



COMMON SIGHT in the farm communities of Ontario's Perth and Waterloo counties—Old Order Mennonites riding to church in their topless buggies while the world speeds by all around them. The Canadian province has more than 40,000

Mennonite inhabitants, its first settlers emigrating from Pennsylvania in covered wagons 180 years ago.—(Photo by Ontario Dept. of Tourism and Information)

Nearby jaunts

Visit Mennonite country to view tranquil living

With Spring only a few days away on the calendar, at least, people from the district enjoy pleasant drives through the countryside. There are many areas within a few miles of Acton and district that attract tourists from thousands of miles.

For instance, how about a drive through the farming communities of Waterloo and Perth counties into the heart of the Mennonite district, with a side trip to the Kitchener county's 14,000 members no longer conform entirely to the strict doctrines of their faith, the peace-loving Amish (pronounced Almish) and conservative Old Order Mennonites continue to spurn everything modern.

Summer visitors come in droves primarily to see Shakespeare played in Canada's "other" Stratford and to shop in Kitchener's famous market. But, by exploring further, they can be whisked into an era even sentimental oldsters have forgotten.

In this unique pocket of the Canadian countryside somberly-attired men in broad, black hats, some with Old Testament beards, shun conventional ways and try to live as did their ancestors 300 years ago.

Their women wear coal-scuttle bonnets and plain, ankle-length dresses. The children are exact replicas. And, bundled in shawls, they ride imperturbably in topless buggies while the world speeds by all around them.

These people, basically Swiss-German and German-Dutch in background, comprise a large segment of Ontario's more than 40,000 Mennonites, its earliest settlers emigrating from Pennsylvania in covered wagons 180 years ago.

There are 17 separate groups among the province's Mennonites, 12 different branches in Waterloo County alone. And while most of the

They won't even own a tractor because for them the only mode of transportation is the horse and buggy.

Though they pay taxes they refuse old-age pensions and family allowances. They won't vote in federal or provincial elections.

They have conscientious scruples against participation in military service or violence of any kind. Instead, they go all-out raising money for world-wide relief.

All they ask is to be left alone and find everlasting security in their faith, their families and their prosperous farms.

The best areas in which to see these simple folk at their daily tasks are at Wellesley and St. Mary's, east and west of Stratford, respectively, and north and west of the twin cities

of Kitchener and Waterloo, notably at Elmira where a major maple syrup festival is staged every spring.

Kitchener is just 30 miles west of Acton, while Stratford, farther west, is 60. Both are within easy driving distance.

An ideal summer weekend outing is to visit Kitchener and its renowned Mennonite market on the Saturday morning, tour the farm communities north of there, then head for Stratford, just 24 miles distant, for an evening performance in the Stratford Festival Theatre.

The Kitchener market tour is a must. The tangy, tantalizing aromas that fill the air come straight from the kitchens of the Mennonites.

Succulent meats, luscious apple butter, strudles, pickled corn-on-the-cob and many other

German-Dutch delicacies are among the foods you can buy at this well patronized market. German is so freely spoken here that vendors thank you with a "danke schon" and bid you "auf wiedersehen".

Another trip highlight is to visit an Old Order Mennonite meeting (church) house on the Sunday, where all parishioners arrive by horse and buggy. (There is even a "buggy factory" in the district.)

Mennonite moderates, who dress similarly and worship in the same type of meeting house, traditionally of wood and painted white, permit the use of cars but encourage their adherents to choose somber colors and paint the chrome trim black to de-emphasize evidence of luxury, ornamentation and pride.

Just how long the Mennonites can hold out against the prevailing pressures of culture is anybody's guess.

Ironically, the unpretentious clothing they wear is part of their continuing quest for obscurity, but now this is making them more and more the subject of attention in an everchanging society.

For the time being, however, their community still is one part of the world that truly takes you back and worthy of a visit if only for the sake of nostalgia.



VISITORS TO THE bustling Kitchener market are advised to be there early on a Saturday morning to avoid the late hour jostling as this picture shows.—(Staff Photo)



TANGY, TANTALIZING aromas fill the air at the Kitchener market where bearded Mennonites rub shoulders with "gay" people from the towns and cities to buy market staples and delicacies of the area. German is freely spoken here and sometimes the vendors thank you

with a "danke schon" or bid you "auf wiedersehen". These gentlemen are typical of those who make the market unique.—(Staff Photo)

Esquesing agrees verbally to Hornby Park pavilion

Esquesing council has verbally agreed to provide \$10,000 for the construction of a pavilion in Hornby Park, but put off passing a resolution authorizing the expenditure until a written agreement is received for the spending of a similar amount from the town of Oakville.

Hornby park is owned jointly by Esquesing and Oakville. Esquesing's share in the cost of the building is to be taken out of the township's capital reserve fund.

The remaining \$6,000 for the \$26,000 building is expected to be provided through a government grant.

However, Reeve George Currie reminded councillors at Monday night's regular meeting, that the purchase of the land for the park was government subsidized in the first place.

"Can you get a second subsidy?" he wondered. The 2,600 square foot pavilion will house washrooms and dressing rooms. One side of the building, will be open and contain picnic tables.



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