



Joe and Sadie Hershberger  
*Interviewed by Anne Kimzey*

**1. Mennonite history (02:29)**

**J. Hershberger:** We're known as Mennonites.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** And, uh, this [isn't [?]] started as a movement, uh, the Anabaptists.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** And you're familiar....somewhat?

**Kimzey:** Yes, somewhat. Um....

**J. Hershberger:** Um, shortly <clears his throat>, shortly after Martin- Martin Luther's, uh, break with the Catholic Church, uh, [since that [?]] is the most notable, and then uh, from then on quite a few....others accepted the fact that [he thought [?]] the Catholics were not holding the traditions of the early Church, uh, the apostolic Church, and so more and more broke away and in our particular setting, regarding the Anabaptists, there were three, uh, two were Catholic priests and one other wasn't. Uh, but there were three that came together and, uh, had a firm convictions that the Bible was saying different things from what the Catholic Church was preaching. So they, uh, came together and they renounced the Catholic faith and, uh, they- one of them was baptized by one of the others. The three Anabaptists I'm just speaking about were [Conrad Gable [?]], [Felix Mons [?]], and [George Bleurock [?]]. And [Bleurock [?]] is a blue cloak or blue coat. So they were baptized and then from then on they had problems, as all of the- those that broke away from the Church, and they [unintelligible [?]] neither committed themselves to Luther's doctrine or to the Catholic Church or to, uh, Zwingli started the, uh, Church in Switzerland and there was much persecution [unintelligible [?]] and the early Anabaptists had something of the same- similar faith that the, uh, Friends or Quakers, you're probably more familiar with those, a non-resistance to war, to love not only your friends but your enemies also, and this is a tradition- teaching of the Anabaptists held, uh, held onto. And

the, uh, Baptists today, Baptists today, also came out of that movement, they were led by John Wesley.

## **2. Differences (01:25)**

**J. Hershberger:** One of the things that the Amish, uh, there's many Amish today [that [?]] you're aware of, one of the things that they are very strong on is anyone that leaves their church, regardless of what denomination, what church they go to, they're expelled and excommunicated or banned. And, uh, he was one of the first ones, uh, didn't approve of this now. Our churches today they approve of someone being expelled and excommunicated if they have been a Christian and been loyal members and then they fall away, and, um, into sin and are not willing to repent, go on living in sin, so they're- they, uh,- but outside of that, if one leaves our church and goes to another church, a Christian church, and is a good member they're still brothers. So that was the beginning of the Beachy church from that belief, the Amish are very traditional as you're aware of, and uh, they have a good points, but, uh, they are more strong on their traditions, clothes, and various things like that than they are, they had no outreach as far as missions or anything like that.

## **3. Finding a place to live (01:39)**

**J. Hershberger:** When people come in, one of them comes in from Michigan, and one from North Dakota, and one from New Mexico, and one from Alabama, and they sit down side by side, good people, where they came from and yet they have nothing in common, and people lose their zeal- their feeling for each other. They become units instead of people. And we saw that happening and we wanted to, uh, the fast pace of life there, we wanted- we like it slow pace of life.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** Where people mean- are meaningful to each other. So we were looking around, I guess for six years, various places. We were in- looking at Alabama at one time, and we- some of us were, four of us were going to look at an area there and uh, we had an accident on that way, that road, that time, uh, my brother and one of the others was killed in the accident and, uh, but anyway, we looked through six years. Meanwhile, farmland is

increasing in price and finally, we came to the conclusion that farming wasn't for all of us anymore, there were other things- farming is big business and many of our people wouldn't be equipped or they wouldn't have the- the, uh, bank accounts to start up in farming anymore, so, we came here. And just the three of them, one [unintelligible (?)], my younger brother, and uh, my son-in-law, and my brother-in-law were here, and they took options on three different places.

#### **4. Cabinetmaking (00:47)**

**J. Hershberger:** Another one of them, my brother-in-law, started in with the cabinet-making cabinet tops.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** And, uh, so they- that's right in the same area.

**Kimzey:** Are these like counter-tops....

**J. Hershberger:** Countertops.

**S. Hershberger:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** I said- I was wrong- countertops. And then, uh, it's a big demand for those and then we had, in the area we have one, uh, three cabinet shops. One makes only doors for cabinets, and that's a type of work that most of them are in now. They have- most of them have some land and some cattle, but that's primarily their work.

#### **5. Nurses, schoolteachers, missionaries (00:45)**

**Kimzey:** You don't encourage them to go to college-

**J. Hershberger:** No, unless, if they have a special calling, if they- or a desire, schoolteaching or nurses, uh, something like that, we have quite a few nurses.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** Of course, it's mandatory for them to have a college education. When they go out for something like we approve of it.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** Uh, most of them are interested in going out in the mission field, where they're really needed.

## 6. Not conforming (00:37)

**J. Hershberger:** We believe in the Bible, we teach against following the standards of the world.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** Uh, in all things. Which would include dress. Now, we feel our Amish brethren go overboard on the dress, uh, and don't hold some of the other things in like perspective. But we <clears his throat> we feel that, uh, in other words, we feel that because of style of dress changes this year or that we don't have to discard the dress and get new ones right away.

## 7. Quilting (00:57)

**Kimzey:** So do people make their own clothes here? Is it Mennonite-

**J. Hershberger:** Uh, the women's dresses-

**S. Hershberger:** Our clothes are mostly made by us, but the men's are bought.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**S. Hershberger:** Now the Amish, they make all their own clothes. Men and everybody, But-

**J. Hershberger:** Except their hats.

**S. Hershberger:** Yeah. But the girls are taught to sew, our girls learn to sew, that helps a lot.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum. And do, uh, you mentioned earlier quilting, right? Maybe I did, um, lots of women quilt or....

**S. Hershberger:** Quite a few of us. We-

**Kimzey:** You know how to sew, that's one step.

**S. Hershberger:** We have, uh, well, we call it relief sewing once a month.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**S. Hershberger:** And we always make some quilts there and they go to mission fields. But, uh, we do a lot of private quilting too.

## 8. Small town life (00:50)

**J. Hershberger:** Because there's such a contrast where we came from already, that establishment- you went into a store, uh, everything was business. And, uh, it's more so in the North too than it is in the South. But even there where we were everything was business. And strictly business and you didn't loiter much. Now here when you go into a store or a bank they want to know how Aunt Maggie is <laughter> and how you're feeling and all that. I like that, it shows an interest in you. 'Course, some people say "I wouldn't live in a small town- everybody knows your business <laughter> and no privacy." I like that.

**Kimzey:** Well, if- if you have something to hide I guess is- <laughter>.

**J. Hershberger:** But it's got its advantages and disadvantages.

**Kimzey:** Right.

**J. Hershberger:** But I- we appreciate it very much. The friendliness of the people.

### **9. Baking pies (00:32)**

**S. Hershberger:** I think they specialize in, uh, you've heard of peanut butter pie.

**Kimzey:** This here?

**S. Hershberger:** At Yoder's.

**Kimzey:** Oh, ok, peanut butter pie.

**S. Hershberger:** I think they specialize in that. And of course, when it's the- strawberries are ready, they'll have fresh strawberry pie, fresh peach pie, just sort of variety you know.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**J. Hershberger:** I don't think there's any specialty in pies, uh, as such. Now, just like your shoo-fly pie, which is-

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**S. Hershberger:** I think it's mostly in the seasoning, you know, like strawberries and peaches.

**Kimzey:** Um-hum.

**S. Hershberger:** Things like that.

