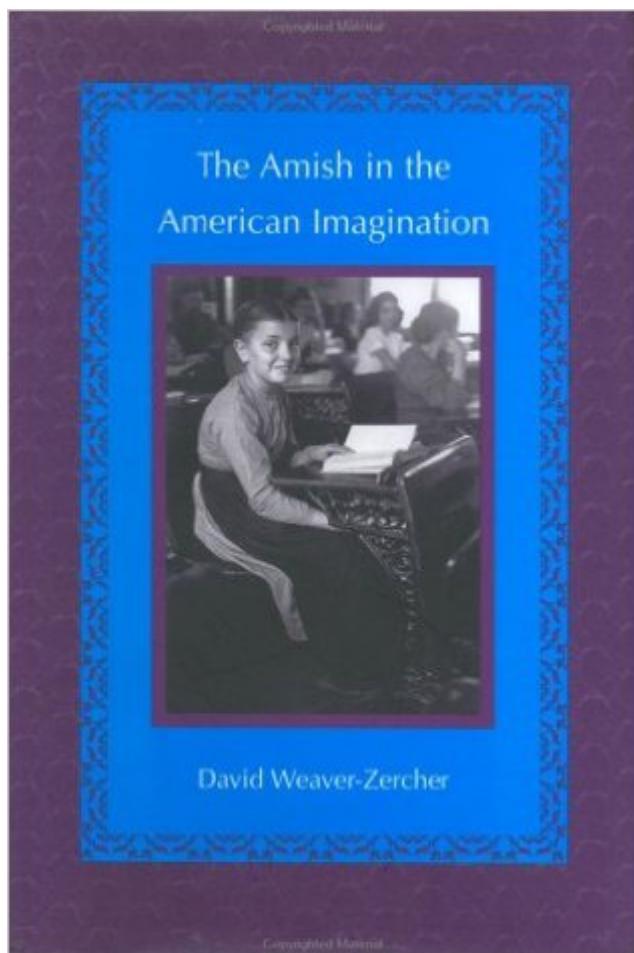


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The Amish In The American Imagination (Center Books In Anabaptist Studies)



Synopsis

Enveloped in mystery, Amish culture has remained a captivating topic within mainstream American culture. In *The Amish in the American Imagination*, David Weaver-Zercher explores how Americans throughout the twentieth century reacted to and interpreted the Amish. Through an examination of a variety of visual and textual sources, Weaver-Zercher explores how diverse groups—ranging from Mennonites to Hollywood producers—represented and understood the Amish. Unlike previous studies that focus on Amish interaction with the broader American culture, *The Amish in the American Imagination* emphasizes how the various members of that larger culture see the Amish and, in turn, what these interpretations reveal about twentieth-century mainstream American culture and society. Weaver-Zercher argues that, through different representations of the Amish, "English" Americans appropriated what they viewed as exotic, rural Americans for ideological, commercial, and spiritual purposes. This engaging book thus identifies the various functions the Amish served for their American neighbors, most of whom led lives far removed from the Amish existence they imagined.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Amish In The American Imagination by David Weaver-Zercher (Assistant Professor of American Religious History, Messiah College) is a fascinating Anabaptist study of how American twentieth-century culture perceives and interacts with America's Amish population and culture. The

repercussions that Amish songs and Amish themed movies arising from the broader American popular culture have had upon Amish people, and vice versa, are discussed at length in this sober, thoughtful, scholarly, and carefully researched presentation. The Amish In The American Imagination is a highly recommended and original contribution to American Religious History Studies, American Popular Culture Studies, and 20th Century Amish Cultural Studies supplemental reading lists and academic reference collections.

I would give this book more than five stars if I could because it is well written, scholarly and very well researched. I only recently learned about it and immediately bought it and read it with much interest. Admittedly, it has special interest for me because of the fact that I was born and raised in the Old Order Amish church in Lancaster County, Pa. I was also an Amish church member for three years and then decided to permanently separate from it. Because of that, I have been excommunicated and shunned since then. One item that is especially interesting to me is the old postcard photo on page fifty- six which shows my grandfather, Benuel Fisher on the left-hand side. Mr Weaver-Zercher writes about the disputes between Amish parents and secular school officials who wanted Amish children to have more than an eighth grade education. Because of that situation, one of my uncles spent a night in jail on five different occasions. Undoubtedly, my father would also have been jailed, but was spared from that because he was recovering from a very serious wagon/car accident. The picture on page eighty-six which shows Amish children running to a one-room schoolhouse brought a wave of nostalgia to me because it is from the book "Henner's Lydia" which my Aunt Fannie had and which I read as a young child. The old photos of Plain and Fancy Farm and of Dutch Haven are also very familiar to me. Also, the story about the book "Jonathan" was very interesting to me because I knew the author, Dan Neidermyer's' mother and grandfather quite well. The numerous items in the Notes section and the bibliography section were also very helpful and informative.

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