

Interview with Brother Arnold Hadd

Interviewer: Unknown

February 9, 1996

Q: The main question I'm concerned with right now is the impact of the great enormous wave of communalism that struck the United States in the late 60's and through the 70's. I'm interested in the effect of that on the Sabbath Day Lake Shakers. The Shakers generally Canterbury too, I suppose. I'm just curious to know what kind of impact it had. Were you swamped with seekers that came through. Was the life so unappealing that no one even considered it? Did the world even know the Shakers existed.

A: Well, I think actually the world new about us and I think most of those people who were looking for community life in the 60's were aware of the Shakers too. And we would get letters from people and we would get, as Brother Ted would call them, spiritual seekers dropping in every now and again. Usually those spiritual seekers would only be around for a couple of hours. Brother would speak to them or Sister Mildred or Sister Francis or somebody would sit down and take some time with them and just have candid conversation and explain what the life was all about. And once they understood that the life had so much structure to it, it was the very kind of thing they felt that they wanted to get away from, they were out the door. Very, very, a couple and only a couple would end up staying on a day or two, they ... didn't come to stay on ... but they seemed kind and harmless and they wanted to observe and help out. And in one way there's a group of man, it's called the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association in Bosco. And they have an apprenticeship program which we became involved with almost in the beginning and I think that was back in 1977 or 1978, no no 1976 I guess it was. And they would send us three and people and they were always girls that we ended up getting, but there young men in there too, who were interested in organic farming and gardening as a lifestyle. Most of these tended to be people who would have been, had they been five or 10 years older, would have seriously been communal people. They had all of the same aspirations and goals and they were trying to really incorporate a communal lifestyle into their own lives. And actually it was interesting, most of them were very much affected positively by their experience of spending two months in the community and working together and being with these people who they formed very close personal ties with, I think. And helping out inside of the community and working and worshiping, it was very interesting to see the interaction going on. I know privately we discussed about the community of the simple life. There were three people from California that had already begun a community of some sort that had evidently come out of the Hait-Ashbury thing.

Q: And they stayed how long?

A: They stayed six weeks. They came with the intention of learning about Shakerism, they went through the whole finding out of what was it like to be a Shaker, to really more or less imitate it. From the reading they had done they thought this was something that they really wanted to do. And so they took the whole basic aspects of Shakerism and wanted to take it back to California with them and they did. They went through a lot of changes and a lot of growth and they're still with us today. But they've gone into the Catholic Church and become a lay community. And they are now called Star-Crossed Monastery and they're in Annapolis, California.

Q: But are they still somewhat Shaker influenced in the way they live would you say?

A: I think monasticism is...

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Q: Monasticism is ..

A: ..itself monasticism, you know, and you can put a Protestant bent or a Catholic bent to it. Add a saint and the Hail Mary and you got the Catholic in circulating with the Protestant.

Q: Is that the best word to characterize Shaker life? Monasticism?

A: I think so, yea. I mean today, I would say it's probably less so than it was up into the 1960's. We were kind of the last community to really change. We kept the old ways, we kept the world separate from the family. And we started to incorporate the world more into our lives. The concept of the cloister was really brought down. Although student dwelling houses mostly offer ... to everybody but us.

Q: There are some other people there though aren't there? Don't you have a museum employees who work there and ... not part of the community?

A: Right, there not in the house.

Q: Oh, they don't live in the dwelling house.

A: Right.

Q: Oh, I thought they did.

A: (no)

Q: So that's still really a Shaker monastic community.

A: Right. And in fact we are taking the business office out of the house this year. We're painting and changing another building over and moving all of the public operations out of the dwelling house.

Q: What about... It sounds like there wasn't really the great 60's surge really didn't have a vast impact, the peace seekers, kind of life went on as it had, sounds like.

A: Right. But I think if anything good brought us more back into the media's attention. Not so much from a dying aspect, but here are the original hippies. And you see that in newspaper articles where they are talking about communalism and all that. The Shakers, always, absolutely always are mentioned in those articles.

Q: ... What about the other side of it? Did... I presume the Shakers have always read the newspaper and such. They must have been aware that that was going on in the rest of the world. Was there any reaction to that? Is it like, maybe our thing is coming back into vogue and energized.

A: No, I don't think so.

Q: No.

A: No, I don't think they thought of it in any which way. I mean so many of the community were older at that time and they looked at them like most of America as Hippie freaks.

Interview with Brother Arnold Hadd

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Q: O.K.

A: They didn't see much of a like... Although when they met them, you know, I mean as individuals, they saw a very open, very sincere people. One group that we had, rather more of a long term involvement was the Sufis, who eventually came to inhabit the South Family of Mount Lebanon, which they renamed the Abode of the Message. And for, I'm gonna say five or six years, there was a real steady stream of the Sufis coming up to Maine and coming spending long weekends with us, and a lot of letter writing back and forth and a couple of visits by the members of our community down to see them.

Q: Well, actually, I don't know about the Abode people entirely, but the Sufis I've known there was a fair acquaintance with the Hippies I would say.

A: Oh, absolutely. That's how I mean. They really were. They just found their Guru in ... Alad, that's all. I remember them well.

Q: They may have quit smoking pot or something, but otherwise...

A: They were all very macrobiotic and they were into the incense of the week and they were very pacifist oriented, anti-war more than pacifist really. The cry was anti-war. Alternative lifestyle and rejecting capitalism. They were very young, very idealistic. Communal oriented slash cooperative people.

Q: Just to characterize the Shakers back in that period in the 60's and 70's, there were two communities. And do you know about how many people there were in say in 1970 roughly?

A: 1970 there were five Shakers at Canterbury and at Sabbath Day Lake there were 12.

Q: Now Brother Ted was there by then wasn't he?

A: Right.

Q: And he kind of represents the first, as I understand it, the new generation or whatever you want to call it.

A: Yea, because... although there was still... I'm trying to think in 1975 ... I think we had one child left. But she was just waiting out her time and there seemed to be no hope in her into a Shaker.

Q: Someone who had been placed there?

A: Yea, as a child and she was the only one left.

Q: When did Brother Ted join?

A: 61.

Q: So he's really before all of that. The 60's period as we think of it.

A: Although he was sympathetic and kind to them, I mean he was really very much a conservative at heart. So... regarded I think.

Interview with Brother Arnold Hadd

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February 9, 1996

Q: How did he get? He kind of represents a ... it seems to me.

A: He was ... He's a real unique kind of person. He went to Colby College, undergraduate.

Q: Which is fairly close.

A: Yea, he's from Watertown, Massachusetts ... he's from Colby which is in Waterville, not far away, which does play into it. And he got a full ride scholarship and went to the Cerbone, then on to the University of Strasbourg cause his specialty was medieval Latin. He came back to this country and went to Harvard Divinity School.

Q: Mmm. I didn't know that.

A: Yea, and the other skill he had picked up was being a librarian. So to help pay his way through Divinity School he was working as a branch Librarian at Watertown, Massachusetts which was his home. And he had to fill in at the reference desk one week, when a young lady in the '50's, it's a very odd time to be doing this, she was doing a series...paper, an undergraduate paper on the Shakers. And she wanted to know if some of these books had come in, well of course he was fascinated by religion anyway. So then, he started to make sure that no book got to that girl before he got to read it first. And everything started pouring in. And on the substance of that he decided to go to Hancock. And Hancock in those days was in its last hoorah. It was very close to closing, that was 19... I think it was 1955 or 56 when he first went there. And there were signs on all the gates that said Keep out, Closed, Stay Away. They didn't want to be bothered. In front of the dwelling house, not the store, but in front of the dwelling house were they actually lived. And he decided he hadn't driven all the way across the state for this. So he opened up the gate anyway and a window flew open and Brother Ricardo yells out the window, "Can't you read?" And he said that he could but he was here to talk to the Shakers about Shakerism. And when Ricardo said oh in that case wait a minute. And he comes down the stairs and he took right up to his bedroom and they sat there for two hours. But first, he said the first words out of Brother Ricardo's mouth was regeneration. The life of the generation. And they got to be very good friends and Brother Ted go once or twice a month, over to Hancock, and take Brother Ricardo out and they would talk. And Ricardo advice was this is the end for us. You can't join here. It's all over. But if you're interested in being a Shaker go to Sabbath Day Lake. And he did it. And he met Sister Ethel and he would come and help her in her museum.

Q: That's a different Sister Ethel than at Canterbury?

A: Right, this is Ethel Peacock. They called her Sister Grandmother, she looked like everyone's... twinkling blue eyes, white white hair, rosy complexion. She was in good health. And big woman. Just very huggable. She called everyone darling. And so she became Brother Ted's special pet. Ethel wouldn't let anybody in the family know about him for a long time. For her birthday, I think, he sent this huge bouquet of flowers and I said, "Grandmother who sent that?" A friend, a friend. So he kept coming enough that everybody got to meet him. And he came and with his training with the library he came to help. Meanwhile, he had taken a position as public librarian in Waterville, Maine. So he moved eventually to be closer to the community. So from Waterville he would come and spend every weekend. And that's what he did. He would come and spend every weekend with community and had

Interview with Brother Arnold Hadd

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February 9, 1996

a permanent room over the trustees office just for him, until such time he could move in. He came in 1961 but full time he wasn't in the community until 1966. And then he moved. And so he really came as a very different person than normally join the Shakers.

Q: It kind of seems like then things were opened up somewhat essentially.

A: He represented the possibility of perpetuation. He's the one that said look you can't have the closed meeting thing. You've got to open them back up to the public. You've got to speak out for yourselves because there are enough people who want to do it for you and you don't like it. So why don't you do something about it? And we said, "Well what should we do?" He said ... He organized the library and made it available to people outside the family for the first time ever. And started to take over the museum from Sister Ethel, which was just this lovely little hodge-podge of everything she could ever find that was just squirreled in this building. And he started to organize them into room setting and give interpretations to the whole thing. So he started to make Sabbath Day Lake open up to the world.

Q: Were you next? Your generation.

A: There were other people who came before me who ... didn't have those things ... and stayed rather five or ten years.

Q: Oh really, that long?

A: ... Well I mean since I've been at Sabbath Day Lake, 18 years, well counting Alister now, 17 people have come for the ... They've gone through the whole thing of let's examine them and try. And ... counting Alister four of us have stayed.

Q: June ...

A: June's been with us for 10 years.

Q: That's right. O.K. She's the youngest sister.

A: Yea, cause you missed our youngest sister, she left, a year ago in January. She had been with us for 10 years. ... vocation too, sadly.

Q: I don't know what else to ask is there anything, since I'm limited to this period I'm interested in. I don't know...

A: I'm trying to think of any other common things or run ins.

Q: But as far as day to day life went, life went on as before. I mean you had the industries you were working on...

A: Right. I mean we got rid of some and the fancy goods really took a nose dive in the 60's.

Q: Is that right?

A: Because house wives were becoming fewer and fewer and even fewer of them wanted to sit around and do sewing and knitting and stuff. I mean the kind of things our sisters were producing just weren't fitting the market anymore. So we had to wipe them out and find something new and that's when we

Interview with Brother Arnold Hadd

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February 9, 1996

went back to ... the earth ... Brother Ted was really influenced by the natural, back to the earth movement and saying this is the time to revive the herbs. So in 1965 they started growing again.

Q: Now I noticed you said everything was grown organically.

A: Mm-hmm. (Yes).

Q: I would say that was 60's influence.

A: Very much. Yea, ... Mossy ... had a lot to do with that. But I mean, very sensible thing. And actually Brother ... though he did use chemicals was well aware of using other sources too. He was a big believer in ... green manures ... and cause he always used all the cow dressing. ... He also did use ...

Q: So the fancy goods went out and I guess the furniture probably wasn't being made anymore? Is that right?

A: Sabbath Day Lake never really made furniture. And certainly never made any for sale anyway.

Q: So what... I guess the herbs really did...

A: Yea, the herbs and the farm was bringing in some cause we had the apple orchard. Then we were really planting a lot more even when I first came. The vegetable garden was much much larger. It was like the family could never admit that they were under 30 people, so we were still growing all this unnecessary food which we would just sell. I mean it wasn't like we were making tons of money on it selling it either when you think of all the labor and everything that's put into it. Brother ?Glenn? and I... Well, I had the garden first. And I couldn't convince them so what was bought was what I had to plant and what I had to grow. But then as Brother Glenn and I came to take the farm, we were together, now he has it. We just scaled down to what makes more sense. And were allowing some of the soil to actually rest for a while. We're trying to let it stay for three years to really build it up and then kind of change it over to the other sides. See what we can do then.

Q: When did Brother Wayne arrive?

A: He came in December of 1979.

Q: So he's been there a good while...

A: 16 years.

Q: Well, I don't know. I can't... I wish I had a long list of questions but I really don't. I wish I could have seen it at that point. It must have been a more of a ... than when I was there this year or last year. It seemed a little more modern than I expected somehow. Men and women talking to each other for example. Things like that. I wouldn't have expected that. I didn't know if I was going to be allowed to shake hands with Sister Francis, you know or should I keep my distance.

A: We dropped that a long time ago. I think when the sisters started taking more of the sale trips, that's when it happened. Cause the brothers always did it, even though it was sisters work, because the brothers, because it was a hard thing. You know you get out on those darn wagons and ... eight of our ... men. It would seem to be just too strenuous for the sisters and I would agree that it probably was. So

Interview with Brother Arnold Hadd

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February 9, 1996

the brothers, ... two of the ... brotherhood just got to a point where they just couldn't do it anymore. And then travel changed and too where they could go by train and have their goods taken by valets where they needed them to go and they weren't doing the lifting anymore, it was O.K. But then, of course, the trips themselves ceased in the 60's cause there just wasn't anything ...

Q: Well I guess maybe I should let you go back to your business.

A: O.K. Are you done then? Are you gone?

Q: I'm gonna leave. Go back to Kansas.

A: Now this exhibit I hear is going to be in Kansas.

Q: It is? Where?

A: I don't know. Somebody just told me that. It's going all over the place, but it's going to end up in Kansas when it's done. I think in another year or two.

Q: ...

A: Cause see they're talking. Sharon and Tommy were talking about whether they were going to be asked to be anywhere else or not. They weren't. And I said where else is it going and she wouldn't say. It's going to end up in Kansas.

Q: There aren't too many places big enough to put it on I would say.

A: \$15,000.

Q: Is that what it costs?

A: That's what they told us. I couldn't believe it. That's what their rental ... Well, there's packing and shipping and insurance, that's what it is.

Q: That's a lot. I would hope somehow Mount Lebanon would get the proceeds or something but I gather they had nothing to do with it.

A: No they sure don't. I mean it's their own stupidity that's what's happened has happened. They lured Mr. ... Hakuta ... into buying this stuff and they weren't taking care of it. And they were really abusing it. And he had somebody who was working for him who told him about it, they said look you investment... So ... Hakuta ... came down and tried to negotiate with them and they locked him out of the buildings, away from his own things. And of course that infuriated him. And he just said that's it. It's out of here. It's coming out. And he took everything out. And he would have given them money to restore the place, but you see ... Darrow ... doesn't care about having a museum. They don't care about the Shakers, they don't care about the museum, they only care about the school, which is a pathetic place. So they can't say enough bad things about him, but I really don't agree with them.

Q: Why did they treat him so badly?

A: They didn't want him to take anything out. They wanted him to leave all that.

Interview with Brother Arnold Hadd

Interviewer: Unknown

February 9, 1996

Q: They wanted him to leave his money and leave the stuff too.

A: Exactly. And then not take care of it, which was basically what they promised to do. So his own investment and his own possessions, suddenly aren't his anymore. Well, he hired a warehouse in Virginia, but it's just been in storage now for almost two years now. He doesn't like that either. So, he's looking for a place eventually that will take it. He wants it to go back to a museum. I think that's his.... And he's almost holding out hope that Mount Lebanon will get their act together and he'll give it back to them. But it's not going to happen. They're just going down hill.

Q: That's too bad.

A: Yea.

Q: Well I don't know I guess maybe other places are better hope.

A: Well you know it's a funny thing, ... with turning out the way it did ... It wasn't ever meant for Mount Lebanon not to exist. It was meant to be the last community as opposed to the first, was meant to be the last. Just freaky little things happened that it didn't end up that way.

Q: What kind of a Shaker history, ... survive.

A: What happens to Francis ... You see she was a trustee at Hancock and she wasn't going to live at Mount Lebanon and she came into the power position and she just said we're closing it down. And so she moved them over to Hancock. And had the other situation, the normal situation had been reversed Hancock would have moved over. So Mount Lebanon would have lasted until 1960 and it would have been the premier museum, which really it should have been. And Hancock would have been ... a historical place???? Because although, Hancock is beautiful, it's a nothing place in its own history. It was never noted for anything, it never excelled in anything. It always just lived in the shadow.

Q: I don't know, but your dealing with human beings. That's the way things go.