Circle Letters, Produce Auctions, and Softball Games: Investigating the Internal Dynamics of the Old Order Migration Process

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This thesis titled
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ABSTRACT

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Circle Letter, Produce Auctions, and Softball Games: Investigating the Internal Dynamics of the Old Order Migration Process

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Currently, the Old Order Anabaptist population is one of the fastest growing religious groups in the United States. As members decide to continue with their socio-religious traditions, they become faced with the heightened possibility of migrating to a new settlement area, leaving the communities in which their groups have inhabited for close to two centuries. Semi-structured interviews and one oral history were carried out with thirteen members of a newly formed Stauffer Mennonite community in Ohio. Results of this study revealed that social networks were instrumental in the migration process. Strong personal ties characterized their network connections, providing ethnically-specific resources, information, and entrance into the destination area. Through their social status within the community, “pioneer” migrants acted with relative degrees of agency within the network connections of subsequent individuals, regardless of their own connection to individuals. For many individuals, their connectivity with other spaces and places developed as a result of the migration process, creating translocal spaces of communication amongst members. Aspects of locality became manifested in the landscape through place-making practices of migrants as well.
This thesis is dedicated to Kenneth Estle, whose thoughts and discussions have always pointed me in the right direction.
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INTRODUCTION

Background

Old-Order religious groups today occupy a distinctive place in the popular culture of the United States. Most people in rural Ohio and Pennsylvania have had some sort of encounter with a member of a conservative Anabaptist community; whether at a farmer’s market or on a dirt road in the countryside, members of these conservative Anabaptist groups have managed to live “apart” from the outside world while at the same time interacting with it in certain ways. Popular television programs and national news organizations have even featured these unique populations as subjects of their programming. They are widely regarded as being plain, simple folk who reside in the rural countryside where they can carry on their traditional “horse-and-buggy lifestyle.” However, certain aspects of their society, such as their rejection of modern technology, are over-emphasized to the point that much else has been largely ignored.

Old-Order Anabaptist populations are highly diverse and are in fact comprised of dozens of groups, each distinguished separately by theological and socio-cultural ideals. The Stauffer Mennonites are one subgroup of several conservative horse-and-buggy Anabaptist sects in the United States today (Hoover 1987; Redekop 1989; Scott 1996). As is the case with other Old-Order sects, the Stauffer Mennonite population has an extremely high fertility rate (Hurd 2006), a small deflection rate, and life expectancies similar to that of the rest of the U.S. population. Because of this, their populations double every eighteen to twenty-two years (Hostetler 1993; Kraybill and Hurd 2001; Hurd 2006) It then comes as a shock to most that these rural, plain, old-fashioned families are a part
of one of the fastest growing religious groups in North America (Kraybill and Hurd 2006; Donnermeyer et al 2012).

High rates of natural increase and increasing difficulties regarding their participation in the modern agricultural economy present a special set of problems for Old-Order groups, especially with respect to finding rural spaces within which their distinctive way of life can be practiced. As a result, members of Old-Order groups have recently been migrating to new areas that have never been settled by Old-Order groups (Kraybill and Bowman 2001; Donnermeyer et al 2010). Kraybill and Bowman (2001) found that most families in Old-Order settlements have extended family members that have moved to another settlement as well. Due to their socio-religious ideals, Old-Order groups are restricted as to where they can migrate and locate. As with any migration, there are strategies and decision making processes that migrants go through before they settle (Cohen 1996).

Over the last two decades, Ohio has seen an influx of migrants from various Old-Order groups (Kraybill 2010; Stauffer Mennonite Directory 2010; Donnermeyer et al 2012; Grammich et al 2012). In addition, new settlements tend to be concentrated close to previous settlements. As a result, Ohio today has the largest Old-Order Anabaptist population in the country (Kraybill 2010; Donnermeyer et al 2012). With regard to Stauffer Mennonite affiliation, 110 households have chosen to locate here since 1990, making it one of the fastest growing Stauffer Mennonite settlements in the United States (Stauffer Mennonite Directory 2010).

As a growing topic amongst geographers and other scholars of migration studies (Castles and Miller 2009), social networks have proven to be influential within the
internal dynamics of the migration process. As Kyle (2000, 83) has explained, social networks become “effective units of migration” which facilitate the migration process for individuals and groups. It conceptualizes the act of migration as a social product, rather than one that takes place solely through individual actors attempting to maximize earnings while adjusting to macro-structural changes, as many previous theories have highlighted. Through the sets of theoretical approaches concerning social networks, researchers can thoroughly investigate the social context within which migration occurs (Massey et al 1993; Portes 1996; Kyle 2000; de Haas 2009; Samers 2010; Bakewell et al 2010).

A current focus within the migration studies literature is the concept of translocalism, “a way to capture complex social-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-oriented and multi-dimensional understanding” (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, 376) by placing emphasis on the ways in which these interactions affect the concept of “place” for migrants (Oakes and Schein 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011). Through this approach, authors have researched the (re)created and experienced identities, notions of the local, connectedness, spaces, and place-making of migrants as they relocate and experience new situations. As expressed in interviews with participants, recreating the concepts of home and work within the destination area becomes a way to communicate aspects of locality and thus transpose the boundaries from the areas in which they became situated.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the migration and settlement choices of an Old-Order Mennonite church district in Highland and Pike counties, Ohio. Emphasis will be placed on their network connections into this destination area and also the ways in
which spaces and places are created and experienced by migrants. This comprises the major research question of the study. This research question is subdivided into three sub-questions. These questions will lead the investigation and are outlined below:

Research question 1: What internal social aspects affect the migration process within this settlement?

A. What role did social networks play within the migration process for members?
B. How did the pioneer migrants who created this settlement influence the network connections of subsequent individuals and households?
C. How did aspects of locality become replicated through the spaces of home and work within the destination area?

Significance of the Study

While a large number of studies have focused on Anabaptist societies, the geographic literature concerning Old Order groups is sparse and rather dated (Cross 2007). With regard to some smaller affiliations, such as the Stauffer Mennonites, academic studies are almost non-existent. While many books and studies acknowledge the existence of new settlements, few have examined the decision making processes and migration networks with regards to different occupations that are involved in their migrations. It is also currently unclear how Old-Order affiliations, including the Stauffer Mennonites, designate and create new settlements. By researching this particular settlement, this study will contribute to the migration and settlement literature on Old-Order Anabaptist groups. In addition to this, my findings will contribute to academic conversations regarding the importance of social capital, identity, and the role of pioneer agency within the literature on social networks. This research aims to explore the social
contexts within which these choices involving migration destinations are made and to
document how the Stauffer Mennonites experience the process, thereby filling gaps
within the migration literature on Old Order Anabaptist groups and academic discussions
concerning social networks.

Description of Settlement Area

The settlement area, referred to as the destination area throughout the paper, is
located a few miles west of Bainbridge, Ohio. Residences, businesses, and farms of the
community span across Highland, Ross, and Pike counties.

Figure 1. State Route 41 South, off of US-50; on the corner of the intersection, a large
sign advertises several of the businesses owned by the community. Following are a few
of the businesses of the participants and the community-run Produce Auction.
Although exact numbers are not known, participants commonly describe the economic make-up of the community to be split evenly between those involved in businesses and those with agriculture. For those families and individuals involved in agriculture, the Bainbridge Produce Auction provides a valuable and dependable outlet for their agricultural output. The auction, which operates through the spring, summer, and fall, conducts sales on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Buyers range from larger food companies to local individuals who reside in the area. Participants often describe the selling radius of the auction as “quite large,” with buyers from Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, and even from surrounding states such as Kentucky and Indiana.

Figure 2. Buyers parked in front of the auction, where the entrance sign reads “wholesale seller of fresh local grown produce.” Photo Credit: Author
Figure 3a and 3b. Larger buyers parked on the North side of the auction in the left photo, Local and regional buyers parked in the right photo. Photo Credit: Author

Figure 4. Wagons of the Stauffer community loaded with produce outside of the auction. Photo Credit: Author
Many individuals and families own and operate businesses as their primary source of income. Businesses exist separately from home residences and from within the home, and are both of formal and informal nature. A bakery, several general stores, a restaurant, a garden supply store, and many construction and wood working companies are operated by members of the community. Informal businesses and “side jobs,” as typified by some of the respondents, are characterized as home operated businesses such as shoe repair, sewing, leatherwork, and are advertised just outside of the home.

Figure 5. Signs of a local woodworking business and gardening center owned by members of the community. Photo Credit: Author
Figure 6a and 6b. Stores owned by two of the participants. Photo Credit: Author

Figure 7. Sign advertising a shoe repair “side business.” Photo Credit: Author
Since the establishment of the settlement in 1989, 115 households and additional individuals have moved to the settlement area. While the federal census does not account for individual religious affiliations, the Stauffer Mennonite group accounts for members who have joined communities as adults. Adherents, or youth who have not yet joined the community, are accounted for separately as well. Using the Stauffer group’s own census numbers, the population of this community had risen to 522 by 2010 (Stauffer Mennonite Directory 2010). After meeting and conducting interviews with members of the community, many described the periods of time in which in-migration occurred as sporadic; where families and individuals entered “fast and furious” in certain years, as described by one participant. Although a few members have moved in since 2010, the periods of rapid in-migration which the community previously experienced had ended by that year.
Figure 8. Settlement Growth in the Stauffer Community. Map Credit: Zach Bodenner
METHODOLOGY

It is the purpose of this study to analyze the internal dynamics of the migration and settlement process within an Old Order Stauffer Mennonite church district located in Highland and Pike Counties, Ohio. This section presents an overview of the research project’s design and implementation, especially with regard to the semi-structured interviews which form the basis of the study.

Participants

Interview participants were selected on the basis that they were members of the Stauffer Mennonite group, resided in the study settlement area, and had previously lived in at least one other settlement outside of the study area. All were at least 17 years of age when they moved to the study area. Previous settlements (commonly referred to by the participants by either county location or nearby town) in which interviewees previously lived included Lancaster and Snyder counties in Pennsylvania, St. Mary’s county in Maryland, Tunas, Missouri, and Elkhorn Kentucky. Participants were not excluded by family status at the time of migration; interviewees included single males and females, childless married couples, and families with children. Participants were not selected based on their district membership within the settlement due to the fact that the settlement had an identical Ordnung for both districts and split because of the inability to accommodate the growing number of members in a single meeting house rather than disagreement.

One person who was a part of the initial settlement process was interviewed. This participant provided information on the creation of the settlement in the study area and also provided information from a different perspective as to how the settlement has
grown over time. Ten other participants took part in semi-structured interviews so as to elicit information relating to the last two questions. Interviews were conducted with participants whom had migrated from different states and also from agricultural and non-agricultural occupational backgrounds in order to gain a wider perspective on the linkages and reasons for migration to this settlement as well.

Procedure

Qualitative research methods were employed to assess why individuals chose to migrate to the study area. As Winchester and Rofe (2010) suggest, qualitative methods are most useful when studying individual experiences of place. This study focuses on investigating the migration choices of individuals who have decided to retain their socio-religious lifestyle but have to cope with the impacts that are associated with such a lifestyle. By utilizing qualitative methods (rather than quantitative methods), I was able to uncover individualized experiences and investigate the internal dynamics of the migration process for these individuals.

To provide data on the first research question, an oral history interview was administered to one of the initial migrants who settled in the area. The unstructured nature of an oral history allowed for the informant to direct the interview towards meaningful personal accounts (Dunn 2010). Oral histories, as noted by George and Stratford (2010), add personal perspectives towards understanding changes in place over time. The information provided by the oral history also assisted in adding triangulation, also noted as an outside perspective on the overall process, to the second and third research questions (George and Stratford 2010). This process is suggested by George and Stratford (2010) as a way to visually assist the oral history interview. Conducting
interviews over multiple sessions has been regarded as a way to allow the participant to reflect on their answers and also ensure that more information can be provided in the interviews. It has also been noted as a way to relieve the interviewee of possible exhaustion due to the extensive nature of the process. After the first session of the interview, I asked the participant to bring any documents that the group produced before the interview began to assist the process (Dunn 2010; George and Stratford 2010). This oral history was hand-written.

Semi-structured interviews were employed to gather data relating to the second and third research questions. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the best interview method because it allow for gaps to be filled that quantitative methods cannot address. These types of interviews also allow for pre-determined questions to take different courses, thereby creating the possibility for the interviewee to elicit information on other topics regarding the migration process (Dunn 2010). All interviews were hand written in individual notebooks to avoid complications that are involved with their societal rules regarding recording devices (Hostetler 1993).

Throughout the course of the research process, field notes were used to assist further analyses and thought processes that developed around the interviews. Field notes, as noted by Dunn (2010), assist the interviewer in writing personal and analytical reflections that aid in labeling and cataloging interviews. These reflections also serve the researcher as another method of recalling specific details regarding the interviewee (Emerson et al 2010). My personal reflections included such topics regarding the age of the migrant, year, and other specific demographic details. Also included were my own personal reactions to the interview process. Analytical references typically were used to
account for important topics that arose during the interviews. Field notes were taken before and after interviews, and also during the transcription process.

To further facilitate the analysis process, I regularly kept two lists of in-process memos. Emerson et al (2010, 123) suggest that in-process memos “allow the fieldworker to develop analytic leads and insights early on in the fieldwork process.” These memos were written in a small notepad that I kept in the field and also as an electronic document on my computer. In-process memos allowed for codes, theoretical migration concepts, and other information to form and create topics in my research.

Informed verbal consent was sought from each participant. The research project and its goals were explained to each participant and all were given a copy of the introductory sheet that was submitted to the Institutional Review Board of Ohio University. Participants were also provided my personal contact information as well. All interviews have been kept confidential in order to ensure confidentiality. All participants refused the offer of choosing an alibi, so the pseudo names employed in the study were chosen by the researcher. Code-replacing identifiers were used as “names” for interviewees. A master list was kept confidential and destroyed upon completion of the study. Possible psycho-social harm was minimized in the interviewing process by accommodating sensitive issues. This was all done so as to ensure ethical conduct and accurate representation during the interviewing and transcribing process (Dowling 2010; Dunn 2010).

Interview Design and Transcription

The eleven semi-structured interviews used in my study were designed to elicit information that all participants shared but also were occasionally catered to individual
participants. Descriptive questions that were designed to gain demographic knowledge of the participant and also “open up” the interviewing process were implemented in the beginning of each interview. This technique was suggested by Dunn (2010) as a way to ease the tension of the beginning of the interview and to gain specific knowledge of the participants. Questions and topics that followed were centered on the migration process and choices of individual participants and were often more reflective and personal. These questions were sometimes designed after a preliminary meeting and were to be specific to the participant so as to gain information on their business, family, or lifestyle. This was done to cater explicitly to the individual. This type of interview design approach is described by Dunn (2010) as a “pyramid structure.”

Questions for the oral history were designed to gain knowledge about the choices that pioneer migrants made. This topic was explored in the interview after finding that, for many of the other participants; the roles of pioneer migrants were influential in their decision to join the community and migrate. Subsequently, questions and topics that were covered included personal information from the participant, his family and fellow pioneer migrants and also his perspectives and experiences of the settlement over the course of its entirety.

The semi-structured interviews and oral history were structured physically with a prompt question at the top of each page and with the remaining page left blank so as to leave space for the semi-structured nature of the interview. The back side of each page was left blank as well. Although my general interviewing practice gradually changed over the course of the interviews, I developed an interviewing procedure technique that allowed me to quickly write my own additional questions; typically, after the informant
answered a question completely, I would write my next question in short-hand on the interview. Since the participant would often pause when he/she realized that I was not making eye contact, I was allowed ample time to record my own questions in the semi-structured interview process.

Interviews were transcribed to an electronic format within a day of the interview, but were typically transcribed within hours after the interview. All interviews were transcribed before the subsequent interview was conducted so as to avoid confusion. Verbatim quotations were used to delineate actual written verbal speech and information that was taken down with shorthand, other symbols, and incomplete text. During the transcription process, field notes were transcribed at the top of each interview page in order to serve as points of reference for the coding process. In the results section, additional notes explaining the quotations, which were words of my own, were italicized. This ensured the most accurate representation of the material possible (Dunn 2010). Written transcripts were made available upon request; however, each of the participants declined this offer.

Recruitment Methods of Participants

Members from within the community were recruited via personal contacts that were made during personal interactions with members of the group. Although I had originally intended on using the “snowball” method to recruit interviewees, many members were reluctant to provide references to other potential participants. In addition, Old Orders tend not to frequent public spaces and often remain within the confines of the home, work, or school (Hostetler 1993), making public encounters outside of their private social sphere somewhat rare. Furthermore, the general avoidance of modern
communications technology (e.g. telephones, e-mail) eliminated the possibility of contacting members through electronic means. As such, contacts had to be made through various personal encounters. The processes by which such contacts were made changed as my interviews progressed as well.

The majority of the semi-structured interviews were conducted at sites where private businesses, owned by the group, operated. Because Old Order groups typically operate businesses (both formal and informal) out of the home or residential property, I was able to make contacts with adult family members and arrange a time to conduct the interview by visiting local businesses. This provided an “entry point” towards the possibility of procuring an interview. Through this tactic, interviews were scheduled and conducted with either the only adult male, adult female, simultaneously with both adults, and on two occasions with the entire family. Only the adults over the age of 18 were recorded in the interviews so as to comply with the rules set forth by the Institutional Review Board of Ohio University. These interviews were typically conducted outside of the home or at the business but not within the confines of the material home. The durations of the semi-structured interviews ranged from around 20 minutes to two hours.

As noted above, Old Order members tend to avoid most public social spaces. However, after meeting and interviewing several members, I found that their community social space, commonly referred to as “Barrett’s Mill” by the group and other locals, was centered around a former mill that was located near the settlement. This mill is located on Rocky Fork Creek in Paint Township and had not been in operation for over a half a century but was regularly visited by the Stauffer Mennonites, other Amish groups and non-Anabaptist locals alike. The group used the area to fish, swim, and gather informally.
as families and as a community. Typically, members frequented the mill and the surrounding rural area on Sunday afternoons and evenings. It was here that I established contacts with three of my interviewees and where I also conducted two of the semi-structured interviews.

As the research process progressed over the course of the summer, many community members became aware of what my research process entailed, and some even had a general idea of it before I attempted to ask for their cooperation with my study. This greatly eased the tension that came with presenting the study and asking for their assistance. In addition to this, members became less reluctant to reveal the locations of other potential interviewees and also the ties that bound themselves with other members of the group. Close personal connections with individuals and that of the whole group therefore greatly assisted the process of procuring interviews and increased the quality of my interviews over the duration of the interviewing process, which lasted roughly from May to August.

After establishing personal relationships with some of the members of the group throughout the process of conducting semi-structured interviews, I was able to find and meet with the first Stauffer Mennonite family to move into the area. Following de Haas’s (2009) description of a “pioneer migrant,” I chose to interview members from this family for my oral-history interview. However, only the adult male agreed to take part in the oral history interview. As it was initially planned, two interview sessions took place. However, both sessions occurred the same day; between the sessions, I drove the interviewee into town to run errands for the family. It was felt this constituted a long-enough break between the sessions so as to keep from exhausting the interviewee. In
addition to this, the break allowed for time to converse and “get to know” the participant, which has been noted to enhance the quality of the interview (Dunn 2010). It also allowed the family time to collect samples from Die Bottschaft, a popular newspaper used by the community and other various Old Order groups, to assist in the interview. The combination of both sessions totaled a time of nearly three hours, without the break included.

Data Analysis

The information derived from the twelve interviews (eleven semi-structured interviews and one oral history) were employed to address the three primary research questions. The research utilizes the Grounded Theory approach with regard to data analysis. Grounded Theory allows the researcher to develop concepts and theory from the data rather than basing the research on established theories and approaches (Emerson et al 2010). Through this method of analysis, I was able to discover themes in the data that emerged across the sets of interviews and to also relate these themes to the literature around which the study was based.

The open-to-focused coding process was employed to reduce and analyze the data. This process, according to Emerson et al (2010), allows the researcher to review then subsequently deduce key themes from the data. By adopting this technique, analytic codes were then developed around key themes in the research. Descriptive codes were used to categorize specific attributes of the interviewee, such as age, date of migration, occupation status, and gender. Codes that developed from in-process memos which were kept during the interview process were also used in the coding process.
Interviews were coded with assistance from the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software NVIVO. Using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software such as NVIVO allows for the data analysis process to code, categorize, store, and retrieve unstructured data in a systematic fashion (Cope 2010; Emerson et al 2010; Peace and van Hoven 2010). It also allowed for the coding of one text with multiple different focused codes with ease.
CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Old Order Groups of North America

Old Order groups of today trace their origins to the Anabaptist movements of sixteenth-century Europe. The Anabaptist movement, which began in Zurich around 1525, was a rejection of many of the ideals and practices of the Reformed Church and the Roman Catholic Church. In Zurich a number of Anabaptist leaders articulated major disagreements with the theological tenets of both of these religions and as such sought major reforms; Anabaptists leaders sought freedom from the oppressive society that they believed the corrupt Roman Catholic Church perpetrated and sought a more literal interpretation of biblical scripture (Redekop 1989), while the Reformation was viewed as yet another corrupt state-run church in the making. As they continued to reject conventional Catholic and Protestant beliefs, Anabaptists began to form various different group identities across Europe (Nolt 1992; Redekop 1989).

The term Anabaptist is derived from the Latin word *anabaptismus*, meaning “to be baptized again” (Nolt 1992). Anabaptist followers believed that sin was acquired in adulthood, not as an infant. Therefore, membership in the church is acquired through adult baptism. Although it was a very loosely-organized movement with great diversity, all Anabaptists were united by the theological principles set forth in the Schleitheim Articles of 1527 (Redekop 1989). The Schleitheim articles called for a society that was separate from the outside world, the rejection of all oaths, and a strict policy of non-violence. The Swiss Brethren, which consisted of Anabaptist reformers from Alsace-Lorrain, Southwest Germany, and Switzerland, also adopted the Articles of the Dordrecht
Confession. These articles added the practices of excommunication and shunning to this distinctive religious theology (Hostetler 1993).

The Anabaptist movement was as much a religious movement as it was a social and economic one. The beginnings of the movement paralleled those of the Peasants Revolt of 1525 in Germany, which aligned the peasant class against the Holy Roman Empire and leaders of the Reformation. Due to large population increases at the beginning of the 16th century and increasing tithes, the peasant class was forced into extreme poverty and hunger while heavy government taxation continued (Nolt 1992). Stayer (1991) notes that the German Peasants Revolt, although relatively short-lived, and the Anabaptist movement had many followers that participated on both sides. The commonality was thus their mutual angst for that of the ruling religious structure; the Peasant’s Revolt sought to relinquish the power of taxation and exploitation of the peasant class, while the Anabaptist movement can be understood as stemming from theological backings. Arising in a time of great social disorder, Anabaptism was able to establish common ground among revolutionaries within many parts of central Europe, and the interconnectedness of the forces driven within these two movements therefore defines the Anabaptist movement as a socio-religious phenomenon (Klassen 1964; Redekop 1989; Stayer 1991). Stayer (1991) however notes that, while the German Peasants War was also fought amongst an oppressed class of people, the Anabaptist movement had important theological backings that were derived from within and its beginnings cannot simply understood as stemming solely from the economic turmoil that led the German Peasants War.
As many Anabaptist leaders began to be killed and martyred throughout Zurich, the movement gained popularity throughout central Europe. The Anabaptists that were killed after the radical reformation of 1525 numbered in the thousands (Kraybill and Bowman 2001). This severe persecution allowed for a more separate and internally cohesive existence for many Anabaptist communities. Anabaptist communities then began to adopt different titles regionally over the next century, including the Hutterites, Amish, Dunkards, and Mennonites (Nolt 1992; Hostetler 1993).

From Anabaptists to Mennonites

Menno Simons, a Catholic Priest in the Netherlands who later became an Anabaptist leader, began to accumulate followers known as the Mennonites or “Mennists” in central Europe. Simons and his followers concluded that shunning, termed Meidung, was to be taken very seriously, as it prevented sin from entering the Church (Nolt 1992). Siding only with the non-violent Anabaptists of the era, Simons sought to further separate peaceful Anabaptists from violent groups such as the Munsterites. The rapid growth of these followers resulted in the creation of the Mennonites, whose followers hailed predominantly from the Palatinate region of Germany, the Alsace-Lorrain area of France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland (Hostetler 1993; Nolt 1992).

With increasing numbers across the continent, Mennonites soon developed differences based on their regional location (Redekop 1989; Wenger 1966). In addition to this, Anabaptist followers did not adopt the Mennonite title and teachings at any given time, thereby dissuading any unity over the center of the continent. Due to the social circumstances of Holland and the general acceptance of their religion, many Mennonites became urbanized and participated openly in the city, even holding political offices. The
The Amish faction emerged from the Swiss-German Mennonite communities during the 17th century. Jacob Amman was an Anabaptist follower of Swiss descent who later moved to the Alsace region to escape persecution from the Swiss government. Amman opted for a much more strict religious society, which required communion to be taken twice a year, Meidung and excommunication to be enforced, and ritual foot washing to be practiced by all. These criteria were outlined in his “Warning Message” of 1693, which called for the adoption of these rules, or else members face excommunication (Hostetler 1993). The Mennonites of the Alsace and Palatinate regions were following a concept of Meidung that practiced spiritual avoidance and not total
physical avoidance. This disagreement led to the creation of the Amish and the split from the Mennonites (Nolt 1992).

In the case of the Swiss-German groups, Intra-European migration occurred mainly during the 16th and 17th centuries. Prior to any migration to North America these groups maintained their distinctive ethno-religious identity in isolated rural areas, mainly in the Palatinate region of Germany. After the Thirty Years War, King Ludwig allowed Anabaptism to be tolerated in return for food production. Various Anabaptist groups, including the Hutterites, Amish, Swiss Mennonites, and other Swiss Brethren groups relocated here to avoid further persecution; most became farmers (Dyck 1967; Hostetler 1993). Although exact numbers and locations are not accounted for due to the nature of their secluded existence, it is estimated that several hundred Swiss Mennonites relocated to the relatively under populated rural Palatinate region from surrounding areas during the 16th and 17th centuries (Redekop 1989; Hostetler 1993).

Mennonite Migrations to America

Beginning in 1683, Swiss Mennonites from central Europe migrated to North America. Over time, a large number of sub-sects developed in North America, resulting in an impressive array of theological diversity within the movement. This migration lasted well into the 19th century, by which time some 8,000 Swiss Mennonites had moved to Pennsylvania (Scott 1996). A variety of push-pull factors have been identified for each period of migration but it is widely recognized that organized recruitment networks were important in facilitating Mennonite and other Swiss-German migrations to North America (Redekop 1989; Fogleman 1996; Scott 1996).
The Swiss Mennonites migration of 1683 was part of a larger German recruitment plan designed by William Penn that included many others groups from Southwestern Germany. Penn, a Quaker who planned his Pennsylvania land grant around the idea of universal religious tolerance, advertized his plan widely among the German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist populations of Europe (Clouse 2012). Initially, less than 100 Mennonites accepted the offer (Fogleman 1996). However, conditions in the Palatinate quickly changed; in the Wars of the Palatinate from 1688-1697, Louis XIV destroyed many Anabaptist homes in the Rhineland-Pfalz and Baden areas of Germany, and Swiss governments were still jailing Anabaptists for their religion (Nolt 1992; Hostetler 1993). Coinciding with such turmoil, in 1709 the Queen of England began to offer free passage for Germans to emigrate and settle in Colonial Pennsylvania. Fogleman (1996) points out that the beginnings of the Swiss-German Mennonite migration were voluntary; many more Mennonite families stayed in central Europe than those that chose to leave. Migration periods throughout the 18th century would remain sporadic until it halted with the coming of the Revolutionary War; it is estimated that nearly 4,000 Mennonites relocated during this century (Nolt 1992; Hostetler 1993; Fogleman 1996).

The socio-economic background of 18th century Swiss-German Mennonite migrants was that of a lower class than some of the other Germans who came during this time period. Hailing mostly from rural areas of the Palatinate, migrants typically came from agricultural backgrounds with little ability to appropriate any expenditures resulting from the migratory process (Gameo 1989; Redekop 1989). While many Germans were forced to repay debts through indentured servitude (Fogelman 1996), only small
percentages of Mennonites took this route (Gameo Pennsylvania). Instead, most relied on funding from the Dutch Government and group support (Fogelman 1996).

Although the Swiss-German Mennonites represented the largest Anabaptist group to migrate to North America in terms of numbers, they were not the only radical European pietist group to come through Philadelphia and settle in colonial America. Radical pietist groups accounted for a significantly small portion (estimated at less than 10%) of the total German speaking migrant population. The Moravians, representing the second largest Anabaptist group, also relocated across the Atlantic to form their own communities within Pennsylvania (Fogelman 1996). The Amish, with heavy assistance from Dutch Mennonite groups in Holland, totaled nearly 300 persons before 1775 (Hostetler 1993; Fogelman 1996). The Dunkards, Schwenkfelders, Waldesians, and other groups migrated in much smaller numbers, each settling within different rural areas outside of Germantown, Pennsylvania, while often remaining in separate communities and thereby reinforcing individual ethno-religious group norms (Hostetler 1993; Fogelman 1996).

Considerably smaller in numbers, Mennonite migration in the 19th century consisted more of members from the Dutch stream than those from the Swiss-German groups. Assimilation into the larger host society also became more frequent; the Swiss-German Mennonites who migrated in the previous century were found to be much more conservative than the ones whom came during the 19th century, and these Mennonite groups often formed more progressive religious groups upon their arrivals. Because of this, many Mennonites that migrated in the 19th century distanced themselves from the more conservative factions that previously settled and due to their more affluent nature;
they tended to settle in or near more urban locales (Redekop 1989; Fogleman 1996; Kraybill and Hurd 2006). Further, the reasons that migrants left were slightly different. Nolt (1992) attributes the changing laws of citizenship within Europe as a result of the French Revolution and The Napoleonic Wars as one of their primary reasons for Anabaptist emigration at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Motivation stemmed more from “word of mouth” from previous migrants rather than large scale recruitment schemes as well (Hostetler 1993; Fogleman 1996; Kraybill and Hurd 2006).

Although Mennonite migration lasted slightly more than two centuries, the connections with the Old Order groups of today stem mainly from those of the late 17th and 18th centuries. Coming from similar economic backgrounds during a distinct time frame, these groups would develop separate ethno-religious orderings as well. They would not, however, remain distanced from the larger Swiss-Dutch-German population that would settle amongst them in pre-and-post Colonial America.

The Creation of Pennsylvania Dutch

Despite the fact that the Swiss-German Mennonites (and other various German groups) were now in regular contact with English speakers and that English was the dominant political and economic language, a unique German ethnic identity emerged in colonial Pennsylvania during the 18th century. Known widely as Pennsylvania Dutch, German-speakers from all various locales within Europe would gradually assimilate into this linguistically and culturally defined ethnic space that spanned across an inimitable Pennsylvania-German landscape. Pennsylvania Dutch is an English misnomer that is derived from the Germanic word duetsch, which translates to “German,” and became the
dominant term used to categorize these immigrant settlers (Foglemann 1996, Lamme 2001; Pillsbury 2001; McMurry and Van Dolsen 2011).

William Penn’s concept of universal religious tolerance led to an extremely diverse, but specifically German, landscape that later came to be distinctly described as Pennsylvania Dutch. Described by McMurry and Van Dolson (2011, 6) as a landscape that “blended Old World spatial, aesthetic, and technical values with American ones,” German immigrants replanted various architecture styles within settlement areas. Clouse (2011) notes that religion, being the foundation of this German immigrant population, thereby created part of the unique and incredibly diverse Pennsylvania Dutch religious landscape. Pennsylvania German bank barns, with their large structural design based on rural Swiss barns, not only accommodated the wide variety of agricultural undertakings well but also served as ethnic identifiers in rural space; large and distinct “hex signs” were regularly displayed on the sides of the barns to demonstrate the Pennsylvania German identity. German fraktur script was also used to engrave titles on anything, from grave stones to housing addresses (McMurry and Garrison 2011).

This Pennsylvania Dutch identity, however, was perpetuated not solely by Mennonite and Amish migrants, but rather by more politically and economically active German immigrant groups as well. Lutherans and Reformed members, who mainly hailed from German speaking lands, played active roles in politicizing German voices while many Anabaptists continued to oppose voting (Fogleman 1996). Making up nearly ninety-percent of the total German speaking population in colonial Pennsylvania, Lutheran and Reformed followers numerically dominated the Pennsylvania Dutch culture region (Clouse 2011; Nolt 2012). Broadsides, which facilitated communication amongst
German immigrants in Colonial Pennsylvania, regularly influenced Pennsylvania Dutch culture and ideas (Yoder 2005). These groups also played a role in German resistance to popular American religious trends (commonly known as American Revivalism) inspired by the Second Great Awakening through cultural reinforcement (Nolt 2002).

According to Foglemann (1996), one of the key factors in the creation of the distinctive Pennsylvania German ethnic identity was the high index of dissimilarity rates that existed in pre-and-post colonial Pennsylvania. Anabaptist groups, along with other German speaking parts of the population, remained in highly segregated residential (and typically rural) areas that spanned entire counties, often geographically isolated from the English speaking Scots-Irish, English, and Welsh. The settlement areas grew so rapidly, both from in migration and natural increase, that by the beginning of the 19th century Pennsylvania’s population was one-third German (Fogleman 1996; McMurry and Van Dolson 2011). The described area was located within east-central Pennsylvania, where the population’s majority in many places existed as hailing from Germanic backgrounds. This multi-ethnic (but overly Germanic) space has been referred as a “Homeland” by Pillsbury (2001) and other authors within various fields of academia (Nostrand and Estaville 2001).

Although settlement dissimilarity indexes were high, Fogleman (1996) and Nolt (2002) also note the roles that ethnic conflict and differentiation played in shaping the Pennsylvania Dutch identity. Faced regularly with issues regarding citizenship opportunities and forceful English political agendas, Pennsylvania Germans often grouped themselves against the more affluent English. Nolt (2001, 3) identifies this as a
concept referred to as “ethnicization-through-Americanization;” where ethnic group identity formation resulted from an advantageous gain of sharing ethnic space, but also stemmed from ethnic discrimination within the new destination country. Despite the large variety of religious affiliation, German speakers regularly aligned themselves in matters regarding their ethnicity (Fogleman 1996; Nolt 2001).

Anabaptists, which represented significantly smaller numbers within the German speaking population of Pennsylvania, often lived in separate communities outside of Philadelphia in counties such as Berkshire, Lancaster, and Somerset (Nolt 1992). These “ethnic islands,” as referred to by Conzen (2001), allowed for family, home, and church networks to create ethnic bonds that would separate their groups from other colonial Americans. Covering much of Pennsylvania during the 18th century, some of the ethnic islands that existed during that time still exist today, especially amongst the Old Order Anabaptist population (Hostetler 1993; Foglemann 1996; Kraybill and Bowman 2001).

Due to the wide variety of German dialects that emerged in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect became the linguistic norm amongst many German immigrants (Fogleman 1996). Developed within Pennsylvania, these different dialects slowly converged to create a language that grouped German immigrants but also separated members from English society (Johnson-Weiner 1998), thereby also contributing to their ethnic identity formation (Foglemann 1996; McMurry and Van Dolsen 2011). By adhering to this Germanic-based language, Kraybill and Bowman (2001) argue that Anabaptist groups were also able to better resist being subsumed into the dominant culture. It is estimated that one-third of the Pennsylvanian populace used Pennsylvania Dutch in every-day speech during the 18th century. Pennsylvania Dutch
gradually evolved to the point where it nearly became unintelligible to 19th century German speaking migrants, which, according to Nolt (2002), further separated German migrants from those who had migrated prior to the American Revolution and those who came after. To this day, many Old Order groups such as the Stauffer Mennonites still speak the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect amongst group members. Although it is now not typically used as a written language, it is still regarded as being one of the significant factors holding together the Old Order socio-religious group foundation (Hostetler 1993; Scott 1996; Johnson-Weiner 1998; Nolt 2002).

The combination of high indexes of dissimilarity within ethnic settlement regions, general religious and social tolerance from the government, and abundance of German social, economic, and religious institutions allowed for the Pennsylvania Dutch identity to have considerable social influence over German migrants who located in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania became a “cultural hub” for seemingly radical Pietist and Reformed followers that, in counties such as Lancaster County, still exist today. Anabaptist groups, such as the Mennonites, developed their own distinct social traits through the migration process, their own religious orderings, and the influences derived from settling amongst a larger Pennsylvania Dutch group (Hostetler 1993; Fogleman 1996; Scott 1996; Nolt 2002).

**Early Mennonite Ordering and Community Splits**

The variety of European backgrounds, differences in belief systems, and regional migration locations led to the creation of separate religious orderings, referred to as conferences, amongst Anabaptist settlers within eastern North America. Throughout the 19th century, Mennonite groups would begin to form regional group identities that bound
themselves together based on their socio-religious beliefs. Without any religious
hierarchy or predominant social ordering, many Mennonites would begin to leave their
faith and join mainstream American religious denominations. Others even began to reject
the term Mennonite. While some groups became more progressive and integrated into
American culture, others would resist and further distance themselves from American
society (Redekop 1989; Scott 1996; Kraybill and Bowman 2001).

Separated regionally, Mennonites in Pennsylvania formed the first two
conferences: The Lancaster conference, in Lancaster County, and the Franconian
Conference, which began outside of Germantown in Philadelphia County. Although
loosely organized, these two conferences served as points of stability within the
Mennonite lifestyle. They often dictated societal rules such as dress code or family life,
but seldom delved into the religious sector (Scott 1996). However, further schisms that
would begin in the 1850s would make these conferences obsolete (Redekop 1989; Scott
1996; Kraybill and Bowman 2001).

Mennonites of Germanic background in Pennsylvania established The Mennonite
Church, which is also known as the (Old) Mennonite Church, in the early 1800’s.
However, John F. Funk and John S. Coffman’s admittance into the conference grew the
membership at a much higher rate. Inspired by the evangelical nature and success of
American protestant movements, Funk and Coffman’s evangelical practices quickly
altered the nature of Mennonite churches in North America (Scott 1996). After extensive
travelling expeditions and literary publications, Funk and Coffman branched out to other
Mennonite groups within other states. By the 1880’s Indiana, Virginia, Ohio, and Ontario
had Mennonite Church congregations (Redekop 1989; Scott 1996). It is currently the largest Mennonite conference in North America (ASARB 2010).

The General Conference Mennonite Church, commonly referred to as the GCMC, also has roots in Pennsylvania. Comprised of Mennonites of Dutch, Russian, and German origin, this conference formed in the latter part of the 19th century directly after Dutch/Russian-Mennonite in-migration occurred during the 1880s. Being one of the most progressive Mennonite organizations, this conference became highly evangelical and individualistic, abandoning many of its conservative roots (Redekop 1989; Scott 1996).

Mennonites who resisted the trends of evangelical Protestant groups but remained conservative by means of refusing to join the newly-formed progressive Mennonite conferences gradually accepted the connotation “Old Order” (“Alte Ordnung” in German). These groups adhered to a strict and conservative social ordering that was built upon early European Anabaptist/Mennonite concepts. Hostetler (1993) describes this as: “[t]he process of social ordering…. these regulations represent the consensus of the leaders and the endorsement of the members at a special meeting (Ordnungsgemee) held semiannually, before communion on Sunday, and are necessary for the welfare of the church-community” (Hostetler 1993, 82).

These groups include, but are not limited to, the Wenger, Horning, Weaver, David Martin, and the Stauffer Mennonites. Many other conservative Old Order groups emerged, but few lasted. Sometimes, each of these Old Order affiliations are referred to as “conferences” as well. Although many of these schisms emerged in Pennsylvania during the middle of the 19th century, all states with Mennonite and Amish immigrant populations experienced religious schisms and conservative group formations before the
turn of the 20th century (Kraybill 2010; Kraybill and Hurd 2006; Kraybill and Bowman 2001; Scott 1996; Redekop 1989).

Old Order Groups Today

Three major groups that emerged out of the Anabaptist revolution are extant today: The Amish, Mennonites, and the Hutterites. Out of the many immigrant Anabaptist groups that entered North America, these three also have sub-affiliations that are given the Old Order recognition. Most commonly recognized from their mode of transportation and their distinctive folk cultural ideals (Donnermeyer et al 2012), Old Order groups occupy a distinctive niche in American popular culture. Within the last several decades, however, Old Order groups have experienced tremendous amounts of change.

Kraybill and Bowman (2002) note four commonalities shared by Old Order groups: conservative Ordnung that spans both the religious and social spectrums; a concept of Gelassenheit that requires subordination to God and the greater good of the group, a tradition of non-resistance and non-violence; and a large variety of community identity symbols (such as plain dress and horse and buggy transportation) that separates and distances members of the groups from others. Through these rules and values Old Order groups continue to re-create and reconstruct what it means to be a part of their group, thereby coloring and defining each individual settlement’s ethnic identity. This, however, creates an extremely diverse and unique Old Order population; settlements within the same geographic location can have drastically different rules (Hostetler 1993; Scott 1996; Kraybill and Bowman 2002; Nolt 2007; Hurst and McConnell 2010).
The term “Old Order” has been given to such groups who abide by a traditional religious ordering (Ordnung), are socially conservative, and are completely autonomous in their practices from higher church organization. The general understanding as to which groups are actually defined as “old order”, however, remains somewhat unclear; some researchers have included “black bumper” or car driving groups (Kraybill and Hurd 2006), while others define Old Order based on their horse and buggy mode of transportation (Hostetler 1993; Donnermeyer et al. 2012). Also, it differs by affiliation; most researchers do not consider car-driving Amish to be of the Old Order variety, but some black-bumper Mennonites have been included in such category (Kraybill and Bowman 2001).

Researchers commonly refer to the religious classification of Old Orders as a sect. Anabaptism, which is part of the “free church” tradition, cannot be considered a denomination of Protestantism or Catholicism, despite its Judeo-Christian roots (Redekop 1989; Hostetler 1993). The ways in which religious ideals transcend into the social realm further categorize it as one as well; sectarian groups create social boundaries that both comfort and exclude its members from outside societies (Hostetler 1993). However, other scholars have recently referred to Old Orders as being “ethno-religious” due to their time- and location-specific ethnic backgrounds (Kraybill and Bowman 2001; Nolt 2007; Hurst and McConnell 2010).

An Old Order community is structurally organized into settlements and church districts. Old Order members cannot live separate or alone from other members. A settlement is simply any cluster of Old Order families living within close proximity of each other and can be of any size. It is not necessarily a confined area within specific
borders, and there are sometimes non-Anabaptist families that live within a settlement. A church district is comprised of all of the households that worship together and follow a similar set of societal rules. Church districts also vary in size, but most are not larger than forty families; one settlement can include several different church districts (Hostetler 1993; Kraybill and Hurd 2006).

Kent and Neugebauer (1990) have acknowledged the usefulness of using Mennonite church districts as a way to identify their ethnic settlement regions. Since Stauffer Mennonites are restricted to buggy, bicycle, and pedestrian travel, a church district is usually compromised of members that live in relatively close proximity to each other (Kraybill and Hurd 2006). A church district therefore is likely the best unit of analysis for conducting research with regards to Old Order Anabaptist groups (Kent and Neugebauer 1990).

The majority of Old Order groups have historically lived in settlements located within the middle-Atlantic states of the U.S., with the exception of a few groups of Amish who have ventured into South America. Throughout the 19th and middle 20th centuries these groups exhibited relatively stagnant population growth (Hostetler 1993; Redekop 1989). Since the 1970s, however, most have experienced considerable population increases; the Amish and Mennonites populations now double nearly every twenty years, and as such they are some of the fastest growing religious groups in North America. Overall, the Amish greatly outnumber Old Order Mennonite and Hutterite groups (Donnermeyer et al 2013; Hurd 2010; Kraybill 2010; Kraybill and Bowman 2002).
The average Old Order Anabaptist family is large, and the majority of the children in a family typically decide to join the faith as adults. Adults within the society tend to live long, healthy lives as well. Since the 1970’s, the Old Order Anabaptist population within North America has been doubling every 18 to 20 years due to this. This combination has led to the dramatic increase of their population within North America (Hostetler 1993; Kraybill and Hurd 2006; Hurd 2010).

Old Order women tend to have very high total fertility rates, ranging on average from 6 to 7 in North American settlements (Hostetler 1993; Hostetler 1997; Hewner 1998; Greksa 2001; Hurd 2010). The Old Order population is said to have a “natural fertility”, which “. . . implies the absence of deliberate, parity-based changes in reproductive behavior intended to meet some normative target family size” (Wood 1990, 212). Hutterite populations have been noted as having some of the highest fertility rates in the world (Redekop 1989). Continuing high fertility rates have been found for Iowa Amish residents, along with record birth rates in the 20 to 30 cohort (Cooksey and Donnermeyer 2013). A low rate of infant mortality, similar to that of the U.S. average, amongst Old Order populations means that large families are the norm. Historically, these rates have not deviated much as well (Hostetler 1998; Hurd 2010).

Hostetler (1993) notes that while Old Order groups do not generally condone contraceptive use or access to abortion, this does not tend to affect fertility rates. In an agricultural society that limits the use of tractors and other machinery, children are valuable workers and thus are seen as economic assets. Children are obligated to work for their parents, and since children complete school at an eighth-grade level, they begin working at a much earlier age than other children in the U.S. In this society, large
families are vital in order to support their agricultural practices as well. Aside from economic value, Old Order communities believe that limiting births because of selfish reasons is against “God’s will” (Hurst and McConnell 2010, p.100).

Because of high fertility and birth rates, the age structure of Old Order communities tends to be heavily skewed towards the bottom. In the Geauga settlement of Ohio, for example, forty-six percent of the population in a recent study was found to be under the age of fifteen (Greksa 2001). Some grandparents within the Holmes County settlement were reported as having around sixty-four grandchildren (Hurst and McConnell 2010). Low mortality rates and a life expectancy similar to that of the rest of the U.S. have contributed to high rates of population growth as well (Greksa 2001; Hurd 2010). Since youths are expected to provide care for the elderly by working for their families, the young age structure does not place a burden on their society as it would in the non-Old Order U.S. population (Hostetler 1993).

The non-baptized adherents of an Old Order community tend to join the church at a high rate as well. Certain Old Order affiliations have recorded retention rates around the 98 percent range (Kraybill and Hurd 2006; Hurst and McConnell 2010; Donnermeyer et al 2012). This, however, is a semi-recent phenomenon; historically, many children left the group before becoming baptized (Hostetler 1993). The practice of excommunicating members, although it occurs, is not extremely common. A Bann, the German word used for the forced expulsion of a person within the community, can happen when a member disobeys parts of the established Ordnung (Hostetler 1993).
Intra-Regional Migration and the Establishment of New Settlements

Old Order groups are considered to be mobile and adaptive societies that have historically moved to locales that support their socio-religious lifestyle. Religious persecution, political pressure, excessive population growth, rural crowding, and the availability of agricultural land have historically fueled the migration of these religious groups. Since the 1970’s, however, their rapid population growth has contributed to their migrations out of their previous settlements and into new places. Although past migrations have been international, recent moves have predominately been within the United States; with the exception of a small number of newer settlements in Canada. Migration can also be classified as predominately rural-to-rural. As their population continues to rapidly grow, more members are faced with the reality that they will have to relocate to new places (Hostetler 1993; Fogleman 1996; Greksa 2002; Kraybill and Bowman 2001).

New settlements are created differently by various Old Order affiliations. Many Old Order Amish settlements were established by groups of families who left the church district due to excessive growth or disagreements regarding Ordnung, thereby relying on intra-affiliation ties or other various social contacts. Some new settlements replicate the previous Ordnung and remain affiliated with the previous group (Hostetler 1993; Luthy 1996). Seohnee (2013) found that, for many Amish entrepreneurs, heterogeneous ties were crucial in starting Amish business ventures. Cooksey and Donnermeyer (2013) have suggested that among the Old Order Amish, because affiliation change is quite common, most migrations are typically undertaken to either find a more liberal church district or a cheaper farm. This has historically occurred in both the Amish and Mennonite factions.
(Scott 1996; Kraybill and Hurd 2001). Some groups migrate to new areas with their church affiliation rather than through individual choice. Migration flows and directions for the Hutterites, for example, are decided by church elders and do not allow individual choice (Hostetler 1997).

For Old Order Mennonite groups, the migration process is rather unclear and undefined. In the case of the Wenger Mennonite affiliation, Dr. Donald Kraybill believes that the church orchestrates the addition of new settlements and encourages new migrants to the area in this way. Old Order Mennonites have not been reported as to have switched an affiliation, which means to have changed religious group membership, through the migration process. For the many other Old Order Mennonite groups, however, it is not entirely certain how new settlements are formed and how members are brought into them. It is unclear how the Stauffer Mennonite affiliation orchestrates the creation of new settlements, and this is one of the primary questions framing this research (Kraybill, Personal Correspondence 2013).

As a socio-religious group, Old Orders have several restrictions as to where they are allowed to move and settle. Stauffer Mennonites, like other Old Order groups, do not migrate to new areas alone or to one that does not already have an established settlement or church district. The existence of a church district serves as a place for new migrants to settle. While much of the information on their migration is unknown or speculated, researchers all agree that an already established church district serves as a pull factor to a new area (Kent and Neugebauer 1990; Hostetler 1993; Kraybill and Bowman 2001).

Old-Order groups prefer to reside in rural areas in order to separate themselves from the “progressive” modern world (Hostetler 1993; Kraybill and Bowman 2001).
varying degree, the economic practices of Old- Order Mennonite groups in the United States (in particular, the Stauffer Mennonites) reflect those of their ancestors from the areas of Switzerland, Alsace, Lorrain, and southwest Germany. Old Order community members believe that working close to the land strengthens the bond between Christ and themselves. Because of this, many Old Order families attempt to work in agriculture or hold other traditional lines of work (Redekop 1989; Hostetler 1993; Kraybill and Bowman 2001). This preference for agricultural and non-industrial occupations further limits the locations of their settlements to rural locales.

In the United States, farmland continues to be converted into non-agricultural land uses and the size and number of rural areas continues to shrink as cities and suburbs grow (Wood 2005). Complicating matters, the availability of farmland and rural space within Old- Order settlements has been on the decline, especially in recent years (Hurst and McConnell 2010; Donnermeyer et al 2010). In 1980, Ericksen et al found that the ability to find farmland has been the primary concern for Old- Order Amish and Mennonite populations in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Many authors have suggested that cheap and/or available agricultural land is one of the biggest motivating factors involved in the decision of location for Old Order families (Redkop 1989; Hostetler 1993).

However, since the 1980s more and more Old- Order members have been leaving the plow and taking up non-agricultural occupational positions (Greksa and Korbin 2002; Kraybill and Hurd 2006). Peters (1994) acknowledges that this trend is due to the increased difficulty of procuring farmland, the increasing costs of entering the agricultural industry, and also because of the growing competitiveness in the farming industry between small scale and large scale farming operations. In the Geauga
settlement in northeastern Ohio, the percentage of Old-Order Amish men involved in agriculture dropped by half between 1973 to 1993 (Greksa and Korbin 2002), and a follow-up study within the same settlement found that it continues to drop (Cooksey and Donnermeyer 2013). Jobs in these settlements are becoming progressively more specialized and varied as well; in past decades, occupations may have included several different modes of income, but now members are sticking to one single occupation (Peters 1994). Although many Old Order households continue to be engaged in some sort of subsistence agriculture, it is not the primary means of income for many families. Increasingly large numbers of Old-Order members are entering into occupations that cater solely to the non-Anabaptist world as well (Kraybill and Hurd 2006; Hurst and McConnell 2011), sometimes even partaking in economic activities involving elements related to tourism (Trollinger 2012).

Old Order groups are expected to own private property but are semi-communal in the sense that there are sectors of property that are to be paid for by all members (Redekop 1989; Kraybill and Bowman 2001). While other sectors of the Mennonite faith (such as the Hutterites) are entirely communal, the socio-religious background of Old Order groups tends to strike a balance between the realm of the community and that of the individual. Private property is to be bought by the individual and assistance is given by community members when possible (Redekop 1989). Old Order groups reject the capitalistic ideology of self interest and extreme wealth accumulation through their understanding of what it means to be a part of the Old-Order community (Redekop 1989). However, men are required to find and hold stable occupations to support their families and their communities in times of need. Unlike communal Anabaptists societies
such as the Hutterites, these positions are not always provided by members of the
church; at times, Old-Order members also encounter situations where they must seek
outside non-agricultural employment or start businesses on their own (Peters 1994).

Social aid from the government, such as farm buyouts, social security, Medicare,
as well as private crop insurance, is discouraged and can even be grounds for
excommunication. Instead, members often rely on close ties to form business relations
(Seohonee 2013) The strong presence of mutual aid within the community assists
members in need, but members cannot forever rely on the assistance of the community.
When some form of aid can be provided in Old-Order communities it is intended to be a
means of moving towards self-sufficiency and is not permanent (Hostetler 1993; Good-
Gingerich, Lightman 2006).

The Stauffer Mennonites

The Stauffer Mennonite group was created in 1845 as part of several church
schisms that occurred from the Old Mennonite Church in Pennsylvania (Redekop 1989;
Scott 1996; Kraybill and Hurd 2006). This ultra-conservative group split from the
Lancaster Mennonite Conference in Pennsylvania. Stauffer Mennonites are sometimes
referred to as “Piker” and “Team” Mennonites as well. The Stauffer Mennonites were
one of the first conservative groups to emerge out of the Lancaster conference and the
Mennonite Church. Their schism was led by Jacob Stauffer who felt that
excommunication within the Groffdale Conference (later subsumed into the Old
Mennonite Church) was not taken seriously enough after the refused dismal of a couple
who had indentured servants. His followers then formed communities in Lancaster and
Snyder counties, Pennsylvania. Jacob Stauffer then outlined his community guidelines in
his pamphlet *A Foundation of Faith and Confession*, which provided ten societal rules by which community members must abide (Scott 1996).

As with most traditional Anabaptist groups in the United States, they have a trilingual linguistic heritage (High German, Pennsylvania-German, and English), use their own school systems, reject higher education, and restrict the use of technology (Johnson-Werner 1998; Kraybill and Bowman 2001; Scott 1996). Stauffer Mennonites are often labeled “Old Order” or “Team” because of their restricted transportation use (horse and buggy) and conservative separatist society (Redekop 1989; Scott 1996). Like other Old Order Mennonites, they too utilize a “meetinghouse” to conduct services and hold community meetings. Today, thirteen different church districts within eleven different counties are affiliated with the Stauffer Mennonite conference (Kraybill 2010; Stauffer Mennonite Directory 2010).

The Stauffer Mennonite population remained relatively small until the mid-twentieth century due to several schisms within the group, with some congregations even becoming extinct (Landis 1958; Scott 1996). In 1989, the group was believed to have around 1,700 adherents, which included both baptized and non-baptized members (Hoover 1987). As of 2010, the population totaled 3,599, meaning that their rates of natural increase coincide with many other Old Order groups (Stauffer Mennonite Church 2010).

Migration Systems, Social Networks, Pioneer Agency, and Translocalism

Researchers have approached the migration patterns of Old Order groups through various macro-structural approaches, focusing on aspects such as land prices, high rates of natural increase, and economic involvement within certain industries. The propensity
to migrate due to structural forces has an extensive literature that was covered in the previous section. Although this literature includes research on all Old Order groups, it tends to focus on the Amish, especially with regards to migration and settlement.

Geographers have approached the migration and settlement of Old Order groups in a variety of ways. Most notably has been Crowley’s (1978) research on the early rapid growth and diffusion of Old Order Amish settlements within North America. Cross (2007) focused his research on the recent growth and participation of the Amish in North America’s dairy industry, identifying an important economic outlet for many members of that group. Finally, Lamme (2001) contributed to the “ethnic homelands” discussion within cultural geography with his research involving the Amish in Pennsylvania. Together with scholars from other social sciences, geographers have published a significant number of studies involving the structures of Amish society and geographic distribution. However, the internal dynamics involving the migration process for these groups, especially the lesser-studied Old Order Mennonites, has not been thoroughly examined.

The following literature review encompasses interdisciplinary research involving migration systems, social networks, pioneers, and the roles that they play in the migration process. It covers the early literature on the roles of networks in the migration process, as well as more recent concepts and conversations within academia. This literature review accepts the position that the network exists as its own entity, or space, where costs, risks, benefits, and arrangements within the migration process are constructed and negotiated. Additionally, it includes literature on translocal spaces so as to provide an overview of the ways that the migration process inherently affects the mobilities, identities, places,
and experiences of migrants in place. This review addresses many of the relevant points of my study and provides an overview of the theoretical advancements made regarding migration networks.

Migration Systems

Migration systems theory, first pioneered by Mabogunje (1970), sought to conceptualize migration as a holistic process rather than a phenomenon driven solely by micro-level choices or macro-level structural changes in the environment. In doing so, it integrates a variety of processes to form a framework for understanding migration between two geographic regions. Unlike other theories of migration at the time, MST incorporated individual choice, macro historical-economic structures, and intermediate (commonly referred to as ‘meso’) structures (Castles and Miller 2009). With its roots in geography, the proprietary focus then was on the linkages between sending and receiving communities and how these linkages facilitated and also perpetuated migration between two locales. Although it was first used to primarily explain rural to urban internal migration (Mabogunje 1970; Massey et al 1996), it has been adapted to investigate migration at the international scale (Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al 2011; Bakewell 2012).

Mabogunje (1970) formulated his research within the context of general systems theory from the field of sociology and applied it to his study of migration in Africa (Bakewell et al 2011). Mabogunje defined his migration systems as:

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\ldots \text{a complex of interacting elements, together with their attributes and relationships. One of the major tasks in conceptualizing a phenomenon as a system, therefore, is to identify the basic interacting elements, their attributes, and their relationships. Once this is done, it soon becomes obvious that the system operates not in a void but in a special environment. \ldots} \]

A system with its
environment constitutes the universe of phenomena which is of interest in a given context. (Mabogunje 1970: 4)

As such, Mabogunje identified the system as its own entity. This entity was compromised of various sub-systems and adjustment mechanisms that continually controlled and altered the system, thereby changing the dynamics of the process as it continued. This framework recognized that several possible elements, rather than one or two, influenced the migration process as well (Mabogunje 1970; Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al 2011; Bakewell 2012).

The interacting elements referred to above are later described as sub-systems, and these systems include factors at a variety of different scales. These scales exist at the family, community, and national levels; however, each sub-system’s interactions are to be analyzed separately. At the individual level, networks and ties to pre-existing migrants are employed to describe linkages to the destination area through family, community and ethnic ties (Mabogunje 1970; Massey et al 1996). National and international factors include regional and world changes in markets, laws, and additional large scale relationships, as well as historical connections such as colonialism and war (Mabogunje 1970; Castles and Miller 2009; Bakewell et al 2011).

One key concept from the migration systems theory literature is the role of adjustment mechanisms, later described as feedback mechanisms (de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al 2011), within a system. Feedback mechanisms include information, remittances, ideas, goods, and, in some cases, the migrants themselves; in short, they are the return of newly defined items from the destination area (Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 2010). The uniqueness of feedback mechanisms within systems theory is that it
involved both material and non-material items, where previous theories tended to focus on one or the other (Kyle 2000). Feedback mechanisms have been known to either encourage or deter later migrants, as they often serve as the main source of knowledge of the destination area. These mechanisms, along with their sub-systems, were known to perpetuate the system through the ongoing economic and social exchanges amongst migrants, places, and the system itself (Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al. 2011).

Mabogunje (1970) and Massey (1990) both note the capacity of migration systems, sub-systems, and feedback mechanisms to alter the social contexts of the sending and receiving areas. In his work on rural African migrants, Mabogunje (1970) theorizes that systems were influential in transforming and adapting a rural migrant into a city resident, modifying the social atmosphere of the individual and his contacts. Massey (1990) further explores this through his concept of cumulative causation, where “migration induces changes in social and economic structures that make additional migration more likely” (Massey 1990: 5). Through this, feedback mechanisms are understood to be essential in not only sending information but also socially, economically, and physically transforming the geographic locations involved in the system (Massey 1990; de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al. 2011).

Like other theories and frameworks regarding migration, migration systems theory is not without critics. Some note that migration systems theory is highly descriptive and rather broad (de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al. 2011). De Haas (2010) argues that the creation and beginning of systems cannot currently be accounted for, leaving systems theory only able to account for the perpetuation of migrants. He further
posits that the internal dynamics of migration systems are not adequately explained in most studies, including that of Mabogunje’s (1970) original work. Bakewell et al (2011) criticize systems theory for its inability to account for the decline of systems, and also for the absence of progress gained in general systems theory, the theory from which many of its concepts are borrowed.

The migration systems approach that Mabogunje (1970) originally conceptualized has evolved far past its original descriptive nature, and has been influenced by several relating concepts and theories (de Haas 2010). This is due to increased interdisciplinary discussion on research regarding migration by geographers, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, and others (Castles and Miller 2009; Samers 2010). While migration systems theory is regarded as one of the more innovating and dynamic migration theories of its time, researchers today are attempting to resolve its shortcomings through the advancement of additional theories and frameworks (Mabogunje 1970; Massey 1990; Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al 2011)

Migration Network Theory

Closely related to migration systems theory is migration network theory. Within the migration literature, social network theory and the importance of networks in the migration process has gained significant ground. Although originally rooted solely within sociology, it has become an interdisciplinary approach for analyzing migration (Castles and Miller 2009). In this approach, migration networks are defined as “sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin” (Massey et al 1996:198). From this viewpoint, migration is understood to be driven by
the connectedness of individuals, families, or groups. It conceptualizes the act of 
migration as a social product, rather than one that takes place solely through individual 
actors attempting to maximize earnings or completely affected by macro-structural 
changes, as many previous theories have highlighted. This postulates that the central unit 
of meso-structures is the network itself, rather than the individual or the household; 
specifically, the ties and social relations involved in the network (Kyle 2000). It has often 
been advocated as a way to examine sub-systems within migration systems theory as well 
(Mabogunje 1970; Massey et al 1996; Kyle 2000; Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 
2009; Samers 2010; de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al 2011).

Social Network theory focuses on the factors that perpetuate migration rather than 
its determinants (Massey et al. 1996; de Haas 2010). Massey (1990, 69) theorizes that 
“once migration reaches a critical threshold, migration becomes self-perpetuating because 
migration itself creates the social structure needed to sustain it”. As more people enter an 
area, the spread of possible networks widens, allowing more people access to resources 
within the destination area. In addition to the benefit aspect, networks serve as risk-
aversion strategies; migration becomes less hazardous when networks expand to the point 
that later migrants are able to greatly reduce most possible risks associated with moving. 
Migrant networks then evolve into institutions and sometimes persist even when benefits 
in the receiving end cease to exist (Massey 1990; Massey et al 1996; Castles and Miller 
2009; Samers 2010).

One essential concept of network migration is that social networks evolve into 
self-sustaining entities achieved through various feedback mechanisms that occur during 
the process of population movement (Massey 1990; Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas
De Haas (2010) identifies two types of feedback mechanisms, which he terms “endogenous” and “contextual.” Endogenous effects describe migration-related information and details about the process and/or receiving area that directly affect the networks. Contextual effects are those that create adaptations in the sending society; these adaptations are usually in the form of remittances, social stratification, and deprivation of certain individuals. Endogenous and contextual effects therefore play different roles in perpetuating migration networks (de Haas 2010). Feedback mechanisms both fuel and reinforce the advancement of networks within particular locales (Massey 1990; Massey et al 1996; Kyle 2000; Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 2010).

The foundations of migration networks are the ties that bind migrants across locales. These ties are usually characterized as either “strong” ties or “weak” ties (Samers 2010). Strong ties are those that exist between family members and close friends, while weak ties are shaped by commonalities such as religion, ethnicity, background, or other types of group membership. This distinction becomes apparent in the types of information and resources that are shared and the methods by which they are disseminated (Massey and Garcia Espana 1987; Flores 2006; Castles and Miller 2009; Samers 2010; Ryan 2011; Lui 2013).

It has been demonstrated that strong ties generally assist participants in the migration process to a greater degree than weak ties (Espinosa and Massey 1999; Flores 2006). Flores-Yeffal (2006) found that in the case of many undocumented Mexican migrants, strong ties were instrumental at the beginning of the migration process, with regard to finding employment, and avoiding risks. Weak ties, however, have been found to be influential as well, specifically in the post-migration time period. Ryan (2011), for
example, found that Polish immigrants constructed relationships with people outside of the Polish community on a regular basis in order to assist with issues that arose in the destination area. They have also been suggested to provide a wider array of possible employment opportunities than strong ties (Lui 2013). Conversely, negative aspects arise from both strong and weak ties; migrants are often abused from contacts with legal and illegal networks that involve migration, employment, smuggling, and trafficking (Samers 2010).

In addition to social ties, certain individuals within networks, commonly referred to as “actors,” can exercise a higher level of control and power within networks. This concept is defined as “agency” in the migration literature. The agency of an actor (or actors) allows them to no longer simply be understood as individuals who either receive or pass along information within a network or system; instead, the degree of agency of a person can allow them to act in particular roles, such as the leader or “bridgehead” (Bakewell et al 2011; Bakewell 2012), for the social circumstances regarding the whole group. Agency can be exercised by individual(s) and affect other potential migrants within a system even without a direct strong or weak tie to an individual. The importance of this concept is that it removes rather influential individuals from the planar realm and recognizes their abilities to alter the networks of others. This concept, although relatively new within migration literature, can be applied to both network theory and migration systems theory (de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al 2011; Bakewell 2012)

Although social networks explain how migration is perpetuated, they cannot explain how they begin or why they cease (de Haas 2010; Bakewell et al 2011). While some authors suggest that it is the weakening of ties or macro-structural forces that
gradually stop migration networks from forming Massey et al (1996) and de Haas (2010) argues that migration undermining feedback mechanisms within the internal relationships of the network itself play a role in stopping migration. In addition to certain theoretical insights, criticisms of network theory point out the consistent “positive” viewpoints that networks obtain when researched; networks seldom are viewed in a negative or exclusionary fashion. These criticisms point to significant gaps within the migration network literature (de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2011).

Social Capital

The resources that exist within networks are commonly referred to as Social Capital (de Haas 2009, Samers 2010). First conceptualized by Bourdieu (1985; de Haas 2009), social capital has been defined as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group (Bourdieu 1985: 248)

In this definition, Bourdieu (1985) recognizes the network as the primary resource within the social capital approach, followed by the potential resources that the network can provide. These social structures are what migrants derive resources from in certain locales throughout the process. Portes (1998) recognizes three further intermediating dimensions of social capital: the resource itself, the recipient (or potential migrant), and the social ties to previous migrants (Portes 1998; Garip 2008). Social capital theory advances migration research by moving past the network and focusing on what kinds of resources can become readily available through networks (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Portes 1998; Palloni et al 2001; Garip 2008; de Haas 2009).
Social Capital’s ability to reproduce assistance within networks can come in the form of financial and/or cultural capital. Financial capital, or the economic resources involved in a tie (de Haas 2010), facilitate employment, pay debts, and generally assist with monetary concerns. This has been known to lead to the creation of ethnic economies that operate both informally and formally, thereby specifically attracting group members who share an ethnic background. Cultural capital can gain social status within a group or society either through selected individuals or larger institutions. While this too can be derived from employment, the focus is on social stratification rather than monetary gain. This can allow persons to elevate to positions of power as well (Portes 1998; Garip 2008; Samers 2010).

Social capital within networks also has the tendency to be influential in determining the economic activities for migrants. This concept, defined by Granovetter (1985) as “social embeddedness,” implies that networks not only facilitate economic goals of migrants but also can determine livelihood and/or temporary earned income in the destination area. According to Kyle (2000),

…social embeddedness implies that, even in advanced capitalist societies, economic activities, institutions, and their outcomes are embedded in, and affected by, the actor’s personal relationship and by the structure and content of the network of social relationships in which those personal relations are interposed (86).

Originally employed in economic sociology studies (Kyle 2000), social embeddedness also highlights the strength of social ties in migrant economic activity. Because of this, networks do much more than assist migrants in finding work; they also affect the sorts of work that they come into contact with. This puts economic employment within the destination area at the whim of the relationship of the individual(s) rather than
the macro-theories or Marxist historical approaches that have previously guided many migration theories surrounding migration resource obtainment (Granovetter 1985; Portes 1998; Kyle 2000).

Pioneers and Pioneer Agency

Coinciding with further in-depth research, investigations into the role of agency in migration networks and systems has led to the concept of pioneer migrants and pioneer agency. This distinction further classifies individual migrants into groups, allocating certain characteristics, duties, and relationships to other individuals that affect outcomes during the migration process. Pioneer migrants, whether acting individually or within a group, can be understood as operating separately from that of subsequent migrants. Pioneer migrants represent “actors” who directly affect the social context within migration systems and networks by exercising a degree of agency over others who are involved in networks (Bakewell et al 2013). Their roles then can be analyzed separately from that of the individual in the migrations process (Bakewell et al 2011; Bakewell 2012).

Pioneer migrants are often referred to within migration literature as “the initial movers, who left their country and/or community of origin (or current dwelling), and went to a different country and joined a different community, where none of the members of their community had been before” (Bakewell et al 2011, 12). Under this broad definition, pioneer migrants can be understood as the first who enter an area where the social, economic, and cultural circumstances differ from that of the previous. In a sense, they are “social trail blazers,” whose moves allow later associates the possibility to migrate ( Kyle 2000).
Early literature on pioneer migrants depicts their common economic backgrounds as being “well off, risk prone, and entrepreneurial community members” (de Haas 2009, 24), while later scholars acknowledge that this has not been the case in recent decades. Bakewell et al (2011), for example, point to the UK’s growing Brazilian population, which was initiated by relatively poor economic migrants who came in search of employment and lived within clustered communities. In a similar vein, Kyle (2000) traces the beginnings of Ecuadorean migration from the Andes to New York City back to a lower (peasant) class pioneer migrant. He argues that in his case study, weak ties that were available to the pioneer migrant were more influential and helpful than that of the pioneer’s level of human capital (or his individual assets). As recent case studies demonstrate, the backgrounds of such migrants do not always correlate with previous understandings, but it is agreed that these “pioneers” deserve to be situated within the migration literature separately from that of subsequent migrants (Kyle 2000; de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2011).

Within the migration process, pioneers are conceived of as being “active and innovating” in comparison to those migrants who tend to follow. They are identified as having social characteristics that set them apart from their followers, and have been documented as both male and female (Jokisch and Pribilisky 2002; De Haas 2009; Lindstrom and Lopez Ramirez 2010). Bakewell et al (2011) further the concept of the pioneer in the migration literature by identifying their position as one of “pioneer agency.” Because the roles of the pioneer differ from others in the migration process, their position within the newly formed community can allow them the ability to exercise a degree of agency, or control, over the migratory movement of subsequent individuals,
despite any connection or tie to later migrants. As actors who have the potential to influence the social and economic circumstances of the new place, they have the ability to exercise certain powers over the social relations that exist within the newly formed community. This position is engendered by their entrance into the destination community rather than their actual roles within a given community. Although their degree of agency is not without influence from outside macro structures, this position of power elevates them above other migrants, resulting in abilities to operate at a higher level, or agency, within the networks involved in the migration process (Bakewell et al 2011; Bakewell 2012).

As the first ones to enter a new community, pioneers typically lack the resources that are available to those who follow. Information on with respect to jobs, resources, and other advantages are typically absent or minimal when compared to those who migrate later (Massey 1990; Bakewell et al 2011). Because of this, pioneer migrants are forced to adapt to the broader structures presented to them in the destination area, and therefore experience the process in a manner that differs from that of later migrants. Further, pioneers accrue information that allows them to function as “bridgeheads” that pass acquired information on to other subsequent migrants (de Haas 2010; Lindstrom and Lopez Ramirez 2010). Their adaptations to the destination area therefore set the stage for later arrivers, and the hurdles they overcome then smooth the road for others. However, this allows pioneers to be selective in the networking process (de Haas 2010; Lindstrom and Lopez Ramirez 2010; Bakewell et al 2011; Bakewell 2012).

Bakewell et al (2011) theorize that due to the ability of pioneers to exercise social influence within a migration system and network, pioneer migrants can also be
exclusionary in their ability to produce networks. Their ability to perpetuate social ties with others in the former community rests on their decision to do so; pioneers who leave their former community and exclude members can therefore choose to cut potential community bonds that have been found to be essential in the migration process. Pioneers themselves could have been excluded from community opportunities and social capital as well, and then decide to deny opportunities to select others and their associates (Bakewell et al. 2010). Their motivation to migrate can also stem from the desire to leave the previous social condition, and then deny access to former friends and family (de Haas 2010). Finally, researchers note the capability of pioneers to be “gatekeepers;” given their position in the formative years of the community, pioneers can decide how much assistance to give and to whom they choose to provide assistance. Since resources for migrants are not unlimited, pioneers then actively share the possibility of regulating migratory flows into the newly formed destination area during its early stages. Because of this, scholars note the ability of pioneers to be selective and exclusive in the migration process (de Haas 2009; Lindstrom and Lopez Ramirez 2010; Bakewell et al. 2011; Bakewell 2012).

Bakewell et al. (2011) define three ways in which pioneer agency can affect later migrants, networks, and migration patterns, which they term *iterational*, *projective*, and *practical-evaluative*. The *iterational* aspect refers to the degree to which pioneers actively continue communication with their previous community and the degrees to which certain cultural identities and ways of life that their previous community contained are preserved. It is these continuing strong bonds with the previous home that can encourage, or inversely discourage, others to move. The *projective* element refers to the
ways in which pioneers cope, adapt, and invent new possibilities in the destination area while distancing themselves from the previous home; these adaptations can disinterest later migrants who feel that the pioneers have assimilated to a degree which makes life in the target area undesirable. Additionally, these methods can also deter pioneers from inviting others to follow. Finally, the practical-evaluative element explores the ways in which the *iterational* and the *projective* make present conditions in the target either desirable or undesirable for in-migration. These elements of agency, according to Bakewell *et al* (2011), do not always appear in every situation; one might dominate over another in specific cases involving migration destinations and pioneers.

Although the concept of the pioneer migrant is not recent (de Haas 2009), it remains an understudied and under-theorized topic within the migration literature (Lindstrom and Lopez Ramirez 2010; Bakewell *et al* 2011). Bakewell (2012) acknowledges that further research into the roles played by pioneer migrants may resolve recent criticisms regarding the origin and decline of migration networks and systems. Through a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which pioneer migrants exercise agency, researchers can offer additional theoretical insights regarding social capital, migrant networks and systems. Moreover, other theories and hypotheses regarding the micro- and meso-levels of migration can be explored in greater depths (de Haas 2009; Lindstrom and Lopez Ramirez 2010; Bakewell *et al* 2011).

Translocalism

During the last decade, the concept of translocalism has gradually evolved into a distinct area of study within migration studies, particularly in studies involving internal migration. Although the term “translocal” has been defined in a number of ways it has
generally become regarded as “a way to capture complex social-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-oriented and multi-dimensional understanding” (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, 376) by placing emphasis on the ways in which these interactions affect the concept of “place” for migrants (Oakes and Schein 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011). It is an interdisciplinary research perspective that has been used by geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, and cultural theorists (Oakes and Schein 2006). In this approach, authors have been able to focus on the (re)created and experienced identities, notions of the local, connectedness, spaces, and place-making of migrants as they root themselves in new locales. Although it tends to focus on population movements as a topic of interest, a number of authors have adopted the term in investigations of the movement of ideas, images, diseases, and various other topics (Oakes and Schein 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013).

Much of the conversation surrounding Translocalism stems from academic treatments of transnationalism (Oakes and Schein 2006). Similar to transnationalism, translocalism investigates the ways in which migrants embody the relations of different geographic locales as they transpose boundaries, thereby altering and linking political, economic, and/or social behavior in the process (Castles and Miller 2009). Although transnationalism was originally conceptualized to account for newly-defined and de-territorialized social spaces that international migrants experienced, the focus was still on the exchanges across national borders (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). Translocalism shifts the focus from the national scale so as to investigate members of populations “who do not cross legal boundaries but still struggle for legitimacy once on the move” (Oakes and Schein 2006; 25). The focus is less on nationalistic identities and boundaries than
on investigating place-making practices that still embody previous localized notions of life (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). However, it is not only the scale that differs, but the ways in which studies rooted in translocalism approach scale (Oakes and Schein 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013).

Studies that investigate translocalism recognize that scale exists on several different levels, especially those that are socially produced. Borrowing from Levebvre’s (1991) conceptualization of scale, authors of translocalism view it as the ways perceived by individual actors in everyday life as they move across various socially-defined places (Schein 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). Rather than solely visualizing scale as something rigid as the national, translocalism approaches scale within research in a way that allows for the investigation of multiple forms, varying from that of the personal body (Goodman 2006), familial (Gan 2006), gender (Oakes and Schein 2006), local, and national (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). Through this, scale is not seen as something “fixed”, but instead one that conforms and changes to that of the lived socio-spatial properties of migrants. (Oakes and Schein 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013).

In addition to scale, the ways in which studies on translocalism approach the notions of place and space are unique within much of the migration literature. According to Oakes and Schein (2006), translocalism investigates not only material spaces, but also socially-produced places and the ways in which the native places are negotiated by means of place-making in the newly experienced area. Rather than a territory with rigidly-defined spatial boundaries, authors of translocalism view new spaces and places of migrants as ones that are influenced by the previous and experienced by the individual as
one of “spatial struggle and meaning by considering what mobility does to the body on
the move and in place,” and consequently when it is “out of place” (Oakes and Schein
2006, 18). Through this, translocalism uses a place-based approach so as to capture the
individual experiences of migrants as they are traverse various scales (Brickell and Datta
2011). Translocalism advances the study of place within academia by acknowledging its
different and subjective forms as it investigates how places are made, experienced, and
their relatedness to former places (Oakes and Schein 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011;
Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013).

One fundamental concept within the literature on translocalism is what Brickell
and Datta (2011, 18) have termed the “translocal imagination;” individual actors
(migrants) selectively surround themselves with past experiences and memories as they
move through space. Because of this, migrants then (re)create the past through place-
making practices that personalize these memories. This “imagination” then also links
them to the past as they move through different locales. While this is generally focused
on personal social relations, it is not devoid of cultural-historical notions of place
(Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). It propels migrants to re-create the past so as to remain
visually interconnected with the former locale and is symbolically represented in a wide
variety of practices and forms (Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013).

This translocal imagination then becomes embodied in materialized forms in
space, social practices and space, and also through ideologies and communication. It
creates alternate spaces of place-identification within new locales. Such was the case in
China, as migrants negotiated their previous localized identity throughout various places
while en-route to a different territory, where a newly-experienced place created the
necessity to re-identify themselves with their previous locale (Oakes and Schein 2006). This was achieved through the consumption of locally-specific noodles (Goodman 2006), communication via internet message boards for new mothers (Gan 2006), and also the resurgence of former economic practices (Hendrischke 2006). These various practices allowed migrants to identify themselves with their home community, thereby transporting previous localized identities in the process (Oakes and Schein 2006).

Another topic within the translocal approach is the notion of home. As stated by Brickell and Datta (2011, 13), “home is a concept is primarily understood both as a physical location of dwelling as well as a space of belonging and identity.” The scale of home then becomes one that is constructed with regards to that of the socially-experienced destination; boundaries of the home shrink and/or grow, homes become interconnected with new locales, and migrants identify with homes differently as they change in material and socio-spatial form throughout the process. As new material homes are constructed physically, they are not without past notions of cultural identity and belonging as well. Brickell (2011) further acknowledges that the translocal spaces of home do not necessarily appear in the form of structures; her study on Cambodian refugees found that many migrants constructed and communicated with the past symbolic home through pictures, gardens, and also statues. In this study, the feeling of home was obtained through alternate spaces (Brickell 2011). Translocalism therefore approaches the scale of home on a variety of different ways so as to capture how the spaces of home are experienced and negotiated by migrants (Brickell 2011; Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013).
By examining the epistemological notions of space, place, mobility, and place making for migrants, the translocal perspective hopes to uncover new spaces and places (Oakes and Schein 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). In addition to this, Tolia-Kelley (2010) praises the literature on translocality for its openness towards research areas that have not recently been considered “in vogue” within geography, especially with that of studies dealing with internal and rural to rural binaries. Although it is a relatively recent approach, it is currently gaining acceptance within academia with its rapidly-growing literature base (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013).
CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE STAUFFER MENNONITE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

‘It’s important to have someone, somewhere.’
- Maggie

‘Here, it’s not clicky, it’s easy to get in. It’s an easy one to get into, live in.’
- Hershel

While researchers and authors have begun to recently acknowledge that there is no single theory that can account for an entire case study involving migration, scholars continue to recognize the roles of social networks in mediating abilities and determining outcomes within the migration process (Castles and Miller 2009; Samers 2010). Social networks are often characterized by relative attributes, and have been found to vary between groups and societies with regards to their nature. Connectivity amongst individuals, and subsequently their methods of transmitting information, is often highlighted as it is the means by which networks are strengthened between places. In addition, networks have been found to both initiate and sustain migration between locales over time. Finally, many scholars recognize that networks do not function separately from economic conditions, and that these conditions affect the connections of others over time (Massey et al 1993; Kyle 2000; Flores 2006; Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010; Castles and Miller 2010).

This chapter investigates the roles of social networks in the migration process with respect to members of the Stauffer Mennonite study group. Social networks are important for the process, as close personal connections help to facilitate migration to the destination area. In addition, networks of strong ties create destination-specific outcomes
for individuals and families. Continuing these ties prior to the onset of migration is facilitated by what is known as a “circle letter,” a culturally-specific form of communication by which valuable social capital can be transmitted among actors. Finally, as migration evolved into a larger social product and continued for close to two decades, social barriers began to limit migration into the destination area. For the members of this community, social networks were influential in a variety of ways.

Recognizing Structural Factors and Network Influence Simultaneously

The multitude of existing migration theories suggest different conceptualizations as to why migration occurs and why the nature of migration changes throughout the migration process. While theories such as Dual Labor Market and World Systems Theory focus on the structural causes and onset of migration (Samers 2010), Social Network Theory typically centers on how migration is sustained over time (Massey et al 1993; de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010) However, in some cases, the migrants’ personal connections act as an additional root cause, especially since the connection often transmits information back into the sending area and further influences individuals (de Haas 2009, Samers 2010). This has been described by Massey et al (1993) as “cumulative causation.” For some members of this Stauffer Mennonite community, existing structural factors in their former settlement played a role in their contemplation of the idea, but their social ties to this particular place allowed the migration process to ensue. For others, the personal connection to the new settlement inspired them to migrate as well, allowing the personal connection to be as influential as structural factors. This section investigates these structural conditions and the influence of networks prior to the active engagement with the network connection.
Conditions in the Sending Region

For many participants, overpopulation and the movement of outsiders into their settlement and surrounding area posed specific problems regarding the continuation of their distinctive way of life. Phillip, whose family was the first to enter the destination area and who was one of the collaborators who initiated the migration to the new settlement in Ohio, discussed his perceptions of his previous settlement:

*Discussing the situation in Lancaster County, Phillip explains:* ‘It was a lot of plain peoples,’ you know, like Amish and Mennonites. ‘A fruit salad of Anabaptists,’ there were just so many! ‘But all had different rules.’ People did their own things. ‘It was getting too full, that’s why.’

Similarly, Richard described his perceptions of his previous settlement:

‘The traffic, the tourism.’ People come from all over, stay in hotels. ‘We grew up on the fringe of what they call Amish country.’ So there’s lots of tourism. ‘Farms that go for millions.’ Wal Marts. Wal mart ‘is competitive.’ They have cheaper labor, ‘Mexicans, Puerto Ricans.’ It’s ‘hard to compete.’

Phillip began by describing the variety of Old Order and Plain People groups that lived in and around his county. Depicting the situation as a “fruit salad of Anabaptists,” he demonstrated the diversity of groups and their growth in the surrounding area.

According to his perception, the existing inter-ethno-religious relations created unpleasant situations, especially since most groups “had different rules;” in this comment, Phillip points out the difficulties involved with not only the encroachment of non-Anabaptist populations, but also that of similar groups as well. These relations posed specific problems within Lancaster County as many Old Order and Plain People groups have dissimilar societal rules and obligations. Phillip, concluding the excerpt in a way that many participants referred to their previous settlement, used the simple construct of “too full.” This regularly repeated phrase not only signifies the problems
with excessive population growth in the previous settlement, but also with the conflicting relations that developed in places with regard to various Anabaptist groups existing within it.

Richard, who also came from Pennsylvania, began the excerpt by acknowledging the problems inherent with living near a tourist destination in which Amish and other Anabaptist groups are featured. Eventually becoming subsumed into a tourist area because of widespread population growth, Richard felt that this competitiveness made it increasingly more difficult to continue living in the settlement that their groups have lived in for over a century. As such, increasing tourist activities made it undesirable to continue living here. In addition, sharp increases in population had adverse effects, especially with respect to the rise in commercial businesses. Specifically mentioning Wal Mart, he pointed out yet another way in which it has become progressively harder for himself and members of the Stauffer Mennonite community to survive; in-migration into the surrounding area from non-Anabaptist groups created ethnic competition among actors as they struggled to cope with the changing landscape. According to Richard, employment problems arose between competing groups, leading to decreasing economic opportunities for members of the group. Through their interviews, both Phillip and Richard demonstrated how population increases and in-migration of diverse groups made it difficult for the Stauffer community to claim space and continue to carry on their traditional lifestyles.

For others, regardless of whether or not their livelihoods involved agriculture, heightened difficulties with regard to their ability to establish themselves economically in
the former settlement created less-than-ideal circumstances. In their interview, Maggie and James discussed their living situations before they had moved;

*James begins by discussing the settlement in Maryland:* ‘It’s crowded, compared to here, home.’ Lot’s of cars, houses, its real packed. ‘It’s a good area for businesses though, lots of good paying jobs.’ That makes it hard though too, ‘it drives up prices, property taxes are real high.’ *Maggie goes on to say:* ‘We didn’t like that dad had to work far, outside of the home.’ He had several jobs in Maryland, but we both grew up on farms. ‘We knew that’s what we wanted to do. I felt like it was time for dad to come home.’

Echoing this theme, Richard and Andrea explained their conditions;

‘People either keep their property they get handed down, or they don’t.’ Even if you get a property, ‘the property taxes are high.’ ‘When we got married we said, whoa, we can’t buy anything here. Couldn’t even make a payment.’ So we ‘rented.’ *Later on in the interview, Andrea says that:* ‘I worked in a factory making pretzels.’ I had long hours, and we ‘worked a lot.’ ‘I wanted to take care of the home.’ To have my ‘kids,’ raise them. To make ‘my home like I wanted it.’

James and Maggie, who moved as a young married couple in 2001, dealt with the many changes to their rapidly-urbanizing environment in Maryland prior to their move. James began by describing the ways in which it became increasingly difficult to maintain their traditional lifestyle; referring to the military base that had been built in the surrounding area, he discussed how the urbanization of his area was no longer conducive to the idealized lifestyle that members of his group wished to maintain. He further recalled how, even if he was able to procure employment, living expenses became much higher than what he and his family could sustain. Maggie continued this thought by discussing that, although employment was available, her idealized conceptualizations of how work and the family were to be carried out had become impossible to realize. Citing her and James’ childhood experiences with agriculture, she then explained how their goals of farming were unattainable in that particular area. These comments (as well as
those of other informants) illustrate how Maggie and James came to believe that migration was necessary in order to live in the same way they did as children.

Richard and his wife Andrea, who came to the settlement in Ohio in 1996, also incurred hardships when attempting to establish themselves in their previous settlement in Pennsylvania. For them, high property prices and taxes had made it impossible to own their own home. Unable to purchase a home given their salaries, the young couple was forced to rent. As Richard explained in the interview, members such as him, who had not been provided the means to establish themselves within the settlement, had to increasingly face the reality that they would have to relocate.

Andrea began her part of the excerpt by discussing the types of work that she did in her settlement. Andrea longed to have a home of her own; more specifically, to own a place where she could build relations and create an ideal family atmosphere. As she explained, her previous working conditions had become unfavorable with regards to constructing her home, which thereby prohibited them from acquiring the means to secure themselves. Richard and Andrea, along with James and Maggie and others within the settlement, thus found it very difficult to establish themselves in the prior area.

For aspiring business owners, the ability to operate a small business had become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, in the home settlement. Beth explains her situation regarding the problems inherent with opening a business in the following text:

‘Oh yes! Where I lived before there was no place to build a store.’ Lancaster ‘is full of businesses, there is a fabric store every other mile.’

Previously in the interview, Beth explained how it was her “dream” to own a small business, such as a fabric store, where she had grown up. Her former settlement,
which is one of the oldest continuous Amish/Mennonite settlement areas in the U.S. (Hostetler 1993), had become an unfavorable place for beginning a small business due to the multitude of similar ethnically-based businesses. Describing the area as “full,” she disclosed how she felt that it would not be possible for a business to survive, thereby stressing the lack of opportunity for small business owners to begin. In her case, establishing her own fabric store was something that had become impossible in the previous settlement area due to the spatial distribution of such businesses within it; Beth’s perception that a fabric store existed “every other mile” ultimately would limit the available territory which a business needs to survive. Beth’s own aspirations, along with other persons who wished to operate their own business, depended upon the transformation of the social and economic atmosphere of which she was a part.

Personal Connections to Place

Along with some of the situations mentioned above, many persons with connections to this settlement prior to their move were influenced by the social network connections of which they were a part. These connections further influenced their decision to migrate before their engagement with the process. Through the excerpt below, Maggie discussed how she and James were influenced by their connection:

‘We had other family members here, on both sides.’ They’d been here a couple of years, ‘and they all said they liked it.’ Lot’s of people talked about it, ‘some from Maryland were moving here already.’

In this excerpt, Maggie pointed out two ways in which she and James had been influenced by their network ties to the particular settlement. First, she explained how she and James’ close ties to the area had existed prior to their move. As a result, they both received positive feedback on the new settlement, further influencing their decisions to
migrate. Through their understanding that persons of trust “said that they liked it,” this provided feedback in a way that was positive, which thereby alleviated worries attached to moving to a place that they had never been. Second, she discussed the ways in which population movement from her own community in Maryland affected their conceptualizations of this particular settlement as well. In this portion of the excerpt, she demonstrated how the movement of others, and subsequently, as they remained in the settlement, affected their positive opinion of the place. For Maggie and James and many other participants, an understanding of the settlement in Ohio grew through personal connections prior to their move, which in turn influenced their decisions to move as well.

On a separate theme, Richard expressed how his experiences, gained through his personal connections to the place, provided further insight prior to his and Andrea’s move;

‘Yeah, my cousins were some of the first that came here.’ Then others started to move, and ‘we saw how other people came too.’ Lots of people in PA said ‘it wouldn’t work out.’ ‘There were skeptics. Said it’d be over in 5 years.’ But it lasted longer than that before I came out here. ‘I came out almost every year since it began in 87.’ I saw how it was going.

Richard began by explaining how his close relations with some of the first families who entered the area provided valuable experience and insight about the place. From this, he had been able to form his own opinions and perspectives years before the process occurred for him and his family. Following this comment, he continued to explain how his perception of the settlement area grew as members from his own community began to enter the settlement as well. This observation of community movement, similar to that of Maggie’s, allowed him to ascertain the ideas behind the move to a higher degree; understanding that others were entering the settlement provided
him with the idea that the act of migration was indeed feasible since others had been successful in achieving that goal. Finally, he discussed the unyielding negative social perceptions that lasted through the early years of the settlement in his particular community. These attitudes of the community allowed Richard to continue observing the progress of the settlement, but from a cautious point of view. The subsequent trips that he made to help his other family members move into the area heightened Richard’s comprehension of the place. Like many other participants, Richard’s close engagement with his network relations and the destination area provided the necessary information and motivation to negotiate the migration process at a later date.

Hershel, who had visualized the success of other businesses in the destination area, reflected on how these connections influenced him before the move;

‘I had family here. My nephew, he owns JR’s, my niece owns the bakery.’ They told me about it. Because of them, ‘I knew it’s a good place to have a business.’

Hershel, who had lived in three other Stauffer community settlements prior to his move to Ohio, discussed another way that his personal connection influenced his decision to migrate. For him, the success of his close family members in the settlement as entrepreneurs provided insight into the possibilities in the business sector. Later in his life, Hershel became interested in selling his farm in Kentucky due to the physical difficulties associated with agriculture and hoped to open a cabinet and woodworking business. As he acquired an understanding of the social and economic atmosphere in the destination area, Hershel became better equipped to deal with the adaption to this new livelihood strategy; the success of his nephew’s general store and his niece’s bakery further influenced his decision to migrate. From this point of view, Hershel was able to
contemplate the act of migration and also conceptualize the opportunities for himself as an entrepreneur.

For others, the connection with the new settlement resulted from an active engagement with individuals in the former, further influencing their decision. Below, Amy explains how her sister regularly invited her to relocate:

_Discussing her motives that she and her husband shared, she goes on to say:_
‘When we were dating, we talked about moving here.’ We had always wanted to, but we had no way to work or get jobs once we got there. ‘Then my dad got sick, and my mom. We had to take care of them.’ It took six years, so that was what we did. After they died, we lived there for a year. ‘My sister asked, ‘what’s keeping you from Ohio?’

Amy began by explaining how she and her husband Jacob were both motivated to enter the settlement years before the process ensued. She continued by explaining how, despite their connections, several setbacks prevented them from leaving their settlement. The inability to finance their migration, along with problems they had with regards to gaining employment in the destination area, hindered their capability to migrate. In addition to this, her parents and their illnesses required her care, as she was one of the last children that still lived in their settlement. This obligation to her family delayed their move for several years. Her sister, who was a member of one of the first families to enter the area, maintained a connection over time, which heightened Amy’s desire to enter the settlement. Following the death of her parents, Amy’s sister continued to encourage her and Jacob to move to the settlement in Ohio. The active and continued encouragement from Amy’s sister facilitated Amy and William’s aspiration to relocate to the new settlement, thereby providing yet another way in which the personal connections across space created the desire to migrate.
Both structural factors in the social and economic environment and the social networks of individual actors were instrumental in creating a situation where migration became desirable. Overpopulation, increasing difficulties with maintaining traditional Old-Order livelihoods and problems with in-migration and ethnic competition created difficulties for members. Their personal connections in new places, however, made the migration process possible; a network with ties to specific places influenced actors to contemplate the act. This transmission of information between places ultimately led members to actively engage with their connections, allowing the migration process to ensue.

Relying on Strong Ties

Social networks were instrumental parts of the migration process for the participants of the Stauffer Mennonite study community. In the case of each of the respondents, close family member ties to the destination area were not only important, but entirely necessary. Social networks provided a means of entering the settlement, even though there was no official “gatekeeper” to divert persons from entering. Participants relied solely on close personal relations, or strong ties, to assist them rather than weak ties. Strong ties often placed resources within the realm of the personal connection, thereby limiting the availability of such resources to that of the tie. Weak ethno-religious connections, along with ties of English origin (a term used by the Stauffer community and other Old Order groups to denote non-Anabaptist English-speaking persons) were utilized after the migration period; this phenomenon is discussed in several studies concerning weak ties (Lui 2011; Ryan 2011). Nearly all of the respondents claimed that, not only did they have close personal connections to this particular settlement, but also
that this settlement was their only option; this general lack of ties to other places was what facilitated and directed their movement to this particular place. Through these ties, network exclusivity existed among actors. Some writers have critiqued research that focuses almost exclusively on male-centered social connections (Pessar 1999), but in the case of this study community families often relied on social ties through both male and female heads of households.

For each of the participants, a strong personal tie to a close family member characterized the migration network in this particular settlement. In her interview, Maggie discussed the necessity of having a close personal connection;

‘It’s important to have someone, somewhere. Before we came, our family was already here. They found a place for us.’ When asked if that was why she and James moved here, she replies; ‘family, definitely.’ In 2001, there wasn’t a huge group. ‘It was still small then, you need your family to begin.’

Continuing this line of thought, David further explained how a strong connection to a new place was essential to the migration process:

‘It’s a relative thing. It’s easier that way. A relative settles, sees a place for sale, they let you know.’ I ‘had relatives here, the first people.’ It’s ‘easier to get set up, to get help you need. Not all of use can live where we grew up. Those people who stayed behind had things given to them.’ Not everyone gets a house, or a property. ‘It’s different when you don’t have that.’ You have to ‘rely on support from family, friends’ to get ‘set up in a new place.’

In her excerpt, Maggie explained the importance of having a relative in the destination area in order for the migration process to initiate. A strong tie, rather than a weakly associated connection, was deemed of utmost importance. Noting that both she and James had family living in the settlement in Ohio, she then described one way in which this connection was entirely necessary for their entrance into the settlement; the ability to move required assistance that was typically available solely through a family
member, and thus a certain level of trust and responsibility existed within the network. In their case, to have been able to find a residence that fit their expectations and desires to transition into the community entailed a strong personal connection as well; this responsibility was one that required the trust and knowledge of those within the connection. Following this, she then identified how the current situation of the group further necessitated a connection to the area. As Maggie illustrated, entering the area on their own, without such personal connections, would have been nearly impossible. Establishing themselves within the destination required a connection that provided the means to find a place and acquire resources from someone whom they could continue to rely upon, rather than through any weakly associated individual or organization.

Similarly to Maggie, David exemplified the importance of having a relative in the destination area with regard to one’s ability to enter a new place. Claiming that a strong tie into a place is “easier to get set up,” he demonstrated the difficulties inherent with finding a place and certain resources without such a connection. His feelings and perceptions showed that, for members who were not provided the ability to establish themselves in the home community like himself, relatives in other locales facilitated becoming situated within a new settlement. His circumstances in the former settlement caused him to access the connections he had in this place, once again identifying the differences between two social groups of people within the larger community: those with resources in the home settlement, and those without. Those who are left without a way to establish themselves, such as David, found it necessary to rely on strong ties in order to be able to relocate. Both David and Maggie, along with other respondents, felt that a close tie into the destination area was necessary in order to survive in the new place. As
opposed to other Old Order Mennonite groups, whose family migrations to new settlements are organized by the larger religious body as a whole (Kraybill *Personal Correspondence* 2013), families of the Stauffer community in this particular settlement relied on strong ties in order for the migration process to occur.

In the case of the Stauffer group, migration networks existed through various parts of the household for those who moved as a household unit, either through the husband, wife, or sometimes both. In his interview, Jeremiah illustrated how his family was able to relocate and enter this community through his wife’s connections;

‘I didn’t have any other options, I had this one because of my brother in law.’ *When asked about how he had assisted them, Jeremiah replies;* ‘Yeah, he told us about the area, how it was, how it was a nice place to live. He helped us out, made me feel okay about it.’

Jeremiah and his wife, who had entered the settlement as the twelfth family, began by explaining how his sole opportunity for him and his family to move had been through his wife’s connection to this settlement. Previously in the interview, Jeremiah had discussed how he and his wife were highly unsure about the idea of moving to this settlement; for them, the act appeared to be a risky endeavor due to the young age of the new community. Discussing the positive nature of his bother in-law’s advice, Jeremiah explained that this information about the destination area made the couple “feel okay about it.” This act of transmitting positive information to both members of the household greatly assisted Jeremiah and his wife as they contemplated the act of migration.

Jeremiah’s brother in law assisted him and the family in a variety of ways; between the large amount of information provided and assistance with providing a property, Jeremiah and his family were able to proceed with the migration process
through this connection. In addition to this, he provided comfort for Jeremiah and his wife as they had been especially nervous about the process; in their case, as a family who had not previously been involved in agriculture but was provided the resources through their network to begin as farmers, changing locales and occupations had been a rather unnerving venture. However, their connection into this place, through Jeremiah’s wife, alleviated many of the concerns that they had prior to their move. For many of those who migrated as a household, the migration networks of members existed through different parts of the household, regardless of the familial status of the individuals. Rather than the specific status of the connection, the resources within the connection proved to be of greater importance to individual actors.

For many respondents, having a strong personal connection in this particular place deterred them from investigating other possible destinations. As Jonathan explained;

*When asked what other settlements he had looked at prior to moving, he replies; ‘None, but there were a few in the making.’ Kentucky, Missouri, those were beginning. ‘The people that moved here were young, so instead of moving to an established place, I could just move here. My brother was already here.’”*

Jonathan, whose brother had been one of the first to enter the destination area, had a connection to this settlement from its beginnings. Several newer Stauffer settlements had just begun, such as those in Kentucky and Missouri, which offered additional possibilities for relocation if provided the possibility to do so. However, Jonathan’s brother had enticed him to enter this particular settlement; as he had previously discussed in the interview, he offered to find a property and repeatedly hosted him during visits to the area. In his comment “I could just move here,” he showed that this connection made it easier for him choose this settlement over other possible destinations. That is, his tie to
the area dissuaded him from accessing resources and information from others with whom he had less of a connection.

Scholars of social networks (Kyle 2000; de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010) note that the tendency to rely on strong ties can provide assistance in a way that deters individual actors from better-or-worse opportunities in other places; instead, individuals only acquire advantages that are available through their connection. For Jonathan and others who simply did not investigate other settlement areas, their chosen reliance on strong ties determined the location-specific outcomes of their migration destinations through their selection.

Social networks, especially those considered to be characterized by strong ties, are by their nature inherently exclusive (Kyle 2000; de Haas 2009; Samers 2010). A strong tie consists of two close relations, where outsiders who are not considered to be within the realm of the tie are excluded from the benefits within it. For all of the respondents, their lack of connections into other places limited them to this place. As Jacob and Amy explain below;

*When asked about what other settlements they had looked at before they came, Jacob replied; ‘None, we had family connections here.’ Amy’s sister and brother were here. Conferring Jacob’s statement, Amy adds; ‘Nope, we knew about this community, never had the opportunity from anywhere else.’*

David explains how his ability to move was limited to this place as well;

*Well I didn’t ‘have many options. Actually only this one.’ While asking about specific locations, he replies; ‘It was around. There was nothing bad, but I didn’t have any relatives.’ I had ‘no idea about it. No way to get there, get set up.’ Agreeing with him that he did not have connections, he says; ‘Nope, didn’t have none. Heard bad stories too.’ In ‘Maryland, I had uncles but it was too populated. No one was moving there because they built a huge naval base there.’ People were ‘leaving.’ In Missouri, ‘I had no relatives.’ ‘Knew nothing about it. Never heard anything from it either.’*
Jacob began his portion of the excerpt by discussing how their close and reliable connections to this particular settlement were derived from Amy’s family. Jacob and Amy, who moved in 2007, entered the settlement as the 80th family. By this time, there were twelve other Stauffer settlements in existence. Despite the availability of destination areas associated with other settlements, Jacob and Amy had not investigated the benefits and possibilities in other settlements; their constant communication resulted in higher motivation to relocate to this particular place. Like Jonathon, whose interview was discussed above, ties to the area dissuaded them from investigating other places or potential benefits from in those places. Amy’s ties to two family members already living in the destination area provided a structured and reliable means of support and information for the couple to establish themselves. In the passage, Amy continued to discuss how their knowledge of this community deterred them from investigating other places. She added that they had not been given the opportunity to move into any other community; either through a general lack of ties to places or through the exclusion of others, this settlement had been their sole opportunity to relocate. Despite the availability of settlements that had already been established, their lack of connections prohibited them from finding information about other possible communities and destinations. Additionally, their options were limited to this particular place, as they had not been provided with information and assistance in other locales.

Similarly to Jacob and Amy, David’s ability to move rested upon his personal connection to this place and was also limited to it through an absence of connections with other settlements. As he described this place as his only possibility, he then explained the
reasons why in a more in-depth manner. For him, the main problem was a lack of information on the social and economic situations of other settlements due to a lack of ties to those settlements; the lack of transmitted and received knowledge on other places further limited his possibilities. In addition, David had become receptive to negative aspects of other places as well, such as circumstances that caused certain settlements to decline in numbers. As he cites specific locations, he explains how a lack of ties, along with negative feedback, limited his choices to the settlement in which he now lives. David, Amy, and Jacob demonstrate how the reliance on strong ties, and subsequently their lack of such connections, limited their choices to this settlement in Ohio. Through their social networks and transmitted information, places had become difficult or impossible to enter, regardless of factors such as land prices, employment, or other macro-structural factors typically explained in push-pull frameworks.

For Richard and Andrea, there were additional aspects that dissuaded them from going to another community;

‘Yeah, I didn’t know anyone in the other settlements.’ Family and friends ‘are how you get to new places.’ Also, people in my community weren’t going to Kentucky or Maryland. ‘Nobody from the community was moving there.’ This place had lots of Stauffers from PA going there. ‘So Ohio was really my only option.’

In addition to their general lack of connections to settlements in other places, Richard and Andrea discuss the ways in which the migration of others within their own community affected their choice to engage with particular networks in certain places. As he began the excerpt by stressing the importance of having a close personal connection in another settlement, Richard then spoke about his former community. For him, visualizing the migration process through others who shared this commonality was influential. He
acknowledged that, in addition to his lack of connections to other places, people from within his former community were not entering some of the other newly established communities. In contrast, Ohio had become a place to which many acquaintances from their settlement in Pennsylvania had moved. Due to this, certain places became, for him, more difficult to enter; if he had attempted to move to a place where members of his community were not already present it would leave him and his family without the benefits that came with those weakly-associated ties from his home community. In addition to this, Richard and Andrea were able to gather information with regard to the successes of others in the Ohio settlement. For Richard and Andrea, visualizing the places where members of their first community were relocating was also influential when contemplating their own move.

Some respondents cited that, even with the ability to connect with someone in another settlement, certain resources and advantages would not be available. Below, Hershel explains his experiences with other settlements;

‘You couldn’t get a job’ there. ‘The families were clicky. Not just anyone could or would help someone out. You didn’t know someone good, you didn’t have a job.’ It’s not like that here, we saw that before we came. ‘Here, it’s not clicky, it’s easy to get in. It’s an easy one to get into, live in.’

Hershel’s experiences living in several different settlements allowed him to construct certain views with respect to the social atmosphere within other places. For him and many other respondents, the advantages of the settlement in Ohio centered on the ability to secure employment and housing for all newcomers to the area. Hershel, however, explained how certain places were not as receptive to in-migration; persons who wished to enter the community might find themselves without access to certain
benefits from their associations outside of their direct connection. Claiming that without the ability to connect with “someone good” one would encounter difficulty, Hershel demonstrated that a strong personal connection would not only be required to enter the community but it also would have been necessary to establish such connections after the initial migration. For him, the knowledge that the overall social atmosphere was receptive and accessible in this settlement meant that his family could benefit from being a part of the community after they moved there. In the final portion of the excerpt, Hershel explained that entering the community was “easy” compared to other settlements. Additionally, a positive perception of the social atmosphere provided a heightened possibility of accessing certain types of capital gain through weak associations after arriving in the destination area.

Accordingly, Hershel explained some of the ways in which he, as a new business owner, reduced risks and accommodated to the developing social atmosphere within the settlement;

‘I knew it’s a good place to have a business.’ So I stopped a few, I asked around. ‘There was a guy who made cabinets.’ I just wanted to make cabinets here, not farm. ‘So I asked him, if it’s okay.’ You don’t want to encroach on someone’s business. ‘People get mad, things don’t jive.’ He said there was plenty of work. ‘I wouldn’t be hurting his business, it’d be okay.’

After he addressed the extremely open and receiving social atmosphere within this settlement, Hershel then discussed how his personal contacts in the area provided him with a better understanding of the opportunities for businesses and business owners. However, his entrance into this community could have possibly created tension and competition among existing business owners; opening an additional cabinet business, according to Hershel, could have disturbed the accepting social atmosphere within the
settlement. Due to this, Hershel felt the need to contact business owners prior to his relocation to the Ohio settlement. Without doing so, problems might have arisen and disrupted additional opportunities. Hershel identifies the importance of the social atmosphere within the settlement: in his comment “people get mad, things don’t jive,” he demonstrated the potential for competitiveness to disrupt in-migration opportunities. For Hershel, his connections allowed the possibility to design and sell cabinets within the destination area, thereby promoting his acceptance into the community. Through his personal contacts, he was able to avert possible risks and gain valuable information as to the opportunities for small businesses within the area.

Some scholars have criticized the failure of Social Network Theory to account for the postponement of network-based migration; in some cases, persons involved with migration networks do not move until substantially later (de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010). As was the case with some participants who were presented with the possibility to enter the settlement during its early beginnings, waiting became a way to assess the status and stability of the community. Dale further illustrated this concept in the excerpt below;

*When asked specifically on the reasons why he had waited, he says; ‘Yeah, to see if more people would show up. I wouldn’t have made the move as soon without.’ It takes a certain kind of person to be the ‘first half dozen. I waited to see. I waited because of that.’*

Such individuals operated with limited amounts of social and economic capital within the network; without advantages from businesses, the produce auction, and other assistance from the community, early migrants managed the process devoid of many resources that later migrants had. Due to this, they waited to access their connection and initiate the migration process, sometimes even waiting years before they decided to
relocate. The ability to foresee stability related closely to the development of the community; as community infrastructure such as schools, a church, and increasing numbers of church members took shape, the community appeared more established in the eyes of individuals. Waiting to access personal networks then became a way of deterring possible risks, especially since moving was very costly for many individuals. As Dale illustrated, if the community had failed members would have to relocate once again, which would force another costly endeavor upon the individuals. Towards the end of the excerpt, Dale recognizes the social and personal differences between individuals and families who tend to be more risk-prone, thereby identifying himself as one who was not. Waiting to assess the progress of the new settlement became important to Dale and other migrants, as it served as a way to avoid risks and enter the community safely.

For a period of time within the settlement, migrants were then able to reproduce the connections and types of resources that had served them well in the previous settlement. Below, Jeremiah explained;

*When asked if he had helped people enter the area, he says; ‘My sister and my brother. I helped them get their places.’ Word of mouth is the biggest thing, ‘if it’s available, somebody’s friend or family will get it for them.’*

Correspondingly, Beth and Isaac explain how they recruited a family member;

*As Isaac begins; Well ‘I brought my sister here. She works in the store, we needed someone.’ Following, Beth replies that; ‘She was ready for the adventure!’*

As migrants settled and established themselves in the area, many decided to re-establish the same kinds of connections that had been provided to them in order to help other potential migrants. Jeremiah, whose family had entered the area in the early 1990’s as the twelfth family, was able to experience the early years of the settlement. Their
position in the community, acquired as a result of their early migration to the new settlement, allowed them to then act as a connection into the destination area for other possible migrants. For Jeremiah, these individuals consisted of his close immediate family, further demonstrating the reliance and continuance of strong ties within migration networks. In closing, Jeremiah discussed the narrow scope of resources that become available to those who repeat their connections for others; to be able to reproduce connections was derived from their own abilities to find information and resources within the destination area. Because of this, migrants may have not have always been faced with the “best possible” resources within the connection, as the resources became competitive and limited to their own capabilities. Rather, it was the connection itself that allowed migration to ensue for other members. For Jeremiah, the act of relocating expanded the possible network connections into this place, and in doing so, he was able to bring his brother and sister’s families into the area.

Following this excerpt, Beth and Isaac discuss how, as a result of their own needs, they reproduced their connection with the settlement for Isaac’s sister. As Beth’s fabric store continued to grow, the business expanded to include the sale of food and gifts. As such, they were able to acquire additional employees, which provided Isaac’s sister with the opportunity to not only enter the community but to obtain employment in the destination area as well. As individuals became better situated within the community, they expanded their opportunities to change roles within the networks of which they were a part and offered opportunities to others within the realm of their network outside of the destination area. These actions characterize the perpetuation of social networks and the theories built upon the ability of networks to continue the migration process for others; as
more members of the network become established in other destinations, their networks expand and incorporate a larger number of persons (Massey et al 1993; Kyle 2000; de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010; Samers 2010)

Migrant Resources

Strong ties created ethnically-specific employment opportunities for migrants, and as such played an important role in determining the types of economic activity undertaken by many migrants and their families in the destination area. This in turn created opportunities with regards to migration destinations and the ability to negotiate their own skills and abilities in the economy of the new settlement. The kinds of resources available to new migrants varied according to when they arrived, as new resources became available as the economic situation of the new settlement improved. Despite the fact that networks were influential throughout the migration process, the network resources in this settlement varied according to the quality of the tie itself. As discussed above, the spread of information among networks of individuals and families had been the primary resource (commonly referred to as ‘social capital’ in the migration literature) of migrants. This section investigates additional forms of capital that were available to migrants within networks. 

Along with creating the infrastructure of the settlement, early migrants also were concerned with finding individuals to hold important positions within the community. Below Beth explains how she was able to enter the settlement;

‘Jonathan knew that I was interested in teaching. I was 17 years old, and it was an opportunity. He was one of the first. He knew me when I was little.’ He knew ‘my adventurous ways! I wanted to be a teacher, so he contacted me. It was in 1998. I came first.’ My family came three years later.
Through Beth’s personal contacts, she was recruited as a schoolteacher for the children of the settlement in its early stages. In addition to this, her connection also provided a means of housing and further assistance as she transitioned into the new community. As she described her bond with her connection as one that had existed since she was very young, she demonstrated the amount of trust she and her connection shared as well. Her ambitions to one day become a schoolteacher allowed her to fulfill a need in her personal network, thereby allowing the migration process to occur for Beth. Beth, who entered the settlement at a young age, later described how the members of the settlement provided large amounts of emotional support as well. As she recounted her positive experiences in the interview, she expressed how her connection provided opportunities that otherwise would have been impossible. For Beth, her personal connections and her ability to meet the needs of the community in the destination area made the migration possible.

The creation of the Bainbridge Produce Auction in 1999 provided a fundamental market outlet for families involved in agriculture. In this excerpt, James explained how this outlet motivated him and his family to enter the community;

‘The Produce auction was one of the main reasons.’ My dad farmed when I was little, and that was his biggest struggle. ‘There’s a readily available market, and I knew it went well for farmers.’ There’s not really any other market in the area. ‘I didn’t want to try to search for one, or develop one. It was on the third season when we got here.’

For James and Maggie, who longed to own a farm of their own, the marketing outlets provided by the Produce Auction were as influential as the possibility to relocate onto a farmstead. Citing that the produce auction had been “one of the main reasons,” for
their relocation to Ohio, James demonstrated the importance of this specific economic capital offered within his network; without a way to market their produce, their farming endeavors would have been fruitless. After this portion of the excerpt, James explained how his family struggled to continue within the agricultural tradition while he was growing up. Additionally, their connections into the area provided a sense of understanding with regards to how others were benefitting from their contributions to the market as well. Through this information, James and Maggie envisioned the benefits from the produce auction as being a crucial part of their network, as it increased the chances that they could establish themselves in the new place. Finally, James expressed his desire to not have to locate agricultural outlets of his own, demonstrating the perceived difficulties inherent with the process. For him and Maggie, their ability to continue in the agricultural tradition that their families had upheld rested not only upon their ability to procure a farm, but also the existence of specific outlets in a place that where they had few contacts and connections. This type of mixed social/economic capital provided agricultural families with a way to avoid possible risks and a source of income when first moving to the community.

In addition to the ways that the produce auction elevated the strength and quality of the tie into the area, this type of economic and social capital determined the types of agriculture that families and individuals would perform. Below Daniel explains how becoming a part of the market embedded socially determinable aspects within those who participated;

‘I wanted to be a farmer, but hadn’t been one yet.’ Farming is what I always wanted to do, but I didn’t get one. ‘The auction was a big plus for me. Most people here do produce and flowers, where it was different things back home.’
Daniel, who had moved from Missouri to be with his new wife from this settlement, also found the auction to be financially beneficial. Through his ability to access the outlets provided by the produce auction, he had been able to begin as a farmer in the destination area, despite the fact that he had not previously been involved in agriculture. This possibility and general acceptance of newcomers into the area represents the first way that the auction, as an ethnically specific source of employment, assisted in determining the livelihood strategies of individuals; for Daniel, without such connections the ability to begin as an agriculturalist in a new place would have been difficult, if not nearly impossible. Prior to owning his own farm, he spent several years working with other Stauffer individuals involved with agriculture, furthering his knowledge of this particular livelihood strategy. Secondly, the types of products that the market perpetuated, mostly “produce and flowers,” influenced the types of agricultural products that Daniel himself would produce. Through conversations with various individuals and families who use the market as an outlet, the types of items which “sell better” or do so at different times of the year affected what families contributed and at what times. Agricultural activity in the settlement then became influenced by the group’s actions as a whole within the market. For Daniel, this meant that he had to be involved with flowers and produce rather than livestock or other types of agricultural endeavors. Accessing the outlets via the market then embedded socially-deterministic activities among migrants in the destination area, especially for those who were expected to begin as farmers in a new place.
As its own entity, the produce auction stimulated other forms of economic activity outside of the agricultural sector, which introduced new sources of economic capital for the migrants and the networks of which they were a part. As Jacob explained;

*Discussing their problems with entering the settlement, Jacob explains:* ‘Well we always wanted to, but we didn’t know where we’d work. In 2007, they called me about being a manager for the produce auction.’ It came abruptly, out of no where. ‘It came earlier than I wanted, but it came up so I had to take it.’

Jacob and Amy, who were in regular contact with Amy’s relatives in the new settlement, still faced difficulties with regards to procuring employment in the settlement area. As they waited for an opportunity, Jacob was offered a management position with the produce auction. While their personal connections provided information about the new settlement, their connections also secured employment that allowed them to support themselves in the destination area. As such, the network satisfied both of these requirements. As the produce auction continued to grow, it began to require several employees and management positions. For Jacob, this employment opportunity provided a way to more securely enter the community, thereby strengthening the quality of the connection in the process.

Some migrants experienced a variety of occupation changes before they were able to find stable, long term employment in the destination area. Below, David discussed how finding an occupation affected him;

‘I’ve had too many different jobs.’ I’ve done so many different things, ‘but that’s what you have to do to get by. It was so bad, so I thought I had to stick to something.’ But there were lots of opportunities, ‘my uncle knew people.’

As David relocated into the settlement, his uncles provided him with several employment opportunities as he attempted to establish himself in the community. When
he first entered the settlement, his family had arranged employment with a neighboring Amish community, where he was picked up by the employer and transported to and from work. Following this, he had worked with several construction companies in the settlement, and eventually even a company that built swimming pools. This period marked a point where, before being able to find a stable source of employment, members often took several types of jobs to “get by,” as David puts it. In his interview, David illustrated how his network connection allowed him to develop certain trades and skills before establishing his own woodworking business in the destination area. For David and many others, their network ties to this settlement allowed for a period of time where various different jobs were performed in order to survive.

Communicating Strong Ties

As migrants relied on strong personal ties to assist in the migration process, methods of communication strengthened such connections across boundaries, especially between those who had migrated and those who had not. It has been theorized that persons who interact with these practices further their likelihood of migration, especially since information and ideas become transmitted back into former locales (Massey et al 1993; Kyle 2000; de Haas 2009). In this section, I describe how the practices of letter writing, and particularly that of the “circle letter,” transmitted valuable migration information. Through this, the bonds within personal networks were maintained and strengthened.

As members relocated to new places and persons within their former network remained behind, the practice of writing circle letter strengthened the ties within...
networks as actors situated themselves across boundaries. Below, Amy illustrated how a circle letter functions;

*When asked if she wrote letters home, she replied;* I’m ‘not a letter writer. But I’m in a circle letter. We write letters to friends and family. Stuff about how we’re doing, what we’re doing.’ It’s mostly with ‘my family.’ It’s like a ‘list. It usually comes around once a month. We don’t have phones in the houses.’ So that’s how we know how each others are doing. *Commenting on the benefits, she said;* ‘It’s nice, I keep in contact. Not all my family’s here so I can talk with my sisters.’

In a similar vein, Maggie explained why she uses the circle letter;

*When asked how she kept up with her family outside of the settlement, she replies;* ‘Most is done through individual letter writing, circle letters.’ That’s how I ‘keep up with who I want to. Men aren’t good writers (*Maggie laughed after this comment*) so we write a lot.’

Amy began by identifying the differences between a circle letter and a normal letter. To be included “in a circle letter,” appropriated a type of close group membership to those who are within the realm of the circle, or network; to be involved means to have a shared past close connection to others who are a part of the circle. The relations that they had been involved within before then became replicated through the practice of writing the circle letter. Through this, previous shared connections amongst individuals were reified within the “space” of the circle letter, thereby deterring such connections from becoming obsolete or absent after the migration process. Additionally, the circle letter became a means of passing information between those who had yet to migrate and those who had. Information regarding the new settlement such as situations, and the experiences of individuals, and other occurrences are transposed within the confines of the circle letter for others to view. Through the circle letter, migration networks develop, strengthen, and engage individuals with people and places in other destinations.
Next, Amy explained how the circle letter operates. Rather than a letter, which addresses one individual within one locale, the circle letter connects multiple persons across time and space. In addition to this, those who are a part of the circle letter write about their current situation, a kind of “profile” that can then be shared and read by others. As Amy describes, it becomes a sort of “list;” After one person writes about their current situation the letter then is forwarded to the next person within the circle. The circle letter is then passed in an envelope to those who are within the “circle,” until it returns back to the initial sender who can then read the information from others who have contributed. Through this, Amy explained that she can maintain the bonds that her family previously shared while various members of the circle relocate into new destinations. For her, this practice was an important means by which she could “keep in touch” with her close immediate family. It was also a way for her and Jacob to receive information about the destination area while they waited for the opportunity to move to the new settlement.

In Maggie’s and James’ experiences, the circle letter practice became the sole method of communicating with those outside of the destination area. For Maggie, this method of preserving bonds with selected individuals demonstrates the ability of the circle letter to strengthen bonds amongst networks. This practice became an important way to retain relationships within networks as members became situated in new destinations. In addition to this, the circle letter allowed members to communicate their own statuses in the new destination area, thereby spreading information and ideas back to their former locales. This practice, however, is bounded a gendered construct which relegates certain activities, such as letter writing, to women; in her final comments, she expressed the belief that letter writing was something that she was good at, and as such
identified the practice as a gendered means of communication. As the main purveyor of information among members, the circle letter is one of the most customary methods of communication between individuals across boundaries.

Maggie commented on the nature of the information which is passed through the circle letter:

_When asked about various different things, such as the community, that are written about in her circle letter, she says; ‘Yes we do! We write about what’s going on in the community.’ Sort of ‘how’s it going’ and things. ‘It’s rather indirectly sometimes, other times it’s not.’_

In addition to the statuses and information about the persons within the circle, members also spread information on the community to other individuals and locales. Previously in the interview, Maggie described how her circle letter informed her and her family about the status of this particular community this was of prime importance in persuading her and James to consider moving to the new settlement in Ohio. Maggie next commented on how she was able to then communicate her own perceptions and experiences in the new community to others outside of it. Topics of discussion within the circle letter, such as home and community life, indirectly transported information on the places and social situations therein. For others contemplating such a move, information passed through the confines of the circle letter can be a vital means of understanding details about a possible destination. As Maggie and Amy explained, the topics of the circle letter focus on information about family and community, and this provided others with information about the place that otherwise could not have been received.
Individual letter writing and visits back home were also ways in which information was transmitted, but these methods were often short lived. As Jacob explains below;

*When asked if he wrote letters back home, Jacob replied;* ‘I don’t write, it takes too long.’ When we first moved I did. ‘But not anymore.’

For Jeremiah, visits back to the former settlement had become increasingly difficult;

*When asked if they visited back home, he replies;* Not too much anymore. ‘When mom and dad was alive, we visited some. But traveling is expensive, and very hard.’

For Jacob, after settling in the new destination area for a period of time, he began to communicate less and less with people in his former settlement. Letter writing became unimportant, and more difficult to maintain. By noting the discontinuance of bonds, Jacob demonstrated two points of interest: first, his attachment to the former community led to a desire to continue such relations. Secondly, as time passed after the initial migration, he felt less of a need to maintain strong relations with the former place. For Jacob, and many others in the settlement, letter writing began to wane with years spent in the new destination area.

For Jeremiah and his family, visits back to the former settlement were fewer and fewer. Earlier in the interview, he discussed how his family became more firmly established in the new settlement; some of his children had entered school and the others had taken jobs off of the family farm. The organization of such a venture had become increasingly difficult as more of the family had obligations elsewhere in the community.
Additionally, their visits became more burdensome, as travelling became “hard and expensive.”

While alternative forms of communication with the past did occur, they were less frequent and influential among those who participated in circle letter writing. While the experiences of all of the participants illustrated the importance of strong bonds and their connection to this place, the circle letter was a vital method of maintaining and strengthening networks. As the primary means of communicating information and between locales, the circle letter was a vital part of the migration process for many members of the community.

Coming to an End: The Conclusion of the Ability to Access Personal Networks

A common critique of Social Network Theory is its failure to explain the demise of some social networks over time. While some claim that this is caused by the decline of bonds over space and time (Massey et al. 1993), others cite structural factors in causing the quality of resources within ties to dwindle (de Haas 2009; Samers 2010). In the Ohio study community, however, the ability to access social networks was negatively affected by the youths within the community; this came to be understood through an unspoken consensus that existed amongst members.

Around 115 families had relocated to the study settlement within twenty years of its establishment. Some of those who had migrated during the settlement’s early years had children who were gradually approaching the adulthood; these children of early migrants began to look for residences outside of the home in which they had been raised. This altered the focus of the community and began to change its social structure.

Jeremiah explained this adjustment to in-migration in a more in-depth way:
What’s different now is that there is growth, ‘lots of growth. Peoples kids are getting older.’ When asked if he meant from inside of the community, he replies; ‘Yeah, internal growth.’ We had ‘seven families get married last year.’ Growth used to come from outside, from different states. ‘We try to help out our friends, our family. But now it’s from the inside.’ People’s kids getting older, ‘we need places for them. So now growth in the community isn’t from outside as much. It’s from inside.’ It’s at the point where you have to think about the community, about the ‘new comers.’ It’s ‘not looked highly upon when you don’t. Nobody wants their kids to have to move away.’

Jeremiah began by confirming that the community was still growing, but differently from the ways it had before. Recognizing this difference, he referred to the manner in which the group was enlarging as “internal growth,” or growth from the children of in-migrants who were gradually entering adulthood. Although he felt that it was still important to help friends and family relocate to the settlement, this practice gradually had to be modified or even abandoned altogether: the types of resources that were formerly afforded to others from outside of the community now need to be provided for their own children. Residences, employment possibilities, and other forms of capital now had to be reserved for the youth who wish to enter the community as full-fledged members. Finally, Jeremiah commented on the importance of this trend; although there was not a direct “barrier” preventing some from relocating persons from outside of the community into this settlement, the social consequences of performing such actions could cause negative effects. As Jeremiah claimed that they now have to think of the “newcomers,” he pointed out that this obligation of members rested within the entire community, not just several persons who were directly connected to the youth. In his final comment, he communicated the undesirable perceived outcomes associated with not abiding by social obligations to the community; the fear related to the inability of parents
being able to establish their own children within the settlement created a decline in further in-migration.

This concept, iterated by the majority of the respondents, differs from the commonly cited reasons for the decline of social networks by social network scholars. Apparently unique to this particular group, the members of this community represent a case where network decline was caused by the aging of previous generations, thereby requiring a shift in focus with regards to exactly who was to settle within the community. The inability to provide for the growing numbers of youth in the community required that the rapid periods of in-migration that the community had previously experienced had to now slow to a halt. Although no “barrier” into the community directly deterred additional persons from entering, the existing social atmosphere discouraged members from inviting others into the community. As Jeremiah and many others iterated, growth from the families of early migrants and those with aging children formed the basis of network decline within this community, which resulted in the gradual end of in-migration from outside settlements.

Summary

The interviews with members of the Stauffer Mennonite group who participated in the study illustrated several essential themes with regards to their migration process. First, while addressing the reasons that cause persons to move, both environmental factors and social networks significantly influenced the decisions of individual actors; as many migration theorists have shown (Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas 2009; Samers 2010), a combination of social networks and structural changes in the environment often create motivation to move rather than one single cause or circumstance. Second, while
many were affected by macro/structural factors within the environment as well as influences from within the personal network of which they were a part, social networks involving strong ties had become the primary means through which the act of migration was negotiated and conducted. Information, tangible resources, and entrance into a locale were dependent upon the social network. Third, these connections provided economic resources in the destination area, and this strengthened and elevated the quality of the ties. Fourth, sustaining bonds within social networks across time and space was typically accomplished through the circle letter process; communicating information, resources, ideas, and the general well-being of persons who migrated became regularly transmitted among women who were a part of a circle letter. Finally, migration networks ceased to exist due to the aging of children within the community, which subsequently altered the community’s attitude towards in-migration.

As opposed to other conservative and Old Order Mennonite groups, whose migrations are planned by religious leaders (Kraybill and Bowman 2006; Kraybill Personal Correspondence 2013), the Stauffer Mennonites who participated in this study relied on their strong personal networks in order for the process to occur. Moreover, networks provided the necessary resources to successfully relocate, and outside migration-related businesses and organizations apparently played no significant roles in the process. With regard to the processes facilitating migration to new locales, this Stauffer group has much more in common with Old Order Amish groups, whose migrations have also been shown to rely primarily on social networks (Hurst and McConnell 2010; Seohnee 2013). The Stauffer Mennonites who participated in this
The reliance upon social networks by the participants entailed several additional aspects with regards to the migration process. As all of the respondents noted, strong ties were essential in acquiring the ability to migrate, and these ties provided valuable information and resources that members could rely upon. Additionally, many participants felt that the necessary resources necessary for migration could only be provided through such a close personal connection; weakly associated ties and organizations would not have been sufficient to provide the required resources and opportunities in the destination area. As was the case with many participants who migrated as a household, migration networks were negotiated through both parts of the household. Through this, the ability to migrate for those families depended on whether a connection existed, and was not directly based upon gender structures within the household.

The destination-specific outcomes of their migration were influenced in two additional ways: their chosen reliance upon strong ties, and their lack of ties to additional locales. The reliance on social networks involving strong ties subsequently narrowed their spectrum of possible destination areas. As noted by several participants, the social atmosphere of other places had become negatively receptive towards in-migration, which thereby prohibited others from entering; the withholding of certain resources had ultimately deterred persons from entering other settlements. The lack of opportunities limited their options to this particular settlement, which further supports the argument that social networks were essential in the migration process. In agreement with other
scholarly studies concerning migration networks (Castles and Miller 2009; Samers 2010), participants experienced both inclusion and exclusion from the social networks and atmospheres of which they were a part.

As migrants operated with their strong personal connections to this place as their primary means of social capital, additional resources involving forms of economic and cultural capital were available through their network. For those involved with entrepreneurial and other business activities, information and jobs within the destination area provided the means for members to become situated in the settlement. Participation in the group’s produce auction, offered by members within networks, provided a valuable form of economic capital for participants took up agricultural activities after migrating. As many members valued agricultural occupations as a primary livelihood strategy, cultural capital was gained by those who had not previously been involved with agriculture through the economic resources that had been provided. Finally, other researchers note that employment opportunities for migrants who are involved within networks of close ties were socially embedded within the group’s activities; agricultural output and potential businesses were begun in conjunction with the established economic production of the community. In addition to their existence, migrants’ social networks provided valuable forms of capital in the destination area, which subsequently averted risks for migrants and strengthened the quality of their network.

For many households and individual migrants, strong ties were continued and communicated across locales through the practice of the circle letter. The concept of the circle letter, which bounds actors who formerly shared close relations, replicated these strong ties as members became situated in new places. Through this, information was
both directly and indirectly transmitted among participants; as members wrote about their current status within the destination area, persons within networks were able to obtain valuable information about the new settlement. The act of letter writing, constructed upon gender roles within the group, was conducted entirely by women; as illustrated by the participants, this type of communication was relegated to females. Through this, it was apparent that women played significant roles in the communicative aspects of migration. Primarily a gendered means of communicating, the circle letter transmitted important information and maintained the necessary strong ties within migrants’ networks.

Finally, the ability to access social networks by those outside of the community began to end as the community grew and matured. Instead of a lack of availability with respect to resources such as land or employment, a change in perception towards immigration occurred due to the circumstances surrounding the youth of the community; members chose to focus on the allocation of resources within the destination area for the children who were beginning to require such resources of their own. Although no person directly deterred others from entering the settlement, this change in perception came to be generally understood by members of the community. This specific case regarding how migrations involving social networks decline over time is unique when compared to other studies, most of which cite dwindling resources in the new destination areas as a causative factor with regard to the weakening of such ties (de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010; Bakewell 2011).
CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLES OF PIONEERS

It’s not like we were first. ‘It would have been different if we were first, like my sister. Or to start up a new community.’ That is a ‘whole different story for those.’

Amy

This was going to be a ‘huge undertaking!’ ‘Leaving plain folks, entering a different culture.’ ‘Ohhh, people looked at us like we had funny ideas, said that we’d be back.’ No one expected us ‘to pull it off.’

Phillip, A “pioneer.”

In the literature on social networks and their roles within the migration process, the actions of certain persons or groups from outside of the personal network connection have typically been defined in one of two ways: either as a third party who assists persons across a border (a “coyote”) or as some form of ethnically specific business or migration industry (Castles and Miller 2009; Samers 2010). This chapter addresses a particular social subgroup of people within the process, which the literature has come to term as the “pioneers,” whose decisions and actions ultimately affected the outcomes of many unrelated subsequent migrants from various different settlements.

As previously discussed, the Stauffer Mennonites relied heavily on the assistance of strong personal ties rather than any religious or inter-ethnic association in order for the migration process to occur. For Phillip, the very first Stauffer member to enter the area, this was true as well; Phillip and his family begun began their journey with little to no help from others, with the exception of some of their close friends who planned the move along with them but who came shortly after. From his interview and several other respondents, I address roles of Phillip and some of the early migrants with regards to the settlement process as they worked to construct a place of their own.
Because of their positions as pioneers within the community, they were able to exercise degrees of agency, or control, over many of those who came subsequently. The practices and actions of pioneers were carried out with the idea in mind that they wished to connect with their previous locales and encourage further migration during the early beginning stages of the settlement, thereby engaging in what Bakewell et al (2010) have come to term as *iterational* practices. This chapter explores the ways in which the actions of pioneer migrants eventually engaged the migration network connections that had developed amongst individuals and drew subsequent migrants into the settlement.

**Being the First**

Although the interdisciplinary literature has employed the term “pioneer” many times, there appears to be no clear, concise definition of who such persons actually are. In using this term, some authors refer to the very first person or family to enter an area, while others cite the first several who come during a certain period of time (Bakewell et al 2011). For many of the Stauffer Mennonites who relocated, the discourses that surrounded the term “pioneer” or, more plainly put, being “the first,” depended on the lived experiences of early migrants. References to pioneers, rather, were constructed around topics which contrasted certain advantages given to those who came later compared to those who arrived at the beginning. These references were devoid of any specific periods or status as well. Being a pioneer meant much more than simply being the first family or part of the first several families in the area; it meant being a person who lived a radically different experience than those who came subsequently when the community had become more developed.
For Dale and other members of the community, being some of the first meant
that they were required to shoulder extreme amounts of responsibility, especially for your
own family and the subsequent followers. This thought had been based upon the
unnerving social atmosphere that was encountered only by “the first.” As Dale explained
in his interview:

‘I’m not brave enough to be the first.’ That takes a ‘special kind of person, cause
they have to figure it all out.’ When asked what kinds of things he is referring to,
he responded: ‘Lots of stuff, it would be a hassle. Have to build schools, the
church. For me, it’d be lonely.’ I wouldn’t want to be ‘without family.’ Plus it’s
being in the ‘new place. Not knowing anyone, not my neighbors. I’m not made
for that, or my wife.’ Continuing the dialogue, he says; It takes a certain kind of
person to ‘be the first half dozen.’ I waited to see. I waited because of that. For
one thing, ‘we don’t know if the area will accept us. Most people are decent, but
you don’t know.’ After realizing that I knew his friend Phillip, a “pioneer,” he
states that: ‘I’m sure Phillip had it rougher than me. That’s why I waited; I’m not
cut out for that.’

Dale provided several different examples as to why the concept of being “the
first” is difficult to ascertain. According to Dale, the first family, along with the first
dozen, both shared similar experiences. Their entrance into the new area came with a
great deal of responsibility as well; not only with regard to the social aspects, but also in
terms of constructing a community. Family, for the respondent, was believed to have
been such a central aspect in the settlement experience that he was unable to imagine
being in such a situation without them. Dale concluded this portion of the interview with
his explanation of how constructed relations with the local outside community ultimately
affected whether or not they would clash as a group, possibly even determining the
whether or not the settlement would survive. Through his comment “most people are
decent, but you don’t know,” he exemplified these feelings of uncertainty. This also
implied that a relative degree of uncertainty comes with being a member of an Old Order
Anabaptist community entering a place where people of similar ethno-religious backgrounds are absent. This kind of fear that came with being “the first” in an area is why, according to Dale, he and his family waited to migrate. The tasks that needed to be undertaken early on in an entirely new location had to be accomplished by not only the very first pioneer, but also the first “half dozen” families as well. Finally, Dale concludes by acknowledging that being a pioneer required a certain mental strength, a strength that he felt he did not have; as he referenced Phillip, he explained how his circumstances were perceivably more difficult than the ones that he himself encountered.

Being the first, as illustrated through Dale’s excerpt, is rather a social experience built upon the ideas that these persons went without the typical former comforts of being a part of a larger group and also without the benefits of close ties. As a result, they were forced to set the stage for those who were less adventurous and risk-prone, such as Dale himself. The social arena that they were to enter was one of uncertainty as well; as he explained, the pioneers were the ones who were forced to establish relationships with persons outside of the social atmosphere to which they were normally accustomed.

In a similar vein, Amy, who moved with her husband in 2007, discussed her perceptions of the difficulties entrenched with being a “pioneer:”

*When asked if she had become homesick during the process, Amy responded: ‘I thought it would be.’ You live somewhere your whole life, you get attached. We went back a few times, and ‘I thought it was different. But we never got homesick. We expected we would, our roots are deep.’ We had lots of ‘family, support, it made it okay.’ It’s not like we were first. ‘It would have been different if we were first, like my sister. Or to start up a new community.’ That is a ‘whole different story for those.’*
In this portion of her interview, Amy contrasted her own experiences with that of her sister who was one of the earliest migrants to move to the area, and in doing so, further discussed the concept of being “the first.” Although her sister was not part of the first family in the area, further identified by her following comment “Or to start up a new community”, she was nevertheless regarded as one of the first, or pioneers, in the settlement by Amy. Following this, she pointed out that support from her family members was precisely what kept her from missing her previous home. The lack of homesickness, for example, was due to the amount of “support” that came with entering the community at a later date. As with Dale, Amy concluded that the concept of being a “pioneer” meant much more than being the first; for Amy, it meant entering a place without the comforting support of her close immediate family, which would have led to exactly the opposite of the pleasant experience she had had for herself. Through her distinction between her own migration and that of her sister who had entered the community during its earliest years of existence, Amy revealed additional complexities associated with early migrants.

In Phillip’s interview, whose family was the very first Stauffer family to move into the area, he illuminated some of the common characteristics of the persons who planned the beginnings of the community:

It was a small group, ‘me, my family, two other families and another but he left.’ He went out to Missouri. ‘We were friends, but in the same situation. We were all like-minded but not relatives.’ We didn’t get things given to us. ‘We all wanted places to raise our families on a farm.’ We were ‘all young too.’ We had been ‘in school together,’ and were from the ‘same church.’ There’s ‘three in my county.’ ‘All that was impossible in Pennsylvania, its Inherit or Leave if you want.’ Later on in the interview, he concludes that: I was young though, ‘so it wasn’t as bad, and I was adventurous.’ Not everyone is like me, ‘not everyone can start a settlement. That’s why a lot of people feel stuck in Pennsylvania.’
Phillip and some of the very first migrants shared several commonalities. While they were from the same community, the main bond that they shared as “pioneers” was that they were all friends in similar economic positions; facing the realities of today, they grouped together in search of a place that allowed them to continue livelihoods that embodied traditional ways of life. Their ages and experiences as pioneers dovetail well with the findings of other studies that have addressed the concept of pioneer migrants (Kyle 2000; de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010). Following this, Phillip directed the conversation towards his attitude in Pennsylvania with regard to many of the other faster-growing and well established settlements; for many of the young Stauffers, moving had become an essential part of life. His term “inherit or leave” demonstrated his feelings towards the ever-growing reality that, without any kind of family inheritance, young individuals and couples would be forced to migrate if they wanted to continue a traditional way of life that has characterized the group for centuries. At the end of his interview, Phillip commented on how starting a new community required a different attitude and general character than most people had. Being the first meant taking steps to initiate the process, thereby leading the way for those that would follow.

In addition to the experiences shared by “the first,” Phillip and Richard described the lack of support that came with being a pioneer and starting a new settlement:

While addressing the amount of community assistance he received, Phillip goes on to say: ‘Ohhh, people looked at us like we had funny ideas, said that we’d be back.’ No one expected us ‘to pull it off. Lots doubted us, men tried to talk me out of it.’ They said it wasn’t safe, that stuff would go wrong and ‘we’d waste all our money. The whole church said we’d fail.’ You see, the ‘Church didn’t help, never assisted us. The church leaders were negative, thought we were trying something. It was all up to us to get it started.’ My dad tried to talk me out of it. With me it
was different, I was ‘24 when I moved. Lots of people’s parents give advice and help, my dad gave zero!’ In fact, he ‘told me not to do it.’

According to Richard: Lots of people in PA said ‘it wouldn’t work out. There were skeptics. Said it’d be over in 5 years.’ But it lasted longer than that before I came out here.

Phillip described the very beginnings of the group as a small one that acted and planned the move alone, with little to no assistance from the previous community. His feeling towards the community’s attitudes, most clearly stated in his comment “lots doubted us, men tried to talk me out of it,” illustrates that his family and close friends were not only organizing the move on their own, but doing so without any verbal encouragement. The general lack of support from both the community and his immediate family confirms that the motivation to create new settlements and the will to do so rested primarily on the pioneers. With regards to the larger religious body, Phillip expressed the reactions he encountered most clearly in his passage where he expressed that the church not only discouraged the move, but also conveyed negative opinions about the move to others. For this particular settlement, the pioneers operated without assistance from the home community and also received negative feedback from it as well; through these occurrences and attitudes, the social group of the “pioneers” was further distinguished from that of other groups within the migration process.

Richard echoed many of the topics discussed by Phillip; from his perspective, being a pioneer required a great deal of individual will in order to initiate initial migration. Richard acknowledged that he had also been receptive to the negative attitudes about Phillip and the rest of the group, and in doing so concurred with many of the concepts and ideas regarding the pioneer migrants. Both respondents demonstrate that,
for many of the required tasks involved in starting a new settlement and moving to a new place, much of the responsibility had been placed solely in the lap of the pioneers. It also meant that being a pioneer required moving without the support of the previous community.

Much like the speculation of later migrants, being a pioneer meant that one needed to accumulate resources in a way that would differ greatly from those who came afterwards. Consequently, this elevated them to a particular social status within the community. As Phillip explained in his interview:

*While asked if the beginnings were difficult replies that: ‘It was, but it’s a lot of personal matters.’ When you move ‘later,’ you know people to ‘ask for cheap lumber, places to get help. I didn’t have that, so a lot of figuring out things. It’s different when you’re the first, it’s harder.’ I knew ‘nothing when I came here, and lost out on some stuff.’ Later on, with ‘many people, everything is established. I didn’t have that, so it’s easier for them.’ Later on in the interview, he contrasts the move with his former home: It’s not like in Pennsylvania, where I know where to go to get things. ‘There weren’t plain people around here then, just in Peebles, I didn’t know them Amish well.’ They’re from ‘Ohio already.’*

Echoing this dialogue, this portion of Dale’s interview reflected how the pioneers assisted him:

*They did, ‘just by being here, but a lot more after I bought the place.’ Then I knew ‘where to get things to build my house, they helped dig out the foundation too. Laying block for it.’ Mostly it was ‘information. Where to get things.’*

In this passage, Phillip illustrated how the lack of strong associations and links to particular resources created a vastly different experience for him and other pioneers than for those who followed. As his family entered the area before others, they had been forced to acquire alternative means of assistance, occasionally through a less-than-profitable means. Through his references of specific material resources, Phillip identified just a few of the ways in which he and his family struggled to establish themselves in the
new area. Subsequently, his ability to provide such resources to others resulted in him taking on a particular role in the community; being able to spread information to others allowed him the ability to control to whom information was given. This crucial role involving his agency as a pioneer allowed Phillip and some of the other “firsts” to regulate resource distribution and availability (de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010; Bakewell 2011). Finally, Phillip discussed how, even though weak ethno-religious associations existed in the new settlement, it had still been his responsibility to conjure particular resources on his own. Although there was an Old Order Amish community in the neighboring county, he felt that he was unable to connect with them due to their lack of close associations and ties. This sheds further light on how the experiences of early “pioneers” reflected a theme of separation, thereby leaving the pioneer to acquire resources on their own without the benefit of ethnically shared ties.

According to Dale, it was the first pioneers enabled an easier transition into the new settlement for him and his family; both material and immaterial resources were provided by having someone of a close ethno-religious background within the destination area. Indeed, aside from material resources, Dale claimed that their presence alone was assistance enough. After his relocation to the area, the pioneers then provided valuable information, which they had had to accumulate on their own, to Dale and other migrants; in doing so, they came to be defined as a separate social entity within the internal processes of subsequent migrations.

**Iterational Engagement with the Former Settlement**

While simply being a “pioneer” in a new place may have led to a particular social status in the community, engagement in certain practices directed towards the previous
home reinforced a position of authority in the destination area. For Phillip and some
of the other pioneers, it became necessary to extend ties back home in order for the new
settlement to develop into a self-sustaining community. This section explores the ways in
which Phillip and some of “the first” exercised degrees of agency through their active
engagement with their previous home and how these practices facilitated the maintenance
of networks to develop over time.

Before Phillip and the other pioneers had even chosen the new area, they had
decided upon several criteria. As Phillip discusses below,

It was just ‘Indiana or Ohio,’ I ‘didn’t want to be west of the Mississippi.’ If you
get too far, you’re out there! ‘You can’t get people to move out that far. Starting a
family, it’d be too far to visit Pennsylvania, so its east of the Mississippi. Not too
far south, it’s too hot and humid.’ Stuff doesn’t grow good, not produce. ‘I didn’t
want to be in New York, it’s too much of a city. Made me think of New York
City.’ Following this excerpt, Phillip goes on to contrast his thoughts with that of
some of the characteristics of pre-existing settlements: So when we looked, ‘we
looked for something to have farms, shops, close to other places, but rural.’ Other
places were ‘too rural.’ The places in ‘Kentucky were too hilly, and remote.’
There’s nothing around there. ‘In Missouri,’ the place was even ‘more rural,
nothing around. Closest town is thirty miles.’ That’s not what I wanted, but I
didn’t want a city like we had in Pennsylvania either. ‘Somewhere with nice land,
a bank, grocery stores.’

In this excerpt, Phillip discusses many of his motivations for selecting the
destination area. He begins by narrowing his criteria down to the parts of the U.S. which
are east of the Mississippi River. Identifying the difficulties with moving “west,” he
demonstrates the first element of the iterational concept theorized by Bakewell et al
(2010); Phillip concerns himself with the selection of the destination area not only
through his own wishes, but also through those of other prospective migrants from his
home community. Phillip shared that he and the other pioneers wanted to find a place that
subsequent migrants who would come much later would also find comforting; a place
that, although far away from the previous home, would still allow for the possibility of back-and-forth travel. As he narrowed down his list, he continued to take into account both his own wishes as well as those who would possibly contemplate moving into the community that he had started.

Towards the end of his excerpt, Phillip contrasted his own criteria with that of some of the other newly former Stauffer communities. To him, finding a place that was still rural, but “not too rural” like some of the other settlements, was essential in order to build a new community. For Phillip, finding a place that was suitable for both his family and others and that would entice future migrants had been of central importance in determining exactly where to place the new settlement. Through this discourse, Phillip expressed an underlying communicative strategy that he and the other pioneers shared so as to hopefully make the destination area successful. Rather than basing their decisions solely upon structural factors such as land prices, Phillip revealed yet another aspect of how pioneers attempted to engage their previous homes, and in doing so identified additional elements of iterational agency.

Below, Phillip discusses some of the initial worries that led him to be concerned with the idea of choosing a place that would entice others to move:

‘My worry was that I wouldn’t have enough people to move!’ If it failed, ‘I had to go back, I had nothing else.’ So we had to ‘find others to come here.’ Then there was my kid, and the other people’s kids. ‘We got to have enough kids for a school. I didn’t want to put him in public school!’ I wanted him to ‘have others to play with. We hoped people would come here in five years, so my boy had kids to go to school with, to play with.’

Similar to many members of Old Order Amish sects (Hostetler 1993), Phillip’s worries identified another characteristic of the Stauffer Mennonite group - members who
wish to retain their ethno-religious identity must live within the social boundaries of a community. Without this, they would have been eventually forced to move to a pre-existing community, or distance themselves from their families by leaving the group. At the beginning of this excerpt, Phillip identified an important aspect of the Stauffer community and the migration process: pioneer migrants who have created a new settlement must be able to form a stable community within the destination area.

On a separate theme, Phillip’s strong motivations in engaging the former community existed for several reasons. First, the settlement’s survival depended on the development of a community. Phillip discussed the immense amount of resources that he and his family used to make the move, most aptly illustrated in his comment “I had nothing else.” Next, he stressed the importance of bettering the life of his children. For Phillip, another one of his major worries had been that his children would not be satisfied in the new place; without other families with children his own children would have become lonely. Creating a comforting environment for them meant that he would need to entice additional members of the Stauffer community enter the new area as well. These worries, then, were in part assuaged through his enticement of members of the former community to relocate; such agency is another characteristic that separates the pioneers from other members of the community.

Throughout the early years of the new settlement, Phillip’s family and the other few families in the settlement actively tried to communicate and entice other members to move so as to alleviate some of their worries mentioned above. In his interview, Phillip explained how he and his wife accomplished such motivations:
When asked about how they tried to get others to move, he replied: Ohh yeah! ‘My wife did the same, talking and writing letters. Communicating.’ ‘My wife still writes letters to this day.’ We wrote to the paper too! ‘They put it in Die Bottschaft, the paper back home.’ It was just a little article, ‘I sort of bragged about the place. Told how we were doing.’ I wrote all about the settlement. ‘The weather, the happenings, just let people know how it was, what was going on!’ Other stuff too, ‘stuff to brag about, and stuff about Bainbridge. Land prices, how the whole community was, how it was growing, to let people in other settlements know.’

Consequently, this communication to the home settlement evolved into something much more. As Phillip discussed:

Then some get, what we ‘Plain People say, ‘nose trouble’. They have to see it, so ‘I’d let people stay at my house.’ They don’t plan on it, but these situations happen, ‘then they stay!’ So you would say that that enticed people? You letting them stay at your house? ‘Yeah, they see it and I keep an eye out for places for sale. Tell them what I know.’ They ’might not have planned it, but it happened that way some.’

Phillip and his wife’s drive to communicate, and inversely, promote the new settlement area, demonstrates their desires to preserve the bonds with the former community. Writing directly to the members of the former community maintained bonds with selected persons with whom they wished to remain in contact. Subsequently, through their placement of an article in the community’s newspaper, they addressed not only their close relatives but also the entire community in a somewhat indirect fashion; rather than only writing concealed letters, they alerted their former community in a way that would avert the overall negative attitude they had previously encountered. This form of communication informed a much wider audience; it would not only reach the former community, but also those in settlements that they were not in direct contact with, thereby extending the realm of knowledge and information about the new area. In addition to this, these practices offered encouragement to those contemplating the move.
In the second passage, Phillip discussed the consequences of his and other pioneer families’ actions. Identified by his term “nose trouble,” Phillip’s motivation to communicate with others led recipients of such information to become interested, and subsequently encouraged their through a visit to the area. Through this, they opened up particular resources to individuals who previously did not have access to them; even through the simple visualization of the destination area, Phillip and his family influenced subsequent individuals. In both of the passages, Phillip expounded on the great deal of work that was necessary in order to facilitate the migration of the first few families. Years of back and forth communication, visits, and eventually the allocation of resources to individuals occurred before the first families moved in. Phillip and his family instilled valuable confidence in others who did not necessarily share the same bold and risk-prone characteristics as that of the pioneers.

Dale and John illustrated how the actions of the pioneers influenced them as early migrants:

*Referring to Phillip’s article, Dale states that:* ‘Well I saw Phillip’s article, but it was more the visit.’ Matthew, the guy who builds log homes, ‘I stayed with him.’ Phillip and his family came in 1988, ‘Matthew was in 1989. So he was already in the area.’ I came a few years after that.

*Similarly to Dale, John explains his experience with that of the early pioneers:* ‘The first ones had come a few years earlier. My brother was one of the first.’ I got to ‘visit, decided I liked it, and prices were at a low at that time.’ That was nice, ‘I wasn’t given a farm back home. So I got to see the place, then my brother told me when something was for sale.’

In the above passages, Dale and John described the ways in which they had received information and become influenced by the pioneers. For Dale, it was a combination of the communicative aspects of Phillips newspaper article and the
subsequent visit supported by another of the first families that influenced his
decisions to move. Both of these actions, performed by two different pioneers,
demonstrated the effects of such actions in Dale’s own personal instance. In a similar
manner, John discussed the benefits of having a close connection to one of “the first,”
and also how that connection facilitated his family’s move. For him, the existential
actions of the pioneers greatly motivated him and his family; his network connections
with those who were pioneers provided the livelihood conditions that he idealized. As
recipients of these actions from the pioneers, Dale, John, and their families had become
highly motivated to migrate. Choosing to integrate persons of the home community,
therefore, was an essential part of the communicative iterational roles exercised by the
pioneers.

Another action of agency performed by the pioneers involved instilling
experiences of the new place into young people who would migrate many years later.
David, Richard, James, and Beth all encountered such actions from the pioneers. As
explained by David;

‘My uncles were already here, they let me know about it.’ They brought me here
when I was a kid, ‘to build it up. I first came here when I was 14, I played softball
with the other kids.’ It was ‘nice,’ and I ‘remember having lots of fun. It made me
like Ohio.’ There were some 14 yr olds like me. ‘Now one of the girls I played
with is my wife. There were only 11 kids at first when I came with my uncles to
help build things.’ I guess for me it was different because I was a kid. ‘I was
young.’ When asked if he came directly after that, he replies: ‘No, I was 19 or 20
when I came out here.’

For Richard and Jacob, their experiences of building some of the infrastructure to be used
in the community gave them similar aspirations as well:

Richard goes on to explain how he had prior experiences in the area: ‘I had a
good idea.’ It was a long time ago, ‘I came out to help my cousin move here when
I was 15.’ He was building his house, ‘and a dairy barn,’ so he needed help. Then, ‘when my sister moved I helped her too. I came out almost every year since it began in 87.’ I saw how ‘it was going.’ Similarly, Jacob explains his own trip: ‘When this started, I was 15. They brought me here to work.’ I helped build the place; build ‘peoples houses. Build barns. I liked it.’

Beth, who was initially recruited as a schoolteacher by one of the pioneers, recounted her experiences as a young person in the destination area as well;

‘Jonathan knew that I was interested in teaching. I was 17 years old, and it was an opportunity. He was one of the first. Jonathan knew me when I was little.’ He knew ‘my adventurous ways! I wanted to be a teacher, so Jacob contacted me. It was in 1998. I came first.’ ‘My family came three years later.’ As I commented on how that must have been an experience, she replies ‘Yes it was. I was young. I had a lot less family contact.’ They were ‘young couples, some with children. It was different…. Without my family, no one my age.’ My students ‘were all younger than me. First we had seventeen youth. It was good though, we played volleyball and lots of games.’ Then we ‘had a playground.’ There’s ‘lots of contact when the group is small. We grew close, playing games. There isn’t when the group is big.’

For David, his attitudes about the settlement began at a young age and from a different perspective. As an adult, he recounted the positive experiences he had when he was sent by his parents to assist in the initial building period. Being introduced to Ohio, playing games, meeting new friends, and visualizing the area provided David an alternative point of view as a child, thereby motivating him later in life to reconnect with his uncles and sister who were already in the settlement. The memories he had gained from his childhood experiences in the destination area carried on through his teenage years, aptly illustrated through his recollections of how he had been motivated to come to this settlement. His experiences as a youth not only provided friendships but also introduced him to the person who would become his wife later in life.

For Richard and Jacob, the experiences of constructing buildings for the community led them to have the same aspirations as David. Their perceptions of the new
environment provided them insight into the potential it had compared to their own homes, which further motivated them in life. Richard’s assistance then facilitated the comprehension of the possibilities that the new settlement held, especially since he repeatedly helped family members relocate there. Although Richard officially moved into the destination area nearly ten years after his time spent in the community during his youth, Jacob did not move until almost twenty years later. In their passages, the participants recalled the positive experiences they had during their time spent assisting the pioneers. The experiences provided by the pioneers instilled memories within David, Richard, and James that lasted years, thereby providing higher degrees of motivation for them to enter the settlement when the possibility was provided.

Beth, being recruited as a young teacher, explained how her experiences working for the community’s school fashioned strong bonds to the community. After characterizing her recruitment as an “opportunity,” she went on to discuss how this experience dramatically changed her life. Although she recalled the temporary loss of direct contact with her family, Beth still remembered her experience as a teacher for the community as a positive one. She recounted the times spent playing games and interacting with the children as enjoyable as well. For her, the pioneers created a positive environment for her to work and live in while she taught school away from her family. Rather than returning home after her teaching period ended, Beth decided to remain in the settlement, opening her own shop that sold sewing materials and small goods. For Beth, being recruited from her previous community by the pioneers as a youth meant taking a life-altering journey to a new place.
Below, Phillip discussed his and the other pioneers’ motives in contacting the former communities for assistance.

*When asked specifically on the topic, he responded:* Well, ‘it wasn’t part of the plan for them, just another link in the system.’ When I asked people to come help build, ‘I wanted them to see it for themselves. When I asked people though, they usually sent their kids.’ It just happened that way.

By engaging with the former community, rather than distancing themselves from it, Phillip and some of the other pioneers invoked a series of motivations among these respondents. According to Phillip, however, their actions were not reacted to by the community as planned; since he expected to bring adults into the area, Philip and the others hoped to introduce and encourage other adults to join their community. Instead, this caused a delayed response, leading several highly motivated youths to leave their circumstances and join the new community years later with the assistance of different connections. This iterational action of the pioneers incentivized many latter migrants, thereby contributing to another element of agency.

In addition to the ardent communication and subsequent interactions with the home settlement, the pioneers also influenced others in ways that allowed the preservation of former and/or idealized livelihoods, thereby preserving aspects of past ethno-religious identities. In his interview Phillip described the course of action he and other pioneers took as they attempted to farm within the new area;

Well lots of people want to farm, ‘but there aren’t many outlets here, or most places really.’ That’s the other side of farming that ‘people don’t think about. Before, we’d farm produce, and dealers would stop by, barter us, make us pay less.’ One dealer would ‘trick us, tell us he’d pay this. Weeks later, we’d grow it, and he’d say he’d found someone who’d do it for less. Play games with us like that. Tell us to plant a certain amount, then ask for less, or not take it.’ It was a big mess, ‘left us all with headaches.’ One day we all said ‘let’s start an auction!’ This makes it ‘attractive for younger generations’ too. Dad ‘slaves away, gets
ripped off, kid says ‘I don’t want to do that.’ Now when the kid sees dad do well, it makes it attractive for the next ones. My boys love it, they watch and see what their work brings them. It’s rewarding.’

During a time when agriculture has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for many Old Order families, the pioneers provided a way for former idealized livelihoods to continue in the destination area. As Phillip iterated, agriculture had become increasingly harder to practice in a new social and economic environment. Phillip explained the difficulties inherent in procuring outlets in a new market; his descriptions explain how he and other families were regularly taken advantage of, making it increasingly harder to establish themselves in a new community. Phillip then discussed how creating the produce auction benefitted himself and his own family. By placing themselves in a position of control, members of the community were able to better control the outcomes of their livelihoods, as well as their overall situations in the destination area. For Phillip, this was done not only to procure a better living for himself, but also to afford his children and other members of the community the possibility to continue agricultural traditions.

By creating an auction for their goods, the pioneers established a resource that many in the previous chapter claimed was influential in their decision to relocate. Rather than attempting to enter a separate sector of the economy, Phillip and some of the pioneer families who sought to continue farming created a way for their new community to preserve the agricultural traditions that had been historically performed in their former community. In doing so, Phillip and the pioneers allowed for the recreation of some of the former livelihood traditions of the past communities in the new one, lessening the potential risk in the eyes of potential migrants. As a specifically ethnic-oriented source of
employment, Phillip and the others were then able to secure additional elements of financial capital solely for migrants in the Stauffer community as well. This method of recreating past identities of places in the new community is yet another aspect of the iterational element of pioneer agency (Bakewell et al 2010) practiced by the pioneers of this community.

Network roles

In addition to the iterational actions described above, the pioneers influenced the networks of individuals in other ways. This ability was given to them not only because of their position within the community, but also because of the ways in which they developed their community. This section explores the ways in which the pioneers further influenced the interpersonal network connections to this settlement. These actions signify the final ways in which pioneers exercised agency over the connections of individuals as well.

Below, Phillip discussed why and how he began to stop actively engaging others to them to join the settlement:

‘At one point, I felt it was stable. Good to go. I didn’t discourage it then, but other people were doing the moving.’ That was so much better! ‘It has its advantages, now I don’t have to be at every build.’ People ‘don’t worry if I’m not there!’ It’s gotten so big now though, I ‘never dreamed it could be this big, couldn’t think there would be this many. I thought, in the beginning, we’d have twenty families. Maybe.’

After realizing that he had secured enough people for a functioning community, Phillip admits that he stopped attempting to encourage others to enter the area. His feelings of stability, he says, were one of the main reasons that he quit actively communicating with his previous settlement. His comment “good to go” further
demonstrated this concept; that is, his worries had been alleviated. He then points to the fact that those whom he had directly influenced were now the ones perpetuating the migration process, providing information, assistance, and other means that Phillip and the other pioneers originally supplied. As this alleviated a great amount of responsibility, he then remarked on the advantages that came with this stage.

This broadening of migration networks into destinations identified the point in which subsequent migrant networks began to function.

Finishing the passage, Phillip commented on how the settlement grew over time. As he expected to have only “twenty families,” his beliefs and comment signified two important aspects: first, that he was counting on only creating a small community, and second, his amazement that so many members of his group had been willing or needed to migrate. Not expecting the community to have grown to 115 families, this demonstrates the differences between the evolution of networks directly related to pioneers and those who move subsequently. The entirety of this passage discusses how and why pioneers stopped engaging with their previous communities, and when the stages of network migrations began.

Finally, Phillip discussed his ability to influence the network connections of others who wished to continue moving others into the community, a situation in which he and other pioneers served as what the literature has come to term “gatekeepers” (de Haas 2009);

*When asked about the growth of the community currently, he states that; ‘Last seven years has been from our children.’ Lots of them are joining the church, and they want to stay here. ‘It’s a thing to think about, now there’s no use to get people to move in, the older ones like me need to find places for our children. No one wants to see their kids have to move away.’*
‘If someone asked me, I’d say ‘we’re full, go start a new one!’ Just to give them something to think about.’ I mean, ‘that’s what I did.’

Philip began with an explanation of the current status of the community by identifying the many young people, whom are mostly the children of the first families who entered the community, who are growing up and wish to continue living with the community. After he noted that the social atmosphere of the community had significantly changed since their years as community organizers, Phillip and the others now began to place special importance on those who were becoming adults; as their motives changed, they no longer placed importance on moving others in or simply allowing others to continue to do so. As he expressed above, the thought of having his kids move away because of the focus on finding resources being put on others rather than his own children was an unpleasant one. He concluded this passage by suggesting that others also have the possibility to act as pioneers, just as he did. By normalizing the role of the pioneer in this way, he again points out the ways in which becoming a pioneer stems from individual will rather than any appointed leadership position from within the group.

Although he did not directly bar those who wished to enter the community, which is common in other cases of “gatekeepers” discussed in the literature (de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010; Bakewell 2011), he and the other pioneers still dissuaded those who contemplated the idea within the general social context of the settlement. Rather than through an organizational body or economically-based group, the ability for others to enter the community began to cease through the social entity of the pioneers. In this
passage, Phillip identifies another way in which the agency of pioneers has affected
the migration process

Summary

Although the consensus varied, the perceptions of who the “pioneers” are within
the community share several commonalities. The first is that, due to their social position
within the community, a great deal of responsibility rested upon those who moved first.
The social atmosphere of the new place also forced the pioneers to undergo certain
experiences as well; because of the lack of close ethno-religious ties, pioneers were
encountered situations different than those of migrants who came afterwards.
Additionally, these experiences elevated them to a non-titled position of authority as
well; because they were often the ones who “went against the grain” and had gained
access to particular resources, they were able to then reproduce these resources for others
to use. These resources were then able to be selectively given out specifically to members
of their community. As elucidated by the participants, the concept of being a pioneer for
the Stauffer Mennonites rested more so on the experiences tied with moving into a new
area rather than any specific move-in date or from the exact number of families within
the community.

As a group of actors within the migration process, the pioneers were not only
separated by their own personal characteristics but also from persons within their home
community. Without substantial amounts of emotional or material assistance from their
close relatives, the pioneers were forced to act on their own in order to initiate the
process. In addition to this, the general negativity from the previous community,
encountered by Phillip and even some of those who moved much later, heightened their
isolation as a social entity within the migration process. For this particular community, the tasks of finding a location, building the community and initiating the migration process for subsequent individuals rested solely on that of the pioneers.

As was the case with the pioneers in this settlement, engagement with the former community achieved several things. For Phillip and the few planning the settlement, they felt that selecting the destination area to favor those remaining in the previous settlement had been pertinent to building the community; without taking the others into consideration with regards to the location, they may not have been able to create a community. Because of this, they constructed the community in a manner that would appeal positively to others. Without doing so, there was a greater possibility that the settlement would not succeed. Some of the worries for the pioneers, as exemplified by Phillip, facilitated the necessity to create opportunities for others to move. For Phillip, this meant that he and his family, along with the other “first families,” needed to interact further with the home community.

The degree to which the pioneers kept in touch was relatively high as well; writing letters, the placement of an article in their former community paper, and the constant visiting of and communicating with others all illustrated the high engagement of pioneers with the home community. Consequently, several respondents who were recipients of such communication cited the importance of those actions by the pioneers. As discussed in the previous chapter, the differences between this settlement and some of the others that were also just beginning revolved around the degree to which the pioneers attempted to either distance themselves from or interact with the home settlement; in comparison to some of the other settlements, which several respondents claimed were
“difficult to enter,” the pioneers in this area regularly attempted to connect with the home community. In comparison to other Old Order communities discussed in the literature, the pioneers of this Stauffer community attempted to connect their former community with their newly created one to a high degree.

Although unintentional, the active engagement with the former community in the form of requesting assistance to build parts of the destination area left several individuals highly motivated to react when given the possibility to migrate. As discussed in the previous chapter, the network provided the means of entering the destination area, but the roles of pioneers instilled valuable experience in the lives of many youths from the home community. These experiences, whether in the form of a friendly softball game or through the satisfaction of contributing to a new place, created positive memories that would survive within some for over a decade. For respondents such as Beth, this recruitment allowed her to remain within the community. This method of connecting with the home community, unintentionally done by the pioneers, engaged several former community members who would later attempt to move when the option was provided.

In addition to this, it partly explains how network connections within this settlement were delayed. This is a significant finding with regard to the literature on migration networks (de Haas 2009; Bakewell et al 2010; Bakewell 2011).

The means by which the pioneers created resources for potential migrants also reflects the degree to which the pioneers attempted to recreate the idealized notions of their identity. As noted by several respondents in the previous chapter, the ability to carry on traditional livelihoods of small-scale agricultural production, with a special emphasis on produce farming, proved to be an important component which facilitated their
motivation to engage with the personal connections offered to them. Because of this, they not only provided an economic resource but also one that catered to previous local ways that has characterized the group for centuries, especially in a time where many Old Order families find it increasingly difficult to compete with large scale agriculture ventures within North America (; Kraybill and Hurd 2006; Cooksey and Donnermeyer 2013). Rather than taking advantages of other possible economic outlets in the area, the pioneers worked to create an outlet (the local produce auction) upon which much of their identity is built. Through this, the pioneers contributed to the second element of iterational agency as theorized by Bakewell et al (2011): by preserving previous livelihood strategies that many larger communities were slowly becoming unable to sustain, the pioneers created possibilities for subsequent migrants to not only provide for their families economically but also to maintain portions of their group’s identity in a new place.

In addition to the iterational activities that the pioneers employed, the pioneers interacted within the network connections of others in additional ways. At a certain point, Phillip felt that the community that his family had started had attained a sizable population that reflected a degree of stability. This marked the end of pioneer engagement of networks and the subsequent beginning of others to then continue the process. In addition to this, it signified to a degree the point at which the agency of the pioneers had begun to diminish; no longer acting as “builders” of the community, the pioneers were able to retreat into regular positions within the settlement, thereby exercising less authority over the process.
As the community’s population became more substantial, the ability of the pioneers to interact with the migration process surfaced once again. The community, now many years in the making, began to witness internal growth from the youth who came of age and decided to join the community. Phillip and many other early families who have entered the area, hoped that their children would not have to encounter the same problems that they had faced when they had migrated years ago. By voicing their concerns within the community, they exercised a final element of pioneer agency within the process. Through this, they demonstrated how migration into the community eventually ended; rather than directly from a lack of resources such as farmland or employment, the pioneers turned the focus away from those outside of the community to the children who grew up within it. Although they did not act as a direct barrier, their voices of discernment served as obstacles to those who would have contemplated the move.

In conclusion, the pioneers had several methods of interacting within the social context of the migration process for subsequent individuals. As a social subgroup within the system of networks that developed during the beginning stages, the pioneers have acted from relatively authoritative positions within the networks of others through their time. Their choices to engage the former community, rather than distance themselves from it, led to the ability for subsequent individuals to offer valuable resources to others later on. Finally, the pioneers were able to influence the ending of the migration process through their early positioning of themselves within the community. All of these factors represent how the concepts of the pioneer and pioneer agency were influential throughout the social context of the migration process.
CHAPTER FOUR: TRANSLOCAL SPACES OF HOME

‘When I got out here, it was different than home. But I felt at home, like I should have been here all along.’ I didn’t have the ‘woods’ back with my parents. ‘I felt like this was where I was supposed to be.’

-David

‘No, moving gave me the opportunity.’ There are so many businesses back in PA, ‘it’s hard to compete. It gave me the opportunity to do something I love, and that opportunity came.’

-Amy

The home, for many individuals, was a central concept in how the new place was experienced and constructed. Because of the difficulties entrenched within the process, the boundaries of the material home were experienced for some in different ways as they entered and lived within the new settlement. As the home is “understood as a physical place of dwelling as well as a space of belonging and identity” (Brickell and Datta 2011), the complexities entailed with entering a new place are then bound to previous ideas of what the home should be and how it should feel, while further negotiated through the realities of the migration process. For others, it was not based so much around what their previous home was, but rather what it was not; where the new place embellished a sense of belonging that was incomplete in the past. Through their previously experienced conceptualizations of the home and place, which have lasted centuries for some extended families, many migrants were compelled to remain connected across settlements so as to alleviate the distances involved with.

Traditionally, Old Order Anabaptist communities have relied on small-scale and subsistence agriculture as a livelihood strategy. This livelihood has characterized such groups for centuries, dating back the Reformation-era origins of the Anabaptist
movement (Hostetler 1993). Due to this, many members elect to continue the tradition of growing food, specifically produce and livestock, in order to maintain these traditions. However, with the ongoing difficulties associated with farming practices in the United States, many have elected to take up occupations outside of agriculture. For others, an agricultural background is simply not appealing; other vocations, typically associated with localized notions of the rural, are either more feasible or enjoyable. As new social relations developed in the new area, expressions of the group’s identity became manifested in the landscape as well.

Constructing the Home

The home, for many of the Stauffer Mennonites, was a central part of the migration experience. As migrants typically construct places based upon “meanings, histories, and practices” (Oakes and Schein 2006, 18), the home, then, is no exception. Building the home in a new place often required the negotiation of such meanings as they coped with the realities involved with their relocation into a new place. For others, the new place offered aspects of an idealized home that their previous home lacked, especially with the feeling of being “at home.” The constructed and experienced home for migrants of the Stauffer community circulated around negotiating ideas of past conceptualizations of home with those of the newly encountered home. This section examines the ways in which the home was created and experienced by members of the Stauffer community.

As noted in the previous chapters, some members used alternative, temporary housing to lessen some of the burdens after the initial migration to Ohio. In this excerpt, Maggie described her experiences with living in a trailer in the new settlement;
'Oh yes, 7 years on a rental place.' That was ‘something new to me.’ The trailer was ‘small, not a lot of rooms. It was set up to be temporary, so it didn’t quite feel like home.’ I knew we’d ‘have a house someday.’ I just didn’t know when.

For Maggie, their stay on a rental property in a trailer with her husband and several children proved to be a difficult experience. The lengthy stay in her father-in-law’s rental place, although helpful while the couple tried to establish themselves, meant that she was left without the comforts of an actual home for an extended period. In this passage, she conveyed the distinctions of feeling “at home” with having a home that this type of alternative housing entailed; living in a place that was “set up to be temporary,” she differentiated between the feelings that come with having a home of her own and those that came with staying in one that was not permanent. For her and several other respondents, having a home of her in which she could comfortably live with her children and husband was longed for after her relocation. As a newly encountered experience, she was able to contrast her feelings about the housing conditions with that of the local home in which she was raised. In her final comment, she noted how the uncertainty was also unnerving; although she knew that she would “have a house someday,” the inability to know exactly when had been discomforting.

These feelings of longing for “home” stemmed from the new experiences of the migration process and those of the idealized notions of the home in which from which she had grown up. For Maggie and many others who resided in alternative housing units immediately after the initial the migration, the feelings mentioned above typically accompanied the experience. Living without the feeling of home for an extended period of time led Maggie to characterize her transition into the settlement in this manner.
In a different way, David describes his experiences with his alternative housing and, in doing so, expands outside of the realm of the material home;

‘I rented a hunting cabin on Lapperal Road.’ It was just me, ‘for eight months. When I got out here, it was different than home. But I felt at home, like I should have been here all along.’ I didn’t have the ‘woods’ back with my parents. ‘I felt like this was where I was supposed to be.’ Later, while describing the area, he says that; ‘The wildlife is great, nature helped calm me.’ It ‘got my mind off of what happened in my life.’ There’s a lot of wildlife here. ‘It’s absent in Lancaster County.’

David, a young man of 19 when he first hitched a ride from a neighbor to go live amongst with his uncles in Ohio, began by comparing his former home to the living situations he encountered in the new settlement. Contrasting the drastic differences between the extremely rural and forested hilltop he had moved into with that of the rapidly-urbanizing Pennsylvania landscape, he went on to describe his feelings of belonging in the new place. For him, the solitude and comfort of the wildlife constructed his idealized conditions of what the home does rather than through the confines of the material house; the home, as David explained, was also a place of belonging that existed outside of the formalized structure of the home. As he referred to the troubles he had had in his teens while growing up in Lancaster County, he then discussed other ways in which his new home alleviated and soothed his mind. David, an avid bird watcher and fisherman, felt that these practices helped him overcome the past and to eventually accept the new settlement as home.

As noted in Brickell’s (2011) study on translocal Cambodian migrants, the space of the home for many of the Stauffer migrants was similarly constructed around feelings of belonging that embodied their previous spaces of home long ago. The rural setting, accompanied by David’s own perceptions of what the home was supposed to entail, led
him to emotionally characterize his new home in this way. David’s conceptualization of home was one that provided a sense of belonging; for him, the conditions of the new settlement provided feelings of comfort and serenity, something that his former home had not. These translocal conceptions of the home, and consequently what the home becomes after migration, reflected how the home was constructed, experienced, and lived for David and many other migrants.

For others, material representations that embodied certain memories were transported across boundaries in order to create the new home. Below, Amy describes how she made the new place “home”;

We had one more thing. ‘All our friends gave us a pear tree for when my parents died.’ We planted it in the ‘yard in Pennsylvania’, it had been there for a couple of years. ‘But we had to take it, it was for my parents.’ So we put it in the truck, but it was really hot and humid. The truck had to wait for a while too, for close to 3 days. ‘I thought it was going to die! I gave up on the tree.’ It hadn’t budded yet, and it wasn’t going to make it. ‘Then we opened the truck, and it had budded! It was full of flowers. It was my parent’s way of saying it was good to move.’ That we had made it, ‘we were doing the right thing.’

Amy’s recollection of the migration process allowed her to recall one way in which the home was transplanted (literally and figuratively) into the new. Her pear tree, a symbol of memory associated with the recent deaths of her parents, had been a necessary item for her to take to Ohio, as it represented a significant part of her previous home and the relations therein. As she recounted the experience of moving and possibly losing the tree in the process, she expressed deep concerns that the tree would die, illustrating its emotional importance to her. When she discovered that the tree had not only lived, but had also fully budded and blossomed, this experience then served multiple purposes within her migration and settlement process. First, the experience of the tree allowed her
to make sense of the migration experience from the perspective of her parents; it alleviated much of the worry and doubt that was involved in the migration process. This is most aptly illustrated in her final comment that this was her parents’ way of saying it was good to move. Secondly, it lessened many of the worries that she would become disconnected from her past, and specifically her parents.

The material landscape feature of Amy’s pear tree connected the previous home and the relations therein to the new settlement. As so, it was an important symbol for her to take along, especially since being in a new place without a relic of her parents had been unthinkable. For Amy, the tree was much more than an object; it was a representation of the past that encompassed her relations with her parents and the previous home that could now be relived in the new settlement. The experience of transporting the tree thus provided her with a means of acceptance with regards to her emotional construction of the home as well.

For some, making the home required members to address and change particular attitudes and practices. Andrea and Richard, who moved as a young married couple, described their motivations to adjust their attitudes toward their new home in Ohio:

*When asked if they were nervous about moving, Andrea replies; ‘I was! It took me a while.’ Going to a new place, back then ‘there wasn’t a whole lot here. Then we got robbed!’ Someone broke in, ‘stole all our things. It changed my mind.’ I thought, ‘do I really want to come here?’ Richard then provides detail on the experience; ‘all my plumbing equipment, the cabinets.’ All our things we had saved up to buy. ‘Things for our house. You didn’t have to deal with theft in PA.’ Andrea then comments; ‘Nope,’ we left all our houses unlocked. ‘But not here.’

As she addressed the anxiety associated with moving into the new settlement, Andrea recalled the life-altering experience with her new home through the invasion and robbery of their personal belongings. In addition to her anxiety, she explained that this
incidence affected her personal attitude towards the overall migration process and the outside community. Left feeling violated within her own personal space, Andrea recounted the experience as one that was emotionally draining. For her, this even entailed second guessing the move altogether. Richard then discussed the material possessions that they had lost, emphasizing the hard work and saving that had also vanished in the process. Following this, he contrasted the situation with his former home, which identifying their former attitudes towards the home; as they had not had to “deal with theft” where they had grown up, he acknowledged the fact that their attitude towards the home had been changed by the experience. Before, as Andrea illustrated, the home was “unlocked,” where they could come and go as they pleased. The social and economic situation of the outside community in the new settlement, however, forced the couple to change. For Andrea and Richard, and several other respondents who had been victims of theft in the new community, their attitudes towards the home altered their own perception and practices of the home.

Some members occasionally made trips to visit their former home, especially in the early years spent in the new settlement. These visits to the former home, and eventually the discontinuance of such visits, represented the other ways in which the home was negotiated for some members. Below, James and Amy explained their transitions into the home with regards to their visits;

_When asked if he, Maggie, and the children still visited their home in Maryland, James replies; ‘We visited, less now though. Home is here.’_  
_Amy, in a similar vein, comments on the lack of homesickness she experienced; ‘I thought it would be.’ You live somewhere your whole life, you get attached. We went back a few times, and ‘I thought it was different. But we never got homesick. We expected we would, our roots are deep.’ We had lots of ‘family support, it made it okay.’_
After spending several years in the new settlement, James and Maggie commented on their reasons for returning home to visit. They discussed how they returned every year to see their previous settlement after their move. As time passed, they grew closer to their current home, which subsequently replaced the need to make trips to the former home. This is illustrated best in his comment “home is here,” which signified him and Maggie’s transition from the previous home or community to the new one.

Amy, who commented on her lack of homesickness, summarized her transition into her current home as well. Although she expected to feel homesick after entering the new community, she explained that she had been without such feelings. For her, her returns and visualizations of the former home allowed her to contemplate the different situations that existed in the two settings, which contributed to her positive feelings about her new settlement. Additionally, having many family members in the new settlement allowed for an easier transition in the new home; family, for Amy, was an integral part of her idea of the home. Her lack of “homesickness” allowed for an easier transition; without the strong feelings of “missing home,” she was able to more easily understand her new surroundings. Visits to the former home, for many members, were a way to both reconnect and negotiate the mental constructions of the home during the place-making process within the new settlement. Through comparisons made by through these visits, they had been able to better conceptualize their understanding of their current home.

Transcending the Boundaries of Home(s) Across Locales
As translocal communities are “often characterized by both sedentary and circulating populations” (Tan and Yeoh 2011, 41), some level of communication, typically via mobile phones or computer, is employed to mediate the distance between the relations embedded in both locales. For the Stauffer Mennonites, who shy away from such technological advancements, alternative spaces of connection were developed in order to negotiate the distances that separated family members who resided in multiple locales. These connections were achieved in ways that addressed diverse aspects of the former home, including that of the entire community, specific places, groups of persons, and the close immediate family.

For all of the female respondents, the preservation of the relations with the former home and certain people within it were of great importance. In her interview, Amy discussed her method of continuing relations with her family and previous home, described as a “circle letter;”

*When asked if she wrote letters home, she replied;* I’m ‘not a letter writer. But I’m in a circle letter. We write letters to friends and family. Stuff about how we’re doing, what we’re doing.’ It’s mostly with ‘my family.’ It’s like a ‘list. It usually comes around once a month. We don’t have phones in the houses.’ So that’s how we know how each others are doing. ‘It’s nice, I keep in contact. Not all my family’s here so I can talk with my sisters.’

As Amy previously discussed, having close family relations in the new settlement was instrumental in raising her level of comfort there, even though not all of her immediate family lived within her current settlement. After outlining the difference between letter writing and the circle letter, Amy then explained her motivations for using such a method. As she illustrated, it was difficult to cross the boundaries of several different settlements; visiting her entire family on a regular basis would be next to
impossible. Through her engagement with the circle letter practice, she was able to overcome the restricted mobility associated with migration and to maintain relations with her sisters and family. This continuance of strong bonds through the reconstructed relations of the local home in the form of an ongoing letter alleviated the tensions that came with this separation.

Amy later explained that the concept of the circle letter rests on the idea that, rather than engaging a single other person like a letter does, a person writes in a way that communicates their current situation in the new place to all of those included in the circle; in a sense, it is a profile presented to others to feel as if they had been within their general vicinity, as before the migration. The circle letter is bounded by one single envelope and passed amongst the persons included in the circle to share information that would normally be known if everyone had still resided amongst each other. Amy’s circle letter required nearly one month to re-circulate back to her, which allowed her to read and follow everyone who had contributed since her initial contribution.

This method not only maintained communication across spatial boundaries, but also did so in a way that embodied a member’s local relations prior to the migration; by spatially representing multiple persons in one setting as the circle letter does, the relations of the first home are then re-enacted for others within the circle to see. These de-territorialized spaces represented the close family relations embedded with the previous home by engaging multiple localities simultaneously. Rather than addressing a single person in a letter, the circle letter became a space for Amy and her sisters to continue the relations of the family before she migrated.
Additionally, Maggie and Andrea described the practices and benefits of the circle letter below;

*Maggie discusses the circle letter as;* ‘It’s how you keep a certain group close. Like with a family, moms and daughters, classmates, people with physical disabilities sharing experiences.’ We don’t have phones in the house, so ‘its how a lot of us speak across the states.’ That’s how I ‘keep up with who I want to.’

*Andrea also explains how long she has used a circle letter;* ‘We always have a circle letter going! My sisters here, and in other places.’ We can ‘see how each other’s doing, and keep up.’

Maggie’s excerpt illustrated the abilities of the circle letter to be selective and inherently exclusive. For her, the circle letter not only allows for spaces of communication to exist, but also spaces which are exclusive in their own right. As she explained, the circle letter is a means for individuals to “share experiences” across the locales in which they are situated. Through this, persons can communicate to *whom* they wish, allowing for these spaces to exist with a level of control; to be a part of the circle letter means to have a commonality derived from shared living experiences in a previous place. In her comment regarding how many members “speak across states,” she sheds further light on the ways that the circle letter brings together persons who are situated across distances into one space. This method, according to Maggie, is how “you keep a certain group close;” here she again echoes the importance of continuing strong bonds which traverse the boundaries imposed by migration. Finally, as she states that the circle letter is “how she keeps up with who she wants to,” she illustrates how the circle letter allows her to continue the bonds of her choice.

Andrea, who has been in the new settlement for over fifteen years, explains how the circle letter process has allowed her to “keep up” with her sisters in other settlements. Further, she acknowledges that those included in the circle letter do not necessarily have
to be outside of settlement or state boundaries; her circle letter includes her “sisters here, and in other places.” This aspect places greater importance on preserving locality by demonstrating that members in other destinations, and also those within the same community, contribute and partake in this method of translocal communication. For her, the connectivity and enjoyment gained from participation in the circle letter were advantages that would stand the test of time. For the large number of Stauffer Mennonites who have relocated into new settlements in North America during recent decades, circle letters have become spaces that embody the relations of the former local home across new territories.

For other persons, the ability to connect with “home” involved connecting with the past community more so than directly with family or friends. This connection came from their former community’s newspaper. Below, Jeremiah and Hershel explain;

When asked how he still connected with their former home, and prompted with replies from other respondents, Jeremiah replied; ‘Yeah, we do keep in contact that way.’ I still ‘read the settlement’s paper I like to know how its going back there.’

According to Hershel; ‘We get the one from Pennsylvania- Our neighbor’s gotten it for 20 years. He gives it to us.’

Most established Old Order communities typically circulate their own, or a shared community, newspaper (Kraybill and Hurd 2006). As a material representation of place, a community newspaper delivers aspects of the former locale that can be caught in time and then experienced in a new place. For Hershel, Jeremiah, and other participants, reading their former community’s paper became a way to interact with the previous home. As Jeremiah stated, this connection allowed him to place aspects of locality from his memory again, which demonstrated his connection to the old place. This practice
made his and his family’s transition into the new settlement more comfortable as well. Hershel, who had previously lived in three different settlements prior to his move to Ohio, still finds it important to connect with the settlement he grew up in despite the fact that it had been decades since he lived there. His attachment to his first community, the home where he lived as a child, was still important.

By specifically reading their former community’s paper, rather than a local or state newspaper, members placed value on their former home; the relations bounded to the home had been of great importance, and therefore necessitated this connectivity. As practiced by several community members, attributes of locality can then be continued by those who wish to remain connected with the former home. It is these material representations of place that allow for the transmission of cultural ideals and values of the local into different places.

For some, living in the new settlement without an abundance of close family and friendship ties from their home community proved to be difficult as well, which caused members to reach out to the former home in more direct ways. As Morgan explains below;

*When asked if this process was difficult, Morgan says; ‘Yeah it was, leaving my family was the hardest.’ There’s not many other from Missouri here. ‘I’m the only one from my family out here. Most of my friends are all back in Missouri too.’*  
*When asked how he communicates with the home, he replies; ‘Mostly with letters. My mom works in a store with a phone, so we talk sometimes when I call her at work.’*  
*Towards the end of the interview, he discusses one thing that he will miss from home; Soon, there is going to be ‘my family reunion in Missouri,’ and I’m ‘going to miss it. Too many bills,’ other things just come up.*

Here, Morgan describes some of the difficulties involved with entering a new community that was not populated with persons from their former one. As Morgan had
moved here to be with his wife, whom he had just recently married, his own personal connections to this settlement were relatively few compared to most that had relied on social ties to enter the community. Because of this, Morgan greatly missed the comforts of his family and friends, most of whom remained in the settlement where he was raised. Hailing from a particular community into which others were not moving posed another emotional complexity as well; without the presence of weakly associated community-based ties, loneliness experienced. This, for Morgan, was “the hardest” part of moving into a new settlement. Morgan concluded his interview by discussing how he was going to miss his upcoming family reunion; his restricted mobility, brought on by having a young family and associated monetary responsibility, would lead to future further distancing of himself from his previous home. These circumstances, associated with his particular demographic, engendered emotional difficulties.

In order to overcome such difficulties, telephone conversations with his mother while she was at work became one way for Morgan to reconnect with home. As members of the communities are not allowed to have personal telephones, especially inside the home (Kraybill and Hurd 2006), Morgan had to arrange for a time to converse with his mother at work. This method of rebuilding intimacy with his family and also with the home community lessened the physical boundaries associated with his situation and the migration process. Although his financial situation prevented him from physically returning home for a visit or for his family reunion, these telephone conversations represented a way for him to cross spatial boundaries and reconnect with his former home and the relationships therein.
Work and Conceptualizations of Locality

The migration process posed unique situations for community members, especially with regards to their occupations. Idealized livelihoods, such as those pertaining to agriculture, were articulated by actors with respect to both the historical/cultural connections and the newly encountered social atmosphere. For others, these social arrangements provided opportunities to modify the kinds of work they had undertaken in the previous home in a way that embodied and maintained their previous local relations. Their own conceptualizations of identity, together with those of neighboring ethnic and ethno-religious groups, created conditions that affected the outcomes of work. In addition to this, the spaces of home and work overlapped. Balances of power, brought on by the act of migration, were adapted to and modified as well due to the social arena in which individual actors lived. This section examines the ways in which the spaces of work, as altered by the migration process, were built upon conceptualizations of the group’s identity and their past home with regards to the social circumstances provide by the new one.

Opening a business in the destination area meant that community members had to articulate certain abilities within the newly encountered social and economic arena. In her interview, Amy discussed the restaurant and store that she opened in the new community;

*When asked what she was doing in Pennsylvania, she replies;* ‘I had on and off jobs, babysitting, worked for a grocery store.’ Nothing full time, nothing steady. ‘Then I took care of my parents.’ *When asked about moving here to specifically have a restaurant, she says;* ‘It wasn’t something I planned on, I didn’t have it in mind.’ But my ‘whole family is good at cooking,’ even my brother. ‘So this opportunity came, and I thought ‘Yes’! I love cooking, I get it from my mom. Moving, it was so I could work like I wanted to.’ I just wanted to do something different, ‘on my own.’ *Elaborating on this change later on, she says that;* ‘It’s nice, it was my dream.’
Amy begins by describing the jobs she worked while back in Pennsylvania. In doing so, she reflects on the ideas that many of her jobs lacked permanence, and often were not stable; she longed for a job that embodied the kinds of work that she enjoyed but also entailed a higher degree of responsibility and ownership. Although she and her husband did not move to specifically open a business, these ideas and aspirations of having business of her own were carried with her. Cooking, a practice that she feels exemplifies her family relations in Pennsylvania became a connection to her past home relationships. As she explained, cooking was a means of identifying with and connecting to her family, especially since it was a hobby that was shared by her entire family. Additionally, she expressed that her cooking abilities came from her mother, furthering the close local relationships that she shared in her past. She continues by reflecting on how relocating to this settlement, for her, allowed her to work in a way that she felt was meaningful and rewarding. Her comment “on my own” further exemplifies this idea. The act of migration facilitated the opportunity to employ her own cultural capital, gained through life experiences in her previous home, in owning a business of her own in the new settlement.
Being situated within a newer community allowed her to negotiate her own abilities; her talents of cooking, which embodied the previous ways of her family, enabled her to recreate these practices in a new way. The act of migration served multiple purposes for Amy, especially since it allowed to her create her own business. For Amy, these replicated attributes of home served multiple purposes during the initial migration and settlement period.

For Beth and many business owners in the settlement, the ways in which they could reproduce ways of work from back home were greatly influenced by their
identification with the group and the community’s social fields. Below, Beth explains her aspirations and accomplishments as a fabric store owner in the new settlement;

‘It was my dream to have a store though. In 2007, I started my own fabric business. It grew, the settlement grew, and I could do more and more.’ Like clothing, food, stuff like that. ‘Now I have all this!’ When asked if this had to do with the new settlement, she replies; ‘Oh yes! Where I lived before there was no place to build a store.’ Lancaster ‘is full of businesses, there is a fabric store every other mile.’

Echoing this thought, Amy shares her feelings on the topic below:

‘It’s too high paced in PA, I couldn’t compete.’ This place was still developing. ‘Our stuff is from here, so we get lots of stuff from the community.’

Beth, who opened her fabric store years after entering the community as a teacher, begins by explaining how the opportunity to open her own business developed as the community grew; as more and more people entered, a business of her own became more feasible. What started as a small fabric shop that was operated out of her house turned into her own “Country Store” that is operated from outside of the home, with a large emphasis on catering to rural living and selling small goods. Largely due to the changing nature of the community, the social atmosphere provided her with opportunities to further develop her new business.

Comparing her abilities to create a locally-emphasized business to Pennsylvania, Beth demonstrates the complexities and importance of place; the social arena in which she currently lives provided the opportunity to exchange and interact with different elements of the community’s social and cultural capital. Describing Pennsylvania as “no place to build a store,” she highlights the difficulties and competitiveness (both ethnic and not) that existed in her previous home settlement, especially for that of a fabric store. Back home, imagining ownership of her own store was “a dream,” and this dream was
carried with her and brought to fruition several years after living in the new settlement. Amy reiterates on the theme of ethnic competitiveness in the former community; being a member of a particular ethno-religious group in Pennsylvania meant being forced to compete with a much larger and similar population. This made it increasingly difficult to operate a business that reflected a locally embodied part of her group, such as a fabric or craft store.

Entering a newly established place provided opportunities to create a business, especially one that embodied a specifically local way of life; one that she had imagined and dreamed of as a child, but which was impossible in the settlement where she had grown up. This social field required new business owners to negotiate their ability to open and run a business in combination with their group identification and spatial location. In doing so, this material element of space became one that required facets from both its situation within the new space and her experience, knowledge, ideas, and other aspects of locality derived from living within another place.
As Dale describes below, population movement within the Stauffer group and others who identify with the Old Order tradition eventually affects the situation within the new settlement as well.

Referencing the current situation of his harness business, Dale goes on to say that: ‘Actually it got tougher now, since we are surrounded by Amish. All Amish communities have harness shops, so there are ones spread out over the counties.’ ‘I got to compete with them now, we all do. If you live in an area, and our area’s big, you go to the closest harness shop.’

As an early migrant and witness to the growth of the community, Dale discusses the changing social situation within the settlement and provides examples from his own business. In-migration from various different Amish communities has, for Dale, caused ethnically-sourced competition to arise within his own business operations. Because of this, his own identification with the area becomes encroached upon; as more diverse, but
seemingly similar, as Old Order groups enter the area, his space within the settlement becomes less of his own. Competing identities, then, exist in the area, especially as ethnically-specific businesses become more numerous. For Dale, this means that, over his settlement area, aspects of his identity and locality are no longer the only ones being reproduced; the Amish, a similar Old Order group (Kraybill and Hurd 2006), construct similar material landscape features as well. The representation of these ethnically-specific businesses across space causes disruptions with migrants’ identification with places and the balances of power within the context of the existing social atmosphere. For Dale and others within the settlement, social and cultural production over space was essential with regard to the conceptualization of his business and home.

Figure 11. Photos taken at the intersection of State Route 41 and Barrett Mill Road.

Signs relating to businesses of the Stauffer community are shown in the photo on the left, while those of Amish communities who have very recently entered the area are posted directly across the road and shown on the right photo. Photo Credit: Author
As previously discussed, access to the produce auction as an outlet for the sale of agricultural products was a form of capital that was made available to new migrants. The establishment of the produce auction dramatically altered the situation relating to agricultural work for members of the community. The motivations behind this, however, were built upon previous localized relations that members had lived and experienced. These translocal practices symbolized their idealized methods of work which revolved around their experiences and identities associated with places. The produce auction, an integral part of the migration process for many families, satisfied and assisted families in making the new settlement “home” in diverse ways.

According to Jeremiah and Phillip, the idea of their own produce auction was created out of their attempts to balance their idealized livelihood strategies with that of the social and economic circumstances of the new place;

*As Jeremiah explains;* ‘No one around here had enough buyers my first year, it was a problem.’ We had all this stuff, ‘produce, flowers, but nowhere to sell it.’ *Phillip also recounts some of the experiences prior to the produce auction they created;* Well lots of people want to farm, ‘but there aren’t many outlets here, or most places really.’ That’s the other side of farming that ‘people don’t think about. Before, we’d farm produce, and dealers would stop by, barter us, make us pay less.’ One dealer would ‘trick us, tell us he’d pay this. Weeks later, we’d grow it, and he’d say he’d found someone who’d do it for less. Play games with us like that. Tell us to plant a certain amount, then ask for less, or not take it.’ It was a big mess, ‘left us all with headaches.’

Jeremiah began by discussing his and others’ inabilitys to survive as agriculturalists in the new settlement. He explained that, while farming was still made possible by the connections to specific resources, the ability to market their products had been extremely difficult. Without the readily available markets that existed in the former home, they faced difficulties when trying to continue their own idealized livelihoods in
the new place. In his interview, Phillip provided many examples in which persons of
the area abused them through the power they had over their product. Phillip and the
others struggled to establish themselves in the new area as buyers continued to “play
games” with them, largely due to their inability to connect and market their product as
new migrants within the whole of the community.

Creating the produce auction alleviated these struggles, thereby positioning them
within spaces of power as agriculturalists in the new place. This action assisted
individual actors and their families in a number of ways. First, they were able to better
situate themselves in the area; providing security to continue their agricultural traditions
was an essential part of building the community. In addition to this, the actual material
structure of the produce auction served as a location in which to market their product to a
larger audience, also contributing to established conditions within the community.
Finally, this position of power allowed for greater control over the agricultural process as
a whole, as it provided a place to market their goods with ease. For Jeremiah, Phillip, and
others who entered the settlement, the material feature of the produce auction was
conducive to their establishment and survival as agriculturalists in the new place.

For Daniel, the produce auction allowed him to create relationships that made his
work more enjoyable, providing a higher level of satisfaction than he had previously
experienced;

*When asked if working and selling was easier here, Daniel begins to talk about
the outlets he had back in Pennsylvania:* There were ‘some, but it was harder to
sell. You couldn’t sell at your house.’ My ‘dad, when he was alive, had to sell to
places like Giant Eagle. Me and my brother did too.’ But with that, ‘there is no
contact, you don’t know the buyer.’ When you ‘have extra produce, you can’t just
go and say ‘I have more’. When you do, you make relationships, it’s nice. I get to
see people when they buy my things.’
Daniel began by discussing some of the difficulties encountered with farming in his previous home. Lacking the ability to market his agricultural products at home, he at first benefitted from being in a place without an abundance of persons who marketed a similar product; in his case, continuing the tradition of growing food in a place where local foods were not readily available was made easier through migration. Advancing in a different direction, he then recounted the ways in which his family has been forced to sell their produce in earlier generations. Starting with his father, he explained the lack of intimacy he experienced through his work by being forced to sell to larger companies, which eliminated him as a direct seller. Daniel and his brother also experienced this lack of intimacy as young adults; without a way to market their produce, they again had little control over the process. According to Daniel, the produce auction provided the means of continuing agricultural practices in a way that objectified the personal relations embedded with farming many years ago; their ability to control their own livelihood strategies to a higher degree allowed members to receive benefits that extended outside of the realm of business. Daniel concluded this portion of the interview by specifying that the real benefits came from interaction with and satisfaction from his buyers.
Figure 12. Wagons of the Stauffer Community parked beside buyers at the Produce Auction on a Friday afternoon. Photo Credit: Author

As Daniel describes above, the produce auction assisted him both economically and emotionally. Through this, his direct identification as a farmer became more apparent amidst the course of interaction between himself and a customer. The ability to articulate this idea, along with the ability to sell his produce, also provided Daniel and others with higher degrees of power with regard to their work situation. For Daniel, the produce auction was much more than a way for him to easily sell his goods; it allocated certain social identities among the involved actors, especially to himself as the farmer.

For Maggie and James, the benefits from the produce auction became a way to reify the close family relations that they had experienced as children.

Maggie begins by saying; ‘We didn’t like that dad had to work far, outside of the home.’ He had several jobs in Maryland, but ‘we both grew up on farms. We
knew that’s what we wanted to do. I felt like it was time for dad to come home.’ James replies that; ‘I wasn’t at home much.’ I was always out and about, and ‘I wanted to be home, with my family. You can do that with farming.’

As many community members claimed that the produce auction had been a great benefit in regards to the migration process, Maggie and James then discussed yet another benefit of the resource. Maggie began by explaining how it was ideal to have the whole family around the home. Growing up on a farm provided her with an idyllic perception of the family and work, and these perceptions had been made possible in their new settlement. In her comment “I felt like it was time for dad to come home,” she illustrated this perception most clearly; having James work close to the home satisfied her conceptualization of where the spaces of home and work should exist. Echoing this thought, James then began by discussing his general absence from his family due to his previous occupational situations. Farming was a means of continuing the close relations that he had experienced with his own family while growing up as well. These relations, embedded within his perceptions of work, continued in the new location, where the ability to be a part of the produce auction allowed him to replicate such beliefs. For them, constructing their space of work depended on their conceptualization of how the family should be involved in work, which was gained from their childhood experiences relating to the home.

In a similar vein, Jeremiah describes additional benefits of working with a group of friends or family, where the balances of power existed in favor of the members;

Back home my family ‘didn’t have a farm, my parents weren’t farmers. I worked masonry. Some might say that they come for the adventure, but for most of us it’s economic.’ I worked long hours, away from my family. ‘It was a no end job. I worked for an outside company.’ My wife, ‘she worked in an outside company
too. Like me before, but now we’re together.’ We were ‘tired of working separate, for others.’

*When I asked if an outside company is like one that’s not Mennonite, he replied;* ‘Yeah. If you wanted to work in Pennsylvania there was work, there was plenty of it.’ It’s different than when you work with your ‘family or friends’ though. ‘Companies worked us, but now we work as a family. My kids and wife, together.’

Jeremiah began by explaining his past experiences with agriculture, stating that his previous connections to farming were minimal. He describes his previous occupation as a “no end job,” one that ultimately would keep him from advancing in life. These comments illustrated his inability to feel satisfied with his job and the separation it placed between him and his family. Describing his work with an “outside company,” he further discusses this dissatisfaction through how he managed his time and with whom he worked. For Jeremiah, working for an outside company meant being without the power to work as he wished. The term “outside company” therefore represents the opposite of such aspirations that are shared by Jeremiah and other members of the group. Finally, Jeremiah compares the social situations that he was able to adopt and construct in Ohio with that of his previous home. In doing so, he highlighted the amount of social and cultural capital obtained through his work with the produce auction; the auction, for Jeremiah, let him and many other members of the group be in control of their work situation. His final comments “companies worked us, but now we work as a family,” further demonstrate this feeling of control.

**Summary**

As members moved into the new settlement area, they experienced and constructed their surroundings through ways which embodied their former home. Aspects involving how the home was constructed and communicated in the destination
area, together with the ways in which actors approached their work, were all influenced by their conceptualization of the home. The “translocal imagination,” or their memories and experiences from the past (Brickell and Datta 2011), were carried with them into the place that they would eventually call home. Ultimately, these memories and experiences became replicated through their everyday practices and places that they frequented.

Constructing the home within the destination area was a crucial aspect towards the well-being of families and individuals. As not all of the persons who moved into this settlement remained, these constructions had been important for those who had stayed within its boundaries. Mixed feelings towards the temporary housing structures that many migrants used to transition into the settlement were derived from their previous perceptions of the home. Constructing the home had been achieved through the place-making practices of migrants; in Amy’s case, one of the ways her new home had been created was through a symbolic representation of her past home. In addition to this, the new home of some participants was acknowledged through the cessation of visits and returns back to their former.

Migrants also recreated the relations of their homes in former locales through various methods of communication. The circle letter, as a culturally specific translocal method of communicating, was a way that all of the female participants re-constructed their previous local relations across the boundaries in which they are now situated. The circle letter served multiple purposes within their migration context, but its main strength lay in the way that it alleviated some of the distances placed between the many members who have migrated within the last several decades. For other participants, their ability to
re-connect with their former home was achieved by regularly reading their former community’s newspaper. Rather than receiving the paper from the county or state that they had previously lived, they specifically interacted with the community’s occurrences through this practice. Finally, for other members, reaching out directly to specific persons in their former home was an important way to maintain the relations that they had left.

The ways that the topic of work was approached by migrants revealed the complex ways in which their conceptualization of their livelihood was accomplished in the destination area. For many migrants, their migration into a place without an abundance of ethnically-similar businesses allowed them to re-create the spaces of work in a way that embodied their past. As Amy and Beth explained, the possibilities in the destination area permitted them to construct their workplace through their imaginations of the past home. In Amy’s case, this was accomplished through cooking, a hobby that she felt characterized her family.

The produce auction, an integral part of the migration process for many families, accomplished several things for the families that took part in the weekly auctions. Issues of power had regularly been discussed amongst participants; the produce auction alleviated many of the problems associated with agriculture by positioning members in positions of authority with regards to the selling process. Additionally, the auction rebuilt portions of the agriculturalists’ identity by placing them in direct contact with the buyers, which created relationships that community members deemed important. Finally, the produce auction preserved the family relations of many members as it allowed members to work together within the destination area.
The translocal spaces of the participants of the Stauffer community were heavily influenced by their former home. The relations embedded within the former home were reconstructed through many of the place-making practices discussed by participants as well. These relations were also reified and/or continued in the ways that they approached their livelihoods in the destination area as well. As a central part of the migration and settlement process, the home was constructed and preserved through the various migrant practices mentioned above.
CONCLUSION

The migration process for members of this Stauffer Community was a complex experience that involved an intricate web of social networks, dependence upon the agency of pioneers, and the re-constructions of their past local relations in a new place. This research adds to the literature on Old Order Anabaptist groups and also addresses the recent literature concerning migration studies.

This study reveals the important role that social networks played in the migration process for members of the Stauffer Mennonite community. In the case of each of the study informants, strong personal connections facilitated migration to this particular destination area. Their feelings towards the process also revealed that, due to the level of assistance required in finding a permanent or temporary residence and, in some cases, employment, the responsibility of locating such resources could only have been entrusted to someone already established in the new settlement. Because of this, the scope of the actors’ migration connections was limited to the personal connection that existed in this particular place (i.e. the study region), as it was the sole connection for nearly all of the participants; in a sense, networks were both enabling and exclusionary for members of the study community. Furthermore, other settlements had become unresponsive with regard to further in-migration as a result of either existential macro-structural factors in the environment, or a negative social atmosphere which limited resources potentially available for migrants.

For many families and individuals, the establishment and reinforcement of strong ties across locales was accomplished through the culturally-specific practice of “circle letters” undertaken and maintained by women in the community. Through this a gendered
means of communication, circle letters maintained connections amongst households and individuals as they became situated in new locales. While members kept in contact through additional means, these methods typically ceased after a short time. As such, the circle letter became the primary way of transmitting information and facilitating ties over time and space. Finally, the strong ties into this settlement facilitated the procurement of employment and a variety of other resources for many participants, and this in turn significantly strengthened the quality of the tie for migrants. The migration choices of participants within the Stauffer Community reveal the importance of social networks with respect to the migration and settlement process, and the circle letter practice can be understood as an embodiment of these connections.

Commonly referred to as “the first” or “the pioneers, those persons who first established the study settlement and those who moved in during its early formative beginning stages played important roles in the migration process. As iterated by the study participants, the constructs surrounding who exactly belonged in this social group revolved more around their arrival into a unique and different social setting rather than the specific date of migration. The pioneers of this settlement actively engaged with members of their former community due to their anxieties regarding the survival of the new settlement in the destination area. This active engagement was accomplished through letter writing, advertisements in the community newspaper, and the recruitment of persons to assist in building the community. Their position within the community also allowed them to begin to discourage in-migration into this settlement, which ultimately contributed to its decline.
The notion of the home was another focal concept in the migration and settlement experience. As members situated themselves in new destinations, their past idealizations of the home figured prominently with regard to the ways in which the new home was constructed and negotiated. Members’ own conceptualizations of the home were based on select memories of the idealized home. Moreover, the preservation of communication and interaction through various means between group members in the sending and receiving regions maintained the social relations of the home and locality across spatial boundaries, and this connectivity resulted in the establishment of translocal spaces among individuals and places.

In comparing the results of this study with the academic literature concerning the Anabaptist/Old Order groups of North America, several key findings can be identified. First, the migration process was initiated by a group of ambitious, risk prone individuals who were connected by ties of friendship and kinship. In comparison to the Wenger Mennonites, whose migration destinations are chosen by the body as a whole (Kraybill, Personal Correspondence 2013), the church body had no role in the creation of this Stauffer community. Interviews with the respondents revealed that other settlements outside of the study area were also chosen in a similar manner. As such, the manner in which new Stauffer settlements are created is similar to the ways in which new Old Order Amish settlements are created. That is, groups of individuals, without a specific social or religious status in the sending community, typically begin newer settlements.

Likewise, the ways in which members were able to enter the new community compared more similarly to that of several Old Order Amish groups than those of Old Order Mennonite groups. Old Order Mennonites, whose migration decisions and
destinations are determined by the larger church organization, differed from the participants in this Stauffer community who relied upon strong ties for the initiation of the migration process. Again, when compared to other Old Order Amish groups, the reliance upon social networks revealed many similarities. When compared to other Old Order Mennonite groups, the Stauffer Mennonites differed with respect to both the nature of settlement creation and the subsequent migration processes, and appeared to relate more closely to the migration processes of Old Order Amish groups.

Several limitations existed within the context of the research process. My own personal limitations lessened the content and quality of the first interviews, due largely to my inexperience with the interviewing process. Although I began to feel more comfortable and competent with the interviewing process, the issue of time then became a factor as well. As a result, interviews were conducted without a particular demographic in mind, which kept the demographic scope of the thesis participants quite broad. I feel that had I had more time and been more experienced with regards to the interviewing process, I could have conducted research that was more detailed and intricate. Another limitation concerned my own position as a male researcher; several possible female respondents appeared to feel uncomfortable with the interview process, which led them to decline requests for interviews. Although this was not the case with all female respondents, many of whom were clearly excited to participate in my study, I believe that my own position as a male researcher limited the possibility of acquiring certain interviews.

The results of the study suggest a number of possible future areas of research with regard to Stauffer Mennonite groups and other similar Old Order pietistic sects. For
example, we know very little with regards to how community-owned businesses in such groups are started. Although I highlighted the reliance on strong ties for business owners within the migration setting, this could be investigated in a more in-depth way by analyzing the nature of community-owned businesses after the migrants have become well established. Another potentially fruitful area of further research might involve an analysis of gender roles in such businesses. In a similar vein, researchers in academic areas such as communications studies would likely be interested in the methods that Old Order groups employ to communicate and transmit information. While this was highlighted in the context of migration in my research, some of the culturally based communication practices (such as circle letters) could be more thoroughly examined in other contexts.

Although the differences between various Old Order Anabaptist groups have been addressed by a number of researchers, my research suggests that the sociological distinctions between the major groups are not as well defined today as they have been in the past. The Stauffer Mennonites, whose migration process appears to be more similar to that of the Amish than other Old Order Mennonite groups, are a unique case within this literature. More research should be undertaken on individual Old Order Anabaptist groups, where the researcher’s perspective is focused on the group’s affiliation rather than the larger Amish or Mennonite division. Through this, I feel that researchers would be able to better conceptualize the differences among Old Order Anabaptist groups of today.

During the research process, I regularly reflected on the entirety of the thesis, which resulted in mixed emotions in terms of the overall benefits of the study. For a long
time I struggled with the thought that I was most likely the only one who would benefit from the research; investigating a conservative, secular society as a thesis topic appeared to solely assist my advancement towards my degree. However, as I found in my research, the migration and settlement process was particularly difficult for many individuals and families, both economically and emotionally. The common perception among outsiders is that the church and community provide for members throughout their lifetime. This may contribute to acts of violence, theft and defacement of personal property committed against members of such groups. The produce auction, for example, was vandalized with offensive graffiti multiple times during my research. But after several participants expressed their gratitude that an outsider would want to understand the difficulties and complexities associated with their migration into a new place, I felt relieved to know that the benefits of the study would go beyond my own personal academic advancement. Moreover, I grew close to and became friends with several participants and other community members as well. In completing the fieldwork and the thesis, I have come to believe that the benefits of undertaking this particular area of research are both surprising and fulfilling, and were so in ways other than simply through the advancement towards my degree.
REFERENCES


