



Us Little People: Mennonite Children

Carl Hiebert

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We are all fascinated by lives led outside mainstream society. Photographer Carl Hiebert spent seven years documenting the Mennonite way of life for this beautiful and touching book. He found himself repeatedly drawn to the faces of the children he encountered. Two years into his project, his camera found a more specific focus.

"Had I perhaps touched the surface of my own childhood, a deep-rooted desire for a more innocent time?" asks Hiebert. "A childhood on a conservative Mennonite farm speaks of another time. There are no televisions, designer clothes, or Nintendo games. Summers are spent barefoot. Mennonite children are allowed to be children."

The photographs in this remarkable collection radiate a simplicity and joy that is increasingly difficult to find in our modern world. Brief essays by Mennonite children tell the stories of their own unique lives, in their own words, such as the following:

"Baseball is a favorite Mennonite sport. Bats often come from Dad's shop, turned on an old lathe. They may be lopsided, too long, too heavy. Tattered balls fly through the air, some of them worn down to their core. Many players prefer the simplicity of bare-handed catches. But perhaps the most remarkable thing about this game is that no one keeps score. This is play for the sake of play. It has nothing to do with winning."

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Teresa Jones:

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