



## Who are the Amish?

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The Amish are the most conservative segment of the Anabaptist movement, which also produced the Mennonites. The Amish resulted from division within the Swiss Brethren. They derived their name from Jacob Amman, an influential Swiss Brethren leader of the late 1600s and early 1700s.

Most of the Amish forefathers came from Germany and Switzerland. Many were driven from their homes by religious persecution, and hundreds of them immigrated to the United States during a period of 125 years, starting soon after 1720.

The Amish believe the Bible teaches a life of simplicity and a distinct separation between the church and the world. In view of this, they have refrained from accepting technology and a lot of cultural changes that have been introduced as progress. Therefore, they still drive horses and buggies, not because they think the automobile is wicked in itself, but because they believe the lifestyle it represents tends to break down a cohesive family structure, and the simple lifestyle they value so highly.

Many such choices and practices only make sense within the context of a unique historical and religious setting. To outsiders, these practices may seem quaint and old-fashioned, when in reality, they're an expression of biblical principles and an interpretation and application of scripture that has remained unchanged for hundreds of years.

As a group they do not wish to be idolized, and they have distaste for their name to be used commercially to promote sales. It is quite safe to say the Amish would feel a keen disappointment if tourists leaving Holmes County would remember them only for their thrifty farms, their quilts and their crafts. Instead, they would desire a deeper understanding of their Christian profession, which is silently portrayed by their simple lifestyle.

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