

ANTHROPOS

The Anthropology Newsletter

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Spring 1997: The Department of Anthropology will offer the following courses for Spring 1997:

- 46.101 Introduction to Anthropology
- 46.102 Anthropology & World Problems
- 46.200 Principles of Cultural Anthropology
- 46.210 Prehistoric Archaeology
- 46.220 Human Origins
- 46.312 South American Archaeology
- 46.350 Medical Anthropology
- 46.360 Pseudoscience
- 46.385 Anthropology Research & Writing
- 46.475 Field Methods in Cultural Anthropology

Note: 46.102 meets the Values, Ethics & Responsible Decision-making Requirement of General Education. 46.102, 46.200, and 46.350 meet the Diversity Requirement of General Education. 46.312 and 46.385 are new courses being offered for the first time in the spring semester.

South American Archaeology: 46.312 is a new course being offered by Dr. Aleto for the first time during the Spring 1997 semester. 46.132 is designed to complement 46.450, Peoples & Cultures of South America, with 46.312 focusing on prehistory and 46.450 on contemporary cultures. 46.312 will look at the major prehistoric traditions of South America, beginning with the on-going debate over when humans first settled the continent to the Inca culture at the time of the Spanish Conquest. In between, there are many fascinating archaeological cultures, some of which are enigmatic and not well understood. For instance, there is the Chavin culture of the 9th century B.C. with its jaguar images and possible links to Mesoamerican cultures. There is the city of Tiahuanaco set high in the mountains of Bolivia with its staff-god images and colossal stone architecture. There are the famous pre-Incan artistic cultures of Mochica, known for its fantastic ceramic portrait vessels, and the Nasca culture, with its amazing textiles and the mysterious lines etched across the Peruvian landscape. There is the Chimú culture with its great city of Chan-Chan. And of course, there were the Incas, coming out of their great stone city of Cuzco to conquer western South America and to create

2.

an empire that stretched some 2000 miles along the western coast. Dr. Aleto has conducted archaeological excavations in Ecuador and has traveled widely in other parts of South America. He will draw upon his personal experience and extensive slide collection to make 46.312 an interesting course.

Medical Anthropology: Medical Anthropology, the study of the beliefs and practices regarding health and illness cross-culturally, is one of the fastest growing subdisciplines of anthropology. BU's Medical Anthropology course, 46.350, is offered on Tuesday nights, 6:30-9:30, this coming spring semester by Dr. Minderhout. A great many topics are covered in this course. Among them are religious healing in traditional cultures, AIDS in Africa, beliefs and practices surrounding pregnancy and childbirth in different cultures, and the problems of health care delivery to minorities in the United States. Also discussed is the training of a medical practitioner, which contrasts shamanistic curing as it is found in many cultures, with medical school in industrialized societies. Holistic and allopathic medicine are contrasted, and the folk beliefs of many cultures are described. There is also a section in the course that compares the diets of traditional societies with the American diet. As can be seen, the topics included in Medical Anthropology are diverse - and, hopefully, interesting. For more information, please see Dr. Minderhout.

Pseudoscience: This popular course has been put together by Dr. Wymer to examine pseudoscientific phenomena, that is, beliefs and behaviors such as ESP, crystal power, creationism, and astrology, which often present themselves as science. In this course, Dr. Wymer reveals the underlying procedures and assumptions of pseudoscience as she debunks their claims. In order to do this, she first examines the nature of science and scientific proofs; she holds the claims made by psychics, astrologers, and others to rigorous standards. In addition to the topics already noted, she will also look at claims surrounding UFO's, the belief that ancient astronauts created human civilization, the idea that Celts or Phoenicians explored the New World long before Columbus, faith healing and psychic surgery, and other ideas popularly held by many Americans. She hopes that this course will not only inform BU students about the bogus claims made around them, but also will enhance critical thinking among students. To quote Dr. Wymer:

"I am creating this course because as an anthropologist, I straddle (purposefully) the fence between science and the humanities. Thus, I have been forced to come to grips with understanding nature and the philosophy of the scientific method along with appreciating the nature of human belief systems. Anthropologists, and particularly archaeologists, are also well aware of pseudoscientific claims since many of them are based on incorrect ideas about archaeology. Thus, I wish to share with students insights I have gained as an active 'debunker' of many of the modern myths about our past - as well as skeptically evaluating those who propose to foresee our future."

This is the first time that this course has been offered as a regular part of the anthropology curriculum, rather than as a Selected Topics course.

3.

Anthropology Research & Writing: 46.385 is another new course being offered for the first time in the spring semester. This course, offered by Dr. Minderhout, is designed to do several things. First, students will become familiar with information sources in anthropology, ranging from library resources to anthropology sites on the World Wide Web. Second, students will learn how to write a research paper in anthropology. Much of the semester will be spent in choosing topics, practicing various writing techniques, and writing and rewriting a term paper. Third, there will be a discussion of the use of statistics in anthropology, with a look at how statistics are abused as well as used. And finally, the place of research in anthropology will be discussed, with a focus on how theory is created and built upon.

46.385 is a newly required course for anthropology majors, beginning with new majors entering BU in the fall of 1996. 46.385 will replace the current statistics requirement for these in-coming students. Students who selected the major before the fall of 1996 may elect to substitute 46.385 for the statistics requirement or to take the course as an elective. Students taking 46.385 are expected to have taken the three basic anthropology courses - 46.200, 46.210, and 46.220 - by the time they enroll for the new course. It is hoped that students will complete 46.385 before they take 46.470, Anthropological Thought & Theory, or 46.475, Field Methods in Cultural Anthropology. Enrollments for the course will be restricted to 15 students so that individual attention can be directed at each student's term paper. If you have any questions, please see Dr. Minderhout.

Field Methods in Cultural Anthropology: In 46.475, students will learn how to conduct cultural anthropological field research by actually conducting their own piece of research. Dr. Dauria will instruct the students in the philosophy, techniques, and ethical considerations involved in doing participant observation, the primary method in which cultural anthropologists learn about human behavior. Students will learn how to create a sample research population, conduct interviews, and draw conclusions from their observations. A major part of the course will be a focus on the ethics of anthropological field research and the difficulties of obtaining informed consent from populations that are often illiterate and/or unable to speak English. Students in 46.475 will conduct participant observation under Dr. Dauria's guidance. It is hoped that the students' projects can be presented at the SSHE Undergraduate Anthropology Conference in April. If you have any questions about the course, please see Dr. Dauria.

Anthropology Club News: The Anthropology Club will meet every other Monday. The first meeting of the new semester was September 12. At that meeting, the club officers announced some of the trips and events that are planned for the semester.

The following is a list of upcoming events:

1. The Anthropology Club will meet every other Monday at 5:15 in G31 Old Science Hall. The meeting dates for this semester are September 30, October 14, 28,

4. November 11, 25, and possibly December 9.
2. The Anthropology Club will be sponsoring seminars concerning topics of interest to students. This idea was initiated by students who wanted discussions about anthropological topics. The first seminar was Professor Warner's discussion of ethnic revitalization in a Q'eqchi refugee community in Mexico (September 30). In the future, the club will announce these discussions via posters and the campus newspaper - so keep your eyes peeled.
3. Plans are in the works for the Department of Anthropology's annual "Cross-Cultural feast." The planning meeting for this event will be October 14. This event was so successful last year that it will be set up in the same fashion for this year. We will request the Multicultural Center again for this event. Students are negotiating a date sometime between the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks - possibly December 2.
4. Designs for the annual Anthropology Club T-shirts are being submitted. A vote on the submitted designs will be taken in November. See Jen Wenzel, club president, for more details.
5. A group of anthropology students are planning to go to the Burnet Park Zoo in Syracuse, NY on October 12. A special tour of the primates is being arranged for this group. Anyone interested should contact Jen Wenzel at 389-1134.
6. A trip to the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia is in the works. Students who are interested should contact Jen Wenzel for information about this trip which is anticipated for the weekend of November 3.
7. The club will advertise the future Quest presentations of nature trips. These will be announced at future meetings.

Money: Given the omnipresent significance of money in our lives, it may seem hard to believe that until recently most people on earth did not have money or currency with which to conduct economic exchanges. Traditional cultures such as foragers, pastoralists, horticulturalists, and peasants were subsistence-based cultures. That is, they produced food and other goods primarily for their own consumption; each family, band, or village was at least potentially self-sufficient, able to provide for their own needs when times were good. Most traditional cultures engaged in some trade within their communities or with others; archaeological evidence from North America, for example, suggests considerable trade of desirable goods such as copper from northern Michigan or abalone shell from the Pacific coast over great distances. But the trade carried out was largely in kind, that is, goods for goods. Similarly, peasants were generally part of a larger state system which required that these subsistence farmers pay taxes, but those taxes were collected in shares of their crops.

5.

Some traditional cultures possessed exchange media which look at first glance like money; examples included cowry shells and gold rods in parts of West Africa. But these exchange media were not exactly like dollars, francs, or pesos. Modern currency is what an economist calls general purpose money. General purpose serves three primary functions. First, it serves as a medium of exchange; you can buy things with it. Second, general purpose money allows for the discharge of debts; you can fulfill obligations, such as taxes or fines, with it. Thirdly, general purpose money serves as a standard of value. This last function is probably underappreciated. A common saying in American culture is that you can't compare apples and oranges, but, of course, you can - if apples are 89 cents a pound and oranges are \$1.29! General purpose money becomes a common measure of worth across a culture. General purpose money - and its worth - are recognized throughout a culture and, with a few exceptions, accepted everywhere. This allows someone from Florida to travel to Oregon and still know the worth of an exchange by its price. And, with a little more difficulty, it is possible for the same Floridian to travel to Mexico, Canada, or anywhere else where general purpose money is in use and to be able to translate worth from culture to culture.

Those traditional cultures which used something like cowry shells for exchanges were using limited purpose money. That is, their currency did not provide them with a culturally universal means of exchange. Often, traditional currencies could only serve to purchase one kind of commodity or, more commonly, to discharge one kind of debt. The anthropologist Paul Bohannan has described how gold rods operated among the West African Tiv to create marriage alliances; gold rods were given by the family of a prospective groom to the family of a prospective bride in partial compensation for their loss. But gold rods could not be used to buy food, clothing, or shelter; their use and value were severely restricted. Similarly, most traditional cultures lacked a uniform medium of exchange whereby the value of various transactions could be measured.

This last point considerably hampered exchange within and between traditional cultures. With no agreed upon standard of exchange, it was very difficult to determine the worth of goods to be exchanged. Within cultures, this was usually determined by traditional standards maintained over generations. In this way, a bolt of cloth was worth two bushels of wheat year after year, often without regard to market conditions of scarcity or abundance, because that was the agreed upon worth of cloth. Somehow this equation had become fixed somewhere back in time and was maintained "forever" because everyone just "knew" that was what a bolt of cloth was worth. Transactions between cultures were more difficult. Without general purpose money, who was to say what the worth of cloth, or stingray spines, or ceramic pots were to a neighboring village? And who could guarantee that those strangers wouldn't cheat you by manipulating your mutual ignorance of worth?

To deal with these problems, many traditional communities resorted to the institution of trade partners to create intercultural exchanges. Trade partners were people who knew and always traded with each other; these relationships were often

6.

handed down through time, as sons traded with the sons of men who had been trade partners with each other. Because trade partners knew and trusted each other, often having forged a bond through time that was similar to the bonds of family, they could exchange with each other without worrying about being cheated. In some cases, as for example with some Australian aborigines, trade partners became "blood brothers" by sharing blood from cuts to make the family-like bond even stronger. All in all, however, exchange across community boundaries was limited compared to the modern world.

European colonialism changed all that. As the European expansion into the rest of the world began in the fifteenth century, Europeans did more than conquer or take physical possession of much of the globe. European colonialism also began a process whereby European institutions became the model or baseline for the world, and no European idea was as pervasive as the idea that exchanges of goods or services involve money. Colonialism was an extractive process; Europeans drew raw materials from their colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas for European consumption. To facilitate the process of extraction, Europeans needed to have people operating with cash. It was all right for an Indian peasant to pay taxes to a local Indian state in shares of the crop or bolts of cloth, but those exchanges mattered little to a colonial empire centered on an European capital such as London or Brussels. Europeans needed their colonial subjects to operate with commodities that could be bought and sold for cash. Thus, for example, Europeans wanted non-European peasants in their colonies to grow something other than subsistence crops with which to feed their families; non-Europeans needed to raise cash crops such as sugar or coffee. Europeans could buy these cash crops from their colonial subjects (though often at market-controlled deflated prices) and sell them to industrial processors at a profit.

How, though, do you get people to use money when they have never had it before? Money in its basic form seems pretty useless to people unfamiliar with it. What can a person do with a rectangle of paper or a round metal coin? It can't be eaten or woven into clothing. People who have never had money do not volunteer to use it just because a conqueror says they should. Faced with traditional cultures' incomprehension of money, Europeans did two things to artificially create a need for it. First, they taxed people, demanding that all taxes be paid in European currency. Taxes were placed on land, labor, animals, essential pieces of equipment such as plows, and people (head taxes). Those non-Europeans who failed to pay their taxes or who tried to pay them in goods or barter were jailed for tax debt; often their possessions were confiscated as well. At the same time, Europeans offered things to buy - new, desirable goods such as metal cooking pots, kerosene lamps, and alcohol - that people wanted and could only obtain with money. European traders would first give away a few items to create a taste for them, and then require people to use money after that. The combination of taxes and things to buy were a carrot and stick approach to getting people to use money; taxes drove people to money, while the things you could buy with it made you want to have it.

7.

During the European colonial period, people's access to money was fairly limited. An African, Asian, or Native American could either work for wages - for Europeans - or grow a cash crop, such as sugar, to sell - to Europeans. This system was, of course, fairly lucrative - for Europeans. European traders and merchants would often prey upon native people's ignorance of money and its real worth to cheat people. An European merchant, for example, would buy a kilo of spices, such as cinnamon or pepper, in the East Indies for a gram of silver and then sell that product in Europe for up to 20 grams of silver. Or a trader would demand 100 beaver pelts for the cash to buy one fifth of whiskey. But then Europeans were not in the business of maintaining colonies as philanthropic enterprises. As a soldier with Cortes during the Spanish Conquest of Mexico wrote in his diary in 1520: "We came here to serve God and the king, and also to get rich."

Non-Europeans often remained ambivalent about money. Once money was in use in a colony, its use spread to exchanges other than those that Europeans intended. For example, many of the world's cultures practiced a kind of marriage exchange called bridewealth or brideprice in which the family of a groom transferred wealth to the family of a bride. Bridewealth was traditionally paid in goods - cows, cloth, tools, etc. - and was intended to compensate the family of the bride for what they were giving up. After all, the family of the bride had raised and fed this young woman until she was of marriageable age, but now they were giving up their investment, along with her labor and child-bearing abilities, to another family. The amount of wealth to be exchanged was conventionally known, though there was room for negotiation. With the advent of money, people began accumulating it and using it as part of bridewealth exchanges. But this conversion bothered people in many cultures. David McCurdy has recorded an example from India where a culture eventually abandoned bridewealth once cash was substituted for goods. As one informant put it, "You shouldn't buy a wife like you buy a shirt." Bridewealth exchanges had once been special; with the coming of cash, the transaction seemed cheapened. In Nigeria, there was so much conflict over the use of money for bridewealth payments, that plaintiffs appealed to the Nigerian Supreme Court in the 1970's to sort out what the proper bridewealth payment in currency should be. You see, they knew what the traditional payment was in goods, but people could not agree what the worth of a bride was in pounds and shillings. (The court took the case, by the way, and levied nationwide standards for bridewealth in cash; in a modern fashion, they tied the worth of a bride to how much schooling she had had.)

Other cultures noticed that they were working harder now for this new commodity. In a traditional subsistence economy, once people had produced enough food, clothing, and shelter for themselves, there was no point in doing more. Why have more food than you could store or eat? But when money came around - as well as things to buy - people found that their aspirations had grown to the point where they needed to constantly work harder to earn more money to buy more things - the same consumers' dilemma that most Americans feel. This kind of ambivalence towards money was expressed by a Solomon Islands poet named Celo Kulagoe in his book of

8.

poems, Where Leaves Had Fallen. This particular poem is called "Dis Man;" we will present it first in the language in which it was written, a creole language called Melanesia Pidgin English, and then in its English translation:

Dis fala man

emi strong tumas ia.

Hemi strong winim gavman.

Hemi strong winim Praem Minista

fo wanem hem hao emi pusum

olketa bik man ia oloketa.

Hemi openem maos blong oloketa

an oloketa toktok strong.

Hemi sukam tang blong oloketa

an oloketa toktok suiti.

Hemi Openem ae blong oloketa

an oloketa lukim pulade roti

long progres.

Dis fala man

emi fren blong mi ia.

Emi save bulas tumas ---

emi save werem enikaeni

Bat emi strong moa winim mi ia.

Hemi mekem mi ron olobaot long pulade ples

lulukaotim waka holeholem waka

gogo mi bon nating nao.

Man ia

emi Masta Dola ia.

"This man

is very strong.

He is more powerful than the government.

He is more powerful than the Prime Minister

because he is the one who pushes

these big men around and carries

them about.

He opens their mouths

and they speak with authority.

He sweetens their tongues

and they give sweet speeches.

He opens their eyes

and they see many ways to progress.

This man

9.

is a friend of mine.

He is extremely decorative ---

he puts on all kinds of ornaments.

But he is stronger than me.

He makes me run around places

looking for work at work so much so

that I'm now nothing but bones.

This man

is Mr. Dollar."

Archaeology on Mars: The 1996 Asimov Seminar: by Dr. Wymer. If Anthropos readers will recall, last year I wrote about my wonderfully zany and instructive introduction to the famous Asimov Seminar ("Murder on Monnbase"). Each summer a group of delightfully wacky and intense people come together to honor the memory of Isaac Asimov by continuing an important science-fiction tradition started by the famous writer and scientist. The Seminar was started by Asimov in the early 1970's, through the auspices of the Rensselaerville Institute, to create various scenarios and situations that would challenge interested individuals to think creatively and scientifically. Each summer's program is different, drawing upon the expertise and guidance of science fiction writers, editors, scientists, and various other researchers.

An Asimov Seminar tradition is to "elect" a scenario or program idea from a pool of proposals generated by that year's group of participants. Last year I suggested a Seminar based upon the idea that in the year 2055, researchers from Marsbase would uncover traces of an alien site. The 1996 participants would thus represent "famous researchers" sent from Earth to excavate and evaluate the archaeological traces. This proposal was selected by the Asimov Seminar members, and I found myself caught up in the frantic whirlwind of helping to construct and orchestrate an entire new world and a new archaeology. It was an incredible amount of work - and I enjoyed every second of it.

By early spring this year the advisors had been selected, and the scenario was being created. Dr. Stan Schmidt, editor of the well-known science fiction magazine, Analog, came on board to offer his expertise in astronomy and linguistics. Jack McDevitt, a science fiction writer noted for his use of archaeological themes, became our main creative force in the formulation of the scenario. Lastly, Dr. Bradley Lepper, an archaeologist specializing in the Ohio moundbuilders, lent his expertise to the group (Brad is a research compatriot of mine). All three joined me in constructing an incredibly detailed Martian culture, including an alien language (thanks to Dr. Schmidt), alien artifacts, and assorted other "zingers" to throw at the participants.

The 1996 seminar took place at the White Eagle Conference in lower New York during the last week of July. I traveled to the Conference Center a day before the participants were to arrive to construct the "site." A nine by nine foot square excavation unit had been dug to a depth of nearly a foot by the Center's work crew - but I

10.

discovered that Martian soil is quite hard and rocky when the depth needed to be adjusted (dang waste of a good three hours ...). I then built a Martian sacrificial altar of rock slabs and placed alien artifacts I created (well, some of them did look awfully similar to torn up pieces of an old Apple computer ... thanks, Dr. Minderhout) on top of and around the altar. In addition, ceramic plaques containing alien symbols and graphics were carefully laid out in a large circle around the altar, and additional artifacts, including stone tools, were placed at the site. Powdered milk paint was used to stain the rocks of the temple area and to color the altar. I then frantically covered the artifacts and features with the Martian soil as rain began to fall (rain on Mars?!).

The next day and a half, the Asimov seminar participants learned how to use scientific archaeological techniques to properly excavate the site (unfortunately, our Subsurface Radar Scanning equipment was coming on a later shuttle, so we had to use the archaic techniques of the 1990's). The rest of the second day was devoted to laboratory cleaning and inspection of the artifacts, as well as hypothesis generation to explain the odd mixture of high technology (computer parts) with stone tools. One of the highlights of the seminar was the language team's persistence in trying to decipher the alien language on the plaques (they actually did pretty good), and excitement was generated when a powerful sentient computer, located deep below the Martian soil, was activated by all our work. Jack McDevitt, by the way, was hysterically funny playing the role of the alien computer. The last segment of the seminar played upon larger ethical issues in our current society after the computer solemnly requested to be turned off. His people, after arriving from off-world and establishing a colony, had degenerated into a stone age culture and eventually died out, leaving him alone for eons. The last segment provoked many personal feelings among the participants, as it was intended to do.

I believe that this was the first time that something of this nature has been done - the actual creation of alien artifacts and language and the construction of an alien site to be excavated. Overall, the 1996 Seminar will be memorable to me for the admixture of the science of archaeology and astronomy, and the creativity of quick-thinking witty people. It was a wonderful experience.

Amish Economics: In 1935, there were 6.8 million farms in the United States. By 1995, this number had dropped to 1,925,300, the lowest total since 1850. The same trend is true for Pennsylvania which had 220,000 farms in the first farm census taken here in 1910, but only 44,870 in 1992. The farms most likely to be abandoned in the United States are smaller, family-owned farms, defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as farms of 160 acres or less. Correspondingly, large farms have mostly held their own. In fact, in Pennsylvania, since 1980, the one category of farms that has continued to increase in numbers has been farms of one thousand acres or more.

There are many reasons for the decline in small family farms, but among them has been that farmers have been caught between two economic forces. On the one hand, the prices farmers can get for their produce has been falling, while on the other hand,

11.

the costs of farming have been growing up. The result is a low profit margin per acre which often only the large farms can survive. Prices for many farm products has fallen in large part due to new agricultural hybrids which produce a great deal more food on the same acreage. For example, between 1955 and 1989, the number of dairy farms in the U.S. dropped from 2.8 million to 205,000, and the number of dairy cows dropped from 21 million to 10 million. Yet, total milk production in the U.S. rose 20% during the same time period because each cow these days gives 144% more milk than in 1955. New hybrids have increased the supply of milk to the point where supply exceeds demand, and many dairy farmers in 1996 say that they might as well pour their milk down the drain as take what they can get for it in the marketplace. The same trend is generally true for crops such as wheat and corn.

At the same time, the costs of farming have been going up. For several decades now farm families have been facing a social problem: their children are not interested in farming. Farmers find that they can no longer turn to their families for labor, while at the same time, they cannot afford to pay the necessary wages to bring labor in. The result has been increased investments in farm equipment. With tractors, combines, and other farm machinery, a farmer hopes to maintain the same-sized family farm his grandfather worked with the help of a team of horses - and a large, willing family. A walk down the farm equipment rows of the Bloomsburg Fair last month should have revealed one striking fact: farm machinery is very expensive. In 1996, a new tractor can cost as much or more than a new Lexus, and, of course, the tractor is not very useful without the plows, harrows, and other equipment it is meant to pull.

To deal with this economic dilemma, farmers turn to banks and other lending institutions to loan them the money they need to get the equipment necessary to run their farms, often putting up their farms or their next crop as collateral. To produce the money to repay their loans and provide for their families, farmers work very hard - often as much as 60 hours a week - and they frequently take on jobs off the farm to earn more money. The result is exhausting and back-breaking for what is often a blue collar income. Small wonder, then, that many farm children find the prospect of farm work unattractive and many farmers choose to do something else.

But not all small family farms have these problems. The Amish are one farming population that remains fairly prosperous. As noted in the April-May Anthropos, the Amish are a religious group that has chosen to separate itself from the rest of American society. The core of the Amish economy is agriculture; most Amish are either farmers or directly involved in farming in some way, such as animal breeding or harness making. The Amish have two major advantages compared to most family farms: 1) they have been able to retain their labor force, and 2) they use a minimum of mechanical farm equipment.

One of the most significant victories the Amish have obtained in their many legal battles with federal and state governments has been the right to educate their children in their own schools. The Amish have always been concerned that if their children

12.

were made to go to the same schools as the rest of America that they would be lost to Amish culture. In Pennsylvania, therefore, each Amish community maintains its own school. The Amish school is outfitted in accordance with Amish social requirements: no electricity, outhouses for toilets, pot bellied stoves fueled with wood, etc. In their schools, children are taught skills directly related to farm life along with enough literacy (in German) to read the Bible and to understand religious services. The teacher is usually an Amish woman, a graduate of an Amish school. School hours are flexibly arranged around farm work, and there is no schooling after the eighth grade. As a result, Amish children are trained for farm life, while at the same time a Amish school does not provide the skills necessary to make it in the larger society. At the same time, the Amish do not use birth control, and women are judged in large part by how many children they have. Thus, an Amish farm has an appropriate labor force at hand.

Similarly, the Amish avoid the widespread use of mechanical equipment. This is consistent with their ideology of respecting nature and of avoiding the wider world. In the 1990's, some Amish communities have allowed farmers to use some gasoline-powered equipment in a limited fashion: running a conveyor belt off a tractor engine, for example. But Amish farmers still depend largely on horse and human power to get the work on the farm done. And there's another aspect to Amish farm labor that other American farmers often cannot count on - community help. In a pinch, an Amish farmer knows he can turn to his neighbors for help - and that they will for no more compensation than a meal and the promise that the help will be returned some day in the future.

In this way, the Amish keep their costs low. The author Gene Logsdon who maintains a family farm in central Ohio has written a book, At Nature's Pace, which outlines Amish economics. In it, he records many conversations with Amish people in which they do an accounting of their costs for a month, a year, or whatever. In one case, one Amish farmer computed his costs for producing a corn crop of 150 bushels per acre, which Logsdon then compared with an Ohio State Extension Service estimate of the costs for a farmer with mechanized equipment doing the same thing. The Ohio State estimate was a cost of \$393 per acre; the Amish cost was \$44.07 per acre. The differences are telling. Ohio State estimated that buying chemical fertilizers added \$63 per acre to a farmer's crop, but Amish farmers use mostly manure for a per acre cost of \$9.10. Pesticides and herbicides cost a farmer \$28, but the Amish, who cultivate their crops by hand or with horse-drawn cultivators to keep weeds down, estimated \$2.50 for the same cost. Ohio State estimated a total of \$85 per acre for equipment and the gasoline, oil, etc. to maintain it; the Amish farmer's cost is \$8. And Ohio State figured in a cost for interest on operating capital of \$12, but the Amishman had no such costs at all.

Now here's the economically interesting point: Ohio State also estimated that the farmer's market return for his corn crop was going to be \$360 per acre, figuring on a per bushel price of \$2.40 (the figure is lower in 1996). That means the ordinary farmer was actually going to run a deficit: \$393 of cost vs. \$360 of return. Estimates like these

13.

caused one of Logsdon's non-Amish neighbors to quip, "It's a good thing I don't have a larger farm - then I'd really be broke!" But the Amish farmer's costs gave him a profit of about \$315 per acre!

Logsdon and others have discovered another point about Amish farm life, as well - Amish farmers do not work as many hours as equipment-intensive farmers, despite the fact that more of the Amish farmer's labor is done by hand. Logsdon discovered this pretty much by chance, when he tried to organize a softball game in his community between the more conventional farmers and the Amish. This turned out to be very difficult, because the conventional farmers were always working, if not on the farm, then at a wage-labor job to help pay for the farm.

"Eventually, or perhaps inevitably, I took my softball team to Holmes County for a cow-pasture doubleheader with neighborhood Amish players ... It was a grand day. We were perhaps a run better than the Amish, but they were twice as adept at dodging piles of manure. Our collected 'womenfolk' cheered from the shade. The Amish bishop watched from his buggy behind home plate, sorely tempted, I was told, to join the game, but afraid it might seem a bit demeaning to some of his congregation. The games themselves taught me two lessons in economy. First, our uniforms of blue and gold cost me more money than I care to talk about. The Amish players, with their traditional denims, broadcloth shirts and straw hats, are always in uniform. Second, some of our player/farmers could not take time off from their high-tech machines to play in the game. The Amish, with their slow, centuries-old-methods, had plenty of time."

Logsdon looked at an Amish barn raising to take another look at costs in money and labor. The same summer as the softball game, a tornado knocked down four Amish barns. In each case, the entire Amish community pitched in. Trees knocked down in the storm were cut down and sawn into lumber and hauled to the barn sites. Each barn took about a day to build. And neighbors donated animals and hay to replace what had been lost in the storm. Logsdon says "I watched the raising of the last barn in open-mouthed awe. Some 400 Amish men and boys, acting and reacting like a hive of bees in absolute harmony of cooperation, started at sunrise with only a foundation and floor and by noon, by noon, had the huge edifice far enough along that you could put hay in it ... Nor were the barns the usual modern, one-story metal boxes hung on poles. They were huge buildings, three and four stories high, post-and-beam framed, and held together with hand-hewn mortises and tenons."

Logsdon invited a contractor to give an estimate on how much it would cost to build such a structure. The estimate was \$100,000; and furthermore it was going to take the contractor three months to do the job. The Amish built all four barns, including cutting the lumber, in three weeks, at an estimated cost of \$30,000 per structure. And the Amish looked at the barn raisings as a kind of holiday! "We look forward to raisings. There are so many helping, no one has to work too hard. We get in a good visit."

14.

BU Anthropology News: Dr. Wymer and senior anthropology major, Tim Snyder, traveled to Harrisburg on September 24 to attend the 1996 Pennsylvania State Museum Curation Symposium. The symposium focused on the latest conservation techniques and the new Pennsylvania state law on archaeology, as well the curation requirements of the Museum for placing a collection with them.

Dr. Minderhout presented a class on rain forest cultures for a combined 2nd and 3rd grade class at Danville Elementary School on October 24. Dr. Minderhout also presented a talk on cross-cultural perspectives on alcohol use for Alcohol Awareness Week at BU.