At the same time, these communities exist in broader social, environmental, and economic contexts, which means they experience many of the same pressures, options, and vicissitudes of other groups in North American society. The three research articles in this issue of *JPAC* explore subjects that are far from unique to Plain people and reveal ways these communities' lives are both similar to and different from their neighbors'. Rachel Stein, professor of sociology at West Virginia University, and Mark Dewalt, professor emeritus at Winthrop University, analyze types and frequency of accidents in smaller Amish settlements. Their study of accident reports submitted to *The Diary* takes into account many more accidents than previous research that has relied on hospital reports, which capture only the most severe injuries. Cataloging the common types of injuries, they suggest culturally appropriate prevention measures tailored to daily activities. Joe Donnermeyer, professor emeritus at the Ohio State University's School of Environment and Natural Resources, also draws on reports in *The Diary* to examine Amish communities' experience of crime. Donnermeyer demonstrates that crime victimization is not infrequent and that the most commonly described crimes were property crimes. This article, too, provides suggestions for culturally appropriate crime prevention education. Finally, a research team led by Kirk Miller, professor of biology at Franklin & Marshall College and including staff from the WellSpan Health system, report the findings of a health needs assessment of Amish and Old Order Mennonites in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and compares those findings with a similar assessment conducted in 2014–2015, with additional questions this time on vaccine uptake and the response to COVID-19. Plain community respondents continue to report good health and lower rates of some physical and mental health issues when compared with the general population, but they have experienced



increased weight gain across all age groups, suggesting that, although Plain communities are separate, they are still subject to influences shaping the broader culture. Investigators also found strikingly different rates of immunization between Amish and Old Order Mennonite respondents.

The Fieldwork and Reflections section includes an excerpt from the 2019 dissertation of Fran Handrick, a British scholar who conducted extensive fieldwork among Amish women in Ohio and Pennsylvania. In this article, Handrick shares surprises from her findings, as well as reflections on her research methods. In the second Fieldwork and Reflections piece, retired public school superintendent Robert Frick of Willow Street, Pennsylvania, draws on his decades relating to Amish families whose children were enrolled in Lancaster County's Lampeter-Strasburg School District. Frick and Young Center director Steve Nolt narrate this story of goodwill between the Amish and a public school system from its origins in the 1950s through the 1990s.

This issue of *JPAC* continues our series featuring research centers with holdings related to Plain groups. This issue includes the Hess Archives and Special Collections at Elizabethtown (PA) College, introduced by archivist Rachel Grove Rohrbaugh, and Muddy Creek Farm Library, Ephrata, Pennsylvania, introduced by James K. Nolt, a member of the library's board.

We conclude volume 4 with a number of books reviews, including a new monograph on Amish women and the Great Depression, a catalog accompanying a Smithsonian American Art Museum quilt exhibit, two volumes of articles excerpted from the Amish magazine *Family Life*, and a history of Nationwide Fellowship churches in Canada.

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.

The *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities* is jointly sponsored by the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center in Berlin, Ohio, and the Ohio State University Libraries.

JPAC's predecessor at OSU was the *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies (JAPAS)*. 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>.

To discuss ideas for manuscripts for possible publication in the journal, contact Joe Donnermeyer (donnermeyer.1@gmail.com) or Steve Nolt (nolts@etown.edu). For details about *JPAC*, including author guidelines, visit <https://plainanabaptistjournal.org/about>. Prospective authors may select from two citation styles: American Psychological Association (APA) style (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th ed.) and Chicago style (*Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed.). In this manner, we recognize the diversity of backgrounds of prospective authors, especially because standard publication formats vary among academic disciplines.