Discussion questions on ‘The history of Pennsylvania German: From Europe to the Midwest’

This is the first chapter from Steven Hartman Keiser’s excellent 2012 book *Pennsylvania German in the American Midwest* (Publications of the American Dialect Society).

1. Simple first question: What did you know about the Amish and Mennonites before reading this chapter? Specifically about them in Wisconsin?
2. What are the names for this language?
3. Where did this language develop? When?
4. Where is it spoken? Who speaks it? How many people?
5. Is this language endangered? Why (not)?
6. Who are the Amish and Mennonites? What’s ‘Old Order’ mean?
7. What other languages do Amish and Mennonites speak?
8. Are there dialects of Pennsylvania German? Where did those first develop? What features are associated with them?
9. Has the language been influenced by English? How?
10. What does Steve mean by ‘portable community’?
11. How is this situation different from the situations of other immigrants, including German-speaking immigrants, to Wisconsin and the U.S.?