

Holmes County Folklife Fieldwork for Ohio State Arts Council
Performed by Michael and Carrie N. Kline, Talking Across the Lines, LLC
www.folktalk.org

Summary of David Kline Interview, January 9, 2009

David Kline gave this stunning testimonial in the comfort of his woodstove-heated living room, with family members conversing and washing dishes in the adjoining kitchen. It is early afternoon and David is in a warm, reflective mood that resonates with his joyful memories of family, fields and childhood. David, for the past 18 years has edited and published *Farming: People, Land, and Community* with the modest support of a few local advertisers and reader subscriptions. He has also written two books, *Scratching the Woodchuck: Nature On an Amish Farm* and *Great Possessions: An Amish Farmer's Journal* with a "Forward" by Wendell Berry. He is also a minister and bishop in his local church district, chosen by lot, as is the tradition.

In a compelling delivery, David weaves together Amish history (both European and American), theology, technology and education as they interweave and interact with land and community. He calmly stresses the important connections to make with natural surroundings in maintaining thriving families and communities and the joy he derives in exercising stewardship of his 80 acre farm. He waxes both philosophical and poetic on the green nature of Amish technology, which is, he says, based on the collection and wise use of contemporary sunlight – for the growing of grain to feed the horse – and not ancient fossil fuels, expensive to produce and ruinous to the environment. "Tell me," he smiles wistfully, "Which system is more consistent with our current needs nationally for renewable resources, sustainable communities, and a green economy?" David Kline offers an heart-rending overview of Amish life, arts, and work in eastern Holmes County and beyond, calling into question many assumed national values and methods which stand in stark contrast to the plain and simple model he proffers. This ninety-minute interview should be required listening for every child and teacher in Ohio schools.