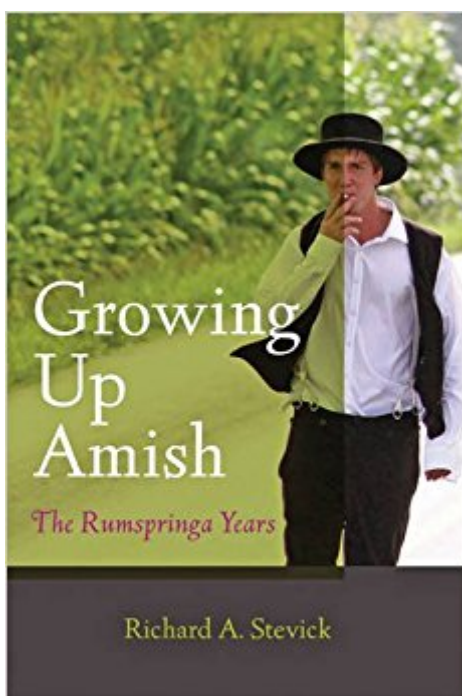


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# Growing Up Amish: The Rumspringa Years (Young Center Books In Anabaptist And Pietist Studies)



## Synopsis

On the surface, it appears that little has changed for Amish youth in the past decade: children learn to work hard early in life, they complete school by age fourteen or fifteen, and a year or two later they begin Rumspringa – that brief period during which they are free to date and explore the outside world before choosing whether to embrace a lifetime of Amish faith and culture. But the Internet and social media may be having a profound influence on significant numbers of the Youngie, according to Richard A. Stevick, who says that Amish teenagers are now exposed to a world that did not exist for them only a few years ago. Once hidden in physical mailboxes, announcements of weekend parties are now posted on Facebook. Today, thousands of Youngie in large Amish settlements are dedicated smartphone and Internet users, forcing them to navigate carefully between technology and religion. Updated photographs throughout this edition of *Growing Up Amish* include a screenshot from an Amish teenager's Facebook page. In the second edition of *Growing Up Amish*, Stevick draws on decades of experience working with and studying Amish adolescents across the United States to produce this well-rounded, definitive, and realistic view of contemporary Amish youth. Besides discussing the impact of smartphones and social media usage, he carefully examines work and leisure, rites of passage, the rise of supervised youth groups, courtship rituals, weddings, and the remarkable Amish retention rate. Finally, Stevick contemplates the potential of electronic media to significantly alter traditional Amish practices, culture, and staying power.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Should be required reading for anyone within Amish studies... Engaging, forthright in a fashion that rings authentic, a truth-telling..." (Denise Reiling Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies)

"The author deftly interweaves the pressures to conform to the fabric of Amish life, highlighting the roles of religion, school, family, and community. The book provides an overview of Amish adolescence and also serves as a more general primer for Amish life." (Mennonite Quarterly Review)"In Stevick's engaging narrative, he profiles the religious foundation of the Amish, its history, culture and schooling, the Amish at work and play, the tradition of weekly singing, and dating and courtship." (History Wire)"So why do so many Amish teens choose to remain within the Amish fold rather than pursue greater freedom outside the community? The answer can be found in Stevick's book." (Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion)"A pleasurable read and responsible treatment of an interesting subject. Stevick manages to both dissolve idyllic and naive notions of Amish life and at the same time show respect and grant insight into the reality of it." (James Benedict Brethren Life and Thought)"Another in a very long line of superbly written, scholarly accounts of Amish life published by the Johns Hopkins University Press... A rigorously researched, well-organized, and clearly written study. Due to rapid population increase, the Amish will be a growing part of the rural scene in twenty-first century America, and for us outsiders to understand them with accuracy and compassion, we need to read, consult, and refer to books like Growing Up Amish." (Joseph F. Donnermeyer Agricultural History)"This work will become an important classic in the field of Amish and Anabaptist studies. Highly recommended." (Choice)

Richard Stevick has worked with Amish people in Lancaster, Florida and Ohio in his position as a professor at Messiah College for many years. Stevick calls on his experience with them to write a clear and riveting story about Amish young people during the Rumspringe period in their lives. This is an update of the book written several years ago and Stevick spends many words and pages on the role of the internet, cell phones, iPads, etc in the lives of the Amish.

the best authentic book out on the Amish in a long time, hope the author does a follow up

I learned a lot even though I lived many years near Amish country. My father taught in an Amish

school in Indiana.

Very good

With a wide contemporary general interest to learn more of the Amish ways in the teen Rumspringa years, this second edition adds significantly to our understanding of how Amish youth use their energies during this unsupervised free time for social exploration. The Rumspringa years have been part of the Amish tradition for a long time but several modern elements have exposed the secrecy of this period for Amish youth from ages 16 upward until they return to a more sedate life of joining the church, baptism, marriage, and raising their own families or leaving the settlement entirely. By direct first-hand personal observation and inquiry the author indicates that changes are taking place in the Amish communities across the country. We who have known and lived among the Amish for years are often surprised to learn of the breadth of current Amish youth activity during the Rumspringa free time years. Some of this activity violates Amish rules and public laws as well. As one Bishop related to Stevick, parents are often reluctant to intervene for fear of losing their sons and daughters completely; and they recall their own days of freedom when they were teenagers. Most youth eventually return to the fold but some do not. Discovery and exploration of contemporary social media using smart phones with Internet connectivity is an exploding Amish youth activity. “This may become the real game-changer for the Amish,” says Stevick. While the adults do not fully condone smart phone usage, they are interested. And in role reversals, Stevick says the youth teach their elders the wonders and utility of this modern practical communication modality for the Amish as they move from farming only to business activities in wider social and business circles. The author observes and writes with sensitivity and objectivity as he explores the many issues causing increased stress for Amish youth and adults alike in the face of modernity. The book is highly recommended for anyone interested in the evolving patterns of Amish life within traditional rural Amish settlement communities across the country.

This book is clearly written and easy to understand for non-academic readers. Stevick has a good understanding of family life, particularly of the Lancaster and Holmes County Amish. There are other subcultures among the Amish such as the Swiss Amish in Allen and Adams Counties, the Troyer Amish and the Lawrence County groups where Stevick’s understanding is more limited. This second edition includes more about the Swartzentruber Amish. Stevick’s recognizes that as an

outsider there are limitations in understanding the secrets in the Amish community. The information presented in this book is the result of years of friendship and trust relationships that give real credibility to this book. I would also highly recommend it for therapists and other professionals who work with the Amish.

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