

working world, faculty pursued careers of their own, and administrators came and went—all while major happenings like the Vietnam War, counterculture movements, and the decline of manufacturing played out in the larger world. The editors, participant observers speaking through informants, provide often irreverent and sharp commentary as they display the candid side of the higher learning process. For instance, a student grouches about history professors “attacking things I grew up believing,” or being “outraged at the things” the Pentagon Papers exposed. Reactions such as these from blue-collar students came with the territory, as did the reactions of veterans and older students returning to a school they could financially afford. Unlike their

downstate peers, commuting urban students are not sequestered in the culture of cloistered towns. And urban universities like IUN (and IUPUI) became a microcosm of society, with all its warts and cross purposes as well as its strengths and creativity. This volume provides the historian of education with original points of view and leads for further work. Mistaken in my view, the editors decided to omit citation of their sources, thinking they would be distracting. The original manuscript, with notes intact, is deposited in the Calumet Regional Archives.

BURTON J. BLEDSSTEIN is professor of history at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



### *The Amish Schools of Indiana* *Faith in Education*

By Stephen Bowers Harroff

(West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2004. Pp. ix, 210. Charts, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

### *Shipshewana* *An Indiana Amish Community*

By Dorothy O. Pratt

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, Quarry Books, 2004. Pp. ix, 209. Illustrations, map, notes, suggestions for further reading, index. \$29.95.)

Whatever the public's infatuation with the Amish, these books prove that a place remains for the serious and responsible study of Amish life. In a field that has focused disproportionately upon the Amish in Pennsylvania—and especially Lancaster County

(from John A. Hostetler's early studies to Donald B. Kraybill's recent works)—Harroff and Pratt promise to provide fresh insight based on the experiences of the Amish in Indiana.

The two books are quite dissimilar. *Shipshewana* is a version of Pratt's

Notre Dame history dissertation. Harroff studied Amish schools during three decades of teaching German language, literature, and culture at Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne. While chapter one of his volume offers a valuable and competent history, the pages that follow provide almost no historical framework, explanation, or analysis. Another difference lies in basic method. Harroff's rearing and religion (Church of the Brethren) seem to have put him close enough to help him understand many subtleties of the Amish world-view. He conducted participant-observer research by visiting and keenly watching Amish schools, meanwhile forming genuine friendships to the point that the Amish sometimes called on him to substitute for a teacher. Pratt did some interviewing, but she otherwise relied mainly on written sources. Even for the purpose of writing history, she might well have profited from getting further into day-to-day Amish life and perceptions.

Another basic difference between the two works lies in their interpretive method. Harroff stayed with meticulous description, while Pratt applied social science concepts—most notably ideas about boundary maintenance, responses to the market economy, and Amish resistance to assimilation. Just as Pratt might have benefited from a bit more of Harroff's firsthand observation, Harroff might in turn have asked deeper questions had he opened himself to such a conceptual framework.

Finally, Harroff proceeds, albeit implicitly, from an assumption that religion is an independent variable, a prime motivator in human affairs. (Apparently he means his subtitle, *Faith in Education*, to be a double entendre.) Pratt's assumption about religion is less clear. While she sometimes attributed Amish people's behaviors to their faith, her discussion often implies that even the Amish are mainly creatures of economics and sociology, with their religion being more a derivative than an independent cause.

Whatever its differences from Pratt's volume, Harroff's *The Amish Schools in Indiana* has genuine strengths: meticulous observation; affective as well as cognitive knowledge and communication of its subject; and clear, well-organized presentation. But it also has weaknesses. Its author has delivered a most favorable description (gifted teachers, orderly classrooms, effective methods, and seamless integration with Amish community, family, and values); but he did not go on to reflect on the lessons that Amish education might offer to parochial and public-school school teachers and officials. Moreover, while he covered in great detail the things that Amish teachers and schools do well, he said almost nothing about what they do not. One wonders, for instance, how well those schools help Amish children to understand other points of view.

*Shipshewana's* strengths and weaknesses are less clear-cut. Pratt

conducted diligent research, used secondary literature to advantage, added much from primary sources, and organized and wrote competently. She delivered keen insights, and readers can profit from her application of social-science concepts. At the same time, students of Amish and Mennonite culture may feel some insecurity about what to accept from her. She seemed not to know that Mennonites affirm, rather than swear, legal oaths (p. 69); elsewhere, she implied that a poultry hatchery near Shipshewana is an Amish enterprise (p. 134), when in fact its owners are Mennonite.

More basically, Pratt's use of evidence undercuts what could have been her most valuable purpose. While a study of this sort promises to test the broader scholarship against specific evidence from a local community, Pratt has trouble keeping that community and its nearby neighbors in focus. Shipshewana, in northern Indiana's LaGrange County, is a key center of Amish life, and consequently of tourism. Yet when she had difficulty finding data from her chosen community she took evidence from Amish elsewhere in LaGrange or in Elkhart Counties, or more widely from Indiana, or even, on occasion, from wider scholarship about the Amish in other regions altogether. Yet

Amish regulations and ways differ, even rather close to Shipshewana (for instance, on whether to allow work in large factories not owned by Amish). How well does evidence drawn from beyond Shipshewana apply to this particular community? More seriously, does her use of non-local evidence undermine the potential promise of testing conventional wisdom against local circumstance?

Like any scholar's work, these books need juxtaposition with other scholarship. Thomas J. Meyers and Steven M. Nolt's Lilly Endowment-funded research on Indiana's Old Order Amish, *An Amish Patchwork: Indiana's Old Orders in the Modern World* (2005) and their forthcoming *Amish Mosaic: Shaping Cultural Identities* provide a good starting place. Readers of Harroff's volume would do well to look at literature that features broader concepts and questions. Such broader literature may also help readers to evaluate Pratt's evidence and to consider religion as a motivator in its own right. But with or without such additional reading, these two volumes, with their divergent styles and methods, will profit even well-versed readers.

THERON F. SCHLABACH is professor emeritus of history at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

