



Life Cycles

Part II: New Beginnings Birth and Child Rearing in the Amish Community

By **GRACE MILLER**

As the first rays of summer sun break through the mist, the Raber household is already stirring. Andy is finishing an early breakfast; he is anxious to get out to his woodshop and start staining and varnishing the cabinet he assembled yesterday. Marie has roused the boys, but she is hoping that the baby will sleep a little longer, giving her an opportunity to wash up after breakfast and maybe even get a pot of soup simmering on the stove for noon dinner.

But before Andy and Marie start their day's work, they pause to spend time with sleepy-eyed David and Roy at the table in the kitchen. Andy reads today's Scripture passage from the Bible, and the family bow their heads to thank God for the blessings of life and health. Six-year-old David prays for a cousin who has measles, and even four-year-old Roy haltingly whispers a prayer of thanks for six new kittens in the barn. Andy and Marie cannot help smiling at each other over the little blond heads. David, named for Marie's young brother who was killed 12 years before when a car struck the family buggy, is a willing helper in his father's shop. Roy, the namesake of Andy's father, is more inclined to play with his numerous pets. A stern but gentle reminder from his mother is usually enough to keep him at his task of helping to carry dishes from the table to the sink. He looks forward to the day when his one-and-a-half-year-old sister will take over this 'girl's work,' freeing him for more manly labor in the barn or the woodshop.

Andy and Marie are looking forward to the birth this fall of the newest member of the family. In fact, Marie has planned a trip today to Spector's store in Mount Eaton to buy more of the soft white cotton fabric she is making up into nightgowns the baby will wear for at least the first few months.

The young parents have been considering what name they will give this child. After following custom in naming their first two children for relatives, they departed from tradition by calling their daughter the more modern 'Lori.' Furthermore, they drew the disapproval of some of the older church members by giving her a