

*The Indiana Decade of
George Rapp's Harmony Society:
1814-1824*

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WHEN George Rapp died in 1847, the capitalistic press of Pittsburgh lauded him as 'The greatest communist of the age.' This was the year that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were commissioned to write the *Communist Manifesto*. At the time of his death, Rapp could look back upon three American communist towns which his Society had built and which had attracted the admiration of all the Western World, for George Rapp was the founder of the most successful of all American communist groups in our history, which provided social and spiritual security with prenatal care and post-mortem burial over a century before the New Deal. Before Alcott's Fruitlands (1843) and Brook Farm (1841) began, Rapp's Harmony Society had been flourishing for almost forty years, and the enormous success of the Society actually inspired both, for Rapp's Society was not just another German-American musical society, but a solid communist (small c!) establishment that endured in our country for a full century. To Karl Marx and his followers religion was the opium of the people, to Rapp it was the essence of life, yet one looks in vain in American high school or college textbooks for an account of this lost horizon. Karl Marx is taught, but our own greatest communist is completely unknown to our textbook makers. To correct this false slant and

to fill a glaring gap in American history I propose to publish a Documentary History Of George Rapp's Harmony Society in six volumes covering its history from the time of its beginnings in Württemberg in 1785 to its legal conclusion in 1916. In the present paper, however, I shall limit myself in the main to a survey of the second volume of this Documentary History, which will cover the period which the Society spent in Indiana, but before entering upon this second decade of its life in the United States, I must concern myself with the religious backgrounds of Württemberg at the time the Society came into being.

The importance of the Book Of Revelation Of St. John The Divine in the development of Russia and the United States has been overlooked. The history of George Rapp's Harmony Society and of similar Harmonies in Russia with almost unresearched archives is evidence of this fact, for the motivating force behind the extensive migrations from Germany into these countries was St. John's vision of the Sunwoman. In the sixteenth century Albrecht Dürer had drawn her picture faithful to Luther's translation of the Bible, and from that time on St. John's Revelation proved to be the most fascinating part of Scripture, especially in Württemberg. The prophet and founder of the most successful of American communist commonwealths taught that his Harmony Society was the embodiment of St. John's vision of the Sunwoman. When his followers in 1804 left their beloved Württemberg for America, they sang a German song expressing these thoughts:

Up and on our way to America
 There the pasture is provided (by the shepherd of the flock)
 That's where THE SUNWOMAN is to flee to be removed from the
 days of evil, when judgment will descend to take revenge.

This song refers to Revelation chapter 12: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown



Albrecht Dürer's *The Sunwoman and the Seven-Headed Dragon*. 1498 (Based on *Revelation*, chapter 12). This was the Biblical symbol of Rapp's *Harmony Society*.

of twelve stars: . . . And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.'

Up to this point Revelation covered the emigration from Württemberg to the desert of Butler County, Pennsylvania, the building of the first Harmonie and the decade of life there. This is a period celebrated by F. Cuming in his *Sketches Of a Tour To the Western Country* (Pittsburgh, 1810), and by John Melish in his *Travels in the United States of America in the Years 1806-1811* (Philadelphia, 1812).

At the time of the formal establishment of the Society in the United States, George Rapp and his associates drew up six articles of agreement covering these points:

1. Members of the Society gave all their property as a free gift to the Society.
2. All members pledged to submit to the laws and regulations of the congregation and to advance its interests.
3. If for any reason a member should withdraw, he would ask no compensation for his service, because his services would have been in the common interest to support children and the aged remaining in the Society.

On the part of the Society, George Rapp and his associates

1. adopted the members and allowed them the privilege of attending religious meetings and school.
2. The Society promised its members all the necessaries of life, not only in health but also in sickness, in other words complete social and spiritual security until death.
3. If a member should want to leave and did so openly and orderly, he would get a donation in cash, according to his conduct while in the Society.

While these simple articles of association formed the legal basis of the Society as an establishment, they did not include or state the real binding force which caused it to thrive, while so many other communities founded because of its amazing

success, soon failed. The sense of a special mission that was implicit in the faith that the Society was the embodiment of the Sunwoman has already been mentioned, but there was a basic body of doctrine taught by George Rapp which must be considered and which is explained when we examine the question why he named his establishment the Harmony Society.

In German literature I find that the designation 'Harmonie' was probably first used in the nineteenth chapter of the fifth book of Grimmelhausen's *Simplicissimus*, published in 1669: 'To sum up, it was through and through such a dear *Harmonia*, which seemed attuned to nothing else than to propagate the human race and the Kingdom of God in as honorable a form as possible.' The term here is used to describe the Hutterian Brethren, here called 'Hungarian Anabaptists', whose descendants the Harmony Society much later helped to bring to America. In many respects the Harmonists and Hutterians were the same, but they differed in the sense of the special mission of the Sunwoman and in the question of propagation, and that was due to Rapp's teaching, based principally on the works of Jacob Boehme. Rapp taught that God was perfect, meaning that he was both male and female and could create life out of himself. Because God created man in his image, man also was male and female and could create life out of himself without the assistance of a mate. The animals as a lower order of creation had been created as male and female separates. Adam made the mistake or committed the sin of wishing to have the female element in him to be separate from the male, according to the example of the animals, and when he was granted that wish, the pre-established harmony was destroyed with the result that disharmony came into the world. This separation of the sexual elements brought on the wars between men and the bitter conflicts between men and women.¹

¹For modern examples of an awareness of this problem see: S. Rudolf Steinmetz: *Die Philosophie des Krieges*. Leipzig, 1907. (Later as *Der Krieg als soziologisches Problem*. Amsterdam, 1909.) John Carter: *Man is War*. Indianapolis, 1926. He defines war as 'The natural state of carnivorous man, actuated by the necessity of obtaining food for

With the Second Coming of Christ all things would be restored to their pre-established harmony and man, so to speak, would reabsorb his rib. Until that time of miraculous change back to the original status came, that is until the fulfilment of the prayer 'Thy kingdom come,' the Harmonists would cease propagating the Moses model of man in his fallen state. These beliefs were the strength of the Society, but also the cause of its ultimate end.

Having clarified these basic doctrinal matters, let us return to the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation which prophesied the various moves which the Sunwoman would make in her flight from the pursuing dragon. I pass over the six verses that follow those already quoted, although their fulfilment in Europe and America was carefully explained by George Rapp to his followers while they still lived in Pennsylvania in their first American decade, and move immediately to verses 13 and 14, bringing me to the heart of my subject. 'And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.' This to George Rapp and his followers was the Sunwoman's second decade, or what I have called: The Indiana Decade of George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1814-1824. This

himself and his family, by his woman's desire for luxury, comfort and personal adornment, by his instinct to provide for his young, and by the imperious demands of his blood.' Anonymus: *Wine, Women and War: A Diary of Disillusionment*. London, 1927. 'The War Between Men and Women' in James Thurber: *Men, Women and Dogs*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1943. Walter Millis: *Arms and Men*. New York, 1956. Oskar Kokoschka: *Murderer the Women's Hope and Job* with the motto: A pain for a rib./When Adam slept on the green lawn,/God had pity, the sun stood at zenith/And He from boredom was about to sleep./Awaken'd by a kick in his ribs, Adam cried: 'Hi',/And found himself wedded to Eve:/'My God, if only He had left my rib in peace.' Both translated in Sokel: *An Anthology of German Expressionist Drama*. Anchor Books, New York, 1963. Konrad Lorenz: *Das Sogenannte Böse. Zur Naturgeschichte der Aggression*. Vienna, 1963. Kate Millet: *Sexual Politics*. New York, 1970. Lionel Tiger: 'Male Dominance? Yes, Alas. A Sexist Plot? No.' In *New York Times Magazine*, Oct. 25, 1970. Norman Mailer, 'The Prisoner of Sex', *Harper's*, March 1971.



A view of New Harmony as it was when the Harmonists sold it.

is the period which inspired Richard Flower in his *Letters From Lexington and the Illinois* (London, 1819) to describe George Rapp's second settlement as 'Harmony, that wonder of the West.' It inspired Mathew Carey, the American economist and publisher, to write in the preface to his *Addresses of the Philadelphia Society for the Promoting of National Industry*: 'The settlement of Harmony in the western country was conducted on this plan. . . . The settlement made more rapid advances in wealth and prosperity, than any equal body of men in the world at any period of time, more in one year, than other parts of the United States, which depend on foreign markets for the sale of their produce, and supply of their wants, have done in ten.' Carey might have added that the per capita wealth of the Harmony Society was ten times that of the average in the United States.

TOWN OF HARMONY,
POSEY COUNTY, STATE OF INDIANA,
NORTH AMERICA.

To be Sold by Private Contract,

THE HIGHLY ESTEEMED AND MUCH CELEBRATED TOWN AND

Settlement of Harmony,

The universal admiration of Travellers,

THE PROPERTY OF FREDERICK RAPP, ESQ.

Situated Thirty-eight Degrees North Latitude,

On the East Bank of the Wabash,

Navigable about Two Hundred and Fifty Miles North, towards LAKE MICHIGAN,

PECULIARLY ADVANTAGEOUS FOR TRADE TO VINCENNES

AND ADJACENT COUNTRY;

RAPIDLY INCREASING IN POPULATION;

ALSO, TO THE OHIO AND MISSISSIPI RIVERS SOUTHWARDS.

The **ESTATE** consists of
TWENTY THOUSAND ACRES

Of Rich Fertile Patented

FREEHOLD LAND,

Suitable for the Growth of Indian Corn, Cotton, and every description of Grain; **THREE THOUSAND ACRES** of which are under Fence, and in a High State of Cultivation; **TWELVE ACRES** are Vineyards, covering the hills, adding beauty to the surrounding Scenery, and producing a large quantity of Wine, and are a source of considerable profit to the Owner; **THIRTY-FIVE ACRES** of ORCHARD planted with Fourteen Hundred Apple and Pear Trees, with sundry Peach Orchards, in full bearing, producing many Thousand Bushels of the choicest Fruit; a due proportion set with Grasses, and Pasture Grounds conveniently interwoven with, and adjacent to the Farming Buildings.

THE HOME-STALL,

CONSISTS OF

THREE FRAME BARNs,

One Hundred by Fifty Feet each; a THRASHING MACHINE, capable of thrashing Five Hundred Bushels per Day; STABLES, COW HOUSES, HAY BARNs, and FARM YARDs, sufficient for the size of the Establishment.

THE TOWN,

CONSISTS OF

TWENTY-ONE SUBSTANTIAL BRICK-BUILT HOUSES,

Four of which are Sixty Feet by Eighty; Three Stories high, with attached and detached Offices, Stables, Gardens, well planted, with a variety of Fruit Trees, a handsome Orangery and Green-house.

A GARDEN OF FIVE ACRES,

Well planted with Medicinal Herbs, Flowering Shrubs, and Dwarf Fruit Trees, with a RURAL ROTUNDA in the centre, surrounded with a Labyrinth. One House sixty feet by sixty; One ditto thirty-six by fifty. FIFTEEN Two-story Brick Dwelling Houses of different sizes. TWENTY-FIVE good weather-boarded Houses, substantially built and well painted, with suitable Offices, Stables, Yards, and Gardens attached and detached. EIGHTY-SIX Log and Dwelling Houses, with garden to each.

A LARGE THREE STORY FRAME OR WEATHER BOARDED MERCHANT MILL,

With Three run of Stones on a Boyard, on the Backwater of the GREAT WABASH, convenient to Navigation.

ONE THREE-STORY GRIST MILL,

Worked by Steam Engine.

ONE STONE and ONE BOARDED GRANERY, Sixty Feet by Forty each,
Three Stories high.

ONE LARGE BRICK STORE AND WAREHOUSE,

With adjoining Rooms, where an extensive Business is already established: One Tavern, with convenient Rooms, extensive Cellars and Stabling for upwards of Twenty Horses, with Carriage Houses, and other Conveniences.

ONE LARGE TWO-STORY FRAME FACTORY,

With all necessary and convenient Buildings for manufacturing WOOL and COTTON into YARN and CLOTH. ONE OIL and HEMP MILL, and a SAW MILL, all by Water power.

A TAN YARD, (with FIFTY VATS, BARK MILL, and SHEDS,

For holding a large quantity of Bark and Leather, with OFFICES for carrying.

A BRICK FIELD:

With Sundry Sheds and Coverings for the making a large quantity of Bricks; a Coarse Pottery adjoining.
A BREWERY and MALT-HOUSE, and TWO SMALL DISTILLERIES.

TWO CHURCHES,

ONE of which is FRAME-BUILT, fifty-five feet by fifty, Steeple, and well painted; the other BRICK-BUILT, with substantial Stone Foundation, one hundred and twenty-five by one hundred and thirty feet.

The Town is abundantly supplied with Spring Water of the finest quality.

THIS CONCERN is well worthy the attention of CAPITALISTS, who wish to invest a large Property; and is highly advantageous for carrying on the Manufactures of Broad Cloth, Cassinets, and other Goods, plain and coloured; or for an excellent MERCANTILE DEPOT for the supply of WESTERN AMERICA: also peculiarly adapted for large RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES who may be desirous to form a settlement.

THE TOWN is capable of accommodations for upwards of ONE THOUSAND INHABITANTS.

The whole will be Sold in One Lot,

And the Purchaser may be accommodated by half the money remaining on the Security of the Premises, at Interest.

Inquiries to be made of RICHARD FLOWER, Esq. of Albion, Illinois, now in London, (if by letter, post paid) who is authorised to negotiate for the Estate, at the Office of Messrs. CAPPER and HASLEWOOD, No. 15, Angel Court, Throgmorton Street.

July 9th. 1824

Mr. Kapp

Sir

I have taken the liberty of sending you a printed circulation of *Harmon*. I have advertised it in four of the news papers the most extensive for in this circulation. I had only the Particular made out by Mr. Baker - and have fill'd it up from Recollection as well as I could - If I had a Map it would be advantageous to me -

I remain

Yours respectfully

Richard Flower



Greenville App Post

20

Harmony

Indiana

*Advertisement
of Harmony, Ind.*

particulars

OF THE

SETTLEMENT AND TOWN

OF

HARMONY,

STATE OF INDIANA,

North America.

Tenlon, Printer, 67, Whitechapel, London.

V BINGO LINDEN

The accomplishments of Rapp's Society have also left their marks in German and English literature. Goethe's novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*, Lenau's poetry, and Lord Byron's *Don Juan* reflect its fame. I quote two pertinent verses from Byron's *Don Juan*:

When Rapp the Harmonist embargoed Marriage
 In his harmonious settlement—(which flourishes
 Strangely enough as yet without miscarriage
 Because it breeds no more mouths than it nourishes,
 Without those sad expenses which disparage
 What Nature naturally most encourages)—
 Why called he 'Harmony' a state sans wedlock?
 Now here I've got the preacher at a dead lock. xxxv

Because he either meant to sneer at Harmony
 Or Marriage, by divorcing them thus oddly.
 But whether reverend Rapp learned this in Germany
 Or no, 't is said his sect is rich and godly,
 Pious and pure, beyond what I can term any
 Of ours, although they propagate more broadly.
 My objection's to his title, not his ritual,
 Although I wonder how it grew habitual. xxxvi

It was in April 1814 that George Rapp together with Johannes Langenbacher and Ludwig Schreiber set out on horseback from Harmonie, Pennsylvania, to explore the western frontier. They had been in their first settlement ten years and needed more space. On April 20th they sent their first progress report from Limestone, Kentucky. Rapp then stated that his spirit would not be satisfied until he had been to the Wabash. A second report followed from Jeffersonville on April 26, and by May 10th the decision on the new home for the Sunwoman, i.e. the Harmony Society, was made and thus reported: 'The place is 25 miles from the Ohio mouth of the Wabash, and 12 miles from where the Ohio makes its curve first before the mouth. The town will be located about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the river above on the canal on a plane as level as

the floor of a room, perhaps a good quarter mile from the hill which lies suitable for a vineyard. The hill is worth more than the land because it has many stones for building The river has plenty of fish and when the water falls many barrels full can be caught by people who know the places and who come from a vicinity of 40 and 50 miles. In short, the place has all the advantages which one could wish.'

Extensive purchases of land were quickly made on the Wabash, and on June 20th, 1814, the first Harmonists left for the Indiana Territory in three boats which contained forty wagon loads of goods. This group took along four thousand dollars of solid Eastern money. Other Harmonists followed with careful instructions about laying out and building the new Harmonie and planting a crop and to provide food for those that were to follow. These pioneers suffered severely from fever and many fell victim to it. This brought Father Rapp to Indiana sooner than he had expected, and his arrival seemed to put a stop to the epidemic. In letters to his son, who had remained in Pennsylvania to keep the manufacture of cloth going in order to obtain the cash needed for their new settlement, Father Rapp revealed a remarkable practical sense in spite of all of his love for Boehme's mysticism. He immediately ordered quantities of medicine, and special food. While he visited and upheld the spirits of the sick, he surveyed the land and decided where the various craftsmen were to have their shops and where the mills were to be built. He provided firm and courageous leadership in body and spirit, comforting not only those with him on the Wabash but also those working in the Society factory in Pennsylvania, explaining in one pastoral letter that the world must be paid in money and that their work was providing that worldly medium. He even found time to compose what is probably the first song to the Wabash, in which he comforts those separated from each other with the refrain 'Wabash, Wabash, sehen wir bald.' (Hear the echoing refrain: Wabash, Wabash, we'll see you soon.)

By spring of 1815 the move of about a thousand persons with cattle, supplies, and equipment had been completed in about thirty flat and keelboats, and without incident. On May 8, 1815, Frederick Rapp wrote his last letter from Pennsylvania and announced his departure with the last transport on May 15, and in this letter he informed his Father: 'You certainly have read in the newspapers that Bonaparte has occupied the throne of France again, it is confirmed that this is true. May heaven have decided the downfall of the old Mother!' In an earlier letter of December 10, 1814, Father Rapp had written his son: 'Ewings told us much about the things that happened at the Congress in Vienna, about Italy and Bonaparte, all of which are directed toward Revelation. The beast will hate the harlot, devour her flesh, and burn her with fire, and asserts that all will change to its opposite. The events in China also were very noteworthy to me. It seems that everything again is on the move. Write me more also of such things which my papers will not report.' With this we come to the historical explanation of the second move of George Rapp's Harmony Society, i.e. the Sunwoman, for all her moves were foretold and had their explanation in current history. As we see from the words just quoted, George Rapp was a great newspaper reader, and the list of newspapers, both English and German, which the Society kept would have proved of great value to Clarence Brigham as documentary evidence for his great work on the press, but beyond this Rapp received regular direct news reports from his correspondents in the old and new world.

The Society also kept up a correspondence with friends and relatives in Württemberg telling them of their success in America and inviting them to join the Sunwoman in her new place of refuge before it would be too late. Frederick Rapp also wrote such letters extolling the freedom and plenty of the United States and urging people to come and join them. The Harmonists knew that within the immediate future there would be such a great wave of emigration that it would ex-

ceed the one which ten years before had carried them to America. As a result, the Harmony Society made even greater purchases of land in Indiana than originally expected. To gain complete control of the Wabash River, land was purchased on both sides. All eventualities for expansion were considered, in fact there is evidence that Father Rapp was dreaming of a kind of German belt which would surround his Sunwoman commonwealth as a kind of buffer state against the dangerous squatters on the frontier. He might easily have populated the entire Indiana Territory with followers of the Sunwoman, if at the time of completing their move another interpretation of the place of refuge for the Sunwoman had not been spread in Germany, particularly in Württemberg, which directed thousands of Germans to Russia. This diverting move has left its mark in world history in the name of the Holy Alliance.

One of the most widely read German authors in Germany and America at this time was Johann Heinrich Jung (1740-1817), called Jung Stilling. His works were printed serially in German-American newspapers and his books reprinted in this country. I have found his journal *Der Graue Mann* (The Grey Man) in private libraries from Pennsylvania down to Louisiana. Such works as *Siegeszug der Christlichen Religion* (Triumphal March of the Christian Religion), and *Heimweh* (Homesickness, for Heaven) were best sellers in the Alsace and Württemberg. Almost all of his works are still in the Harmony Society Archives. Jung Stilling's main source was the Württemberg theologian Bengel who had published a masterfully calculated chronology of the world since its creation. Bengel had figured out that the place of refuge of the Sunwoman was to be Russia, and Jung Stilling, who admired Czar Alexander and was received by him, propagated Bengel's interpretations. Yet, the findings of Bengel and Jung Stilling would not have had such an effect on emigration to Russia, if it had not been for the Lady of the Holy Alliance, Frau Julie Krüdener. She was a woman of aristocratic, Baltic background,

who by way of the pietist settlement of Herrnhut came to Karlsruhe to become a disciple of Jung Stilling. Through him she became acquainted with the unhappy lot of the poor and he introduced her to the leaders, high and low, of the revival then sweeping the Alsace and Württemberg, starting with Johann Friedrich Oberlin (1740-1826), whose fame was so great that later Oberlin College in distant Ohio was named for him. With her aristocratic, Baltic background Frau von Krüdener, who already knew the Czar's wife, soon came to realize that she was destined to become the medium of the Bengel-Jung-Stilling message to Czar Alexander and she found her chance when, upon the sudden news that Napoleon had escaped from Elba and was being hailed in France, the Czar hurried from Vienna to Heidelberg headquarters to prepare for new battles. On his way he stopped at Heilbronn in Württemberg. Soon after his arrival there on June 4th, 1815, Frau von Krüdener called on him, and although he was weary and much depressed, she was immediately admitted to his presence. She read the troubles of his soul and admonished him to change his course of life and to surrender himself to the love of the cross. The Czar was deeply impressed and later upon his arrival in Heidelberg sent for Frau von Krüdener and through his studies of the Bible with her became convinced that he, as tool in the hands of God, was to bring peace to Europe. When he went to Paris, she followed and used her influence to turn his mind in the direction she had learned from the students of the Book of Revelation in Württemberg and Baden, and this influence is to this day reflected in history under the name of the Holy Alliance, signed September 26, 1815. As it has come down through history, it is in the form severely edited by the less religious Prinz Metternich, but in its original form it was intended to be a call to religious and moral awakening, much closer to the advanced social and religious thinking of George Rapp than to that of Metternich, who had turned it into a tool of reaction and for further oppression of the poor. With less severe editing by Metternich

it might well have obviated many of the grievances which later came to a head in the Communist Manifesto and the German Revolution of 1848. However that may be, the combined activities of Jung Stilling, Frau von Krüdener, and the Russian Czar Alexander diverted much emigration from Württemberg to Russia which would otherwise have greatly increased the membership of the Harmony Society on the Wabash. How welcome all additions to the Society were to Father Rapp when the first new refugees and followers of the Sunwoman arrived in Philadelphia, can be judged by the following words in a letter of August 16, 1817, sent to his son Frederick, who had travelled all the way from the Wabash to welcome them and to free those from their redemptionist state who had been unable to pay their passage in advance: 'I do not feel selfish, and if you should use \$20,000, if only you had the sum, Christ did even more for the poor people, he shed his blood and life for them, for the pious and godless; therefore, pay as far as your means reach. I do not want you to become involved beyond that, unless you should have a very strong faith, against that I could command nothing.' In a letter of September 30, 1817 he wrote: 'Rosina especially became quite cheerful and happy when I read in your letter that as often as you come aboard the ship you feel pity for the people. She wept because God had so directed your heart that his will was done, for according to your letter there will be about 300 souls, or even more. That makes the entire Harmonie happy and we hope that most of these can turn out well. Oh sweet hope makes the most difficult things easy and that is good.'

It is not surprising that the establishment of such an efficient commonwealth on the frontier would also deeply influence the political development of the State of Indiana. The Sunwoman became a strong political force there with which any office seeker had to reckon. At the constitutional convention in 1816 the Society was interested in having two representatives but compromised on one, Frederick Rapp, Father Rapp's adopted

son and manager of all external affairs of the Society. Frederick served on key committees of the convention and also was appointed to help locate a permanent seat of government, namely Indianapolis, and the earliest extant plan of the city of Indianapolis bears his endorsement. The map was probably drawn by him personally, because he was respected for his ability as draftsman and city planner, besides, he was quite familiar with the plan of Washington, D.C., which was followed in Indianapolis. No politician who aspired to national, statewide, or county office considered it wise to run for office without first considering the Harmony Society. While the constitutional convention was still in progress, Thomas Posey addressed a very polite letter to Frederick informing him that he wished to be considered a candidate for the office of Governor. Father Rapp's letter of June 22, 1816, includes this comment: 'I also have the hope that the invisible power of the Lord will not desert you in your effectiveness of reasoning wisely, also you have your good protective angels who support your politics which allows your sensitive premonition to sense things in advance so that you can act in a way pleasing to God and to reason, so that the enemies of the righteous will not prevail after they have disgraced themselves through their own lack of reason. Further, I see that the lot has placed you in committees in wonderful departments in which there will probably be most to do. I long to know how it will end. As I hear we will not get along without taxes. For my part I do not have much against them, for the sake of peace, but the last suggestion did not displease me as long as, if a sacrifice is to be made, it will be used for the schools of poor and orphans.'

Officials of the state from the governor on took pride in dressing in clothing manufactured by the Harmonists, and they delighted in their excellent whiskey and beer, a taste shared by boatmen on the river because many whiskey barrels often arrived at the destination in St. Louis or New Orleans quite a bit lighter than sent. On the other hand this very power and influence bred jealousy and hatred, particularly be-

cause the Harmonists refused to bear arms, although they regularly paid their fines for absence from militia drills. This in turn could be depended upon as a source of revenue for the state treasury. The Society also loaned money to the State when the treasury was depleted. In at least one instance, the ballots of the Society were stolen or destroyed. Since this was in a county election, they decided to compromise by abstaining from the next county election, with the amazing result that the winner wrote them a letter of thanks for not voting and urging them to bring their problems and criticism to him where they would be assured of assistance. Because senators and congressmen were familiar with the importance of this commonwealth to the economy of Indiana, quite apart from its voting power, they did not fail to keep the Society informed and to solicit its advice in Washington. One of the most interesting letters I have found so far is one from their friend, Congressman William Hendricks, of February 15, 1819, on the state of the nation.

During the Indiana Decade, the Society also made great contributions to the development of the English Prairie in Illinois, as proved by the extensive business relations with Morris Birckbeck and George and Richard Flower. Rapp's New Harmonie was then a banking center next to Vincennes and had its own bank. Its business relations extended to all points of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, and beyond to Cuba, the Atlantic Seaboard, England, and the Continent. They also kept up cordial relations to the various Shaking-Quaker settlements in Indiana and Kentucky, in fact the Shakers sent a delegation to Harmony to discuss the questions of union, but this failed because of religious differences.

As the Society's fame spread throughout the world, letters of application for membership began to come in from all parts of the United States and Europe, and with the applications came many letters asking for the secret of its success and for advice on the best method for the establishment of similar communities. Here are a few examples:

1. On January 16, 1818, Constantine Samuel Rafinesque sent the Society a copy of his *Flora of Louisiana* and a letter containing forty-three questions about the Society. His motive he explained in these words: 'You must know that since my younger days I have dreamed of a plan and society like your own. The crimes, vices and misfortunes that I have seen arising everywhere from personal and exclusive property, have strengthened in my mind a love of the principles you hold. It has been doubted whether a society founded on common property could exist in our times, and you offer them a successful experiment.' So much from his extensive letter.

2. On May 6, 1820, Freiherr von Fürstenwärther, a cousin of Freiherr von Gagern, then royal plenipotentiary of the Netherlands in the German Bundestag, where he was working for improvement of emigration conditions, wrote Frederick Rapp: 'I wish you would not take it ill of me if I ask you in writing through which means you bring about the miracle which is represented by your colony, because my experiences and observations have convinced me that without special incentives nothing can be achieved with the mass of our countrymen in view of the evil of the majority and because of the conditions of this country which favor such evil.'

3. Robert Owen of New Lanark, Scotland, wrote to the Society on August 4th, 1820: 'Having heard much of your Society, and feeling a peculiar interest respecting it, I am induced to open a correspondence with you, in the expectation of procuring a correct account of your establishment.' Robert Owen had followed the history of the Society from the time of its first settlement in Pennsylvania. 'The particulars of the result of these two experiments would be of real value to me, in order to ascertain the positive inconveniences which arise from changes to society from a state of private to public property, under the peculiar circumstances by which your colonies have been surrounded.' Owen had other questions to ask and sent the Society copies of his publications also requesting that the Society send him copies of its publications. To facilitate

matters, he suggested that letters to him be sent to Mr. Quincy Adams, the secretary of state for the American home department, through whom safe delivery in New Lanark would be assured.

4. On January 5th, 1822, Edward P. Page and Cornelius Blatchly, who were members of the Society for Promoting Communities, which got its inspiration from the Harmony Society, wrote from New York City: 'Please to accept the accompanying, and to show it to your brethren. If your government was not in an aristocratic form, as I am informed it is—but of a pure democracy—not in the priest, but the people—and your elections annual, or monthly (for all new officers) then I would go to the ends of the earth and join a people so consistent as to encourage matrimony and the increase of home manufactured population [sic].' He appended eleven questions about the Society and explains that eight physicians, two lawyers, several school teachers, and in all more than thirty persons have formed a Society. As in all such cases this letter was given a courteous reply with the conclusion, which I translated from the German draft, which alone has remained: 'We have read the pamphlet sent us. It contains many truths, only it is drawn out too much, and it seems that you have not made the right architect Jesus Christ your foundation, for which reason it is doubtful whether your building, namely your community will stand.'

5. The most interesting of all these many letters of inquiry is the one which came from Boston, dated May 23, 1822, and signed by Samuel Worcester. It was written well before the establishment of Brook Farm, but the following parts will show that the plan for a Brook Farm was already there, and that this plan was influenced by the example of the Harmony Society. Samuel Worcester writes:

The propriety of establishing societies on the plan adopted by the Harmonists has become an interesting question in the minds of several persons belonging to this city. Our attention was particularly directed to this subject by a pamphlet lately published in

New York, called an 'Essay on Commonwealths.' We were exceedingly interested in the account which it gave of your society—taken from *Melish's Travels*—and describing your state, as it was ten or twelve years ago, before you removed from Pennsylvania. I am unable to obtain any satisfactory information since your removal. To procure this is one object of my addressing you You will confer a favor by referring me to any book, which contains information of the present state of your Society, or in sending by mail any useful pamphlets—for which I shall be happy to make you a suitable return. I wish particularly to be informed whether the same union exists among you as formerly,—or so much information of this kind as it will be proper and agreeable to you to communicate: Whether, in a worldly view, you are as successful as formerly: In what way you punish offences: And how you provide against indolence. The 1st question arises from the consideration, that men generally labour so much more from necessity or from selfinterest, than in freedom, and for the sake of social interest, that where these common motives are removed, it is not obvious that they would be industrious. Wherefore, many among us, who think a Society established upon principles analogous to those of the Harmonists, would be useful and delightful, *if possible*, believe also that a prohibition of individual and exclusive property would operate as an inherent and irresistible principle of disorder and decay; and, consequently, that all schemes, which act upon such a prohibition must be visionary and impracticable. That your society is industrious is proved by its success: but I am at a loss to know what necessity you find of stimulating its members to exertion by external motives or reward or punishment—and how you find means to supply such motives. Information on this subject would be particularly interesting and useful.

The religious Society to which I belong and whose interest I seek, is commonly known by the name of the New Jerusalem Church—or Swedenborgians. I think a colony of this church might be formed in some of our western states. They would devote their attention to agriculture principally; and to manufactures only as far as might be necessary. Many men of high literary attainments would be of their number. These would not all find places for literary professions, but might be applied to some mechanical arts, and to some branches of agriculture. The great difficulty with us would be, that we should have more heads than hands. But we should by degrees overcome this impediment, as all would go de-

terminated to learn to work; and many might carry with them habits of industry, and knowledge of agriculture and mechanical trades.

Nothing has yet been done by way of preparation for such an establishment, and it may not be effected for a long time: but those who are already interested in it, are anxious that the assent of others should be obtained, and that the information necessary to prepare the way should be collected, as soon as possible.

That concludes a rather lengthy quotation from a longer letter, but I have taken the time to read it in the hope that in this scholarly group there may be some one who could tell me who the 'Many men of high literary attainments' mentioned by Samuel Worcester might be. It is quite probable that some of these later became Brook Farmers.

Frederick Rapp took much time and trouble to give his Boston enquirer a full reply. He drafted the original in German and then reworked it in English.

The frequent requests for pamphlets by the Society which would give information about its purposes resulted in the acquisition of a printing press. It was operated by Dr. Christopher Müller, physician of the Society and leader of its orchestra.² The imprints coming from this press are quite rare German Americana and for that reason I have put two on exhibit in this hall. They are the German and English editions of *Thoughts on the Destiny of Man, Particularly With Reference to the Present Times: By the Harmony Society in Indiana. A.D. 1824*. George Rapp was the author of both but Judge Blackford, who later served in Washington, D.C., polished up the English version for Rapp. As I have shown in my article, 'Herder and the Harmony Society' in the *Germanic Review* of April 1941, Rapp is heavily indebted to Herder's *Ideas on a Philosophy on the History of Mankind* and his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanität* (Humanity).

²As a footnote I should like to add here that the Society for a time engaged W. C. Peters, discoverer and printer of Stephen Foster, as its director of music, but this fascinating relationship belongs to another chapter, which will be treated in an article co-authored with Dr. Richard Wetzel under the title 'Müller's Memorandum Book of the Music Band of Economy: 1828-1831' in *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* beginning April 1971.

There are, of course, innumerable phases of the Society's life which I have not considered, but they will be fully covered in the second volume of my Documentary History of the Harmony Society, which I am now completing with the generous assistance of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. The best overall view of the physical achievements of this Society is found in the advertisement for the sale of its second settlement as published in the principal newspapers of the United States, Paris, Stuttgart, and London. The copy reprinted here with the permission of the Darlington Library in Pittsburgh is the one printed separately by Richard Flower, who was responsible to a large degree for the sale of New Harmonie to Robert Owen of New Lanark, Scotland.

As in the case of the first advertisement for the sale of their first settlement, this one brought many enquiries, but the ultimate buyer was Robert Owen, who years before had written to Rapp for information about the success of the Harmony Society and who now made a special trip from Scotland to the United States to inspect the Society's work. Robert Owen met with the leaders and members of the Society before he purchased the second settlement, and his initial popularity in America was due to the fame of the Harmonists' success. The miracles they had achieved were due to their unselfish industry and above all to their religious zeal. The Society was also free from the curse of intellectualism. Robert Owen was deeply impressed by the work and manner of these people, but like Marx, he was convinced he could do even better in his New Harmony without religion. His dream failed after two years, while the Sunwoman moved on to a third new start and to even greater achievements, for this time the Harmonists, in keeping with the progress of Revelation, were going to build *Die Göttliche Ökonomie*, the divine Economy, the *Civitas Dei*, where God himself would dwell with his very own people and where there would be no more tears because the Lord God Omnipotent would reign throughout the world. Ultimately, however, the very name of their third settlement was

wiped out and renamed Ambridge, for the American Bridge Company bought their lands and built there the world's largest structural steel plant. We drive over structural steel produced on the lands of the Sunwoman, Rapp's Harmony Society, all over the United States. To mention just a few examples: The Louisiana Long or Sunshine bridges crossing the Mississippi, in California the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and on the Maine State Turnpike the Old Alfred Road Overpass, in New York the Tappan Zee and Verrazano-Narrows Bridges, in Delaware the Chesapeake City Highway and many others. From the land of the Sunwoman came the structural steel for such buildings as the Empire State, Rockefeller Center, Chrysler, Pan American, United Nations, and the Vehicle Assembly Building for NASA at Cape Kennedy. After the Harmonists in their third settlement had been given a ride on the railroad their funds had helped bring to Pittsburgh, their leader saw in this development a fulfilment of a prophecy which he quoted in his letter of thanks to the railroad president. I close by quoting this prophecy, because if George Rapp were living today he would apply it to the many bridges I have named as coming out of the land of the Sunwoman:

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(Isaiah 40,4.)³

³Documentation in this article is largely limited to dates of documents as cited. Xerox or microfilm copies are in the possession of the author.

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