

For Lancaster County Woman  
Bimonthly Journal

### **Discovery Begins At Home with the Mennonite Information Center's Amish Country Tours**

When you tell some one that you are from Lancaster, a light bulb of recognition comes on just before the words Amish Country are spoken. Yet we've lived here for years and know little to nothing about the rich heritage of our next door neighbors, the Amish. We drive by the treasure of tradition everyday, oblivious to the survival of this culture that has thrived for so many generations. Meanwhile people gather from coast to coast and from all over the world to experience a heritage, a history that has taken root in our backyard. Our county is home to the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population of Amish in the country, Ohio containing the largest.

The Mennonite Information Center offers private car tours and bus tours. A tour through the Amish Country is tailor made to suit your specific interests. Watching the center's 3-screen feature "Who Are the Amish?" and/or the movie "Postcards from a Heritage of Faith" will help you decide on focal points for your tour. You may want to explore their way of life, education, marriage, religion, farming or crafts. Where ever your interests lie, the Mennonite Information Center will see to it that you get an up close and personal look.

You will be accompanied by a very knowledgeable tour guide such as Lester Hoover. A guide since 1980, Hoover is a Mennonite who has lived in this county for most of his life. "Being Mennonite I lived among the Amish and became interested enough to read a lot about them," Says Hoover.

Lester generally begins his tours with a simple question. What is the difference between the Amish and the Mennonite? This question opens the door to discuss the history of both and how they are related. You will learn how both came upon their names and how and why they branched off to form these two groups. You'll discover their European beginnings and why they came to this country and to this county.

Your journey may take you to the Farmer's Market, A tour of a stone mill, Strasburg Quilts and/or the Village of Intercourse. You may find yourself in craft shops or fabric stores, on farms and in buggies. You'll see historical sites, Amish schools and Mennonite churches. You will meet Amish farmers and shop owners. The tour will immerse you in the lifestyle of the Amish and Mennonite and acquaint you with their tradition.

Great family time adventure awaits you in the Amish Country and best of all, it's only a hop, skip and a jump away. Discover this integral part of our hometown heritage.