

*Meet the Amish, A Pictorial Study of the Amish People.* By Charles S. Rice and John B. Shenk. (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1947, pp. 21, 96 unnumbered. Illustration. \$5.00.)

The Amish, like the American Indians, have had their history and life written largely by those outside their own fold. The result has been much unsympathetic, sensational, and inaccurate writing on the Amish, whether in the form of books, magazine articles, or press releases. The volume under review is a pleasant exception to the general run. In the preface, the authors state that they are natives of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, that they have lived in or near Amish sections most of their lives, and have genuinely liked their Amish neighbors. This attitude seems evident in the volume. Rice is a printer and photographer and Shenk is a teacher in the Millersburg State Teachers College.

A mark of accuracy is the correctly understood distinction between the Amish and the Mennonites. The authors point out how the Amish split off from the Mennonites in Switzerland in the latter part of the seventeenth century. One particular question in dispute was the observance of what is called the "ban" or "shunning"—the practice of having no dealings with a brother who is under church discipline. Jacob Ammon, after whom the Amish are named, thought the Swiss Brethren or Mennonites were not strict enough on this point and led his followers out of the parent group.

The Amish are an extremely conservative people and manifest this in their dress (without buttons) and in restrictions against automobiles, tractors, telephones, and many other modern inventions. Higher education, of course, likewise has no place in their way of life.

The textual part of the book is brief and free from important errors. It is not quite correct to say, however, that the Amish are not allowed "to smoke cigarettes or drink intoxicating liquors." Some, at least, are known to engage in these, especially in smoking. The Amish one "meets" in this book are those in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Failure to point out that there are thousands of Amish in other sections of the country, including a few thousand in Indiana, might be misleading to some readers. The textual part of the book deals with the appearance and apparel of the Amish, their religious development, group characteristics, church

districts (in Lancaster County), weddings, diversions, education, birth and death, occasional happenings, occupations, and the Pennsylvania Dutch (from *Deutsch*) language. Familiar examples of the latter are given, and the influence of these expressions on the English used in these quarters is also shown.

Most of the book is taken up with excellent photographs of almost every phase of Amish life—their dress, buildings, farms, farm machinery and operations, homes and furnishings, carriages, farm sales, amusements, weddings, schools, barn raisings, etc. Taking these pictures must have required much patience for the Amish are hard to photograph.

This work is a good corrective to the misleading picture in such works as Ruth Lininger Dobson's *Straw in the Wind*, and it is a good pictorial supplement to Joseph W. Yoder's accurate account in *Rosanna of the Amish*.

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Willard H. Smith

*The Holcombes. Nation Builders.* By Lewin D. McPherson and Elizabeth Weir McPherson. (Washington, D.C., 1947, pp. lxxviii, 1,346. Index and illustrations. \$10.00.)

In a volume of 1,346 pages, Mrs. Lewin D. McPherson and her husband have published a most comprehensive account of the Holcombe family in America, a family having as great a part as any in the making of all North American civilization.

She gives a background of English and Welsh ancestry of the several immigrant ancestors; A—Thomas, of Devonshire, who came to Massachusetts and Connecticut; B—John, of Devonshire, to New Jersey and Pennsylvania; C—Dr. William Harcum or Holcombe, of Wales, to Virginia; D—William, of Wales, to Virginia; E—Richard, of England, to Virginia; F—Zachariah L.; and G—Richard to Southampton County, Virginia.

In the introduction, the authors acknowledge indebtedness to many who contributed to this book and list them in alphabetical order. There is an index of persons, of places, and sources of information. Some ninety per cent are indexed in another manner, a "pedigree chain or symbol." For example, Lincoln Ellsworth, the noted explorer, is listed as the son of James W. Ellsworth, whose pedigree number is