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8-1-1954

### Letter From Henry M. Fulmer to Alfred L. Shoemaker, August 1, 1954

Henry M. Fulmer

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#### Recommended Citation

Fulmer, Henry M., "Letter From Henry M. Fulmer to Alfred L. Shoemaker, August 1, 1954" (1954). *Alfred L. Shoemaker Folk Cultural Documents*. 57.  
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401-11

632 A St. J. F.  
Washington 3 D.C.  
Aug 1, 1954

Dr Alfred L Shoemaker  
The Pa. Dutch Folklore Center  
Franklin & Marshall College  
Lancaster Pa.

Dear Sir:-

I have a problem (adapted) which I hope you too will adopt, if you have't already done so.

I don't know whether the educational controversy of the Amish has come to your attention or not. I'm writing you about it, so that in the event, (due to the pressure of the many things you have to deal with), it has escaped you, you may know about it.

I was terribly shocked when I saw in our Lutheran church publication a picture of several Amish men being jailed because, (as the small accompanying article put it) they refused to send their children to school beyond the eighth grade.

I was horrified that such a thing could happen in this freedom loving country where special stress is laid on religious freedom.

Here is a people who pay their taxes and bear their full share of the states' burden yet require less of the states' services. They are in no way a problem, they occupy no space in the jails or poor houses, they don't cause near the wear on the highways that the average citizen does and are willing to do with less educational outlay than the rest of us, and yet for that very reason they are jailed. Religious freedom?

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It is part of their religious belief (as I understand it) that education beyond the eighth grade is unnecessary for their way of life, furthermore their homes & farms are conclusive proof that it is so. Nowhere can one find a better environment and a more desirable atmosphere in which to live (if one is desirous of peaceful living) than among these people. Yet because some judge feels they are not living up to the letter of the law they must be jailed.

Now you might say why tell me all these things which I've known for a long time?

Well here is the reason, something should be done about it, and you are in a far better position to bring pressure to bear than I am.

I am hoping that <sup>if</sup> there is a movement already organized to correct this injustice, you will get your organization behind it and give it all the help possible, and if nothing is being done about it, thus far, that you will start a movement to do whatever is necessary even to the point of having special legislation enacted if necessary. State or National or both if needed.

There are exceptions to every rule and this surely is a most worthy exception.

Personally I think this country would be far better off if the entire citizenry was as devoted to God as the Amish

I will be glad to hear that the situation is being remedied.

yours truly

Henry M. Palmer