

# The Amish

*A Research On Their Utopian Lifestyle and How It Succeeded*

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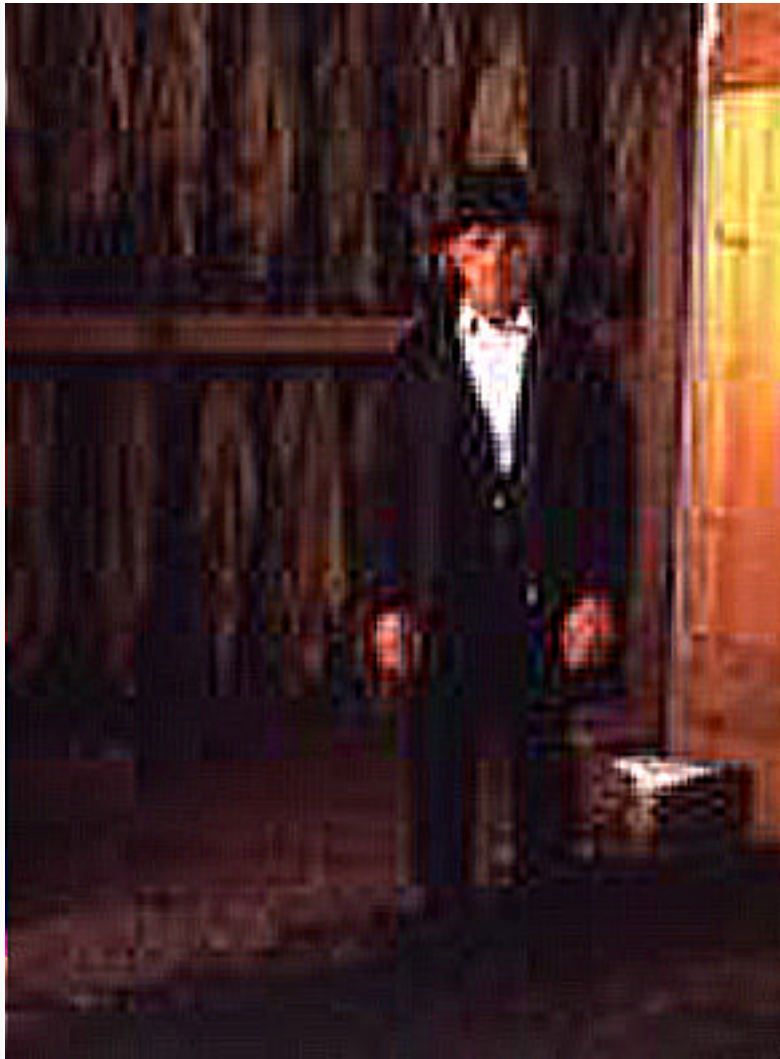
# Topics of Discussion

- History of the Amish
- A Typical Amish Person
- Social Structure
- Philosophy
- Daily Life
- How They Succeeded
- Utopian Success Scale
- Success Rate of Amish Utopia
- Follow-up
- Bibliography

# Hi story of the A mi sh

- Derived from the Anabaptists, which were created in the 16th-century from Protestants
- From the Anabaptists came the Mennonites in 1536
- From the Mennonites came the Amish: Jakob Ammann, whose teachings were controversial, formed his own sect called the Amish
- Ammann's main ideas:
  - A person who had been excommunicated should be shunned and avoided
  - It was wrong to attend a state church because your loyalty to the state and God will conflict
  - People should wear uniform clothing
  - Beards should not be trimmed
  - Overall, he wanted a stricter and simpler lifestyle
- Amish settlements appeared in Germany, Holland, Russia, and Switzerland but the migration to north America in the 19th and 20th centuries eliminated the Amish in Europe

# A Typical Amish Person



- This man is wearing formal clothing: a top hat, suit, white shirt, black pants and bow tie
- The children below are wearing a hat and collared shirt



# Social Structure

- There is no governing body as everyone is thought to be equal
- The men's role in society is to work on the farm and crops and bring in some income; he is the leader in the household
- The women's role is to take care of everything else that the man does not, like cooking, sewing clothes and raising children
- The children's ultimate goal during their childhood is to prepare for their roles as adult men or women

# Philosophy

- The ultimate purpose in their life is to serve Christ and live a simple and austere life
- Christ is the Lord of the church and so he is their leader and the bible is their government; the Bible is taken literally
- Amish have no churches, meeting halls, agencies, or groups because they think the loyalty to the group will interfere with their loyalty to Christ
  - Services and meetings are held in the home
- Each district has:
  - One bishop, two to four preachers, and one elder
  - If more than 75 people are in the district:
    - They will divide and create a new one, since they meet in each other's homes

## Philosophy Cont' d

- The only way they will accept a new gadget or technology into their society is if it keeps their lives simple and does not hinder their family-stressed lives
- After the 8th grade, Amish believe children do not need any additional formal education so they work on the family's farm or business until they are married
  - When married, the couple adds onto the home of the daughter's and lives there



# Daily Life



- The language used within the congregations is a mix of German with some English, usually referred to as "Pennsylvania Dutch"
- Many modern facilities are not used and rendered as unnecessary (e.g. electricity, telephones, and automobiles)
- The dress is simple: dark vests and collared shirts for men, long dresses and no-heeled shoes for women, and prayer caps when inside or during services
- The men shave until married, and then they only shave their moustaches
- At a young age, courtship begins by pairing up a girl and boy. The couple does not share what is going on about their courtship; it is not until a few days to two weeks that the wedding date is released
- The Ordnung is the daily law that they abide by; it is the equivalence of our Constitution, the conduct that they see fit for an Amish person



# How They Succeeded

- A utopia is successful if the goals set forth upon creation of it are accomplished
- One would think that all the people that interact with the Amish would have had to be converted since some Amish will be discontent with their austere life since they can see the outside world and the inevitable interaction with the outside world will create imperfection in the utopia
- But the goal of the Amish is not to convert everyone to Amish, and their primary goal, to seek a simple life, is accomplished
- Therefore, they successfully created a utopia even if an outsider does not consider it one

# Utopian Success Scale

There are two methods that I have created that one can judge the success rate of a utopia

## Method One:

- One way that can measure the success of a utopia, is to measure the number of people that follow the system without resisting or rebelling against it
- For example, the success of Brave New World would be not be considered low nor high but in the middle
  - There were many people that were sent to islands because they were a threat to the utopia, therefore, it was not highly successful
  - If Brave New World was highly successful, rarely would any people be sent to islands

## Method Two:

- Using a checklist based on "Elements of a Utopia" from *Utopianism* by Krishan Kumar, one can check off the amount of criteria that a utopia satisfies

ž More than a social or political tract aiming at reform	ž Seems impractical to the outside eye	ž Edges between reality and not	ž Values lie not in relation to the present factor but to possible future	ž Hope for human betterment
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# Success Rate of Amish Utopia

## Method One:

- Rarely does anyone ever leave an Amish community, therefore the Amish are highly successful
- Research done on the Internet and newsgroups indicate that the Amish population rarely decreases
- In fact, in Arthur, Illinois, the Amish population has risen from a handful of families to over 3,000 since 1865

# Success Rate of Amish Utopia Cont'd

## Method Two:

- The Amish do not try to convert people into their beliefs
- To people outside of the community, their world seems very difficult and challenging without the everyday appliances
- It seems like their world is out of a book rather than reality
- When they created their utopia, they aimed for a simple and austere life for the future, which has turned into the present reality
- Their goal is for humans to live in purity and spiritually, therefore for human betterment

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> More than a social or political tract aiming at reform	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seems impractical to the outside eye	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Edges between reality and not	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Values lie not in relation to the present factor but to possible future	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hope for human betterment
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# Follow-up

- For more information on the Amish and utopias, check out the following sources:
- Internet
  - Visit my site on Utopias on the Internet: <http://utopias.8m.com/main2.html>
  - Frequently asked questions about the Amish are answered here:  
<http://www.800padutch.com/amish.html>
- Books
  - 1984 by George Orwell
  - Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
  - Time Machine by H.G. Wells
  - The Diamond Age by Neal Stephenson

# Bibliography

- Kumar, Krishan. Utopianism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- <http://www.arthuril.com>. Amish Country Marketing, 1997. Accessed: June 6, 1999.
- <http://www.800padutch.com/amish.html>. The Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1999. Accessed: June 6, 1999.



*The End*