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DIVINE ECONOMY:  
GEORGE RAPP, THE HARMONY SOCIETY  
AND JACKSONIAN DEMOCRACY

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## **Introduction: The Holy Migration to America**

*“I am a prophet and am called to be one.”  
~George Rapp (1791)*

The Harmony Society, founded as a Pietist-centered religious and communistic community, was established in 1805 by George Rapp, a self-proclaimed prophet who was convinced that the Second Coming of Christ, as predicted in the Book of Revelation, would occur in the fledgling United States. George Rapp (1757-1847) arranged for his supporters to migrate from Wurttemberg, Germany to the wilderness of western Pennsylvania and prepare for Christ’s second coming by creating a utopian society, whereby each Society member relinquished worldly goods to Rapp, sharing equally in the production of the Society. Rapp developed the idea that Christ would need monetary support for his one-thousand year reign on earth. By employing Henry Clay’s “American System,” Rapp decided that such wealth could be generated by the Harmony Society through to a combination of agricultural and manufacturing interests. George Rapp believed that by being monetarily successful, he and Harmony Society members would be looked upon favorably by Christ at the Second Coming.

This paper is a chronological exploration of the successes achieved, conflicts encountered, and eventual demise of George Rapp’s Harmony Society. During its one-hundred year existence as it awaited the much prophesied millennium, three successful agricultural and manufacturing towns of Harmonie, Pennsylvania; New Harmony, Indiana; and Economy, Pennsylvania were created by the Society out of the wilderness. Also explored is the impact Jacksonian Democracy had on George Rapp’s Harmony Society during the 1824 and 1847 period, as is the contribution the Society made to American industrialization after Rapp’s death in 1847.

Karl J.R. Arndt, a professor of German at Clark University during the 1960s and 1970s, researched and recorded much of the history of the Harmony Society. After spending the post-World War II years as a military administrator in Stuttgart, Dr. Arndt wrote several Harmony Society histories including *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, and *George Rapp and His Material Heirs, 1847-1916*.<sup>1</sup> Many Society documents were written in German, the official language imposed on the Society by Rapp. Arndt's histories of George Rapp and his separatist followers start at its Pietist beginnings in Wurttemberg, Germany during the late eighteenth century and end during the Society's financial battles settled by the United States Supreme Court during the early twentieth century. Arndt provides detailed accounts of all three Society settlements.

There are several thorough accounts of the Society's second home, New Harmony in southwest Indiana, written by New Harmony historian Don Blair in *The New Harmony Story* and by George Browning Lockwood in *The New Harmony Community* and *The New Harmony Movement*.<sup>2</sup> Lockwood penned his histories in the early twentieth century when the Harmony Society was the focus of national attention during the Society's termination proceedings. William Wilson's *The Angel and the Serpent* recounts the role Frederick Rapp played in orchestrating the Society's move from Pennsylvania to Indiana, and the vision Frederick had for

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<sup>1</sup> Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965); Karl J.R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs, 1847-1916* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971). In addition to these monographs, Arndt wrote numerous journal articles on different aspects of Harmony Society life.

<sup>2</sup> Don Blair, *The New Harmony Story* (New Harmony, IN: New Harmony Publication Committee, 1980); George Browning Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities* (Marion, IN: The Chronicle Company, 1902); and George Browning Lockwood, *The New Harmony Movement* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1905).

<sup>3</sup> William E. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent, The Story of New Harmon*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1964). Frederick Rapp was the adopted son of George Rapp.

establishing a marketing network for Society products spreading from St. Louis to New Orleans.<sup>3</sup>

The prevailing spirit of the pre-millennial aspects of the Second Great Awakening in the United States, especially during the presidential tenures of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, are examined by Paul E. Johnson in *A Shopkeeper's Millennium, Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*.<sup>4</sup> The impact of utopian communities, that is, of those utopian visionaries such as George Rapp, who at first viewed the United States as unspoiled territory where such societies could flourish, is explored by Thomas Streissguth in *Utopian Visionaries*, while a primary source account of utopia is given by eyewitness Charles Nordhoff in *Communitic Societies of America*, written during his 1874 tour of several communities, including a waning Economy, Pennsylvania.<sup>5</sup>

Mysticism and alchemy were both an important part of George Rapp's religious philosophy in both Germany and the United States as he attempted to apply these practices to give him an advantage over other pre-millennialists in his preparation for Christ's Second Coming. Rapp's experiences with mysticism and alchemy are examined in three separate works: Brian Gibbons' *Spirituality and the Occult: From the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*; Bernard Jaffe's *Crucible: The Story of Chemistry from Ancient Alchemy to Nuclear Fission*; and

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<sup>4</sup> Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium, Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815- 1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). Johnson explored revivals and millennialism in New York State's "burned-over" district, which was not very geographically distant from the Society's Economy, Pennsylvania location.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Streissguth, *Utopian Visionaries* (Minneapolis, MN: The Oliver Press, 1999); Charles Nordhoff, *The Communitic Societies of the United States; From Personal Visit and Observation: Including Detailed Accounts of the Economists, Zoarites, Shakers the Amana, Oneida, Bethel, Aurora, Icarian, and Other Existing Societies, Their Religious Creed, Social Practices, Numbers, Industries, and Present Condition* ( New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875).

Glenn A. Magee's *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, as Rapp had experimental laboratories in each of the three Harmony Society settlements, and publically proclaimed to all that he had experienced visions from and conversations with God.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, this paper contains an examination of George Rapp's Harmony Society during the age of Jacksonian Democracy. Jackson's policies changed Rapp's view of America. Daniel Walker Howe's *What Hath God Wrought, The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, gives a general American historical background during the era of Jackson.<sup>7</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. in *The Age of Jackson* provides a concise description of Jacksonianism, focusing on the issues of the day including Jackson's Indian removal, war on the Second Bank of the United States, and views on the protective tariff.<sup>8</sup> The presidency of Andrew Jackson and the aftershock of Jackson Democracy had a great impact on George Rapp and seemed to light a spark which changed the course of the Harmony Society's vision. The following narrative, ranging from Rapp's self-anointment as prophet to the last days of the Harmony Society in the early twentieth century, will explore that impact.

Although July 4, 1804 commemorated the twenty-eighth anniversary of American independence, it was celebrated as the first day of true religious freedom for 300 German Pietist separatists, informally known as Rappites, after their spiritual leader George Rapp. Having endured a trans-Atlantic voyage from Amsterdam to Baltimore harbor on the ship *Aurora*, the spirits of this first contingent of travelers soared when they saw George Rapp himself standing

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<sup>6</sup> Brian Gibbons, *Spirituality and the Occult: From the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Bernard Jaffe, *Crucibles: The Story of Chemistry from Ancient Alchemy to Nuclear Fission* (New York: Dover Publications, 1976); and Glenn A. Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought, the Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Howe provides an overview of the radical changes occurring in the United States, including the important political transformation during the era of Jackson, as well as the upsurge of religious fervor culminating in the Second Great Awakening.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947).

on the dock awaiting their arrival.<sup>9</sup> Six weeks afterward, another 260 Pietist followers arrived in Philadelphia on the ship *Atlantic* and a smaller contingent followed on the ship *Margaretta*.<sup>10</sup>

George Rapp's reasons for his holy migration to the United States were twofold. He wished for himself and his Pietist followers to escape the persecution and suppression they were experiencing at the hands of Lutheran church officials in the Swabian region of Germany, and, through his intensive study of the New Testament, he was convinced that the Second Coming of Christ, the "Millennium," was soon to occur, and that it would occur in America which offered religious freedom. Rapp interpreted Revelation 12:6, "and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God," to mean that God was to establish his millennial Kingdom in the United States, and that Europe would be destroyed in the process.<sup>11</sup> Convinced that the Millennium would occur during his lifetime, and being age 47 at the time of immigration, Rapp executed a plan of communal settlement and development to ensure that his followers would be prepared, both spiritually and financially, to embrace Christ's coming.

George Rapp's ideas and leadership created and later destroyed what would become known as his utopian "Harmony Society." He could be considered one of the master managers and societal planners of the early American republic, yet he displayed short sightedness and selfishness, hidden in an outward appearance of piety and insight. Rapp conducted the affairs of the Society in dictatorial manner, which went against the cultural and political trends of Jacksonian Democracy during the early nineteenth century. Several written portrayals of Rapp

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<sup>9</sup> Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 65. George Rapp arrived in America six months prior to prepare for the arrival of his Pietist followers.

<sup>10</sup> Aaron Williams, *The Harmony Society, at Economy, Penn'a. Founded by George Rapp, A.D. 1805* (Pittsburgh: W.S. Haven, 1866), 39. Mr. Williams' account of George Rapp and the "Harmonites" originally appeared in a series of articles printed in the newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Commercial*.

<sup>11</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 58-59.

describe him as a father figure, a tall, smiling, devotional, and considerate man. Yet preservationist Don Blair of New Harmony gives a more exacting description:

George Rapp was the undisputed dictator in all matters of the spirit, and in the control of their life within the community. It was to him the group looked for all guidance in religious matters. Since there was no written creed Father Rapp was responsible to no person nor document for his decisions, the matter was between Rapp and his God. Unfettered as he was, his personality was bound to be reflected in the beliefs of his followers.<sup>12</sup>

Rapp imposed his will on Harmony Society members, and although the Society had a council of elders, Rapp's word was final. Celibacy was imposed which limited the Society's future potential. Rapp alone approved the locations for the three towns that the Harmonist Society built and occupied during a 100 year period. He told Society members how to vote in public elections, and he controlled all aspects of Society finances. Rapp was obsessed with control, mysticism, and money, believing that these were the keys to entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Rapp watched for signs, mainly through world and political events, which could be considered as triggers of the Millennium. It seems that George Rapp deemed his worldly action to be a prelude to his being a leader of a chosen people in the afterlife.

Descriptions of Rapp's leadership style differ, depending on the respondent. Members of the Harmony Society, such as John Duss, saw Rapp as a benevolent father figure. But outsiders who came into personal contact with him, such as journalist D.E. Nevin, referred to Rapp as a patriarchal despot. "His word was law," wrote Nevin, after Rapp's death<sup>13</sup> Nevin also wrote:

The laws and rules of the society were made by George Rapp according to his own arbitrary will and command. The members were never consulted as to what rules should be adopted; they had no voice in making the laws.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Don Blair, *The New Harmony Story*, 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> D.E. Nevin, "The Late George Rapp and the Harmonists," *Scribner's Monthly, An Illustrated Magazine for the People*, XVII (November 1878 to April 1879, inclusive): 703.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



Harmony Society members did not question George Rapp as they looked to him for inspiration and religious leadership, considering him “the vice-regent of the Deity.”<sup>15</sup> George Browning Lockwood, in his study of New Harmony, wrote that Rapp played on his followers superstitions, and “professed to be guided on many occasions by communications received in visions.”<sup>16</sup>

George Rapp, known by his followers as Father Rapp, depended on the advice of his adopted son, Frederick Reichert, later known as Frederick Rapp. Frederick, who became a follower of Father Rapp in Germany, was an artisan, architect, and musician, and assigned by Father Rapp to handle the Society’s business and political dealings with the outside world.<sup>17</sup> Without Frederick’s tireless business planning and administration, the Harmony Society would never have achieved its successes. Later, especially during the Society’s first years at Economy, a rift developed between Father Rapp and Frederick, which changed the Society’s overall focus. Frederick’s suggestions to insure the Society’s existence were undermined by George Rapp’s authoritative personality. Over time, the Harmony Society was not peaceful or utopian; there was infighting, discontent behind George Rapp’s back, and an outright mutiny by many of the Society’s members.

George Rapp’s religious leadership began in Iptingen, Wurttemberg, northwest of Stuttgart, Germany, where as a thirty year old lay preacher, local Lutheran Church authorities accused Rapp of heretical teaching.<sup>18</sup> As leader of a separatist, Pietist group who challenged the authority of church officials in 1785, Rapp and his followers refused to attend formal church

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> George Browning Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, 32.

<sup>17</sup> John S. Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates: the Harmony Society* (Address delivered at the Centennial Celebration at New Harmony, Indiana, on June 6, 1914), 15.

<sup>18</sup> Federal Writers’ Project, WPA Beaver County, Pennsylvania, *The Harmony Society in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: William Penn Association, 1937), 5, 6.

services and receive communion, asserting that they were forbidden by God to so.<sup>19</sup> In a letter to the Lutheran Church Council dated April 17, 1785, Rapp defended himself, stating that the organized Church “weakened rather than strengthened” his faith and that he “needed nothing else since I had found Jesus.”<sup>20</sup> Rapp’s followers, along with their children, began to assert their disdain of the German Lutheran Church. Christian Hornle, a thirteen year old student and son of one of Rapp’s most ardent followers, refused to attend school, accusing the teachers of idolatry, saying “there were no true teachers anymore because they all attended the university while the Apostles never studied.”<sup>21</sup>

The Pietists of Wurttemberg were divided into two social factions: middle class Pietists were led by Magnus Roos and Christian Dann, both church officials, while working class Pietists followed laymen Johann Hahn, a farm worker, and Johann Georg Rapp, a weaver and vine tender.<sup>22</sup> As part of his occupation as a weaver, Rapp journeyed from village to village, absorbing various religious practices and applying them at home.<sup>23</sup> Rapp’s form of separatism included boycotting church services and holding meetings in private homes, home schooling, disrespect of the clergy, civil disobedience such as refusing to partake in military service, and avoiding baptism, confirmation, and burial services.<sup>24</sup>

George Rapp exhibited leadership abilities at a young age. When his parents gave him the chore of gathering grass along the roadside, he recruited his schoolmates to undertake this

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<sup>19</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> Hartmut Lehmann, “Pietism and Nationalism: The Relationship Between Protestant Revivalism and National Renewal in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *Church History*, 51, no.1 (March 1982): 44. The middle class faction consisted of minor church officers and lower level government officials and generally did not leave Germany. Christian Dann became a Lutheran deacon and formed a movement for the protection of animals. When Rapp came to America, several of the middle class Pietists joined him, but not all lived under Rapp’s rule at Harmonie.

<sup>23</sup> Donald F. Durnbaugh, “Work and Hope: The Spirituality of the Radical Pietist Communitarians,” *Church History*, 39, no. 1 (March 1970): 79.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

task, while he climbed a tree, supervising them as he preached to them.<sup>25</sup> Indiana historians Donald Pitzer and Josephine Elliott describe Rapp's personality as "magnetic" and "emotional"; a man who possessed potent ideas and who made his followers believe they were the "Chosen People of God."<sup>26</sup>

Pietism became widely accepted in Germany during the seventeenth century, through the teachings of Philip Jacob Spener and August Francke.<sup>27</sup> Rather than being considered a doctrine, Pietism was "a matter of inner spiritual experience," more of an attitude and way of life, generating group movements and a desire to worship as Christians did during the first century.<sup>28</sup> George Rapp showed emotion in his religion before the Lutheran ministers in Wurttemberg, but toned down his personality after immigrating to America. Rather than adhering to the rules of salvation dictated by the Lutheran ministers, Rapp believed he had achieved his salvation through his religious rebirth, his preparation for the return of Christ on earth, and his concept of Christian communalism as described in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>29</sup>

Rapp was self-taught and well read in European mysticism. He subscribed to the teachings of radical Pietist Gerhard Tersteegen, which centered on "passivity before God," and the "annihilation of self-will," known at the time as "quietism."<sup>30</sup> During his early preaching in Germany, Rapp centered his religious services on the message of spiritual Christianity as formulated by Pietist founders August Francke and Philip Spener.<sup>31</sup> Rapp's acclaim as a spiritual leader prompted German officials to take notice of him.

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<sup>25</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Donald E. Pitzer and Josephine M. Elliott, "New Harmony's First Utopians," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 75, no. 3 (September 1979): 227-228.

<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth Zorb, "Reflections on Moravian Pietism," *Pennsylvania History* 25, no.2 (April 1958): 116.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-117.

<sup>29</sup> Donald E. Pitzer, *New Harmony Then and Now* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 6.

<sup>30</sup> Eileen Aiken English, "Church Services at Economy," *Milestones*, 31, no.1.

<http://bchistory.org/beavercounty> Accessed August 3, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> D.E. Nevin, "The Late George Rapp and the Harmonists," 704.

In 1787, local authorities began an investigation of fourteen prominent Pietist leaders, including George Rapp, determined to bring the separatists in line. Rapp responded to their questioning with a manifesto listing separatist complaints against the Lutheran Church. In his manifesto, Rapp wrote that church members live as pagans, the name of a religion did not matter, and only those that loved Christ would be saved.<sup>32</sup> Rapp claimed that he alone was the force behind his separation from the Church and that men became Lutheran ministers for personal gain.<sup>33</sup> Baptism was not valid because the Apostles did not baptize, and communion should be internal, not external.<sup>34</sup> Rapp led Bible readings and discussions from the heart and believed prayer should not be allocated to certain times of the day as every fool was praying the Lord's Prayer.<sup>35</sup> Regarding civil matters, he and his followers were no longer governed by local law, they would not swear oaths of fealty to the government, and his cause was just based on the reality of felt peace.<sup>36</sup> The Church Commission admonished the Pietist Separatists, but stated that they should be brought back to the Lutheran Church through "kind instruction," and if they failed to comply, they would be denied residence under the Duke's protection.<sup>37</sup> In 1791, the 33 year old Rapp purposely defied the Commissions orders, declaring to his persecutors, "I am a prophet and am called to be one."<sup>38</sup> Rapp was imprisoned in the town tower, and as a result, his followers increased in number.<sup>39</sup>

In 1791, George Rapp, at the demand of the Wurttemberg government, composed a written statement of faith which amounted to rebellion against the German Lutheran Church. A decade later, in September 1803, Rapp, accompanied by Dr. John Mueller, Dr. Friedrich Conrad

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<sup>32</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1745-1847*, 24-26.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Rapp limited external communion to occasions only when "worthy guests" could partake.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 30.

Heller, and Rapp's natural son John, arrived in Philadelphia as an advance party, determined to find American land for Rapp's followers, where they could settle and await the arrival of Christ.<sup>40</sup>

It was George Rapp's sole decision to relocate his sect to America, based on his understanding of Revelation 12:6, but his idea was by no means original. In the late seventeenth century, Wurttemberg pastor and professor, Johann Jakob Zimmerman, determined that the millennial event would occur in America, but Zimmerman died prior to taking any action.<sup>41</sup> Instead, his protégé, twenty year old Johannes Kelpius crossed the Atlantic, noting in his diary, "on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Jan(uary), 1694, I, convinced by God, resolved upon going to America," settling his Pietist colony, "Woman in the Wilderness," on the outskirts of Philadelphia. However, due to harsh wilderness conditions, and the early death of Kelpius in 1708, this settlement did not survive.<sup>42</sup>

Pennsylvania provided German immigrants with the opportunity to practice their religion while taking advantage of the economic opportunities presented by the colonial and later republican setting.<sup>43</sup> The Germans kept migrating, fleeing wars, political tyranny, and oppressive religious conditions imposed mainly by their mainstream Lutheran ministers. As noted by David F. Durnbaugh, Pennsylvania became a "crazy-quilt" of religious sects, including Mennonites, Amish, Dunkers, Moravians, Schwenkfelders, United Brethren, Evangelicals, the Blooming Grove Commune, the Ephrata Cloister, and Rapp's Harmonist Society.<sup>44</sup> In 1783, Professor Franz Joseph Marter observed the German peoples living in central Pennsylvania,

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<sup>40</sup> Pitzer and Elliott, "New Harmony's First Utopians," 229.

<sup>41</sup> Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Work and Hope: The Spirituality of Radical Pietist Communitarians," 74.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 74-76.

<sup>43</sup> Alexander Waldenrath, "The Pennsylvania Germans: Development of Their Printing and Their Newspapers in the War for Independence," *The German Contribution to the Building of the Americas*, Gerhard K. Friesen and Walter Schatzberg, editors. (Hanover, NH: Clark University Press, 1977), 47-48.

<sup>44</sup> Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Pennsylvania's Crazy Quilt of German Religious Groups," *Pennsylvania History*, 68, no. 1, Pennsylvania Germans, Part One (Winter 2001): 9.

writing that they were low class, spoke only German, had rude habits, worked as servants to pay off their transit, and were “ignorant in matters concerning the present enlightenment.”<sup>45</sup> But he added that these immigrants were thrifty, well versed in cultivating land, could successfully raise livestock, and acquired “wealth without possessing any special monopoly of trade.”<sup>46</sup>

Not all German Pietists embraced the millennial theory of America. Many German Pietists migrated to the east, settling in Russia, believing that the millennium would occur in Palestine, which would be easier to reach from Russia, rather than a trans-Atlantic voyage from America.<sup>47</sup> American Pietists, however, settled in a world where “freedom” reigned, offering “free will, free grace and immediate salvation” to all men, regardless of class.<sup>48</sup>

Many European Germans, including George Rapp, were appalled by the French Revolution, considering it evolved from the Enlightenment, and Napoleon himself, who was deemed a “forerunner of the Anti-Christ.”<sup>49</sup> It was the republishing in 1796 of the popular pamphlet, *The French Revolution Foreseen in 1649*, by Puritan theologian Thomas Goodwin, which sparked the Napoleon antichrist theory throughout England and Germany.<sup>50</sup> George Rapp, an avid student of the *Book of Revelation* saw the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte as a sign of the end of worldly society.<sup>51</sup> Rapp and his followers saw Napoleon’s advances through Europe

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<sup>45</sup> John Andre and Hartmut Froeschle, “The American Expedition of Emperor Joseph II and Bernhard Moll’s Silhouettes,” *The German Contribution to the Building of the Americas* (Hanover, NH: Clark University Press, 1977), 144.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Durnbaugh, “Work and Hope: The Spirituality of the Radical Pietist Community,” 79.

<sup>48</sup> William G. McLoughlin, “Pietism and the American Character,” *American Quarterly*, 17, no.2 (Summer 1965): 168.

<sup>49</sup> Hartmut Lehmann, “The Germans as a Chosen People: Old Testament Themes in German Nationalism,” *German Studies Review*, 14, no. 2 (May 1991): 263.

<sup>50</sup> Mario Reading, *Nostradamus & the Third Antichrist* (London: Watkins Publishing, 2011), Part I

<sup>51</sup> Lucy Jayne Kaman, “Luminality, Communitas, Charisma, and Community,” *Intentional Community: An Anthropological Perspective*, Susan Love Brown, editor (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2002), 26.

as a reenactment of the biblical conflict between Gog and Magog, a war which would result in Christ's Second Coming.<sup>52</sup>

In 1798 Wurttemberg, Rapp took his stand against German Civil and Lutheran Church authority, publishing his "Articles of Christian Constitution," containing the seven pillars of faith on which his movement was based. Rapp's Article One, titled "Concerning the Church," is based on I Corinthians 14:27-32, and models the Rappites after the apostles; this article also establishes Rapp's town congregation, called "harmony units," where group meetings would be conducted in the same manner as the first Christians.<sup>53</sup> In Article Two, called "Concerning Baptism," Rapp wrote, "we find no basis for the present institution and use of baptism," as Scripture does not give a basis for child baptism.<sup>54</sup> Article Three, "Of Holy Communion," limits the distribution of communion to Rapp's followers only several times each year, "according to the ancient constitution of the noble church."<sup>55</sup> In Article Four, "Of the School," Rapp takes the power of education away from the civil and church authorities, decreeing that separatist children should be taught by "us," according to Deuteronomy 6: 6-7.<sup>56</sup> In Article Five, "Of Confirmation," Rapp mocks this sacrament saying that it is just an opportunity for children to be given new clothes, rather than partake in a "vow" to God, reaffirming that children in his sect will not be confirmed.<sup>57</sup> Rapp, in Article Six, "Of Government and Taking an Oath," assures the civil authorities that neither he nor his followers pose any threat to Germany, stating, "We will

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<sup>52</sup> Iaacov Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 70.

<sup>53</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1745-1847*, 36.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

gladly do our duty to our government.” By this Rapp meant that he and his followers would pay their taxes<sup>58</sup>

But Article Seven, “Of the Military Order,” did not sit well with a government proficient in waging war as Rapp prohibited military service for his followers, stating, “those who possess the inner peace of God do not like to hurt creatures and accordingly, they may bear no weapons of war.”<sup>59</sup>

After reviewing Rapp’s “Articles of Christian Constitution,” the Wurttemberg authorities considered the Rappites to be harboring “revolutionary thoughts,” becoming an increasing danger to the state.<sup>60</sup> Bernard Bailyn notes in *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* that German authorities closely monitored the activities of taxpayers and farm workers, considering their allegiance to the state as essential, especially during the many periods of German conflict.<sup>61</sup> Regardless of the attitude of Wurttemberg officials, George Rapp placed his adopted son Frederick Rapp in charge of the Separatists’ German affairs and in midsummer 1803, boarded the ship *Canton* to take him, John Rapp, and Doctors Mueller and Heller to Philadelphia to prepare for their own encounter with “The Woman in the Wilderness.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1986), 35.

<sup>62</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society 1745-1847*, 46-50, 61.



## Chapter One: Harmonie: 1805-1814

*There is no pauper here, unless a person refuses to work.*  
-- George Rapp, 1803

On September 12, 1803, George Rapp wrote to Frederick that he was never going to return to Germany and that he was offered several parcels of land for purchase in Pennsylvania, but “we would prefer to be in the region of Virginia.”<sup>1</sup> Rapp believed that the more southern climate would be preferable in order to establish vineyards for wine making. Biding his time, Rapp ventured into western Pennsylvania where he preached and made acquaintances with local Germans.<sup>2</sup> In early 1804, Frederick replied to Father Rapp, informing him that the Wurttemberg authorities considered him a fugitive, and that Rapp’s estate was “under arrest”.<sup>3</sup>

George Rapp arrived in the United States during Thomas Jefferson’s first term as President and, coming from a farming community, was enamored with Jefferson’s agricultural political economy. Having heard the news of the Louisiana Purchase in late 1803, Rapp believed that the purchase was an additional sign from God that the United States was the chosen land for the millennium, ridding the continent of the presence of New France and the Anti-Christ Napoleon.

Father Rapp studied the politics, jurisdictions, economic climate, and geography of the United States and concluded that Pennsylvania, Maryland, northwest Virginia, or Kentucky would afford the best conditions for the agriculture-based society he envisioned.<sup>4</sup>

Frederick Rapp’s reply letters were troubling; the Wurttemberg civil government would not allow the first 100 Separatist families to leave Germany, freezing their finances and

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<sup>1</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 61-62.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>4</sup> Gert Hummel, “Hope for a New World: The Rappites’ Eschatological Settlements,” *Paul Tilich’s Theological Legacy: Spirit and Community*, Frederick J. Parrella, editor (Berlin: Walter deGruyter & Company, 1995), 4.

hindering attempts to raise money for passage.<sup>5</sup> Rapp turned to American support, soliciting funds from German Americans to aid in the migration.

George Rapp was a convincing preacher, but he coerced many of his followers to journey to America with scare tactics. Indicating that all of Europe was doomed to destruction “by fire like Sodom and Gomorrah,” his Wurttemberg separatists did not need much motivation to leave Germany.<sup>6</sup> Rapp convinced them that his “church was the sunwoman who was to flee into the wilderness as prophesied in the Book of Revelation.”<sup>7</sup>

As the first contingent of Rapp’s followers arrived in Philadelphia on July 4, 1804, Father Rapp did not have a specific location for their settlement. Counting on the connections he made since his arrival, United States Senator Samuel Smith of Maryland gave Rapp a letter of introduction to Thomas Jefferson on July 10, 1804, informing Jefferson that helping Rapp’s followers settle would be good business for the United States, “making a settlement so far inland will unquestionably induce other persons to establish in their neighborhood and thus enhance the value of public land”.<sup>8</sup>

Accompanied by Peter Hoffman, a German-American merchant, Rapp met Jefferson at the White House on July 12, 1804, indicating that he (Jefferson) had followed the exploits of the Rappites with interest but the issues of land management and purchase could “only be granted by

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 54-56.

<sup>6</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, “The Strange and Wonderful New World of George Rapp and His Harmony Society,” *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 57, no.2 (April 1974), 162.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. While in the process of leaving Wurttemberg, the Rappites composed a travel song:  
“Let us go, in America the pasture for the sheep is to be.  
The sunwoman is to flee there so that she may be  
preserved from the anger in evil times,  
then judgment will break and take revenge”.

<sup>8</sup> Hummel, “Hope for a New World,” 65.

Congress.”<sup>9</sup> In a letter to Albert Gallatin, Jefferson asked Gallatin to help protect the land interests of the Rappites before Congress could meet and give their approval.<sup>10</sup> Jefferson wrote:

I have this moment been called on by Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Rapp on the subject which will be explained to you in the memorial now enclosed. They became sensible that the matter rested with Congress only, but 200 of the people being arrived at Baltimore and two ships hourly expected with as many more each, they cannot remain here till the meeting of Congress, for want of funds. They will therefore proceed to the place which Mr. Rapp (who has been exploring the country) has pitched on, on Sandy Creek of Muskingum River, where they wish to have 40,000 acres at the usual price, but with longer indulgence as to the time of payment. I told them I would immediately write to you to consider what we could do for them....<sup>11</sup>

Jefferson further advised Gallatin to protect the Rappites from land speculators and to seek a Congressional indulgence on their behalf.<sup>12</sup> Assessing that finding and purchasing land for his separatists was not as easy as first believed, Rapp had no alternative but to buy land further north and east than he anticipated. Rapp first considered settling at New Philadelphia in Ohio, but financing fell through and he was forced to consider Butler County in Pennsylvania, purchasing “five thousand acres of wild land about twenty-five miles north of Pittsburgh, in the valley of the Connoquenessing.”<sup>13</sup> He purchased land from a German immigrant, Detmar Basse-Mueller, who had obtained it from the federal government. The total price for these five thousand acres was \$10,217.74, to be paid in three installments.<sup>14</sup> On August 15, 1804 the German newspapers in Pittsburgh heralded Rapp’s arrival, stating, “they received premium from Congress to select land for themselves and they are being granted fair time for the payment of

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>11</sup> Henry Adams, ed., *The Writings of Albert Gallatin, Volume I* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1879), 199-200.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States; From Personal Visit and Observation: Including Detailed Accounts of the Economists, Zoarites, Shakers, the Amana, Oneida, Bethel, Aurora, Icarian, and Other Existing Societies, Their Religious Creed, Social Practices, Numbers, Industries, and Present Condition* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875), 70.

<sup>14</sup> Arndt., *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 70-71.

the money purchase.”<sup>15</sup> By September 1804, Rapp’s migration to America was complete. Not all of the Separatist immigrants from Wurttemberg were pleased with Rapp’s choice for settlement, and some struck out on their own, severing ties with Rapp. With donations of \$661 from the German Society of Philadelphia and German-American residents, the Rappites began a common fund which would continue throughout their existence.<sup>16</sup>

The location of the new settlement, called Harmonie by Father Rapp, was situated in Butler County, on the banks of Connoquenessing, which was more a creek than a river, and would later be a reason for a further move west by the Rappites. The population of nearby Pittsburgh was no more than 4,700 citizens when the Rappites purchased the Butler County property.<sup>17</sup> The leaders of Pennsylvania concerned themselves with developing a strong religious foundation within their state, producing moral citizens who would enhance a republican form of government. Freedom of religion was the backbone of this measure, separating church and state and giving religious leaders the authority to enforce church policy.<sup>18</sup>

The Rappite settlement was not a unique venture. During the early nineteenth century, while American democracy was still considered to be in its experimental stages, visionaries, mostly from Europe, looked at the United States as a “social laboratory for testing new communal arrangements.”<sup>19</sup> Referencing the American Founding Fathers as inspiration, communities such as Harmonie, Ephrata, Neshoba, Voree, Bohemia Manor, Zoar, Fruitlands,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>17</sup> *The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1852*, Volume 23 (Boston: Charles C. Little & James Brown, 1852), 200.

<sup>18</sup> J. William Frost, “Pennsylvania Institutes Religious Liberty, 1682-1860,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 112, no. 3 (July 1988): 338.

<sup>19</sup> Robert P. Weeks, “A Utopian Kingdom in the American Grain,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 61, no. 1 (Autumn 1977): 5.

Utopia, and Modern Times, spread from east to west, some social and some religious, seizing the opportunity “to experiment with new practices and new institutions.”<sup>20</sup>

There are various accounts as to how many Rappites populated the first settlement of Harmonie at its inception, as estimates range from thirty-one families to one hundred families, mainly of farming and peasant stock. Clearing 150 acres of their 5,000 acre purchase during 1805, the Rappites built about fifty log house dwellings for shelter, along with a church and mill.<sup>21</sup> But one of the first acts as a community was to establish what was called the “Articles of Association” which established Father George Rapp as sole leader of what was now being called the “Harmony Society.”

On February 15, 1805, at a communal meeting of all members of the settlement, George Rapp chose a committee of elders and presented to the adult members of the Harmony Society a six clause document known as the “Articles of Association.”<sup>22</sup> The Articles contained rules to be followed by Society members and obligations to those members by George Rapp and his associates.<sup>23</sup> In Germany, the Rappites did not live as a communal society, but as individuals. Father Rapp formed his ideas about a separate community through his reading of Johann Andreae’s seventeenth century book, *Christianopolis*, which, though a work of fiction, described living in a Christian republic community.<sup>24</sup> As summarized by Donald F. Durnbaugh, the “Articles of Association” forced Harmony Society members to sign over to George Rapp, “all of their personal and real property,” in exchange for Rapp’s promise “to provide for their religious

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Weeks makes a point that the southern region of the United States was not open to experimental communities.

<sup>21</sup> George Browning Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> “Harmony Society Articles of Association, 1805,” <http://explorepahistory.com/odocument> Accessed March 17, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Federal Writers’ Project, *The Harmony Society in Pennsylvania*, 7. The Articles of Agreement were updated several times during Father Rapp’s lifetime, most notably in 1827 and 1836.

<sup>24</sup> Pitzer and Elliott, 230.

instruction and physical care.”<sup>25</sup> In Article One, the Society members transferred “all our estate and property” to Rapp; in Article Two, members pledged to obey the laws imposed on the Society by Rapp; and in Article Three, members pledged that if they ever left the Society, they would never “demand any reward” for the work they completed as Society members.<sup>26</sup> In return, George Rapp, in Articles Four through Six, promised members “the privilege to attend all religious meetings;” to provide “all the necessities of life, as lodging, meat, drink, and clothing, etc.,” and if a member did decide to leave the Society, they would be refunded “the property brought into Harmonie without interest.”<sup>27</sup> Karl Arndt, in his study of the Society, summarized the agreement: “Rapp and his followers were establishing a church, a congregation totally Christian, a congregation of saints in which the ‘Imitation of the Way of Life of Christ’ was to be carried out.”<sup>28</sup> Records regarding the signing of the “Articles of Agreement” are not accurate, but it is believed that about 500 members signed the document.<sup>29</sup> Society members pooled working capital amounting to \$23,000, or an average of about \$46 per member, to be used for the purchase of land, food, livestock, and tools.<sup>30</sup>

The “Articles of Agreement” formally created the communistic Harmonist Society. Between 1607 and 1894, there were about 200 communistic societies established in the United States, generated by the needs of members to build and maintain their homes, and the Harmony Society is considered the most successful of these ventures.<sup>31</sup> British writer William Cobbett followed the early successes of the Harmony Society. The British press, specifically the *Mirror*,

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<sup>25</sup> Durnbaugh, “Work and Hope: The Spirituality of Radical Pietist Communitarians,” 80.

<sup>26</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 72.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 76. Arndt reviewed Harmony Society records and believes that several pages of the signature sheet are missing; one notable signature not included on the Agreement was that of John Rapp, the natural-born son of George Rapp.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>31</sup> Clarence Edward Macarthy, “The Passing of the Harmonites: A Story of a Successful Communistic Venture,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 39, no. 3 (1915): 338-339.

reported on the construction of Harmonie town buildings: log homes, a grist mill, a race, a two-story inn, an oil mill, a large barn, a dyer's shop, a saw mill, a beer brewery, and a meeting house.<sup>32</sup> Between 1805 and 1810, the Society grew and sold corn, barley, wheat, oats, potatoes, rye; produced beer, whiskey, and sweet oil; constructed a school house, hemp mill, and store houses.<sup>33</sup> Cobbett reports that by 1810, the Harmony Society numbered 780 persons, and aside from farm workers, had tradesmen proficient as shoemakers, tailors, weavers, wheelwrights, coopers, blacksmiths, rope-makers, carpenters, cabinet makers, wagon makers, masons, potters, soap-boilers, a doctor, and a pharmacist.<sup>34</sup> Noticeably absent from his account of occupations is a lawyer and a parson (the sole religious authority and law interpreter being Father Rapp).

Although the Harmony Society began to put down roots in Butler County, George Rapp was not satisfied. In January 1806, he journeyed to Washington, DC to restate his request before the federal government. Rapp submitted a petition, composed in poor English, to the United States Senate complaining about the poor soil and cold weather in Butler County and asking for “a grant of land for the cultivation of the vine, and for the establishment of certain manufactories...on the fork of the Mississippi and Ohio, which land bounds on Kentucky.”<sup>35</sup> The Senate appointed a committee to review the petition and later passed a bill giving Rapp the authorization to purchase such lands, passing the bill onto the House of Representatives.<sup>36</sup> But House members, specifically Congressman John Jackson of Virginia, protested that foreign immigrants, such as Rapp's Harmonists, should not be allowed to purchase federal lands at prices lower than those offered to Revolutionary War veterans, possibly inciting a land rush by

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<sup>32</sup> William Cobbett, *Paper Against Gold* (London: Wm. Cobbett, 1828), 72-73. Cobbett places all of these descriptions of Harmonie in a footnote.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, editor, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society, 1814-1824, Volume I. 1814-1819* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1975), Introduction x.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

the European poor to America's west.<sup>37</sup> Congress also began to disapprove of an American wine culture, spouting that American-made whiskey was the American drink.<sup>38</sup> Congressman William Ely of Massachusetts brought forth the theory that if all the Germans settled in one region, they would form German clans that could, in the future, pose a threat to the American government.<sup>39</sup> The House vote ended in a 46 to 46 tie, but Speaker Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina voted against Rapp, thus keeping the Harmonist Society entrenched in Butler County, Pennsylvania for another eight years.<sup>40</sup>

Rapp envisioned Harmonie to be a New Jerusalem. He built a labyrinth at the northern border of the town and placed a grotto in its center, symbolizing Andreae's "Christianopolis," as the labyrinth represented the winding, hidden ways in which the Lord "has led humankind and God's people," finally arriving at Harmonie, their final destination.<sup>41</sup>

An event occurred in 1807, however, which would eventually lead to the downfall of the Harmony Society many years later. Encouraged by his study of current events, including many natural catastrophes, wars on the European continent, and a threat to America by the British, Father Rapp felt a rush of religious excitement.<sup>42</sup> In March 1807, Rapp wrote a letter to a friend stating, "The seventh angel has blown his trumpet, no time remains. We must go forth to meet the bridegroom."<sup>43</sup> The Society began to revel in religious fervor, confessing sins, engaging in

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<sup>37</sup> William E. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent, The Story of New Harmony* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1964), 18.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>41</sup> Hummel, 6.

<sup>42</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 96.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-97.



penance, and living self-disciplined lives.<sup>44</sup> George Rapp insisted that everyone in the Harmony Society experience a rebirth in order to be called “a true follower of Christ.”<sup>45</sup>

One major component of this religious rebirth, as imposed by Rapp, was celibacy. Younger members of the Harmony Society were instructed to refrain from marriage, and those who were married were instructed to refrain from sexual intercourse. George Rapp was convinced of the “dual nature of Adam.”<sup>46</sup> As described by Elizabeth Smith Denehie, Rapp interpreted the Book of Genesis to say that “Adam contained within his own person both sexual elements and he held that both the creator and the created had this dual nature.”<sup>47</sup> Rapp concluded that eventually, Adam “would have begotten offspring without the aid of a female.”<sup>48</sup> According to Carol A. Kolmerten in *Women in Utopia*, George Rapp was convinced that celibacy was needed for resurrection and for a “community of equality” to survive, reinforcing man’s temporary existence on earth and giving human beings the opportunity to sacrifice and prepare themselves for heaven.<sup>49</sup> Rapp defined the role of Christian women as “helpmates,” and those who “sacrifice.”<sup>50</sup> But it can also be surmised that Father Rapp used celibacy as a method of control over Society members.<sup>51</sup> It was a manifestation of the dominant role he held, exerting his control over all of the Society’s religious and social affairs.<sup>52</sup> Celibacy, of course, was not a new notion. Plato wrote that marriage and children attached a man to private property, and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Smith Denehie, “The Harmonist Movement in Indiana,” *Indiana Magazine of History*, 19, no.2 (June 1923): 189.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Carol L. Kolmerten, *Women in Utopia: The Ideology of Gender in the Owenite Communities* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 30.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> At this point (1807), George Rapp had been married to his wife, Christine Benzinger for 24 years. According to Karl Arndt, it is possible that Rapp had practiced celibacy since 1785, just prior to the birth of his last child. But Father Rapp did not discourage marriage as he officiated at the wedding of his son John in 1805.

<sup>52</sup> Stephen Stein, *Communities of Dissent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

several leaders of American communal groups, including Rapp believed that the “elimination of sexual possession” diluted the “problem of exclusiveness.”<sup>53</sup>

As a possible means of protecting George Rapp from critics of celibacy, later accounts by surviving members after Rapp’s death, insist that the younger Harmony Society members launched this idea, believing that time lost to pregnancies and child rearing hurt community production, and that societies waiting for the coming of Jesus should not be divided by “blood relationships,” but should be a community of the whole.<sup>54</sup>

The social conditions at Harmonie changed. Couples who were married could still live with each other under the same roof, “treating each other as brother and sister in Christ.”<sup>55</sup> Society members redesigned their homes by creating separate sleeping quarters: the husband slept in the upper story of the house and the wife in the lower story.<sup>56</sup> The use of tobacco was also banned in 1807, a deprivation which some Society members believed was worse than celibacy.<sup>57</sup>

During the early nineteenth century, celibacy was a common factor among religious communes. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, members of the Ephrata Cloister considered celibacy to be a desirable virtue, although it was not mandatory most members chose to be celibate.<sup>58</sup> Mother Ann Lee, founder of the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearance, the Shakers, believed that a soul could not be considered pure unless a person

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<sup>53</sup> Weeks, “A Utopian Kingdom in the American Grain,” 13. This tenant would later be espoused by Karl Marx.

<sup>54</sup> Blair, *The New Harmony Story*. 18-19.

<sup>55</sup> Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, 73.

<sup>56</sup> Rufus Wilson, *Rambles in Colonial Byways* (Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 1900), 175.

<sup>57</sup> Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, 74.

<sup>58</sup> Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom’s Ferment: Phases of American Social History to 1860* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1944), 111-112.

practiced chastity and celibacy.<sup>59</sup> But George Rapp based his theory of celibacy on the writings of Jacob Bohme and St. Paul. Bohme said that “in the Kingdom of God there will be only a man-virgin, as Adam was not a woman,” a message Rapp totally subscribed to.<sup>60</sup> The Book of Revelation “offered greater promise for those who led a celibate life.”<sup>61</sup> Rapp taught his followers that Jesus was a dual being and that Jesus believed in a “community of goods,” and quoted Acts 4:32 as support: “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”<sup>62</sup>

Not all Pietists who were influenced by George Rapp in Germany chose to remain at Harmonie and be ruled by Rapp’s dictates. Rapp’s close friend, Dr. Friedrich Haller, who accompanied him to America in 1803, led a faction of the Rappites to central Pennsylvania, establishing a Dunker sect known as Blooming Grove, where they lived in a semi-communal society “without mandatory celibacy and authoritarian Rappite rule.”<sup>63</sup> Rapp’s rule also played an indirect part in the establishment of two other communal groups: Bethel in Missouri during the 1840s and Aurora in Oregon during the 1850s.

There are some conflicting views on the Rappite enforcement of celibacy. Lyman Sargent contends that Rapp admitted that celibacy “was not for everyone,” but because most members blindly “accepted whatever they were told,” they adhered to its practice.<sup>64</sup> Some

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<sup>59</sup> Priscilla J. Brewer, “The Shakes of Mother Ann Lee,” *America’s Communal Utopias*, Donald E. Pitzer, ed., (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 40.

<sup>60</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 98. Jacob Bohme (1575-1624) was a German theosophist who believed that divine wisdom, or “Sophia,” can guide a person to spiritual awakening. George Rapp used carvings of the “Virgin Sophia” over doorways at Economy as a spiritual reminder to Society members. Bohme’s work *Signatura Rerum* is discussed later in this paper.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>62</sup> George B. Lockwood, *The New Harmony Movement* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1905), 10.

<sup>63</sup> Durnbaugh, “Pennsylvania’s Crazy Quilt of German Religious Groups,” 24-25.

<sup>64</sup> Lyman Tower Sargent, “The Social and Political Ideas of the American Communitarians: A Comparison of Religious and Secular Communes Founded Before 1850,” *Utopian Studies*, 2 (1991): 42.

Society members, however, ignored Rapp's dictates. Specifically, there were four families who managed to have about two dozen children between 1807 and 1827.<sup>65</sup>

With George Rapp presiding at his wedding, John Rapp was married in 1805, and fathered a daughter, Gertrude, the following year.<sup>66</sup> Later, there was a falling out between John Rapp and his father, forcing John to leave Harmonie and settle in eastern Ohio. John and several former Society members sued George Rapp seeking repayment of their share of funds held in the Harmony Society common trust.<sup>67</sup> The suits were eventually dropped but these actions indicate early discord within the Society, as members began to leave the settlement to avoid George Rapp's dictates. John returned to Harmonie, but died in 1812, at age 28. Rumors in the greater Pittsburgh region, started by outsiders who were suspicious of the Society, charged that John was killed by his father while being castrated for "sexual indulgences."<sup>68</sup> There is no proof that such an act occurred.<sup>69</sup>

More Pietists from Germany began to arrive at Harmonie during 1807 and 1808, however, several of the original families could no longer put up with the "strenuous religious life," leaving "with the greatest bitterness and with a determination for revenge."<sup>70</sup> Both George and Frederick Rapp allowed these departures. As Frederick wrote in a letter in 1808:

And so Harmonie will quickly cast out all filth in order that the body may be cleansed and purified of all foreign substance, and this is a good sign, although it gives offense to many. Whoever has been in the *Harmonie* and has left it again, be it for whatever cause it may, is not worthy of the Kingdom of God, and is a despiser of the suffering of Jesus.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> William E. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent: The Story of New Harmony*, 25. The families were Rall, Schwartz, Vogt, and Killinger.

<sup>66</sup> Denehie, 189.

<sup>67</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 99.

<sup>68</sup> Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent* 26-27.

<sup>69</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, "George Rapp's Harmony Society," *America's Communal Utopias*, Donald E. Pitzer, editor. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 66. Arndt notes that the castration death of John Rapp was just an ugly rumor. John Rapp most likely died from an injury received while hoisting a load of grain.

<sup>70</sup> Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent*, 101.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

Internal squabbles erupted, challenging the piety of George Rapp, possibly in retaliation for his celibacy dictate. Local German Jacob Schaal slandered George Rapp, in writing stating, “when you was in Philadelphia you did ramble with a whore.” This accusation was published and posted in inns and public taverns in Butler County.<sup>72</sup> Rapp sued Schall and won, Schaal being fined forty dollars and reprimanded by the court.<sup>73</sup>

Frederick Rapp, George Rapp’s adopted son, was more attune to the changes beginning to take shape in the United States at this time, as manufacturing was edging in on the agricultural composition of the country. By 1810, Frederick Rapp erected Harmonie’s first factory and installed a machine for wool-carding, along with two spinning jennies to fabricate broad cloth from the wool provided by the Society’s sheep.<sup>74</sup> The town of Harmonie began to expand. Frederick Rapp laid out the town based on the Philadelphia street plan with houses bordering the street, built wide, each having a garden between buildings.<sup>75</sup> Productivity increased because of celibacy as women were freed from raising children, allowing them to take part in factory and farm work.<sup>76</sup> As in most western settlements, males outnumbered females, but as one Rappite woman said, “We are too few girls for so many men, but we work gladly.”<sup>77</sup>

The Society members were isolated, having little contact with anyone outside their community. The residents of Harmonie only spoke German, as Father Rapp saw no need for learning English since the millennium was at hand. Most settlers of the surrounding area were English speaking Scotch-Irish hunters and the German language was a barrier to any interaction with Society members. As one Rappite reported, we “were not allowed to learn the English

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmonist Society, 1785-1847*, 107.

<sup>75</sup> Federal Writers’ Project, 8.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>77</sup> Kolmerten, *Women in Utopia*. 30.

language; never were allowed to have intercourse with persons who spoke English.”<sup>78</sup> Father Rapp prohibited Society members from leaving property owned by the community unless they had his direct consent.<sup>79</sup> Although the Society members became American citizens, at first they were not allowed to vote in elections, and later, they were allowed to vote only for the candidates backed by Father Rapp.<sup>80</sup> Rapp’s Society was a closed society. Only persons who directly emigrated from Wurttemberg were allowed to join the Society, and Pennsylvania German-Americans attracted to Rapp’s community could live in the vicinity of Harmonie, but never join.<sup>81</sup> Clothing resembled uniforms, with the men wearing pantaloons and jackets, and women wearing grey dresses and caps, similar to the garb of Wurttemberg.<sup>82</sup> There are very few accounts of life inside the Harmony Society made by actual members, as most observations were made by outsiders visiting the settlement. Some writers compared Society members to “dumb beasts of burden,” and noted no dissent, especially in front of non-members.<sup>83</sup> George Rapp appointed Frederick Rapp to manage the Society’s business affairs with the outside world as the Society still needed to flourish, eat, and remain busy until Christ’s coming.

While in Harmonie, Society members willingly attended three Church services each week. On Sunday, services were held at Noon and 6:00 in the evening, and an evening service was held on Wednesday.<sup>84</sup> Children were given religious instruction each Sunday morning. Services were simple and conducted by Father Rapp. Visitors to Harmonie noted that Father Rapp “could so inspire and captivate souls that they...would gladly have sacrificed their life for

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<sup>78</sup> Nevin, “The Late George Rapp and the Harmonists,” 705.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Gaillard Hunt, *Life in America One Hundred Years Ago* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1914), 242.

<sup>81</sup> Lucy Jayne Kaman, “Luminosity, Communitas, Charisma, and Community,” 27.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>84</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 119-120.

him believing firmly that he was one of God's very own elect."<sup>85</sup> As noted by Alice Felt Tyler, Church services in Harmonie were patriarchal as Father Rapp preached, required confessions to be made to him, and would not allow anyone who sinned to go to sleep until they confessed. Tyler writes about the Rappite Church: "its pastor looked the part he had created for himself."<sup>86</sup> Such comments reflect both great devotion to and fear of George Rapp by Harmony Society members. The only Society members allowed to attend funerals were George Rapp and elders of his choosing, no family or friends, and all graves in the Harmonie cemetery were unmarked, since Rapp preached that the millennium was at hand and that marked graves were not necessary.<sup>87</sup>

While living in Germany, Rapp publically pronounced that he was a prophet who made decisions based on visions given to him by God. But were Harmony Society members beginning to worship Father Rapp as much as God? As R.E. Banta writes in *The Ohio*, Rappites began to fall under Rapp's "hypnotic personality," and "their confidence in Rapp amounted to worship."<sup>88</sup> George Rapp certainly filled the description of a prophet given by Mormon scholar Richard H. Broadhead. Broadhead states: "A prophet is a person singled out to enjoy special knowledge of ultimate reality and to give others mediated access to that otherwise unavailable truth."<sup>89</sup> A prophet is also on a mission, enacting his will "against the grain of worldly understanding."<sup>90</sup> George Rapp certainly fills this description, yet there are other aspects of his personality, such as

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>86</sup> Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment*, 124-125.

<sup>87</sup> Hummel, "Hope for a New World," 7. Approximately 100 Rappites were buried in the Harmonie cemetery from 1805 to 1814 in unmarked graves. The only person buried in the cemetery with a headstone was Rapp's son John.

<sup>88</sup> R.E. Banta, *The Ohio* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1949), 359.

<sup>89</sup> Richard H. Broadhead, "Tanner Lecture: Prophets in America ca. 1830: Emerson, Nat Turner, Joseph Smith," *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 50.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

financial success and a temperamental personality that would make some Society members question his authority.

By 1811, Harmonie had about 800 residents. Even though George Rapp believed that Christ's return was at hand, he approved an expansion plan developed by Frederick Rapp which included sending several hand-picked men to venture to Philadelphia for factory training at the DuPont facility; the opening of a Society store in Pittsburgh; and sending a representative to Germany to collect any back funds of Society members still held by the Wurttemberg government.<sup>91</sup>

Regarding themselves as non-combatants, the Harmony Society refused to participate in the War of 1812, as they devoted their lives to the Imitation of Christ.<sup>92</sup> But the United States government disagreed with this assessment and drafted the young men of Harmonie, specifically to report to Erie, Pennsylvania, to protect the state from a British attack from Canada.<sup>93</sup> Of course, the Harmonie men did not report for duty and were fined \$1,348.<sup>94</sup> Frederick Rapp authorized the payment of just \$640, and the issue for the difference in payment languished in court for many years thereafter and seems to have just been dropped.<sup>95</sup>

Even though the commune at Harmonie was prosperous, George and Frederick Rapp believed that this site near Pittsburgh was not the location where the Harmony Society would welcome the millennium. It was difficult to transport goods out or get supplies in to Harmonie as the Connoquenessing Creek did not give adequate access to the Ohio River, and the climate of northwest Pennsylvania was not friendly to cultivating vineyards for wine production.<sup>96</sup> All

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<sup>91</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 122-127.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 128-130.

<sup>96</sup> Nordhoff, *The Communist Societies of the United States*, 74.



production of the Society had to be “wheeled more than twelve miles to the Ohio River” in order to be shipped to market.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to this transportation difficulty, America had changed measurably since the Rappites arrived in 1804. Harmonie had been settled in the wilderness, an ideal remote site for Christ’s Second Coming. Rapp had not anticipated that nearby Pittsburgh would blossom into a major western city. By 1810, Pittsburgh factories produced over 200 tons of nails; by 1812, the government chose it as a site for war production, turning out cannons, howitzers, artillery shells and shot; and by 1813 it was home to two iron foundries and a steel furnace, making hammers, hatchets, tongs, shovels, axes, and chains.<sup>98</sup> A Pittsburgh native called the town a “large workshop,” as its population grew to over 8,000 residents by 1815, making it the largest city in the West.<sup>99</sup>

Even though the Harmony Society proved to be successful in agriculture and manufacturing, it was not popular among other Germans in Pennsylvania, and they were losing favor with the Pennsylvania government after their refusal to fight in the War of 1812.<sup>100</sup> The Society’s isolation from other communities and refusal to adopt American customs aroused suspicion among its neighbors. The Harmony Society’s success was documented by British traveler John Bradbury in 1811, who reported that the Society’s land, livestock, houses, factories, and goods inventory was worth \$220,000 after only six years of operation.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 10.

<sup>98</sup> James Moore Swank, *History of the Manufacture of Iron in All Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1892), 227. A Pittsburgh foundry was also home to the most powerful steam engine in America, something that would attract the worldly and business minded Frederick Rapp.

<sup>99</sup> Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 43.

<sup>100</sup> Quintin R. Skrabec, Jr., *A Genealogy of Greatness, The Ethnic Shaping of Industrial America* (New York: World Audience, Inc., 2008), 89.

<sup>101</sup> John Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of America in the Years 1809, 1810, and 1811* (Liverpool: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1817), 334.

George Rapp, who had tended vines professionally in Germany, hoped that wine making would be a large part of the Rappite community at Harmonie, ignoring the criticism given to wine production by the House of Representatives. Wine making was an important component of all German religious movements in America. Because of its moderate alcohol content, it served as a social and “mystical revitalization” for communal groups.<sup>102</sup> Although, as Fuller points out, the amorous effects associated with wine were lost on the Rappites because of their celibate nature.<sup>103</sup> By 1810, Harmonie had ten varieties of Pennsylvania grapes planted on ten acres, but George Rapp’s wine production goals were never realized because of poor soil and bad weather.<sup>104</sup>

In addition to cultivating vineyards to match German grapes, Scottish mapmaker John Melish toured Harmonie in 1811 observing that the attention given to experimenting with plants and herbs seemed to be an obsession with the Rappites:

From the Labyrinth we went to the *Botanic Garden*, which is well stored with valuable plants and herbs; and the two doctors poured over them more than an hour. We afterwards went to the doctor’s house, where he showed us an elegant collection of plants, all natives of Harmony, which he had carefully arranged.<sup>105</sup>

Rapp believed in signs as divine indicators of change. Events such as the defeat of Napoleon in 1813, the death of Rapp’s son John, and the vanishing American wilderness, pointed to a need for change within the Society.<sup>106</sup> After contemplating these “signs,” Rapp decided that the Harmony Society needed to move to a more remote western location, as he originally intended. Rapp dispatched an advance party to head westward to search out a suitable

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<sup>102</sup> Robert C. Fuller, “Wine, Symbolic Boundary Setting, and American Religious Communities,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 63, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 503.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 504.

<sup>104</sup> Hudson Cattell and Linda Jones McKee, *Pennsylvania Wine: A History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012), 23.

<sup>105</sup> John Melish, *Travels in the United States of America in the Years 1806 & 1807, and 1809, 1810, & 1811 in Two Volumes, Volume II* (Philadelphia: Thomas and George Palmer, 1812), 72.

<sup>106</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, “George Rapp’s Harmony Society,” 66.

settlement location to enhance and ease the transportation of goods by river and allow for the production of wine. Led by John Baker, the advance party discovered an isolated parcel of land in southern Indiana Territory which would be ideal for a community ready to embrace Christ.<sup>107</sup> The year was 1814; the beginning of a transformation for the Harmony Society and for the United States of America.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Two: New Harmony (1814 – 1824), That Wonder of the West

*“Although it looks miserable enough, yet does the eye of hope see great and beautiful plans.”*  
~ George Rapp (1814)

George Rapp had not given up on resettling the Harmony Society in the west, either in Kentucky or southern Indiana. Now age 57, he joined John Baker’s scouting party in order to have the final say on a new settlement site. Rapp ventured southwest to Frankfort and Louisville later crossing the Ohio River into Indiana Territory, where he found land more suitable for purchase.

The advance party discovered tree laden property of about 25,000 acres on the banks of the Wabash River in southwest Indiana Territory, about a fifteen day journey from Harmonie, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> The nearby area had been the scene of two recent historic Indian battles where William Henry Harrison won the Battle of Tippecanoe and Zachary Taylor fought an all-night battle near Terre Haute.<sup>2</sup> It is believed that the real reason for George Rapp’s second migration was to find an isolated region where his followers could not be tempted to wander off to the outside world and leave membership in the Harmony Society. Rapp also sought land apart from other German immigrants, who had been hostile to the Society in Pennsylvania. There were just a few thousand total settlers in the entire southern Indiana region, and life there was hard and dangerous, requiring a communal effort to succeed.<sup>3</sup>

George Rapp again called the Indiana settlement Harmonie, but it soon became known to all as ‘New Harmony’ to distinguish it from the Pennsylvania site. In order to sell the idea to his supporters of such an exhaustive move, Father Rapp reminded the Society that it was he who had

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<sup>1</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 143.

<sup>3</sup> Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, 27-28.

special powers granted by the Lord, and it was he who led them to this place where they would welcome the coming reign of Jesus. Again citing the Book of Revelation's calling to "flee into the wilderness," Rapp convinced Society members that the move to Indiana was the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.<sup>4</sup> At the edge of the newly purchased property lies what is known as "Gabriel's Rock," two large stone slabs with an impression of what Father Rapp described to his members as two footprints, one being a perfect imprint. He informed members of the Society that they were footprints of the Angel Gabriel, who led Rapp to this site and told him to settle at this new location.<sup>5</sup> Rapp also justified the move telling Society members that believers waiting for the appearance of Christ need not build a "fixed abode" on earth, but should be in search of a "heavenly home."<sup>6</sup>

In reality, the markets for Harmony Society goods were drying up in the Pennsylvania region, and the Rappites faced financial strain if they did not look to the west for relief. Also, German neighbors who were not allowed to partake in Society rituals, or who did not believe in the teachings of Rapp, became suspicious and resentful of the relatively successful and comfortable Rappite lifestyle. Prior to the move to Indiana, George Rapp dispatched a local leader, Peter Ulrich, to Germany in an attempt to collect monies still owed to Society members who were part of the 1805 migration.<sup>7</sup> With written endorsements from German speaking Pennsylvania Governor Simon Schneider and President James Madison, Ulrich failed in his mission to convince Wurttemberg officials to release these frozen funds, forcing Father Rapp to

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<sup>4</sup> Arndt, "The Strange and Wonderful New World of George Rapp and His Harmony Society," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 57, no. 2 (April 1974): 162-163.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 33. The story of Gabriel's Rock as a sign, as told by George Rapp, was a "legend" concocted by Rapp, most likely as a method of control. In his review of Harmony Society correspondence, Karl Arndt found a letter from Frederick Rapp to his assistant John L. Baker, in which Frederick states that the rock was purchased in St. Louis, and indicates that the footprints on the soft rock were those of an Indian; *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 614-615.

<sup>6</sup> Hummel, "Hope for a New World," 7-8. Not one Society member protested the move to Indiana.

<sup>7</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 127.

send a small contingent of Rappites under his control to do the job, although they were not very successful.<sup>8</sup>

Father George Rapp liked the fact that the site chosen for the town of New Harmony was considered a river port but situated a short distance away from the Wabash River, protecting the town from flooding and the often fierce rivermen who worked on riverboats.<sup>9</sup> Based on his experiences in Pennsylvania, Rapp liked the isolation the Indiana site afforded.

But what was Father Rapp to do with Harmonie, Pennsylvania? On June 10, 1814, the following notice appeared in both the *Pittsburgh Gazette* and *Pittsburgh Mercury*: “The town of Harmony, with all its improvements, and about 9,000 Acres of LAND adjoining --- on which are THREE VILLAGES, in the tenure of GEORGE RAPP AND ASSOCIATES IS OFFERED FOR SALE.”<sup>10</sup> The notice goes on to describe the property, the buildings (including the church), the orchards and vineyards, the good soil, the quarry, and a list of positive results the Harmony Society accomplished on the site.<sup>11</sup>

Several Pennsylvanians inquired about the selling price, but no one bid for Harmonie, which Frederick Rapp was offering for \$200,000, to be paid in four equal payments of \$50,000.<sup>12</sup> When asked if the property price could be lowered, Frederick reset the price to \$135,000, with one-quarter to be paid in cash and the balance to be paid over four years, but still no one made a bid.<sup>13</sup> Finally, on May 6, 1815, almost a year after its initial offering, the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent*, 36.

<sup>10</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, “George Rapp Discovers the Wabash,” *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 26, nos 3-4 (September – December 1943), 112-113.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 113-114. In most Harmony Society literature, the site is referred to as Harmonie. Yet this Notice indicates that there were three additional villages under Rapp’s direction: Ramsdale and Edanan (both with ten log houses), and Oilbronn (with eight to ten houses).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 115-116.

Pennsylvania property was purchased by Abraham Ziegler, a Mennonite from the eastern town of Bethlehem, for one-half of the original asking price: \$100,000, without a down payment.<sup>14</sup>

Most of what is known about the early settlement and administration of New Harmony is revealed through letters sent between George Rapp and his adopted son Frederick, translated from German to English through the efforts of Rappite historian Karl Arndt. Many of the early letters from 1814 are requests for food and supplies and documents related to their purchase. Father Rapp, although the Society's spiritual leader, could not administer a worldly settlement without Frederick. On November 8, 1814, Rapp showed his reliance on Frederick, writing "Everything is still in confusion, no street of the town is cut out, everything lies in the way. Here I sit idly and wait. If I had ever had a cross to bear it is now....In this way I will get by somehow until I see you again."<sup>15</sup>

In November 1814, an advance party of almost three hundred Rappite settlers from Harmonie, Pennsylvania, mostly craftsmen, arrived at New Harmony to build cabins for use during town construction, and Father Rapp requested that Frederick purchase a steam engine for New Harmonie so that factories could be built inland and not have to rely on river power.<sup>16</sup> Frederick was still managing a slimmed down manufacturing operation at Harmonie, Pennsylvania to cover Society expenses during the move.<sup>17</sup> His job was not easy as outside looters, hearing of the Society's move to Indiana Territory, regularly invaded Harmonie, running off with pieces of furniture, tools, and livestock from the fields.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 116. Ziegler also paid Frederick Rapp and additional \$1,600 for odds and ends left at Harmonie which could not be taken during the move to Indiana.

<sup>15</sup> George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, November 8, 1814, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society, 1814-1824, Volume I, 1814-1819*, ed. Karl J. R. Arndt, 71.

<sup>16</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 154-155.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Streissguth, *Utopian Visionaries*, 43.

George Rapp's reliance on Frederick was a key factor to the success of the Harmony Society. Born Friedrich Reichert in 1775, Father Rapp's "adopted son" was age forty when he first entered New Harmonie, Indiana Territory in 1815. Multitasking in the early nineteenth century, Frederick Rapp simultaneously sold Harmonie, Pennsylvania and planned New Harmony, laying out the new town in what was known as the Philadelphia form, drawing up the town as a large square with streets at right angles, the first homes and shops constructed along the outer rim, expanding inward with Father Rapp's grand house in the center of town.<sup>19</sup> In true communal fashion, each street had public ovens and water wells, herb gardens, and mulberry trees, and across from Father Rapp's house were four large dormitories for sixty to eighty single residents.<sup>20</sup> The town housed a brewery, hospital, apothecary, and distillery, as well as factories producing an array of products. But, having settled for religious reasons in America, the focal point of New Harmony was Rapp's church, a two-story wood frame building finished in 1815. A belfry was built over the church entrance containing "a hexagonal clock-room with two clock-faces eight feet in diameter," and the church bell "could be heard at a distance of seven miles in the surrounding woods."<sup>21</sup> Within a few years of its completion, however, the church belfry was destroyed by a lightning strike, never to be repaired.<sup>22</sup>

Initially, Harmony Society members held out a hand to their new Indiana neighbors by hosting a Fourth of July celebration in 1815, inviting settlers from a dozen miles away, providing beer, wine and mutton for their guests.<sup>23</sup> Encounters with the locals shed light on the fact that

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent*, 42.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. According to William E. Wilson, George Rapp had a fear of two things in his life: lightning and steam engines.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 38-41.



the frontier choice of drink was whiskey, not wine, prompting Frederick to enhance his distillery plans and set up a whiskey sales shop at nearby Beaver Point.<sup>24</sup>

But hardships were abundant during the first few years of the new settlement. As described by George Lockwood in *The New Harmony Communities*, “the first breaking up of the bottom ground released the germs of malaria, and the death rate was enormous during the first five years of the settlement.”<sup>25</sup> During 1814 and 1815, about 119 Society members died from diseases contracted along the Wabash, prompting the construction of a cemetery as a priority project and the importation of medicine from Pittsburgh as the chief supply requested.<sup>26</sup>

Although George Rapp was an isolationist, he believed that in order for the Society to succeed as a focal point for Christ’s arrival, it needed to participate in worldly affairs, especially since the Indiana Territory was on the cusp of being granted statehood shortly after the Rappites took possession of their new home. In May 1816, Gibson County officials approached Father Rapp and asked him to appoint a Rappite resident to represent the region at Indiana’s constitutional convention, and naturally Rapp chose Frederick to assist in developing the state’s constitution.<sup>27</sup> Father Rapp, in a letter to Frederick, expressed confidence in his right-hand man, writing “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

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<sup>24</sup> Arndt, “George Rapp Discovers the Wabash,” 115. Rapp allowed Society members to drink beer and wine, but both were rationed to members. The Rappites produced whiskey but were not allowed to drink it. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent*, 50.

<sup>25</sup> Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, 28.

<sup>26</sup> Richard D. Wetzel, *Frontier Musicians on the Connoquenessing, Wabash, and Ohio: A History of the Music and Musicians of George Rapp’s Harmony Society (1805-1906)* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976), 10.

<sup>27</sup> Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, 39. Although New Harmony was officially a part of Posey County, most Rappite land ownership was in Gibson County.

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.”<sup>28</sup>

Frederick Rapp journeyed to the temporary territorial capital at Corydon in June 1816 to meet with the other Convention delegates, none who were natives of Indiana and all who were Jeffersonian Republicans.<sup>29</sup> After only twelve years in the United States, Frederick’s English language skills had developed sufficiently to make him an active participant at the Convention. Ironically, Frederick was assigned, with ten other delegates, to be a member of the “Committee relative to the Militia,” and in only two days the Committee drafted the Constitutional article defining the role and parameters of militia service within the new state.<sup>30</sup>

The Rappites refused to participate in the War of 1812, and Frederick paid a fine to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for their non-service. On June 14, 1816, the militia committee presented their recommendations to the Convention, regulating that the Indiana state militia “consist of all free able-bodied white male citizens between the ages of 18 and 45,” but Frederick Rapp’s influence on the militia committee can surely be seen in the second article of the amendment which states that no person, “conscientiously scrupulous of bearing arms, shall be compelled to do military duty, provided such person or persons will pay an equivalent for such exemption.”<sup>31</sup> Frederick protected the Society’s religious grounds for pacifism, but more importantly to George Rapp, no male Society member would have to leave the commune for the outside world or leave their occupation and communistic duties within New Harmonie. For his service at the Convention, Frederick was paid \$62.24.<sup>32</sup> It only took eighteen working days for

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<sup>28</sup> George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, June 22, 1816, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 226.

<sup>29</sup> “Journal of the Convention of the Indiana Territory, 1816,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 61, no. 2 (June 1965): 81-82.

<sup>30</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Indiana Territory*, (Louisville: Butler and Wood, 1816), 14.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>32</sup> *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 297.

the Constitutional Convention to draft, finalize, and approve the Indiana Constitution. Indiana was admitted as a state on December 11, 1816.<sup>33</sup>

Frederick's actions at the Convention sparked controversy among the Society's Indiana neighbors who believed it was an American duty to participate in the defense of one's land through service in the militia. The Indiana militia statute called for a fine of "seventy-five cents a day for every day's absence from the annual period of military duty required of all able-bodied men."<sup>34</sup> Frederick battled the state on this point and was able to have the amount of the fine reduced for Harmony Society members.<sup>35</sup> Since the perception of the Society's Indiana neighbors was that the Rappites were more financially well off than they were, seeds of resentment were planted.

The following year proved to be pivotal in both the United States and in New Harmony, Indiana. On March 4, 1817, James Monroe took office as the fifth President of the United States, ushering in what would be known as the "Era of Good Feelings." As the European wars ended, social unrest spread across Europe resulting in a depression and massive unemployment and famine, pushing people to seek "asylum and a peaceful home in the land of liberty," the up-and-coming United States.<sup>36</sup> Europeans immigrated at the estimated rate of one thousand persons each week during the summer of 1817, flooding America with both farming and manufacturing workers.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "Journal of the Convention of the Indiana Territory, 1816," 77, 82. The Indiana Constitution prohibited slavery and granted suffrage to white males only.

<sup>34</sup> Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent*, 66.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> James Schouler. *History of the United States of America, 1817-1834: Era of Good Feelings* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1885), 23. The German states suffered the most destruction from the wars against Napoleon, Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern, World Society, 1815-1830* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), 71.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Because of the changing times, the Rappites began experiencing growing pains in their new location. In order to improve productivity, the Society needed to increase its employee base to produce more quality products that would compete with cloth made in Britain. Rappites would need to bolster and modernize (by 1817 standards) their manufacturing facilities through the purchase and installation of steam engine power in their factories, and they needed to face the realization that immigration from other European countries, especially Britain, would diminish their share of the western market.

The Harmony Society shifted emphasis from religious salvation to economic and competitive prosperity. Arndt attributes this shift to George Rapp's "practical sense," meaning he understood that survival of the Harmony Society depended on economic success, especially in the underdeveloped Indiana region.<sup>38</sup> Frederick Rapp became immersed in wool prices, shipment delays due to river ice, taxes, liquor still licenses, hat and leather good manufacturing, spare parts for machinery, banking, debt collection, land deals, tax return forms, and a federal post office for New Harmony. He was appointed a Commissioner of the State Bank of Indiana. Frederick's outside business associates from Kentucky warned him "that the country is at present almost inundated with British Goods," and that "governments are so criminally stupid as thus basely to neglect the dearest interest of the Country."<sup>39</sup>

The overshadowing of religious intent caused dissent among some Society members. A disgruntled Rappite who left Father Rapp's enclave, wrote to his family in Germany, espousing the opportunities in America and criticizing the Harmony Society. Jacob Schick wrote, "Error, superstition, and religious mania combined have among this handful of ignorant men reached its highest degree. Rapp, this concentrated monk, allows himself to be honored as

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<sup>38</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 153.

<sup>39</sup> Sawyer & Peterson to Frederick Rapp, February 17, 1817, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 306-307.

divine... Woe to the man who must buy his indulgence from this scoundrel.”<sup>40</sup> Schick went on to say that “Rapp has built a silver wall around his slave colony,” and that “he did not have a safe enough hold on his people here, as many ran away on him,” warning the Germans that, “he also has in mind to get more people from Germany, which your wise government could hinder.”<sup>41</sup>

Rapp did indeed need to attract more workers to New Harmony. First, he considered merging with a Shaking Quaker group from nearby West Union, but the idea was dismissed as the Rappites believed themselves religiously superior.<sup>42</sup> After reviewing their status, Rapp saw that there were internal conflicts among Shakers, including male/female interpretations of theology and publications, as well as generational conflicts.<sup>43</sup> Still, the Rappites were dwindling in numbers not only from the imposition of celibacy but also from an increase in the number of deaths and desertions among Harmony Society members. The huge death rate due to malaria during the first two years at New Harmony, as well as scattered defections, decreased Rapp’s available workforce.

Even though some former Society members such as Jacob Schick sent letters back to Germany criticizing Rapp and the Harmony Society, many Germans, facing the hardships of life in Europe, looked for a chance to immigrate to America, and saw Rapp’s Society as a way to improve their lives. Because of his workforce needs and the economic success of New Harmony, Father Rapp agreed to pay the passage across the Atlantic of Germans seeking New

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<sup>40</sup> Jacob Schick to His Family and Friends in Germany, June 14, 1816, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 224. Schick tells how he left the Harmony Society and earned enough money on his own to buy a small farm near Pittsburgh. Associates of George Rapp in Germany discovered this letter and defended Rapp and the Harmony Society, objecting that Rapp never allowed himself to be considered divine and further claiming that Rapp was elected leader of the Society and that the Society followed Luther’s Bible.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>42</sup> George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, June 22, 1816, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 228. George Rapp did send his daughter Rosina and granddaughter Gertrude (child of his deceased son John) to live with the Shakers in order to learn English.

<sup>43</sup> Stephen J. Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 92.

Harmony as their final destination, and in 1817, about 200 new separatists arrived in the United States, on the *Frau Elisabeth*, many from German towns where Rapp had preached.<sup>44</sup> George Rapp sent Frederick to Philadelphia to take care of the passage payment, which amounted to \$12,000. But after their arrival, having heard of Father Rapp's negative reputation among Philadelphia Germans, only about 100 of these new immigrants decided to travel to New Harmony.<sup>45</sup> Many of those who did not wish to follow Rapp's stringent regime were enticed by Quakers to settle in the Zoar community in eastern Ohio. Because several of the Zoar settlers were relatives or close friends of Harmony Society members, and because George Rapp intended to keep working members of the Harmony Society isolated from American society, and to avoid defections to Zoar, Rapp imposed a censorship, or ban on communication with the outside world. The ban applied to all except for himself, Frederick Rapp, and one or two of his confidants involved in business dealings.<sup>46</sup>

The increase in European immigration garnered national concern. Former President Thomas Jefferson, writing from Poplar Forest, Virginia had been a champion of resettlement in America during his presidency but changed his mind regarding foreign settlements.

For altho', as to other foreigners, it is thought better to discourage their settling together in large masses, wherein, as in our German settlements, they preserve for a long time their own languages, habits, and principles of government, & that they should distribute themselves sparsely among the natives for quicker amalgamation, yet English immigrants are without this inconvenience. They differ from us very little but in their principles of government, and most of those (merchants excepted) who come here are sufficiently disposed to adopt ours.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 184.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 189. As described by Charles Nordhoff, the Zoarites did not intend to form a commune, but because many original settlers were old and could not pull their weight, the 225 settlers voted to establish an arrangement similar to the Harmony Society, approving an Articles of Agreement in 1819 and even prohibiting marriage, a practice which was struck down in 1830. Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, 100. Zoar did not flourish since "they did not have an able leader such as Rapp;" the Zoarites disbanded in 1898, Hunt, *Life in America One Hundred Years Ago*, 244.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Jefferson to George Flower, September 12, 1817, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 393.

Jefferson was referring to the increase in British migration to America, which began in 1815, after the completion of the War of 1812. The rebuilding of Europe was placing a high burden of taxation on the remaining population. There were four major American settlements of former British citizens: eastern Pennsylvania, Long Island, southeastern Illinois, and southern Indiana. British writer Morris Birkbeck sums up the reason for this migration, “[Englishmen] who have something left to be robbed of, and wishing to preserve it, were looking towards America as a place of refuge from the borough mongers and the Holy Alliance.”<sup>48</sup>

George Flower, the recipient of Jefferson’s letter, was a founding member of the English settlement in Albion, Illinois, just across the state line from New Harmonie. George Rapp soon realized that his quest for an isolated region in the west was coming to an end. By 1817, New Harmony found itself sandwiched between two growing English settlements. About ten miles to the northwest was Flower’s Albion colony on what was being called the English Prairie; twenty-five miles to the southeast was the town of Evansville, Indiana and the agricultural town of Sandersville, both still with small populations but growing<sup>49</sup> Flower wrote that English settlers were coming to America not to get wealthy, but to get “good land dog-cheap.”<sup>50</sup>

Jonathan Lenz, one of the last children conceived at Harmonie, Pennsylvania prior to the imposition of celibacy, recalled a typical day at New Harmonie during 1817. Lenz remembered that all work began at daybreak and ended at dusk, with meals brought out to those working in the fields.<sup>51</sup> Surplus corn and wheat was shipped down the Mississippi River to New Orleans for

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<sup>48</sup> John E. Iglehart, “The Coming of the English to Indiana in 1817 and Their Hoosier Neighbors,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 15, no. 2 (June 1919): 99.

<sup>49</sup> Jane Rodman, “The English Settlement in Southern Illinois, 1815-1825,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 43, no. 4 (December 1947): 334.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> “A Visit to New Harmony in 1883: Letter of Edward Travers Cox,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 35, no. 2 (June 1939): 186. Jonathan Lenz was a Harmony Society Trustee in 1883, at age 76. Lenz accompanied Cox on a tour of New Harmony.

sale. A most lasting impression was that “the air was filled with poisonous malaria,” as the “angel of death” visited every household, and hundreds were buried in the New Harmonie graveyard in unmarked graves.<sup>52</sup>

The education of the remaining children at New Harmony was a combination of classroom studies and vocational trade work. Children were required to attend school until they reached age fourteen, attending class in the morning for German, writing, and arithmetic, and performing mild labor in the afternoon in preparation for attaining an apprenticeship upon their graduation.<sup>53</sup> Not a totally repressive society, “singing and the fundamentals of music” including instrument instruction, were key elements in Rappite classrooms.<sup>54</sup> Music appreciation was stressed as it was a large part of both religious and social functions, helping to “foster group cohesion,” providing an opportunity for “personal expression,” and serving as “a constructive form of recreation” for the young.<sup>55</sup>

After two years of settlement on the Wabash, the exploits of the Harmony Society were well known. Agriculture was booming as the Society harvested “200 acres of wheat, 40 acres of rye, 20 of barley, 30 of oats,” as well as holding tended flocks of merino sheep, cattle stock, and pigs.<sup>56</sup> Within Indiana, however, there was a shortage of labor and little money to pay wages to laborers, as well as lack of money to pay for costs associated with shipping goods to markets.<sup>57</sup> The extension of credit from banks seemed to be the only way to finance farming within the state. Believing that many banking ventures lacked integrity, the Rappites established the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 186-187.

<sup>53</sup> Wetzel, *Frontier Musicians*, 23. It is estimated that by 1820, there were between 80 to 100 children living in New Harmony, the majority of these children were brought over in the 1817 migration from Germany, as this second wave of separatists were not subject to Rapp’s celibacy edict while living in Germany.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Arndt, “George Rapp’s Harmony Society,” 72.

<sup>56</sup> Waldo F. Mitchell, “Indiana’s Growth, 1812-1820,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 10, no. 4 (December 1914): 383.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 377.



Farmers Bank of Harmony, “free from the corruption and political involvements that plagued many other private, ‘wildcat’ banks,” naming Frederick Rapp as the bank’s president.<sup>58</sup>

Frederick was receiving reports from Abraham Ziegler, the German who had purchased the Pennsylvania Harmonie site, that near mid-1818, his region was experiencing a shortage of money and that bank notes were being rejected as a form of payment.<sup>59</sup> Morris Birkbeck and Elias Pym Fordham, representing the concerns of the English Prairie settlements, requested loans from Frederick Rapp, as the banks in Philadelphia began to tighten their control of money, both paper and specie, indicating signs of the banking crisis that was forthcoming.<sup>60</sup> By December 1818, the Society agent in Pittsburgh, Abishai Way, wrote to Frederick that “our currency is in a deplorable condition, many of the country banks have stopped payment of specia,” and banks are beginning “to call upon their debtors with too heavy hands.”<sup>61</sup>

The 1817 German immigration to New Harmony was a disaster according to George Rapp. During 1818, Rapp’s Society still accepted members by giving them a six to eight week trial membership, after which they were required to sign the original 1805 Articles of Agreement.<sup>62</sup> In addition, Rapp changed the rules of property distribution: any member who left the Harmony Society from this point forward would not receive any cash payments upon their withdrawal from their Society, regardless of whatever assets they brought into the Society at the time of their enrollment.<sup>63</sup> Father Rapp wrote to Jacob Boller on March 20, 1819 that he was finished with trying to incorporate these late arriving Germans into his Harmony Society.

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<sup>58</sup> Pitzer and Elliott, “New Harmony’s First Utopians,” 235-236.

<sup>59</sup> Abraham Ziegler to George and Frederick Rapp, May 12, 1818, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 522. Ziegler still owed the Rapps money for the Harmonie purchase three years before.

<sup>60</sup> *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 525.

<sup>61</sup> Abishai Way & Co, to Frederick Rapp, December 18, 1818, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 620.

<sup>62</sup> Pitzer and Elliott, “New Harmony’s First Utopians,” 231.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

I for my part am sick and tired of the people. They are too wild for our congregation.... It is astonishing how much trouble those who arrived here have caused already, for they have no morals and do not know what it means to live morally and according to good custom, nor to speak of true Christianity, of denying the world or oneself. About such teachings they know very little and bring much offense into our community among children and the youth by means of awful sins which are current in Germany. And most of them are themselves caught in them.<sup>64</sup>

Many German Pietists who legitimately sought refuge within the Harmony Society never reached New Harmony. Based on the deficient morality of recent arrivals, Rapp had refused to pay for any more passages to America, and as reported by Karl Arndt, those in route to Indiana fell victim to scoundrels as they “were tortured, sickened, degraded, or ruined by base ship agents, captains, and other human beasts of prey,” many dying, many being sold into servitude, and many competing with black slaves for work.<sup>65</sup> In December 1817, great disaster struck an immigration party as a ship with Pietists bound for New Harmony returned to Amsterdam, as 420 of its 500 passengers died of pestilence en route.<sup>66</sup> Observing that new immigrant members lacked the spiritual drive he required, Father Rapp forbade any Society member living at New Harmony “to write any more letters of enticement to German friends,” and required the new wave of members to enter into individual contracts with the Society.<sup>67</sup> But, the restrictions developed by George Rapp would ultimately lead to the future disintegration of the Harmony Society due to the lack of natural reproduction, a restriction on German Pietist immigration, and non-recruiting of local residents as Society members. Rapp’s idea of the American frontier “did not generate communitarianism,” nor did it offer conditions for its success.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 193. Jacob Boller was the Harmony Society agent in Philadelphia.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>66</sup> Boller & Solms to Frederick Rapp, December 11, 1817, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade*, 424. Boller & Solms was the firm of Harmony Society agent Jacob Boller.

<sup>67</sup> Pitzer and Elliott, “New Harmony’s First Utopians,” 231.

<sup>68</sup> Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., “Patent-Office Models of the Good Society: Some Relationships Between Social Reform and Westward Expansion,” *The American Historical Review* 58, no. 3 (April 1953): 510.

Original Rappites and new immigrant Rappites were beginning to clash. George Rapp determined that the new Society members “were more of a liability than an asset.”<sup>69</sup> Arguments ensued over which individuals brought more wealth into the Society, the original members in 1805 or the new 1817 members. Disgusted by references to individual materialism, George Rapp in 1818, with the unanimous approval of the Harmony Society, burned the Society’s records, ending any claims to “individual property.”<sup>70</sup>

The new European migration began to raise anxieties in the native-born American population who saw the increasing foreign population as “destroyers,” not builders, generating proposals which would deny immigrants voting rights and enforce mandatory sterilization.<sup>71</sup> Saddled with internal clashes of original versus new Society members, George Rapp’s Harmony Society troubles with its Indiana neighbors began to escalate. Some residents of Posey County filed a grievance petition with the Indiana House of Representatives, claiming that the Rappites “do not pay tax even for their town lots,” and “they refuse to bear arms.”<sup>72</sup> The petitioners, veterans of the American Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, were angered that they paid excessive taxes while the Rappites did not, and believed that the Harmony Society was not representative of the American democratic way of life as “they vote by the advice of their Head, Mr. Rapp.”<sup>73</sup> This was corroborated later that year as Rapp decided not to allow any members of the Harmony Society to vote in a local election.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 209.

<sup>70</sup> Lockwood, *The New Harmony Movement*, 19.

<sup>71</sup> Page Smith, “Anxiety and Despair in American History,” Third Series, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 26, no. 3 (July 1960): 423.

<sup>72</sup> Petition from Residents of Posey County to Indiana House of Representatives, January 1818, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 440.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> David Love to Frederick Rapp and John L. Baker, March 6, 1818, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 487.

Dann Lynn, the Posey County representative in the Indiana Legislature received an anonymous letter complaining about the Harmony Society's celibacy rule initiated by George Rapp ten years earlier, inferring that such an antiquated rule was not in the best interests of American citizens, asking that "you propose to the next Legislature a Bill to Dissolve Mr. Raps Restrictions on his people."<sup>75</sup>

Indiana was structured as an agricultural society but the ability of settlers to purchase land in the new state was seriously hampered by the financial crisis known as the "Panic of 1819." The 1819 crisis had its beginnings after the War of 1812 ended, as European production and trade with America resumed. Europe imported abundant, surplus American agricultural products and in return saturated the United States market with cheap manufactured goods. Market conditions prompted an increase in the number of United States banks and the amount of credit they extended, resulting in huge debts owed by agriculturalists to the banks after the prices for crops fell in 1818.<sup>76</sup> As described by Charles Sellers in *The Market Revolution*, real money, in the form of specie, that is gold and silver, was replaced by promises to pay debts in paper money, in the form of bank notes, which were "multiplied far beyond the amount of specie that existed to satisfy them."<sup>77</sup> The agricultural price collapse "made it impossible for state banks to collect from borrowers or meet obligations to the national Bank."<sup>78</sup> Yet, the Rappites did not feel the effects of the financial panic in 1818 and 1819 as their agricultural uses and manufacturing sales were made mainly within the Society or to regional neighbors, or western domestic markets. Becoming expert agriculturalists, the Rappite wheat production generated "25

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<sup>75</sup> A Friend to the Harmony Society to Dann Lynn, October 8, 1818, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 578.

<sup>76</sup> Daniel S. Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," *The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives and New Directions*, Cathy Matson, editor (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 264.

<sup>77</sup> Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution, Jacksonian America, 1815-1846*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 133.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

to 30 bushels per acre,” compared to the 15 bushels produced by their English Prairie neighbors in Illinois and Indiana.<sup>79</sup>

The collapse of crop prices shifted the American business focus from agriculture to manufacturing. An increase in American manufacturing became a means to repel the importation of European goods, especially as cotton and woolen consumption by American consumers rose.<sup>80</sup> Intending to break links with European methods and governments, and develop economic independence, the “American Society for the Encouragement of American Manufactures” chose United States Vice President Daniel Tompkins as its President, with John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe serving as distinguished members.<sup>81</sup> Fully supporting American manufacturing and the American Manufacturers’ Institute, Frederick Rapp informed the Society’s agents to fight “against unfair foreign competition.”<sup>82</sup>

Indiana settlers were noticeably in debt due to land purchases made on credit in the new state as well as the costs associated with start-up farming. When the financial crisis struck, both the Indiana General Assembly and the United States Congress passed measures to relieve the burden of debt, extending repayment of debts for up to one year, as money was scarce in the west.<sup>83</sup> At the end of 1820, Indiana Hoosiers were \$2.2 million in debt to the federal government, prompting the abolishment of credit for land purchases and dashing dreams of land ownership wealth.<sup>84</sup> In contrast, the Harmony Society land and buildings in New Harmony were

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<sup>79</sup> Robert E. Ankli, “Problems in Aggregate Agricultural History,” *Agricultural History* 46, no. 1, American Agriculture, 1790-1840: A Symposium (January 1972): 68.

<sup>80</sup> Schouler, *History of the United States of America*, 41.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

<sup>82</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society 1785-1847*, 210.

<sup>83</sup> Mitchell, “Indiana’s Growth, 1812-1820,” 385.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

valued at \$1 million in 1820, totally owned by the Society members.<sup>85</sup> Indiana was not attractive to many settlers in 1820 because of huge debt, no credit, low trade, few jobs, low wages, poor farming incentives, and no new business enterprises.<sup>86</sup> Yet, because of the ease to produce subsistence crops, hunt forest game, and gather building materials from natural sources, Indiana settlers were not in danger of starvation or lack of shelter.<sup>87</sup>

The Rappites experienced the best of both worlds as they combined agricultural and manufacturing successes, especially during the Panic of 1819 and its subsequent depression. At the insistence of his business agents and Father Rapp, Frederick purchased a steam engine to run milling operations at New Harmony, freeing the Society from reliance on water power from the Wabash River. Not needing to satisfy the needs of the Society alone, Frederick sought to garner business from the local Indiana population by placing advertisements in southern Indiana newspapers for use of his grinding mill powered by steam.<sup>88</sup> During 1819 and 1820, the Harmony Society was self-sufficient for their own wants, sold \$12,000 of agricultural products, and produced \$50,000 of manufactured goods.<sup>89</sup> George Rapp and Frederick became outspoken supporters of domestic manufacturing, blaming the depression on Americans who purchased foreign imports, erroneously believing that foreign goods were superior to domestically manufactured products.<sup>90</sup>

Economist Matthew Carey, in his *Addresses of the Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of National Industry*, praised the Harmony Society “as a model for others to follow in

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<sup>85</sup> Edward E. Moore, *A Century of Indiana* (New York: American Book Company), vii.

<sup>86</sup> William O. Lynch, “An Early Crisis in Indiana History,” *Indiana Magazine of History*, 43, no. 2 (June 1947): 113.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>88</sup> *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, 231.

<sup>89</sup> Pitzer and Elliott, “New Harmony’s First Utopians,” 233. An 1819 assessment valued New Harmony’s assets at \$370,000 (including land and buildings).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 234-235.

establishing American industry.”<sup>91</sup> It was the self-sufficiency of the Rappites, with a combination of agriculture and manufacturing skills, which protected the Society from the adverse effects of the economic crisis of 1819. Carey, an Irish born journalist based in Philadelphia, maintained that domestic manufacturing would ensure both the social and economic prosperity of the frontier, as “placing the manufacturer beside the agriculturist” would be a great advantage for the American home market.<sup>92</sup> Carey wrote: “The Harmonists were true, practical political economists; they did not lavish their wealth on the manufacturers of a distant hemisphere, nor buy abroad cheap those articles which they could produce at home.”<sup>93</sup>

The Panic of 1819 greatly hurt Indiana and the American West. Between 1815 and 1819, land speculation, created by the reckless funding of unreliable bank notes, gave settlers a sense of false prosperity.<sup>94</sup> Western settlers found themselves isolated as trade could not be carried out on a widespread basis. Monies from either the federal or state governments for infrastructure improvements dried up. Agricultural products could not be cheaply shipped to eastern markets as capital needed to build and improve roads and canals was not forthcoming.<sup>95</sup> Frederick Rapp’s economic planning was the foundation in place isolating the Rappites from these economic woes. While in Indiana, Frederick developed domestic trade routes and markets which generated successful ventures. Using the Ohio River, goods were shipped northeast to Pittsburgh and southwest to St. Louis and New Orleans, with strong markets created in Massachusetts, Kentucky and Tennessee.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Arndt, “The Strange and Wonderful New World of George Rapp and His Harmony Society,” 163.

<sup>92</sup> John R. Van Atta, “Western Lands and the Political Economy of Henry Clay’s American System, 1819-1832,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 21, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 643. Carey’s comments appeared in his 1820 book, *The New Olive Branch*, 176-179.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 636.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Arndt, editor, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume I*, xiii.

Aside from letters and financial records generated by Frederick Rapp, visitor's journals provide accounts of everyday life within New Harmony. When English writer William Cobbett visited in 1819, he praised the Society's mill steam machines and plans to build their own steamboat to carry produce and manufactured goods to New Orleans.<sup>97</sup> A visitor was impressed by the Rappite workers, stating, "There is not an individual in that society who is of the proper age who does not contribute his proportional share of labor. They have neither spendthrifts nor drunkards."<sup>98</sup> Culture also defined life in New Harmony. The Rappites wrote a multitude of songs and poems for special occasions including their annual festivals, the birthdays of both George and Frederick Rapp, the arrival of ships bearing goods and people, working group songs for harvesting the fields, songs to the Virgin Sophia, and mystic songs.<sup>99</sup>

The elaborate high-hedged labyrinth, designed by George Rapp and situated in a park-like setting away from the manufacturing buildings, was of enormous interest to New Harmony visitors. Labyrinths first appeared in middle Europe during medieval times, representing the winding path which one needed to navigate to attain "a state of true social harmony," but George Rapp additionally believed that it symbolized mysticism and the impending coming of the millennium.<sup>100</sup> Describing the complexity of the labyrinth, Robert Dale Owen observed that, "one might walk for hours and fail to reach a building erected in the center," and, "thus George

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<sup>97</sup> William Cobbett, *A Year's Residence in the United States of America, Part III* (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1819), 481.

<sup>98</sup> Col. William M. Cockrum, *Pioneer History of Indiana including Stories, Incidents and Customs of the Early Settlers* (Oakland City, IN: Press of Oakland City Journal, 1907), 386.

<sup>99</sup> Karl J. R. Arndt, "George Rapp and His Pioneer Indiana Poets," *Contemporary Education*, 58, no. 2 (Winter 1987): 99. The songs of mysticism, according to Arndt, could only be appreciated by a very small segment of the Harmony Society: those with knowledge of the theosophy of Jacob Bohme (1575-1624) centering on spiritual awakening under the guidance of divine wisdom.

<sup>100</sup> Ross F. Lockridge, *The Labyrinth, A History of the New Harmony Labyrinth, Including Some Special Study of the Spiritual and Mystical Life of its Builders, the Rappites, and a Brief Survey of Labyrinth's Generally* (New Harmony, IN: New Harmony Memorial Commission, 1941), 11, 47. Lockridge writes that the mysticism associated with the Harmony Society is difficult to explain, as George Rapp left no written records of his concept of mysticism.



Rapp had sought to shadow forth to his followers their final state of peace and harmony.”<sup>101</sup>

According to New Harmony historian Ross Lockridge, the Rappites did not leave any records of their concept or practice of mysticism during their decade in Indiana, but the importance of their construction of this intricate maze and the history of labyrinths in Europe links Rapp to the use of this important site as a sense of mystery to his followers.<sup>102</sup>

As more visitors came to New Harmony, George Rapp’s fame spread. But either criticism of or respect for his celibacy policy spanned the European and North American continents. Many believed that Rapp’s celibacy edict was influenced by Thomas Malthus’ theory of population expansion, although there is no proof that Rapp read Malthus. Malthus wrote that overpopulation would be offset by natural disasters, not celibacy.<sup>103</sup> In a profile of Father Rapp, English traveler Thomas Hulme visited New Harmony and wrote, “The Law-giver here made a famously ‘restraining statute’ upon the law of nature.”<sup>104</sup> Rapp’s celibacy edict and outward prudishness inspired British poet Lord Byron to include reference to the Prophet Rapp in one of his major works, “Don Juan.”

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When Rapp the Harmonist embargo’d 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 call’d he “Harmony” a state sans wedlock?  
Now here I have got the preacher at a deadlock.

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<sup>101</sup> Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, 40. Robert Dale Owen was the son of utopian Robert Owen. The labyrinth remained a centerpiece in New Harmony after the town was purchased by Robert Owen in 1824.

<sup>102</sup> Lockridge, *The Labyrinth*, 22. Rapp insisted that each of the Harmony Society settlements (Harmonie, New Harmony, and Economy) contain a labyrinth.

<sup>103</sup> Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern, World Society, 1815-1830*, 207.

<sup>104</sup> Thomas Hulme, *Journal of a Tour in the Western Counties of America, September 30, 1818-August 8, 1819* (Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 2007), 60.

Because he either meant to sneer at harmony  
 Or marriage, by divorcing them oddly.  
 But weather reverend Rapp learn'd 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 propagat more broadly.  
 My objection's to his title, not his ritual,  
 Although I wonder how it grew habitual.<sup>105</sup>

As George Rapp's persona was being satirized, Frederick Rapp emerged as a well-respected leader within the state, receiving numerous reports from his friends in the Indiana State Legislature on the political issues of the day. In January 1820, Frederick was asked to represent Posey County as one of ten commissioners assigned to choose a permanent location for the new state capital, choosing Indianapolis in the center of the state as the seat.<sup>106</sup>

All was not utopian and peaceful at New Harmony. In order to recoup payments for passage to America from Europe, some separatists engaged in indentured servant contracts with the Harmony Society for either themselves or their children. An outsider, William Harris, attempted to free two indentured servants and was met with physical resistance by several Rappites, including Frederick Rapp. After failing in his first attempt, Harris returned to New Harmony with armed reinforcements, furiously attacking six Society members who were working the fields. Harris and his men entered town and instigated a riot.<sup>107</sup> Harris' rioters were arrested and, later, in March 1820, Frederick Rapp was indicted for assault for his part in the

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<sup>105</sup> Lord Byron, *Don Juan* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1858), 469-470. Byron's work was originally published in London on March 26, 1824.

<sup>106</sup> *Vincennes Western Sun & General Advertiser*, January 22, 1820, 1. Frederick received \$66 for his service.

<sup>107</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society, 1814-1824, Volume II, 1820-1824* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1978), 10-11.

town defense.<sup>108</sup> Since indenture was a common practice in Indiana, the Rappites believed that Harris' reason for the attack was only an excuse to physically hurt Society members due to "hostile feelings by local settlers toward the society."<sup>109</sup> Nearby settlers had come to southern Indiana from the Allegheny Mountains and were mostly plain English, Scottish, and Scotch-Irish farmers who resented the success of the German Rappites.<sup>110</sup> The locals resented the wealth and self-sufficiency of the Harmony Society, especially when they discovered that the Treasurer of Indiana asked Frederick Rapp for a \$5,000 loan "to shore up the state," a request granted by Father Rapp charging the state six percent interest.<sup>111</sup>

A turning point for the New Harmony community was August 4, 1820, although its impact would not be felt for several years. On that day, Scottish utopian Robert Owen, writing from New Lanark, sent a letter to George Rapp seeking information about the Rappite successes: "If you can furnish me with any authentic printed or manuscript, statement of the rise, progress & present state of Harmony, you would confer upon me a very particular obligation."<sup>112</sup> Owen was developing his concept of utopia at New Lanark in Scotland and had studied Rapp's Harmony Society as a model. Some Europeans looked upon the Society's success as a form of salvation rather than wealth. One review of New Harmonie erroneously suggested, "It has been doubted whether the Society will continue united, on which alone depends their prosperity. I am

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., "Posey County Circuit Court", (March 1820), 44. Ibid., 76: Frederick Rapp pleaded not guilty, but was tried and found guilty by a jury, fining him \$150. Ever the businessman, Frederick changed his plea to guilty and paid a reduced fine of five dollars.

<sup>109</sup> Lucy Jayne Botscharow-Kamau, "Neighbor: Harmony and Conflict on the Indiana Frontier," *Journal of the Early Republic* 11, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 510.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 513.

<sup>111</sup> Pitzer and Elliott, "New Harmony's First Utopians," 236. Indiana's Governor Jennings solicited a personal loan of \$1,000 from Frederick Rapp in 1822, volunteering to pay back the loan at ten percent interest. Frederick denied the loan to the Governor.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Owen to George Rapp, August 4, 1820, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume II*, 89.

of the opinion they will remain united,” as, “they have no use for money, the love of which is the root of all evil.”<sup>113</sup>

Although the renown of the Harmony Society’s financial success spread widely, issues at home made everyday living in Indiana contentious. Indiana’s Governor Jennings criticized the Society’s non-participation in the military defense of the state. The Harris-led rioters were set free with minimal fines, and the state seized the mill built by the Rappites to grind grain for its neighbors and declared it public property.<sup>114</sup> These events prompted Frederick Rapp to write, “The world can no longer bear us, and we cannot bear it, until it is judged.”<sup>115</sup> Yet Frederick continued to expand New Harmony’s manufacturing operation as the Society was becoming known for its manufacturing and business acumen rather than its religious origins.<sup>116</sup>

Consequently, Rapp began a campaign to focus on their religious roots. A local Shaker delegation, being depleted in population because of their celibacy practice, approached Father Rapp seeking a merger between the two groups, but Rapp discovered that the Shakers “were still comparatively uneducated,” and did not comprehend the mystical component of Father Rapp’s teachings.<sup>117</sup>

The second coming of Christ was still the focal point of everything the Rappites did. Believing that the world was bordering on hopelessness, the Society restudied the books of Daniel and Revelation.<sup>118</sup> Father Rapp always looked to Europe for signs of the coming of

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<sup>113</sup> John Minter Morgan, *Remarks on the Practicability of Mr. Robert Owen’s Plan to Improve the Condition of the Lower Classes* (London: Samuel Leigh, 1819), 71.

<sup>114</sup> Frederick Rapp to John Baker, October 14, 1820, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume II*, 118. These events convinced Frederick that the millennium was at hand.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Near the end of 1820, New Harmony produced fine and course cloth, blankets cottons, leather, blacksmith wrought iron products, tin products, spinning wheels, ropes, leather gloves, shoes, boots, hats, saddles and bridals, stockings, socks, mittens, earthenware, seed oil, beer, brandy, a variety of whiskeys, wagons, plows, carts, flour, butter, beef and pork.

<sup>117</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 251.

<sup>118</sup> Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture*, 306.

Jesus. The war between Spain and France, the sighting of a comet, the Congress of Vienna, the Holy Alliance, and even events happening in China, for him, pointed to the millennium at hand.<sup>119</sup> In May 1823, George Rapp wrote, “Our period of time is suited for this, all disagreements and revolutions are evolutions and purpose toward the high goal, so just have patience.”<sup>120</sup>

Still enamored with economics and manufacturing, however, the Harmony Society adopted the Golden Rose as their logo, and it came to represent quality products to the outside world.<sup>121</sup> Internally, the Golden Rose was understood as a reference to Micah 4:8 as translated in the Lutheran Bible alluding to the kingdom of God on earth, “And thou Tower of Eden, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, thy golden rose shall come, the former domination, the Kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.”<sup>122</sup>

But within this framework of thought, George Rapp began to think that the move to Indiana and their ten year residence was a mistake.<sup>123</sup> Economically, Frederick believed that the development of the American west was failing, as Rappite products still needed to be sent long distances to markets, and because of the financial depression, roads and canals to improve transport were not being built.<sup>124</sup> Father Rapp wanted to welcome Christ to earth with a mass of riches, “to be placed at the Lord’s disposal when He should appear.”<sup>125</sup> Life in New Harmony was becoming too easy; the building of the town was complete, the daily routine was established, and farming and business ventures were successful. In order to keep Harmony Society members immersed in work, George Rapp first developed a plan to build a new church, but when the

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<sup>119</sup> Pitzer and Elliott, “New Harmony’s First Utopians,” 232.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture*, 302.

<sup>124</sup> Blair, *The New Harmony Story*, 31.

<sup>125</sup> Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture*, 302.

construction was quickly completed, he could think of only one more project to keep everyone busy: the building of a new city.<sup>126</sup>

There are few written records of what reasons prompted George Rapp to seek a change of location. One recorded indication was in a letter from Father Rapp to Frederick dated March 6, 1824, where he states, “Providence will provide, or has already provided. The time is not so accidental that we have such courage for the move. Certainly there is more behind this than we now see or know, although something of it can be known by premonition.”<sup>127</sup> Again, Frederick Rapp found himself in the center of real estate negotiations, enlisting Richard Flower of the Illinois English Prairie settlement of Albion to travel to Philadelphia and then England to seek out buyers for the entire town of New Harmony.<sup>128</sup>

After the decision to move was made, it took Frederick Rapp just one month to find suitable land for the resettlement of the Harmony Society, about eighteen miles north of Pittsburgh on the Ohio River, and Frederick immediately took on the task of making sketches of his city plan for Father Rapp’s approval.<sup>129</sup> Richard Flower greatly admired both George and Frederick Rapp, and in his sales pitch referred to New Harmony as “That Wonder of the West.”<sup>130</sup> The impending sale and move must have been discussed and planned by both George and Frederick well before they engaged Richard Flower as their sales agent, as reasons for the move were both economically and religiously based. Frederick Rapp’s economic reasons for the move include the Society’s increased expansion of manufacturing markets for which the

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<sup>126</sup> Edward E. Moore, *A Century of Indiana*, viii.

<sup>127</sup> George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, March 6, 1824, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade, Volume II*, 812. Frederick Rapp was away from New Harmony on a secret mission, which included looking for land for a third Rappite city. To Frederick, Father Rapp wrote: “I hope however the hand of the Lord will guide you to the right appointed place.” This letter is also the first mention that Rapp chose Richard Flower of the English Prairie settlement as their sales agent, indicating that they were looking for a British buyer for New Harmony.

<sup>128</sup> Blair, *The New Harmony Story*, 31.

<sup>129</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 287. Father Rapp had final approval on all aspects of property location, costs, and town layout.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

Pittsburgh region is better suited, poor mail service in Indiana, lack of proper means of communication between New Harmony and the eastern United States, friction with the Society's frontier neighbors, and unreliable and corrupt banking facilities in the west.<sup>131</sup> George Rapp wanted to move because after ten years in Indiana, he felt alienated as a German and sought to reestablish ties with Pennsylvania Germans who spoke his language, including state legislators who were more attuned to German needs.<sup>132</sup> In Indiana, the Harmony Society became the source of ridicule and debasement among some neighbors for their coarse clothing, Old World customs, separate religious practices, and exclusive use of the German language.<sup>133</sup> Both Rapps wanted to move to Pennsylvania fast, as indicated by the selling price asked for the Indiana property. Advertisements in the London and Philadelphia newspapers offered New Harmonie, intact with all buildings and machinery for the bargain price of \$150,000.<sup>134</sup>

On May 24, 1824, 497 members of the Harmony Society of New Harmonie, Indiana, without protest, signed (or made their mark) on a document giving Frederick Rapp the Power of Attorney to dispose of their Indiana property in a manner of his choosing.<sup>135</sup> When word of the pending sale spread, an account of the harmonious life of New Harmonie residents was disputed in an editorial in the *Philadelphia National Gazette*, claiming that such a society could only be effective on a small population basis and that such a lifestyle might be admired by foreigners but

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 293-294.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>133</sup> Streissguth, *Utopian Visionaries*, 44.

<sup>134</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 294. Some documents assess the property and buildings in Indiana at being worth over a million dollars.

<sup>135</sup> Otis E. Young, "Personnel of the Rappite Community of Harmony, Indiana, in the year 1824," *Indiana Magazine of History* 47, no. 3 (September 1951): 313-319. Isaac Blackford, a judge on the Indiana Supreme Court, witnessed their signatures.

would not work well among Americans.<sup>136</sup> Yet, by 1824, the per capita wealth of the Rappites was \$2,000, compared to \$200 for the average American and \$150 for the average Indianan.<sup>137</sup>

The first contingent of settlers bound for the new Pittsburgh site, including George Rapp at their lead, boarded the steamboat *Plough Boy* for a thirteen day trip east on the Ohio River. They left behind a contingent at New Harmony to continue to run the mills and tend the fields under the supervision of Frederick.<sup>138</sup>

Except for letters related to business interests and Harmony Society administration, both George Rapp and Frederick Rapp did not leave much of a paper trail concerning the true mission of the Society. They had never documented their religious attitudes related to Christ's second coming.<sup>139</sup> In 1824, just prior to the establishment of the location, Father Rapp wrote and printed what he believed to be the religious philosophy of the Society.<sup>140</sup> In his *Thoughts on the Destiny of Man*, he saw the United States as a vehicle created by God at the time when the morality of mankind was "almost exhausted," justifying his religious reasons for settling in America. He considered the United States a "happy form of government, which has long been sought for by the wise and good."<sup>141</sup> Rapp praised the United States Constitution and its protection of "the rights of man."<sup>142</sup>

For several months, Richard Flower had trouble attracting a buyer for the Indiana community. On January 3, 1825, however, Scottish utopian philanthropist Robert Owen, who

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<sup>136</sup> Philadelphia National Gazette and Literary Register, April 13, 1824, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society, Volume II*, 842-854.

<sup>137</sup> Moore, *A Century of Indiana*, vii.

<sup>138</sup> Log of the *Plough Boy* from Harmony, Indiana to Economy, Pennsylvania, May 24 – June 6, 1824, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society, Volume II*, 906—915. There were eight steamboat trips during the move, the last trip leaving Indiana on May 5, 1825. About 220 Society members remained buried in the New Harmony cemetery.

<sup>139</sup> The only member documentation of the Harmony Society was related to material possessions in the form of contracts entered into with George Rapp and Associates.

<sup>140</sup> George Rapp, *Thoughts on the Destiny of Man, Particularly with Reference to the Present Times* (Harmony, IN: Harmony Society, 1824), 9.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, 49.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.



had admired the Society and their way of life for years, purchased New Harmony, and Frederick Rapp documented the conditions of sale to Owen in a handwritten memorandum describing the purchase price and method of payment.<sup>143</sup> As the Owenites set sail to America, they too sang of the potential of their new Indiana home, reminiscent of the Rappites travel song from Germany to America. On ship, the Owen group sang:

Land of the West we fly to thee:  
Sick of the Old World's sophistry;  
Haste then across the dark, blue, sea,  
Land of the West we rush to thee!<sup>144</sup>

Robert Owen purchased New Harmony for Rapp's \$150,000 asking price, but paid an additional \$40,000 for livestock and manufacturing equipment, with Richard Flower pocketing a \$5,000 commission.<sup>145</sup> Owen, whose utopian dream stalled in Britain, saw New Harmony as a way to make his dream come true. It would have cost Owen almost half a million to create a utopian village in England, compared to the price he paid for a working town.<sup>146</sup>

The year 1824 was one of transformation. The Rappites abandoned one form of lifestyle for another, still blindly obeying their prophet, George Rapp, who was now convinced that Christ, upon His impending return, would find them ready to be humble servants for His 1,000 year reign. On another stage, the United States was entering a new era, one based on democratic principles favorable to the common man, led for the first time by a common man, Andrew Jackson. Soon, the principles of Rapp's Harmony Society would clash with the principles of Jacksonian Democracy.

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<sup>143</sup> Memorandum," January 3, 1825, Indiana University Archives  
<http://webappl.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids> Accessed October 4, 2013.

<sup>144</sup> Karl J. R. Arndt, "The First Wabash Song," *Indiana Magazine of History* 38, no. 1 (March 1942): 82.

<sup>145</sup> Wetzel, *Frontier Musicians*, 11.

<sup>146</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 296. Owenite ideology clashed with the Church of England and Owen was pleased that the Indiana site was in the center of the English Prairie, far from England.

### Chapter 3: Divine Economy (1824–1847): Factories, Fortunes, and Faith

“...and thou too Brutus.”  
~ *George Rapp to Frederick Rapp (1832)*

By 1824, George Rapp needed to reevaluate his plan for welcoming Christ for His one thousand year reign on Earth. Rapp was 67 years old and still believed that the millennium would occur within his lifetime, but he was no longer convinced it would happen in the United States. As the power base of the United States was beginning to shift from elitist-based political management to government dictated by the common man, Rapp now surmised that he and his Society members would meet Christ in the Holy Land, not Pennsylvania. Re-crossing the Atlantic Ocean with one-thousand faithful followers required the generation of massive wealth.<sup>1</sup> Enough money needed to be made to ensure that all Harmony Society members could make the trip to Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

Over the course of the twenty years since the Harmony Society was formed, the elements of the United States changed greatly; industrialization became as important (or even more important) as agriculture; frontier towns grew into cities; immigration from Europe fueled the workforce; and successful factories led to the creation of fortunes. In Father Rapp’s eyes, a fortune would be needed to travel to meet Christ and present Him with enough funds to finance His one thousand year reign on earth.

Frederick Rapp had guided the financial fortunes of the Society since he was taken under the wing of George Rapp as his adopted son in Wurttemberg. Frederick changed the course of the Harmony Society by turning it into a manufacturing and marketing force. The quality of the “Golden Rose” products changed the worldly perception of the Society from a religious centered

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<sup>1</sup> John William Larnier, Jr., “‘Nails and Sundrie Medicines,’ Town Planning and Public Health in the Harmony Society, 1805-1840,” *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 45, no. 2 (June 1962): 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Rapp was concerned that American morality was declining.

to economic based group within what was becoming Jacksonian America. A generational shift of perception was occurring in the early American Republic. The generation of Founding Fathers, including James Madison and the revolutionaries still living, however, saw the Harmony Society as a successful undertaking, but owing their overall success to their religious core.<sup>3</sup> Madison believed that applying the work ethic of the Harmonists to other ventures or businesses in the United States would fail, as a religious component was needed for such success.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that Thomas Jefferson became a sound supporter of the secular, utopian ideas of Britain's Robert Owen and Frances Wright, but rejected a similar somewhat religious utopian society created by the German Rapp.<sup>5</sup>

Aware that the number of his followers was dwindling, George Rapp scaled down the size of his third settlement. New Harmonie, Indiana spread over 20,000 acres, emphasizing the importance of agriculture to the Society. Economy, Pennsylvania, on the other hand, covered only 3,000 acres purchased from ten different farmers. Here the Rappites concentrated on factory manufacturing and business ventures as large cotton and wool mills powered by steam, a town hall and hotel, a natural history museum, a brick church, and a post office were the first orders of construction in 1824-1825.<sup>6</sup> Even the name of the third location, Economy, expresses the change in Rapp's focus, realizing that instead of isolation, contact with the outside world helped the Society gain the greater wealth needed to meet Christ on his return.<sup>7</sup> As future

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<sup>3</sup> James Madison to Frances Wright, September 1, 1825, *Selected Writings of James Madison*, Ralph Ketcham, editor (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006), 324.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Stanton, "Looking for Liberty," 661.

<sup>6</sup> R. L. Baker, "Description of Economy, Beaver County, Pennsylvania," *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Volume IV, Part II* (Philadelphia: Henry C. Baird, 1850), 185. Romulus Baker was hand trained by Frederick Rapp in the administration of the Society's affairs and would become a Trustee of the Harmony Society after George Rapp's death. John Duss, in *George Rapp and His Associates*, 27, believes Frederick Rapp was becoming too concerned with the cultural education of Society members, a departure from the religious focus of George Rapp.

<sup>7</sup> Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840*, 302.

Society Trustee John Duss points out in *George Rapp and His Associates*, “the name ‘Economy’ is (and was meant to be) significant of the character of the Society; it was pre-eminently an industrial community.”<sup>8</sup>

At Economy, Frederick Rapp excelled in architectural and mechanical innovations. Fredrick designed the Economy granary with a horse-drawn elevator and louver wall openings instead of windows. The great dining hall contained an advanced steam heating system and outside building walls were used as trellises for grape vines. Free-standing coal stoves eliminated fireplace drafts and factory machinery was run by steam power. Frederick engineered innovative plumbing techniques as water flowed into town for consumption from nearby hillside springs. Homes had stone sinks, and drainage gutters were carved into town streets. Harmony Society factories produced illuminating oil for use in their own lamps, and chairs were custom built to fit the shape of individual members.<sup>9</sup> Father Rapp insisted on the construction of a labyrinth, a flower garden, a fish pond, a bandstand, and a Greek-styled grotto, along with the immense home, known as the Great House, built as his residence.<sup>10</sup> Rapp’s frills seem worldly and permanent for a prophet who believed that the world as he knew it would shortly change with Christ’s Second Coming and his followers would again have to be uprooted for a final trip to Palestine.

As previously discussed, the average Rappite was a worker and worshiper, not inclined to write or keep accounts of the goings on of the Society. In order to experience life in Economy, written accounts of visitors need to be reviewed. At the very start of life at Economy, utopian abolitionist Frances Wright studied the agricultural successes of Rapp’s field workers and

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<sup>8</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 26. Another suggested name was “Unity,” which was promptly rejected.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Morse Stotz, “Threshold of the Golden Kingdom: The Village of Economy and Its Restoration,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 8 (1973): 144-145.

<sup>10</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 27-28.

believed that the same principle of communal life could be established on southern American plantations, thus eliminating slavery.<sup>11</sup> Admiring the successes of Frederick Rapp, Wright believed in the organization and motivation Frederick instilled in the Harmony Society field workers, claiming that if just two or three southern plantations could be modelled on the Rappites, they would be able to produce much more product, underselling the production of slave labor, and in turn, rendering slave labor unprofitable.<sup>12</sup> It is reported that Father Rapp met with Wright and her close friend General Lafayette, hero of the American Revolution, in May 1825 during the General's visit to Pittsburgh.<sup>13</sup> Wright was planning to establish a black utopia in western Tennessee, where slaves would be taught how to live communally with the Harmony Society as a model.<sup>14</sup> After the meeting with Lafayette, Frances Wright attempted to recruit Frederick Rapp to leave the Harmony Society and join her endeavor, but Frederick refused, owing his allegiance to his adopted father.<sup>15</sup> Thomas Jefferson supported Frances Wright's effort to change the method of production on plantations, indicating that he knew of and understood the method of working utilized by the Harmony Society. In a letter to Wright regarding a plan to eliminate American slavery, the 82 year old Jefferson wrote:

The abolition of evil is not impossible; it ought never therefore to be despaired of. Every plan should be adopted, every experiment tried, which may do something toward the ultimate object. That which you propose is well worthy of trial. It has succeeded with certain portions of our white breathern, under the care of a Rapp and an Owen; and why may it not succeed with men of color.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Helen Elliott, "Frances Wright's Experiment with Negro Emancipation," *Indiana Magazine of History* 35, no. 2 (June 1939): 145.

<sup>12</sup> Celia Morris, *Fanny Wright: Rebel in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 101.

<sup>13</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt., "The Pittsburgh Meeting of General Lafayette, George Rapp, and Frances Wright: Prelude to Frances Wright's Nashoba," *Historical Notes and Documents* (1979): 285. A note from Wright to Frederick Rapp, dated June 7, 1825, indicates that Father Rapp, his granddaughter Gertrude, his associates John Baker and Dr. Miller, along with Wright, met with Lafayette at the Mansion House Hotel in Pittsburgh.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 286. In later years, George Rapp disputed the ideas of Frances Wright and considered her an enemy of the Harmony Society, especially when her ideas were embraced by Jacksonians.

<sup>15</sup> Morris, *Fanny Wright, Rebel in America*, 102.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Miss Frances Wright, August 7, 1825, *The Letters of Thomas Jefferson*, Volume XV, Albert Ellery Birch, editor (Washington, DC: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907), 120.

German industrialist Frederick List also visited Economy and seriously considered purchasing land there and making it his residence, but the property purchase fell through. Economy reminded him of his German Swabian home, and he considered the Rappites intelligent and hard working.<sup>17</sup>

Another storied visit occurred in 1826, as Bernhard, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar stopped by Economy during his extended visit to the United States, writing a detailed account of Economy in his book, *Travels Through North America*. Accompanied by Frederick Rapp as his tour guide, Bernhard wrote about his visit giving a vivid portrait of Father Rapp:

The elder Rapp is a large man of seventy years old, whose powers age seems not to have diminished; his hair is gray, but his blue eyes overshadowed by strong brows, are full of life and fire; his voice is strong, and his enunciation full, and he knows how to give a peculiar effect to his words by appropriate gesticulation. He speaks a Swabia dialect, intermixed with a little English, to which the ear of a German in the United States must become accustomed; generally. What he says is clearly and plainly delivered.<sup>18</sup>

Bernhard gives the following portrayal of Frederick Rapp:

Mr. Frederick Rapp is a large good-looking personage, of forty years of age. He possesses profound mercantile knowledge, and is the temporal, as his father is the spiritual chief of the community. All business passes through his hands; he represents the society, which, notwithstanding the change in the name of their residence, is called the Harmony Society, in all their dealings with the world.<sup>19</sup>

Having been to both Robert Owen's New Harmony, and George Rapp's Economy, Bernhard professed that the Rappite Society "is the better," and that "no great results can be expected from Owen's plan."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John F. Bell, "Frederick List, Champion of Industrial Capitalism." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 66, no. 1 (January 1942): 61.

<sup>18</sup> Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, *Travels Through North America, During the Years 1825 and 1826, in Two Volumes, Volume II* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1828), 160.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* Bernhard, a German noble, was age 34 when he conducted his American tour. He ended his career as the commander in chief of the Dutch East Indies Army.

Author William Hinds wrote about the physical appearance and demeanor of Harmony Society member living in Economy during his visit: “The first impression made upon the visitor at Economy is that both architecture and people are un-American. It is the most natural thing in the world, as you walk its streets, to imagine yourself in some old town in Germany. But if everything is foreign and unfamiliar, it is not unpleasing.”<sup>21</sup>

Alexis de Tocqueville called Economy, or in German “Oeconome,” “a place of orderly, managed affairs,” but criticized George Rapp: “The founder is the leader not answerable for the undertaking. He directs the common efforts and presents no account.”<sup>22</sup> Another self-ordained prophet, Joseph Smith, lived sporadically in Economy between 1825 and 1827, and closely observed George Rapp’s edicts and administration of the Harmony Society, applying some of Rapp’s principles during his formulation of the Mormon religion, but not those of celibacy.<sup>23</sup>

Although Father Rapp was still committed to Frederick’s economic plans, he needed to regain control of the religious aspects of the Society, lest he face the dissention of more Society members. George Rapp’s Economy church was built across from Rapp’s house, in the center of town, as services conducted only by George or Frederick three times each week, began with song, included prayer by the leader as the congregation stood in silence, and were highlighted by a ninety minute sermon during which the leader and congregation sat.<sup>24</sup> On Sunday afternoon, a second service was conducted in the church, emphasizing that Society members were to lead

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<sup>21</sup> William Alfred Hinds, *American Communities: Brief Sketches of Economy, Zoar, Bethel, Aurora, Amana, Icuria, The Shakers, Oneida, Wallingford, and the Brotherhood of the New Life* (Oneida, NY: Office of the American Socialist, 1878.), 8.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Swedberg, *Tocqueville’s Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 64-65.

<sup>23</sup> Richard S. Van Wagoner, “Mormon Polyandry in Nauvoo,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp/sbi/Dialogue\\_V18N03\\_69](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp/sbi/Dialogue_V18N03_69) Accessed October 4, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> English, *Church Services at Economy*, 3.

passive lives, leaving all choices to God, and were to deny their honor, reputation, property, money, house, friends, and relatives, and willingly accept pain and suffering.<sup>25</sup>

Tied in with vigorous church services was George Rapp's prediction of the long awaited millennium. As described by William Owen in his diary, Frederick Rapp delivered a sermon on December 19, 1824, telling the Society congregation that the millennium was in its thirtieth year: the first ten years occurring in Wurttemberg, the second ten years in Harmonie, Pennsylvania, and the third ten years in New Harmony, Indiana.<sup>26</sup> Frederick added that the woman pictured in Revelation embodied the logistical movements of the Society fleeing twice as did the Harmony Society.<sup>27</sup>

To gain renewed control over the Harmony Society, George Rapp, in 1827, wrote a revised constitution, containing six articles of obedience all members needed to adhere to. All personal property was signed over to "George Rapp and His Associates," all members would "cheerfully" obey the laws and regulations of the Society, and no claims can be made on the Society if a member leaves.<sup>28</sup> In return, "George Rapp and Associates" will provide the necessities of life to members, including lodging, clothing, food, medicine, schooling and church services, and withdrawal from the Society will result in some form of minor compensation payable to the leaving member at the discretion of George Rapp, according to their length of stay in the Harmony Society.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>26</sup> William Owen, *Diary of William Owen from November 10, 1824 to April 20, 1825* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1895), 77-78. William Owen was the son of Scottish utopian Robert Owen, who purchased New Harmony from George Rapp. The December 19, 1824 sermon given by Frederick Rapp was a rare occurrence.

<sup>27</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 353.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 355-357. Dated March 9, 1827, the new constitution was signed by over 600 Harmony Society members

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



These revised Rappite constitutional articles did not sit well with all people, as many Harmony Society members were angry that George Rapp used a non-member attorney to help him draft wording. Nineteen petitioners, including some former Society members and some non-Society neighbors, presented a written protest to the Pennsylvania state government, accusing George Rapp of what amounted to un-American and un-Christian practices.<sup>30</sup> Rapp was specifically accused of considering himself a monarch, prescribing unlawful laws in the eyes of the American judiciary system, changing those laws at will, demanding unconditional obedience from all Society members, exuding a persona of superiority, being accountable to no one, pushing and hitting elderly Society members, being a mystic, equating his physical appearance to that of God's, damning Society members to hell, and being an excessive wine drinker.<sup>31</sup> The number of petitioners grew to 200 people, demanding a state investigation be held outside of Economy. George Rapp's defense was handled by a German attorney who came from a noble background named Charles Von Bonnhorst, claiming that Father Rapp interpreted the world and its rules through his understanding of the book of Revelation.<sup>32</sup> Frederick Rapp and Von Bonnhorst, using all of their political contacts within the state, were successful in having the petition dismissed. If any of the charges were made public through a state inquiry, the religious and economic reputation of the Harmony Society would have been seriously damaged.

In addition to complaints made against George Rapp's questionable Society leadership, Rapp's celibacy edict was coming under fire. By 1827, Harmony Society celibacy had been in place for twenty years and some Society members, especially the younger ones, were getting impatient waiting for Rapp's never-coming millennium, prompting them to disobey Rapp's

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 361-376.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

edict. Before 1814, Society births numbered 262, during the years in Indiana there were 69 births, and during the first five years in Economy (1825 to 1830) 25 children were born.<sup>33</sup>

Again, accusations were made against George Rapp for creating a double standard: rules for his Society members and rules for himself.

Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar, in his journal of 1825, observes that George Rapp's garden was tended by "a very pretty girl, Miss Hildegard, a relative of Mr. Rapp, and possessed of much botanical knowledge."<sup>34</sup> Hildegard Mutschler, born in Harmonie in 1806 just after its settlement, became George Rapp's confidant and, according to rumor-mongers, lover.<sup>35</sup> She was young and gifted, seducing Rapp with her constant companionship, knowledge of botany, and dalliance into alchemy, supervising Rapp's "secret school of alchemy" in a well-equipped laboratory.<sup>36</sup> Hildegard displaced Frederick Rapp as Father Rapp's chief advisor in 1828 and 1829, but when Hildegard fell in love with a younger Society member, a jealous George Rapp banished the young man from the Society, and Hildegard left Rapp's garden and laboratory, running off with him.<sup>37</sup> This incident severely damaged the relationship between George and Frederick Rapp, which was never totally mended, prompting Frederick to compose a letter to Father Rapp in 1829, saying

I have on account of this little creature suffered heavily for more than three years because she took my place, for she was really your confidential counsel, not by your determination, but this became a natural thing through the extensive association with you, for I always found out from her first what you wanted to do in building or in changing of families, etc. and this confidence, of which she was never worthy, caused me to withdraw my confidence from you, which, however, was very hard for me to do because

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 418. Even though there were limited births under celibacy, their number could not adequately supply the Society with a younger workforce.

<sup>34</sup> Bernhard, *Travels Through North America*, 162. Hildegard was not related to Rapp.

<sup>35</sup> Hummel, "Hope for a New World," 12.

<sup>36</sup> Bernard Jaffe, *Crucibles: The Story of Chemistry from Ancient Alchemy to Nuclear Fission* (New York: Dover Publications, 1976), 10. Jaffe writes that Hildegard supervised two other women in the lab, which had up-to-date equipment.

<sup>37</sup> Hummel, "Hope for a New World," 12. Hildegard later married this young man, Conrad Feucht, and his banishment prompted others to leave the Society at this point.

I always saw how your honesty was abused by her.<sup>38</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain George Rapp's status during his relationship with Hildegard Mutschler. Rapp was about 70 years old at this time and Hildegard was in her early twenties. Rapp had married Christine Benzinger in 1783, and Harmony Society records indicate that Christine passed away in 1830, after enduring the after-effects of the "Hildegard" rumor. Aside from innuendo, there is no proof that George Rapp had any physical relationship with Hildegard, but rather needed her and her devious personality to help him conduct his alchemy experiments. She was most likely around Father Rapp more than Frederick, who was conducting the Society's business matters, usually on the road, thus she gained the trust of the Society's leader in Frederick's absence. George Rapp had a long history of imposing lifetime banishments on anyone who left the Society voluntarily. When Hildegard and her husband Conrad Feucht later petitioned George Rapp for reinstatement, Rapp had no objection. This indicates that George Rapp needed Hildegard's botanical expertise for his own personal goals.

Along with the "Hildegard Affair," 1829 was a year of turmoil for George Rapp and the Harmony Society. First of all, Andrew Jackson had been elected President in 1828 and took the oath of office in March 1829. In October 1827, Jackson backers in Pittsburgh attacked George Rapp and the Harmony Society in a newspaper article, calling Rapp a "despot," stating that Society members were forced to do his bidding.<sup>39</sup> The article characterized the Rappites as "slaves," highlighting that in a recent local election, all Society members voted for the same candidate, at Rapp's direction, in turn making them slaves to Rapp's despotism, and therefore making it illegal for Society members to vote at all since the U.S. Constitution bars slaves from

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<sup>38</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 429.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

having the right to vote.<sup>40</sup> Frederick Rapp had publically stated that Jackson's ideas would be bad for the country as a whole and the Society in particular, and cancelled the Society's subscription to an Ohio German newspaper that supported Jackson's candidacy.<sup>41</sup>

The Harmony Society was forced to accept Jackson's election as president, but Jackson's supporters did not accept the opposition exhibited by the Rappites. Romulus Baker, speaking for George Rapp, likened Jackson to Don Miguel, King of Portugal, who administered punishments to his foes.<sup>42</sup> In July, 1829, articles began appearing in a Pittsburgh newspaper, written by one "Junius," calling Rapp and the Society a "monopoly" interfering with the freedom of elections, and a business "monopoly" which has cornered the Pittsburgh market: "He undersells the honest and industrious manufacturer, and mechanic in the market, and amasses the wealth of the community, without returning anything, that will bear a comparison, with a commensurate equivalent."<sup>43</sup> John Duss pointed out that Frederick Rapp was so successful, the Harmony Society controlled the Pittsburgh markets, drawing the wrath of the Pittsburgh business community, as the Society's control became known as "Economy prices," prompting the writer Junius to insist that the Harmony Society be dissolved by the Pennsylvania legislature.<sup>44</sup> As Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. wrote in his Prologue to *The Age of Jackson*, 1829 "was no year for righteous men: everywhere they sat in darkness."<sup>45</sup> He described reactions to Jackson's election as "the ungodly were now in the ascendancy, and those who walked not in their counsels had little but Scriptures for consolation," causing Christ to weep over Washington City.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. The candidate, William Robinson, Jr., was endorsed by the party of John Quincy Adams, linking Rapp as an Adams supporter, which was verified by Frederick Rapp.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 401.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 403.

<sup>43</sup> *Allegheny Democrat*, August 4, 1829. Junius was a very popular pen name to hide behind.

<sup>44</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 31-32.

<sup>45</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Secondly, George Rapp's credibility was damaged again as he made a prediction that the millennium would occur on September 15, 1829, as the age of "the 3 1/2 times of the Sun-Woman" would end and the second coming of Christ would begin.<sup>47</sup> When September 16 arrived, a sense of gloom hovered over Economy, but Rapp did not admit to any mistake claiming still that the millennium would occur during his lifetime. George Rapp's prophecy was soon vindicated by a letter he received on September 24, 1829, from the business manager of a mysterious German who may have held the key to the Society's salvation through one of Rapp's lifelong mystical aspirations – the legendary Philosopher's Stone. But the enhanced turmoil this would inflict was still three years in the future.

A combination of the efficiency of Frederick's factories, and a stagnant population led to an abundance of free time at Economy. Soon, all necessary building was completed and Frederick needed to create activities to keep Society members busy during their idle time. Frederick purchased art objects, built a library, and created what would become the jewel of Economy, the Harmony Society Orchestra.<sup>48</sup> Frederick built the great "Feast Hall," at the time, the largest room in the United States, the indoor venue for the orchestra. George Rapp's long-time associate, Dr. Christoph Mueller directed the orchestra, which had become well known in Pittsburgh, attracting prominent citizens to Economy for recitals and concerts, but soon the creative Mueller and the practical Rapp disagreed over the use of music.<sup>49</sup> George Rapp believed in "music for use," that is music to be played for the farming crews out in the fields, for the factory workers to alleviate boredom, and from the church tower calling Society members to

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<sup>47</sup> Arndt, "George Rapp's Harmony Society," 75-76. Rapp references Revelation 12:6 but does not account for how he arrived at the exact date of September 15, 1829. Revelation 12:6 reads, "and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared for God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days." At the end of 1,260 days (three and one half years), Christ's second coming would begin.

<sup>48</sup> Blair, *The New Harmony Story*, 33.

<sup>49</sup> Wetzel., *Frontier Musicians*, 79.

services.<sup>50</sup> Mueller ensured that the Society was exposed to all types of music, including German folk songs, popular music, and the classics of Mozart, Rossini, and Haydn, as his orchestra maintained a 300 piece repository of music, some of which was composed by members of the Society.<sup>51</sup>

The successes of the Harmony Society had its foundation in the one-man rule of George Rapp, but during 1829 Andrew Jackson was intent on reshaping America's political landscape, a change which would undermine the management philosophy of Rapp. Although hindered by the Eaton Affair during his first term in office, Jackson began breaking the American "aristocracy" connection, a system understood and embraced by Rapp, forging a "principle of self-government," championing the common man.<sup>52</sup> Harmony Society members began experiencing the effects of Jackson's America as they were no longer as logistically isolated as they had been. Frederick Rapp's cultural implementations exposed Society members to a changing world. Jacksonian Democracy was forging social conflict and democratic reforms, or as Carl Russell Fish called it, "the age of the common man."<sup>53</sup>

By 1830, the total income of the Harmony Society had increased four times over the 1826 level, as new ventures such as silk-raising were beginning to turn a profit.<sup>54</sup> The Society was producing about 6,000 cocoons each year, under the direction of George Rapp's granddaughter Gertrude, using the resulting silk for making award winning satin and velvet fabrics, as well as

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>51</sup> Richard D. Wetzel, "The Music Collection of Georg Rapp's Harmonie Gesellschaft (1805-1906)," *Monatschfe*, 68, no. 2 (Summer 1976): 167.

<sup>52</sup> Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 301.

<sup>53</sup> *The Meaning of Jacksonian Democracy*, Edwin C. Rozwenc, editor (Boston: D.C. Heath & Company, 1963), v-vi.

<sup>54</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 390-392. In 1826, the Society's annual income was \$43,000; by 1830, it rose to \$175,000.

silk neckties and ribbons.<sup>55</sup> Cocoon harvesting and silk making was considered the work of women and children by the Rappites. Gertrude Rapp enhanced the Society's silk industry through her study of silk making processes and her readings of German texts on the subject.<sup>56</sup> As reported by Hungarian traveler Sandor Farkas de Bolon in his 1834 memoir, *A Journey in North America*, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives closely observed the Society's silk making enterprise, hoping that silk production would expand the state's economy. Members of the state legislature ordered silk cravats and underwear from Gertrude Rapp's Economy factory pledging to wear these garments to a legislative session in Harrisburg in support of domestic silk.<sup>57</sup>

During the 1830s with the dawning of the Second Great Awakening, there was renewed interest in following self-proclaimed prophets and visionaries. George Rapp had elevated himself to prophet status decades ago, back in Germany, and had held his Society under his sway through the constant visions he proclaimed he experienced. According to historian Richard Broadhead,

A prophet is a person singled out to enjoy special knowledge of ultimate reality and to give others mediated access to that otherwise unavailable truth. A prophet is also a man with a mission, one whose relation to a deep truth both requires and entitles him to enact that knowledge against the grain of worldly understanding.<sup>58</sup>

The timing of George Rapp's declaration ushered in an era of American prophets and visionaries, each promoting the prophet's specific cause. Many early visions, such as that of Sojourner Truth on June 4, 1827, were slave-centered, focusing on freedom, or to the furthest

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<sup>55</sup> R.L. Baker, *Description of Economy, Beaver County*, 186. Gertrude Rapp, the granddaughter of George Rapp and daughter of his deceased son John, was sent away from the Harmony Society during her formative years, learning English and French, as well as becoming an accomplished musician.

<sup>56</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt and Patrick R. Brostowin, "Pragmatists and Prophets: George Rapp and J.A. Roebing Versus J.A. Etzler and Count Leon," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 52, no. 2, Part 2 (April 1969): 175.

<sup>57</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, "Three Hungarian Travelers Visit Economy," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 79, no. 2 (April 1955): 203.

<sup>58</sup> Richard H. Broadhead, "Tanner Lecture: Prophets in America," 50.

extreme, Nat Turner's bloody slave revolt in Virginia.<sup>59</sup> But other religious based prophets soon emerged including Robert Matthews, also known as the prophet "Matthias," in 1830. William Miller began his prophecies in August 1831. Joseph Smith began his revelation in October 1831. And John Humphrey Noyes, who believed in his own perfectionism, emerged as a prophet in 1832.<sup>60</sup> At this point, George Rapp was convinced the millennium would still occur during his lifetime, although his 1829 timing was wrong, and his hopes were buoyed by the sudden arrival of another prophet, Count Maximilian Leon from Germany, who pushed his way into the Harmony Society in Divine Economy.

As a practitioner of alchemy and a student of the writings of seventeenth century mystic Jacob Bohme, George Rapp was obsessed with the legendary "Philosopher's Stone." This mystic stone and the powers it allegedly possessed spanned many centuries, and although no one ever proved that the stone existed, and no one was ever proven to be in possession of it, mystics claimed that someone had it.<sup>61</sup> The most renowned philosophers of the day, Francis Bacon and Benedict Spinoza, believed that the Philosopher's Stone existed.<sup>62</sup> But the general purpose of the Philosopher's Stone, the creation of gold and silver from ordinary metals, did not necessarily fit with Rapp's purposes. When studying the writings of certain mystics like Bohme, it can be inferred that another use of the Stone is religious in nature. According to Justus Von Liebig, the alchemy expressions associated with the Philosopher's Stone can be transformed into religious

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<sup>59</sup> Richard H. Broadhead, "Prophets in America circa 1830: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nat Turner, Joseph Smith," *Joseph Smith, Jr.: Reappraisals After Two Centuries*, Reid L. Neilson and Terryl L. Givins, editors (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20.

<sup>61</sup> Justus Von Liebig, *Familiar Letters in Chemistry, in its Relations to Physiology, Dietetics, Agriculture, Commerce, and Political Economy* (London: Taylor, Walton, & Maberly, 1851), 36.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.



expressions: the alchemical term “clay furnace” meant “the earthly body;” while the “green lion” means, “the lion of David.”<sup>63</sup>

It seems George Rapp was not interested in the Philosopher’s Stone for its wealth making features. After all, Frederick Rapp’s successful business ventures provided the Harmony Society with great wealth. As a practitioner of Hermeticism, George Rapp believed, as did Jacob Bohme, that man could come to know God through divine sparks or moments.<sup>64</sup> Rapp set up laboratories in each of the three Harmony Society locations. Father Rapp was more a student of botany than of precious metals. Visitors to Economy were struck by the beauty and diversity of Rapp’s gardens. He seemed not even to be searching for the perfection or mental clarity associated with the Philosopher’s Stone but rather intended to use the powers of the Philosopher’s Stone, along with Hildegard’s expertise with flowers, plants, and herbs, to concoct foods and drinks that would lead to an extension of life. By extending his lifespan, Rapp surmised that he would live long enough to experience the millennium.

George Rapp did not need more money, but needed more time on earth to fulfill his prophecy that the Second Coming of Christ would occur within his lifetime. In composing hymns for the Harmony Society, Rapp cryptically referred to Bohme’s “Twelve Gates of the City of Gold,” otherwise known as the twelve stages of the creation of the Philosopher’s Stone.<sup>65</sup> Rapp was conducting his laboratory experiments on plants, herbs, and trees, believing that the Philosopher’s Stone would somehow unlock the secrets of plants. Jacob Bohme wrote in *Signatura Rerum*,

For there are herbs and trees, and also creatures to be found, in which something of the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 35. Seventeenth Century mystics such as Jacob Bohme (1624) believed that the “conversion” associated with the Philosopher’s Stone did not necessarily mean conversion of base metals into precious metals, but also meant religious conversions.

<sup>64</sup> Glenn A. Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 10, 13.

<sup>65</sup> *Rosicrucian Digest, Volume 32*, Supreme Council of the Rosicrucian Order, 1954, 101.

divine power is couched, with which in the magical cure the false magi, viz. the corrupt evil oil can be resisted, and changed into good oil...now it behooves the artist and physician to know these things, else he cannot cure any sickness or disease...for in this oil lies the joyful life.<sup>66</sup>

Some researchers, such as Bernard Jaffe, indicate that George Rapp, through his botany experiments, was searching for an elixir which would purify his mind.<sup>67</sup> But being in his early seventies, and claiming to be a prophet of God already having ultimate knowledge of religion in his dominance over the Harmony Society, Rapp was also seeking a longer lifespan. He needed to continue to prove his prophetic status in the eyes of his followers. He needed to live until the millennium. Rapp, as a Rosicrucian follower, used alchemy to gain a pathway to a secure and long life, rather than a wealth making practice.<sup>68</sup>

Having failed in his millennial prediction of 1829, George Rapp did not shrink from his ongoing belief, but rather continued to promote the foreseeable coming of Christ. In the years after 1829, the Economy night watchman was required to shout out a reminder to Society members during his patrol on the hour, reminding all to be prepared for the fulfillment of Rapp's prophecy: "A day is past, and a step made nearer the end...our time runs away, but the joys of the kingdom will be our reward."<sup>69</sup>

George Rapp was faced with an upsurge of religious competition and fervor during the early years at Economy. The Second Great Awakening, touting millennial doctrines, was occurring in the northeastern United States. With the emergence of Methodists, and the continuing growth of Presbyterians, Lutherans, and the Reformed Church, small denominations,

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<sup>66</sup> Jacob Bohme, *Signatura Rerum (The Signature of All Things)* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007), 53. Bohme's original text was published in 1621. The Harmony Society drew its images from Rosicrucian images. As described by Arthur Versluis in *The Esoteric Origins of the American Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 47, the Harmony Society logo (the Golden Rose) was derived from Martin Luther's symbols of the Rose and the Cross (i.e., Rosicrucian).

<sup>67</sup> Jafee, *Crucibles*, 10.

<sup>68</sup> Brian Gibbons, *Spirituality and the Occult: From the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 73.

<sup>69</sup> Rufus Wilson, *Rambles in Colonial Byways*, 180-181.

including the Harmony Society, began to lose their political clout, as politicians played to the masses.<sup>70</sup> Charismatic religious leaders such as Charles Finney were attracting national attention, carpeting the “Burnt-over” district of central New York State, not far from the Pittsburgh region, with religious excitement.

As described by Paul E. Johnson in *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium*, the millennial doctrine and the concept of perfectionism became a staple of the middle class.<sup>71</sup> Frederick Rapp’s industrial workers, however, did not suffer from the same inadequacies exhibited by the general national working class population during the early years of Andrew Jackson’s presidency: drunkenness, factory monotony, and shabby work.<sup>72</sup> But whereas revivalism and millennial preaching were somewhat new to the general working population at this time, they had been instilled in the Harmony Society members for decades, and the waiting and self-sacrifices were beginning to take their toll on loyalty.

To fend off any issues of disloyalty of his followers during the early 1830s, George Rapp clamped down on Society rules and reasserted his role “as a dictator.”<sup>73</sup> Karl Arndt recounts George Rapp’s persona during this period as that of “iron rule,” and it was Frederick Rapp who attempted to keep the course of the Society steady by limiting the role of mysticism in the daily lives of Society members.<sup>74</sup> The proximity to Pittsburgh, the influx of visitors, and the growing reputation and success outside of Economy were all having an effect on many Rappites, including Frederick Rapp, who seemed to be getting caught up in the new Jacksonian spirit of market share, cultural education, and the social importance of marriage and family. Marriage

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<sup>70</sup> Frost, “Pennsylvania Institutes Religious Liberty, 1682-1860,” 338.

<sup>71</sup> Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium, Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 5.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>73</sup> Hummel, “Hope for a New World,” 12.

<sup>74</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: George Rapp’s Third American Harmony*, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 646.

and the family were necessary in Jacksonian America to avoid a spiritual crisis generated by individualism.<sup>75</sup>

Discontent at Economy began brewing as Society members wondered what was happening with all of the Society's acquired wealth. They also grew weary of George Rapp's continued preaching on the merits of celibacy, and, as visitor J.A. Roebeling recounted, his "incomprehensible chatter" and "unreasonable" messages during worship services.<sup>76</sup> It was under these circumstances that a monumental change in the Harmony Society occurred.

In October 1831, George Rapp's millennial vision and hope was reinforced by the fanciful arrival at Pittsburgh of a man calling himself Count Maximilian Leon, with 40 members of his entourage, who was welcomed into Economy by the Harmony Society Band. Count Leon, arriving from Frankfort, Germany in a carriage drawn by four horses, was dressed in full military attire, including a sword at his side, and was escorted up to Economy's church pulpit by Father Rapp himself.<sup>77</sup> Four days before his arrival at Economy, the Count sent a handwritten note, in French, boasting of his European noble lineage to Andrew Jackson, asking the president for political protection while he was traveling through America, to which Jackson replied, "I take delight in assuring you that the benign and equal spirit of their laws will not only protect your person and property, but I trust will promise to you the enjoyment of as much prosperity and happiness as can be promoted."<sup>78</sup>

During the years prior to Count Leon's arrival, George Rapp began to tell his followers that he was getting to an advanced age, and that someone would arrive from Europe to take up

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<sup>75</sup> Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*, 32.

<sup>76</sup> Arndt and Brostowin, "Pragmatists and Prophets," 173.

<sup>77</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 35. The actual name of the Count Leon was Bernhard Muller, the self-proclaimed Lion of Judah, claiming to be the Anointed One and in possession of the Philosopher's Stone. Muller's followers were responsible for the letter sent to George Rapp in 1829 seeking information about the Harmony Society, giving Rapp hope after his failed millennial prediction. Muller was considered handsome, with a strong build, and wore his hair in the manner of Christ.

<sup>78</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 454.

the Society's cause and lead them to their spiritual goals.<sup>79</sup> But Society members took the occasion of Count Leon's appearance to complain about Father Rapp behind his back. The complaints consisted of Rapp's cruelty, his obsession with making and keeping money, and his continued enforcement on celibacy.<sup>80</sup> After observing Leon and his followers throughout the winter, George and Frederick Rapp came to the conclusion that the Count was a fraud, nowhere resembling their perception of the Lion of Judah. Frederick, the ever efficient financial manager of the Society considered Count Leon to be freeloading and sent him a room and board bill for \$1,817.<sup>81</sup>

Yet, many Harmony Society members saw Count Leon as their worldly savior and used this occasion to release their pent up frustrations against the Rapps. During January and February 1832, leaders of the Harmony Society revolt drafted a document accusing George Rapp of disrespecting their rights.<sup>82</sup> In the spirit of Jacksonian Democracy, the Society rebels said that George Rapp's leadership lapses needed to be dealt with like any other American government official who failed in his duty: he should not be allowed to keep his office.<sup>83</sup> Lining up behind the First Amendment's provision for religious freedom, the Harmony Society rebels declared their independence from George Rapp, citing that they were servants and slaves to the Rapps, and that Father Rapp destroyed their human and civil rights.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 460.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 470-471.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 472. Count Leon, travelling with his own personal attorney, refused to pay Frederick.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 475. According to Arndt, the declaration included three points: 1) that George Rapp is personally guilty of actions contrary to the contract he made with Harmony Society members; 2) that Rapp's teachings and behavior contradict the word and law of God; and 3) that on August 31, 1831, the Harmony Society contract was void.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. The rebel faction still considered themselves true Harmony Society members who were adhering to the founding principles of the Society, not the distorted views of George Rapp.

Count Leon's entourage joined the attack on the Rapps, sending Frederick a bill for almost \$16,000 for expenses incurred during the Count's trip from Germany to Economy.<sup>85</sup> In addition, Leon professed that Economy was not a safe place, and that George Rapp was not worthy to be present when he opened the seven seals to usher in the millennium.<sup>86</sup> On February 1, 1832, a legal advertisement appeared in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, announcing that 217 members of the Harmony Society officially broke their ties with the Society and have made arrangements to join the Count Leon in the establishment of a new group of believers awaiting the Second Coming of Christ, under the following notice:

TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC: The undersigned, Members of the Harmony Society, at Economy, in the county of Beaver, Pennsylvania, deem it their duty thus publically to make known that all the authority or power which has heretofore been given, granted to or exercised by GEORGE RAPP, or his adopted son, FREDERICK RAPP, has ceased and determined, and has been revoked; and that their, or either of their acts, under such authority, in all transactions entered into by said George or Frederick Rapp, are without the knowledge, assent, or agreement of the undersigned, whose interests, as members of the Society, are equally involved, and as much entitled to protection as those of any portion of the community.<sup>87</sup>

A faction of the Harmony Society members were becoming Americanized, breaking out from the Old World dictatorial grasp of George Rapp, seeking protection of their rights under the United States Constitution and as members of the community of Pennsylvania. It was not Count Leon's intention to overthrow Father Rapp's rule at Economy but to form his own membership society, affiliated with the Rappites. But because of the growing disharmony at Economy, about 175 Society members decided officially to leave the Rapps and venture out with Count Leon to form a separate union, especially since Leon was against celibacy and would restore physical

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 478.

<sup>86</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, "Harmonists and the Mormons," *American German Review* X, no. 5 (June 1944), 7.

<sup>87</sup> "Harmony Society at Economy," *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania, Devoted to the Preservation of Facts and Documents, and Every Other Kind of Useful Information Respecting the State of Pennsylvania* IX, Samuel Hazard, Editor, (January to July, 1832): 109.

relations between husbands and wives.<sup>88</sup> The dissenters reached an agreement with Frederick Rapp whereby they relinquished claims to Society property but retained their personal possessions, and were granted an award of \$105,000, payable in three installments, for the group leaving.<sup>89</sup>

In addition to the financial dent made by the huge lump-sum payment, Frederick Rapp saw the negative economic implications of losing one-third of his agricultural and manufacturing workforce to Leon. Frederick made a desperate plea to George Rapp to rescind the Society's twenty-five year rule on celibacy so that he could convince the dissenters to remain and work at Harmony. George Rapp angrily rebuked Frederick's idea, snapping at him, "and thou too, Brutus."<sup>90</sup> George Rapp's stubbornness became too much for Frederick to bear. His treatment by Father Rapp during the Hildegard Affair, the anger exhibited at him over his attempt to prevent the decimation of the Society by Count Leon's arrival, and suspicions that George was pilfering money from Society profits caused a rift that became permanent between father and adopted son. Father Rapp used the occasion of this exodus of one-third of his followers to reinforce his status as the Lord's prophet. Citing Revelation 12: 3, 4, "and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." Rapp preached that Leon's appearance was preordained in Scripture, causing no need for his loyal followers to panic<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Arndt, "George Rapp's Harmony Society," 77.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. The Count Leon led the 175 Harmony Society dissenters plus his original entourage to Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania, approximately ten miles south of Economy and formed a society called "New Philadelphia."

<sup>90</sup> Hummel, "Hope for a New World," 12.

<sup>91</sup> Arndt, "Three Hungarian Travelers Visit Economy," 208.

Frederick wanted to punish the Leonite dissenters, who were allowed to remain at Economy for a short transition period. Under Frederick's urging, the following rules were implemented: no loyal member was allowed to let a former member stay overnight; no member would give a former member food; no former member was allowed to stay in an Economy house for more than thirty minutes; and no loyal member was allowed to shake hands with a former member.<sup>92</sup>

Count Leon's New Philadelphia settlement, just south of Economy across the Ohio River, began to experience financial difficulties as money given to Leon by the Rapp's quickly ran out. Count Leon coaxed eighty men from his new settlement to march on Economy and confront the Rapps for more money. According to John Duss in *George Rapp and His Associates*, Father Rapp heard of the pending invasion, instructed the Economy men to hide in the woods and let the Society women take care of the invaders.<sup>93</sup> As the eighty followers of Count Leon attacked Father Rapp's Great House residence, the Economy women poured hot water on them as other women grabbed the intruders by the legs, dragged them into the street, and dunked their heads in water troughs.<sup>94</sup> A local frontier militia was called to Economy, rounded up the eighty dissenters, and herded them back to New Philadelphia.<sup>95</sup>

Additionally, a newspaper battle ensued with pro-Rapp papers battling it out with pro-Leon newspapers. Count Leon, realizing that he did not have the power of Rapp, decided to leave Pennsylvania with whoever would follow him. Those that did were certain that the Count would use the Philosopher's Stone, which he insisted was in his possession, to produce gold to

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<sup>92</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 495.

<sup>93</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 53.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.



finance their movement to their new location, but along the way, Leon told his followers that the Ohio River rocks he came across were “forty years too young” to produce any useable amounts of gold and silver.<sup>96</sup> Leon said that God appeared to him in a vision and told him to go to latitude 31 degrees, 49’, which was approximately the same latitude as Jerusalem.<sup>97</sup> The location Count Leon arrived at and settled was Grand Encore, Louisiana, which he believed held a large deposit of gold, but the actual region was a marsh and the climate was very poor, causing widespread disease among Count Leon’s followers, resulting in Leon’s own death from cholera in 1833.<sup>98</sup>

The Democratic Party of President Andrew Jackson believed that they needed to win Pennsylvania’s electoral votes to be successful in the 1832 presidential election. James Buchanan’s brother George convinced Pennsylvania governor George Wolf to campaign in the Pittsburgh region for Jackson votes. Stopping at Economy, Governor Wolf, who spoke fluent German, enticed George Rapp with a false sense of loyalty, playing on the Old World mentality of the patriarch.<sup>99</sup> But Frederick Rapp again had the best interests of the Society’s economic ventures in mind. In 1831, Frederick lobbied to have a canal constructed near Economy, but the Jacksonian forces in Pennsylvania fought his request, as Jackson was opposed to financing such internal improvements. Frederick agreed for the Society to endure an increase in taxes to help defray canal building costs and in return, the Democratic press attacked the Harmony Society. The Jacksonians, using scare tactics, threatened to destroy buildings in Economy unless the

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<sup>96</sup> John L. Brooke, *The Refiner’s Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 223.

<sup>97</sup> Arndt., *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 514.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. Count Leon’s grave has never been found. After his death, Leon’s followers moved to northern Louisiana, settling in Germantown and Minden. Leon’s New Philadelphia Society disbanded after the Civil War. The New Philadelphia site was later visited by Dr. Wilhelm Kiel, who in 1844 moved the remaining dissenters with him to his new commune in Bethel, Missouri.

<sup>99</sup> Marguerite G. Bartlett, *The Chief Phases of Pennsylvania Politics in the Jacksonian Period* (Allentown, PA: H. Ray Haas & Company, 1919).

Society supported their candidates.<sup>100</sup> On November 25, 1832, shortly after the presidential election, this threat may have been realized. Governor Wolf proclaimed after a review of affidavits sworn to by Society members: “Whereas I have received authentic information, that the Woolen Factory at the Village of Economy, in the County of Beaver, has been recently destroyed by fire, which there is good reason to believe, has been the work of wicked Incendiaries.”<sup>101</sup>

Despite these setbacks, Frederick Rapp continued to manage the Rappite businesses, but in November 1833, he experienced medical issues, both physical in the form of asthma and coughs, and psychological, believing himself to be taking the form of two different persons.<sup>102</sup> Gertrude Rapp was assigned to take care of Frederick, who had periods of renewed strength, but by early June 1834, Frederick had lost weight and experienced depression.<sup>103</sup> On June 24, 1834, Frederick Rapp passed away at age sixty, and his obituary in the local *Beaver River Gazette* declared him, “a man of vigorous mind, enlarged views, and sound principles,” and his loss to the Society, “will be irreparable.”<sup>104</sup> But George Rapp’s enemies circulated another reason for Frederick’s death: he was murdered by George Rapp.<sup>105</sup> Father Rapp loved his adopted son, but Frederick’s last years were tainted by the rift that had separated the two as the old man clung to Old World ideas while the younger man tried to move the Society into the American way of life. Frederick was buried in an unmarked grave in the Economy cemetery with no fanfare, just as all who preceded and followed him in death.

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<sup>100</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 414-415.

<sup>101</sup> *Pennsylvania Archives, Fourth Series, Volume VI, Papers of the Governors, 1832-1845*, George Edward Reed, editor (Harrisburg: The State of Pennsylvania, 1901), 144.

<sup>102</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 529.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 531.

<sup>104</sup> “Frederick Rapp,” *Hazard’s Register of Pennsylvania*, XIV, no. 4, Samuel Hazard, editor (Philadelphia, July 26, 1834): 64.

<sup>105</sup> Jeannine Dobbs, “Hawthorne’s Dr. Rappaccini and Father George Rapp,” *American Literature*, 43, no. 3 (November 1971): 429.

After Frederick's death, a devastated George Rapp took control of all Society affairs, spiritual and economic. Father Rapp immediately appointed Frederick's protégés Romulus Baker and Jacob Henrici to conduct external affairs under his approval.<sup>106</sup> However, Henrici's appointment was criticized by many older Society members. Jacob Henrici did not become a member of the Harmony Society until 1827, when he came to Economy to serve as the Society's school teacher. He never experienced the difficulties of the Society's several migrations, town building hardships, or early years of poverty, and was perceived as "the most fanatical of all Rappites" by the older generation.<sup>107</sup> Henrici spent his first years as Frederick's successor fighting lawsuits against the Society filed by former disgruntled members. Because of this financial assault against the Harmony Society, George Rapp closed membership into the Society in order to eliminate claims against his treasury.

Frederick Rapp's legacy was his successful business ventures and innovative techniques of production accomplished within a spiritual and communal setting. The success of the Harmony Society became known worldwide. German economist Frederick Engels studied American communistic societies, and in particular George Rapp's Harmony Society, concluding that financial success in a utopian setting such as Economy, Pennsylvania occurred due to a reduction in menial labor and elimination of strife and discord in the workplace.<sup>108</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels cited Rapp in *The Communist Journal*:

...the community of goods cannot be established and maintained among a few hundred or a few thousand persons, without the little society becoming exclusivist or sectarian in character. An example is furnished us by Rapp's experiment in America. It is certainly not our intention, nor do we believe the intention of the Icarians, to set up any community

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<sup>106</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 533-534.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 537. Many lawsuits were from former Harmony Society members attempting to obtain some form of compensation for their service to Rapp.

<sup>108</sup> Lewis S. Feuer, "The Influences of the American Communist Colonies on Engels and Marx," *The Western Political Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (September 1966): 460.

on Rapp's lines.<sup>109</sup>

Economy failed as a worker's paradise as it exhibited worker distress, arguments, and resentment caused by a dictatorial leader who insisted on enforcing a celibate lifestyle while retaining all profits for use as he saw fit. Engels did not take into account that the Golden Rose product brand was well known and respected in domestic and foreign markets, generating those huge profits. Engels later read Harriet Martineau's *Society in America*, which opened up his mind to things that he never thought of about Rapp, including Rapp's superiority complex. Martineau writes, "Mr. Rapp is now very old. It remains to be seen what will become of his community, with its immense accumulation of wealth, when it has lost its dictator."<sup>110</sup>

The reemphasis of Jacksonian principles, especially the elevated status of the common man and the looming banking crisis, threatened George Rapp's authoritarian leadership over the Harmony Society. With the distractions of the Eaton Affair behind him, Andrew Jackson implemented many of his goals during his second term in office.

George Rapp believed he could protect the Harmony Society from Jacksonian anti-banking doctrine by creating a secret monetary fund in order to have enough money to travel to the Holy Land to meet Christ at the Second Coming. Rapp made several large withdrawals of Society funds in silver and gold recently obtained from Great Britain, from the Second BUS branch in Pittsburgh, storing specie in vaults constructed in the basement of the Great House where he resided.<sup>111</sup> Large amounts of hard money were entering the United States: gold from

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<sup>109</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, L.M. Findlay, editor (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004), 135-136. Appendix E, *Communist Journal*, No. 1, September 1847.

<sup>110</sup> Harriet Martineau, *Society in America in Three Volumes, Volume II* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1837), 64.

<sup>111</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 552. During 1834 and 1835, Rapp withdrew almost \$60,000 from the Pittsburgh branch. Another \$10,000 was withdrawn from the Bank of Pittsburgh. All withdrawals were paid to Rapp in specie. Harmony Society members, aside from Baker and Henrici, did not know

Britain and silver from Mexico, and Rapp wanted to secure as much funding in precious metals as he could to finance the international trip of the Society to Palestine.

George Rapp seemed to step up his aversion to the Jackson presidency after Frederick's death, attacking Jackson supporters he had personally met. Frances Wright, who looked to the Rappite model of agriculture as a method to eliminate slavery, began to promote free love as one of the pillars of her utopian society. In sermons preached to the Harmony Society in 1838, George Rapp called Wright the "priestess of Beelzebub," who had come to Economy years before to spy on the Harmony Society, running off to New York then gaining the support of Andrew Jackson.<sup>112</sup> Rapp continued his sermon by stating, "the President and his comrades were in agreement with her, and gradually they hoped to eliminate the old moral code and introduce a bestial way of life."<sup>113</sup>

As previously mentioned, average Harmony Society members did not keep diaries or records of their activities, so first-hand accounts of travelers describing the daily activities of Rappites must be relied upon. In 1835, traveler G.W. Featherstonhaugh described his visit to Economy indicating that the lifestyle of Society members barely changed over the previous thirty years. When Fetherstonhaugh said to a Rappite assigned to be his tour guide, "The death of Frederick Rapp must have distressed you all greatly," the reply he received was, "We missed him for a while; but we cannot be made unhappy by the death of one, when we have so many brothers and sisters left."<sup>114</sup> When he was given an audience with George Rapp,

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that George Rapp began to hoard Harmony Society assets, storing gold and silver coins and bars in the basement vault of his Economy house, the location of which was only known to Rapp.

<sup>112</sup> Arndt, "The Pittsburgh Meeting of General Lafayette, George Rapp, and Frances Wright," 292.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> G.W. Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage Up the Minnay Sotor in Two Volumes, Volume I* (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), 83.

Featherstonhaugh reported that the patriarch could not speak English, although he had resided in the United States for three decades.<sup>115</sup>

Even though Rapp, Baker, and Henrici celebrated the completion of Andrew Jackson's second presidential term, the economic Panic of 1837 reaffirmed Rapp's conviction that Jacksonian Democracy was the evil prophesied to precede the Second Coming of Christ. Hope that Martin Van Buren's presidency would be more beneficial to the Harmony Society was soon dashed by the financial crisis. In late 1837 Rapp wrote, "Who would have thought that Van Buren, contrary to all better advice, would follow in the footsteps of Jackson, and would do more wrong than he."<sup>116</sup> Believing that Van Buren's continuance of Jackson's agenda was also a fulfillment of Revelation 17:17, Rapp used the Panic of 1837 to reinforce his prediction that the millennium was at hand.<sup>117</sup>

The Panic of 1837 was a millennial springboard, prompting the use of revivals by all religious denomination as preparation for Christ's Second Coming. Prominent preachers such as Lyman Beecher and Nathaniel Taylor believed that time was short, and William Miller specifically targeted 1844 as the firm date.<sup>118</sup> Millerism began to spread across the northern United States in 1839, through the abundance of camp meetings, published journals, and special hymnals, reaching thousands of mostly poor Americans who also began to believe that the economic panic meant the last days were near.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 553. George Rapp appears to have dictated this message to Romulus Baker who included it in a November 6, 1837 letter to Harmony Society agent J. Solms in Philadelphia.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. Revelation 17: 17 reads, "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

<sup>118</sup> Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture. 1765-1840*, 306-307.

<sup>119</sup> Ira V. Brown, "Watchers for the Second Coming: The Millenarian Tradition in America," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39, no. 3 (December 1952): 454.

Yet, George Rapp, swept up in the national attention being given to the Second Coming, continued to take a course that was selfish, supporting his prophecies and visions rather than protecting the continuation of the welfare of the Harmony Society, whose now elderly members blindly followed his lead. Because of the foresight of Frederick Rapp, however, the Society was not financially damaged by the Panic of 1837. The Reverend William Passavant, a local clergyman visiting Economy in early 1840, was allowed to attend a Rappite church service presided over by 82 year old Father Rapp. Although Passavant admired the intelligence and religious fervor of George Rapp, he reported that Rapp's sermon centered on the theme of celibacy, asking of the congregation, "Was Christ married?" as "his stupid congregation had not the sense to see through his empty reasoning and swallowed the remark entire."<sup>120</sup> Passavant referred the Rapp's hold over his followers as "tyranny."<sup>121</sup>

The Rappites were thrilled when Whig candidate William Henry Harrison defeated Democrat and Jackson protégé Martin Van Buren in the 1840 presidential election. Old Tippecanoe was well known to George Rapp from his military exploits in Indiana Territory, near to the New Harmony settlement. In 1841, President-elect Harrison stopped at Economy on his way to his Washington inauguration.<sup>122</sup> When Harrison died shortly into his presidential term, George Rapp ordered that the Rappites take place in the national day of fasting and prayer in Harrison's honor.<sup>123</sup> In order to gain favor with John Tyler, the new president, Rapp, through his agents in Philadelphia, presented Tyler with a suit made of Economy produced silk, but Tyler accepted the gift in a non-spirited, lukewarm manner.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Reverend William A. Passavant, "A Visit to Economy in the Spring of 1840," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 4, no. 3 (July 1921): 147-148.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Duss, "The Dawn of Economy's Golden Day," 43.

<sup>123</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 562. The national day of prayer and fasting, organized by Charles Finney, was May 14, 1841.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

John Tyler, a Virginia slave owner, was committed to Jeffersonian principles, favoring national expansion, but Tyler did not follow the Whig party platform, resulting in his expulsion from the party in 1842.<sup>125</sup> Whig reforms, such as a reconstitution of a national bank, formal acceptance of Henry Clay's American System, and abolition support fell by the wayside under Tyler. Tyler's leanings toward Democratic Party principles dashed any hopes Rapp may have had regarding a change in the nation's policies after Jackson and Van Buren.

Again fearing the collapse of American banking, which would thwart his preparation plan's for traveling to Palestine, Rapp instructed Romulus Baker to withdraw all Society monies from all banks, with payment to the Society made in specie. Between August 1841 and late 1844, \$375,000 was withdrawn in order for the Harmony Society to prepare for Christ's coming.<sup>126</sup> By 1846, George Rapp had over half a million dollars in gold and silver stored in his basement vault, and seeking full control over these Society assets, Rapp burned all banking records and refused to tell Romulus Baker and Jacob Henrici the exact whereabouts of the money.<sup>127</sup>

In 1842, the 84 year old George Rapp refocused his attention to the study of Palestine. He grilled visitor James S. Buckingham about conditions in Palestine, especially the soil, climate, and viability of the land to sustain a large number of people.<sup>128</sup> Rapp now altered his prediction of the Second Coming, believing it would occur in Jerusalem sometime before 1850. He told Buckingham that he was financially ready to transport the entire Harmony Society to

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<sup>125</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought, The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, 593-594.

<sup>126</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 552. This huge amount of money was withdrawn on nine separate occasions from the Bank of Pittsburgh, the United States Bank in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Bank, and the Bank of Louisville.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 554. According to Charles Stotz, three vaults, discovered after George Rapp's death, were four by six feet, accessible from Rapp's house by a trap door, containing not only specie, but also eight hundred barrels of flour, to be used to sustain the Harmony Society upon their arrival in Palestine. Also found were books on navigation and navigation instruments. Stotz, "Threshold of the Golden Kingdom," 148.

<sup>128</sup> J. S. Buckingham, *The Eastern and Western States of America, Volume II* (London, Fisher, Son and Company, 1842), 229. George Rapp was attempting to learn more about Palestine through his study of Scripture.



Palestine, “when the unequivocal signs of the immediate advent of the Messiah should show the hour to be near at hand.”<sup>129</sup>

Jacksonian Democracy had destroyed the concept of the masses being ruled and guided by philosophic paternalists. Ideology espoused by people such as Father Rapp was becoming obsolete in the changing United States. In 1840, New England intellectual Orestes Brownson wrote in the *Democratic Review*

All are capable of judging of the doctrine of the New Testament itself, whether it be of God or not. The unlettered ploughman by this is placed, so far as the evidences of his religious faith are concerned, on a level with the most erudite scholar or the profoundest philosopher.<sup>130</sup>

Rapp showed his increasing disillusionment with the United States. In 1804, he came to America believing that Jeffersonian agricultural principles afforded the perfect situation for greeting the Woman in the Wilderness, awaiting Christ’s appearance in America. Forty years later, after suffering through the Age of Jackson, population increases due to European immigration, the rise of the common man, and the rise of evangelical Protestantism, George Rapp was ready to leave American shores.

In 1846, German lawyer and historian Franz Von Loher visited Economy and recounted the changing nature of the Harmony Society, writing, “most of the people I saw were old men and old women: whoever was not fifty was still a youngster.”<sup>131</sup> Von Loher had a private audience with Rapp. During the meeting Rapp made an astonishing claim: “And in all this the German nation is marked: it will again be the greatest; it has been the most despised. Its language is despised. Its language is the truest,” prompting Von Loher to consider Rapp

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>130</sup> McLoughlin, “Pietism and the American Character,” 170.

<sup>131</sup> “Western Pennsylvania Through a German’s Eyes: The Travels of Franz Von Loher, 1846,” translated and introduced by Frederic Trautmann, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 65, no. 3 (July 1982): 234.

senile.<sup>132</sup> According to Von Loher, Rapp was incoherent, “speaking like a raging torrent.”<sup>133</sup> Abandoning his support of the United States, Rapp told Von Loher that he “should not stay in America, for here the people tore themselves apart like wild beasts and brought to it their own court of law.”<sup>134</sup>

In January 1847, an official census of the Harmony Society revealed that 327 members remained, the majority being women.<sup>135</sup> These remaining faithful Society members began to see a physically depleted Rapp conduct fewer and fewer church services, and on August 7, 1847, the eighty-nine year old George Rapp died.<sup>136</sup> According to the Council of Elders who were at his bedside, George Rapp’s final words were, “If I did not so fully believe that the Lord has designed me to place our society before his presence in the Land of Canaan, I would consider this my last.”<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. Von Loher admitted that he did not understand much of what Rapp was speaking about, as Rapp lapsed into discussions about wild beasts and animals.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, Appendix F, 602-606.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 577-578.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 577.

## Chapter 4: After Rapp (1847-1905) – The End of Days

“Never let the fire on the alter go out.”

~ George Rapp (1847)

George Rapp was buried in an unmarked grave in the Economy cemetery without fanfare. In attempting to portray Father Rapp as a beneficent patriarch, Romulus Baker continued to assert that “Rapp was not a selfish tyrant” and that “his followers are not slaves.”<sup>1</sup> But Harmony Society visitor Theresa Pulszky termed Rapp, “a religious enthusiast and a cunning imposter.”<sup>2</sup> Rapp’s obituary was not considered front page news in the Pittsburgh region. Overshadowed by the exploits of General Winfield Scott and the American victories in the Mexican War, Rapp’s life story and accomplishments were buried in back pages of the local registers.<sup>3</sup>

During his final sermon delivered days before his death, Rapp told Harmony Society members to “never let the fire on the alter go out,” petitioning his followers to continue to expect Christ’s Second Coming.<sup>4</sup> After Rapp’s death, the Harmony Society needed to maintain its business and agricultural ventures to survive, and it created a formal nine member Council of Elders to manage internal affairs and a two-man council to attend to business matters.<sup>5</sup> Rapp’s hand-picked successors, Trustees Romulus Baker and Jacob Henrici, were determined to spend the rest of their lives complying with Rapp’s final wishes, both in spiritual matters and business concerns. After over sixty years of following the ideals and religious guidance of George Rapp, the remaining Harmony Society members found themselves spiritually led by Romulus Baker, but in the process becoming more active in the capitalistic aspects of industrialized America.

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<sup>1</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 579.

<sup>2</sup> Arndt, “Three Hungarian Travelers Visit Economy,” 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Pittsburgh Daily Gazette*, August 10, 1847, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Karl J.R. Arndt, *George Rapp’s Successors and Material Heirs, 1847-1916*, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Hilda Adam Kring, *The Harmonists, A Folk-Cultural Approach* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1973), 31-32. The nine elders were Johannes Stahl, Johannes Schnable, Adam Nachtrieb, Matthius Schole, Joseph Hornle, Johannes Eberle, Jonathan Lenz, Romulus Baker, and Jacob Henrici. Baker and Henrici retained their duties as the Trustees responsible for business affairs; all were German born except Lenz, who was born in Harmonie in 1807.

The editor of the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* described an Economy church service a decade after George Rapp's death, observing that Baker led the service with Gertrude Rapp and Jacob Henrici playing piano, stating that, "the average age of the members is computed to be now over sixty, and some are over ninety, so that death must soon be busy thinning out their ranks."<sup>6</sup>

As noted by the Pittsburgh press, the advanced ages of Harmony Society members became a growing concern regarding its future operation and success. Theresa Pulszky, visiting Economy from Hungary, admired the Society's various business operations in 1853, but questioned Jacob Henrici as to the viability of continuing the Society's endeavors because of the rules of celibacy, old age, and a ban on new membership. Henrici told her that the Harmony Society's goal was to prepare for the future world of Christ's rule, and that "Providence would take care of the result."<sup>7</sup> From the time of George Rapp's death to the end of the Civil War, half of the remaining members of the Harmony Society died.<sup>8</sup>

The Civil War had little or no effect on the Harmony Society. Society members were too old to represent Pennsylvania in the army for the Union cause.<sup>9</sup> Jacob Henrici was appointed a United States Deputy Marshall, responsible for drawing up lists of military recruits from the Economy region, and Romulus Baker maintained contact with, and gave financial support to other religious communities, such as the Shaker colony in the border state of Kentucky.<sup>10</sup> Author William Alfred Hinds gave a personal recollection of the Harmony Society's contribution to the war effort:

It is remembered to the credit of the Harmonists that during the war of rebellion they

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<sup>6</sup> "The Rappite Community in Pennsylvania," *Frank Leslie's Weekly*, August 9, 1856.

<sup>7</sup> Francis and Theresa Pulszky, *White, Red, Black: Sketches of American Society in the United States, Volume I* (New York, Redfield, 1853), 274.

<sup>8</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs*, 62. During this period, the population declined from 288 to 146..

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Only five Society members were eligible for the Civil War draft, and the Society paid the substitute fee of \$250 for each eligible draftee.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-94.

contributed liberally, “for the equipment of volunteers, for special bounties, for the support of the families of absent soldiers, and for the Christian, Sanitary and Subsistence Commissions, for the fortification of Pittsburgh, for the relief of the freedmen, for the support of soldiers’ widows, and the education of their orphan children.”<sup>11</sup>

Harmony Society leaders continually looked toward world events as predictors for the coming millennium. Events that reignited the Second Coming in the minds of Society members were the laying of the trans-Atlantic telegraph cable and the completion of a world-wide communication system across the Bering Strait, reflecting Matthew 24:27: “As the lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.”<sup>12</sup>

During the 1850s, the Harmony Society elders, out of the need for sheer survival, disengaged their isolation from society and became participatory members of American capitalism. Both Baker and Henrici, trained in business matters by Frederick Rapp, still believed in the Second Coming of Christ, but they did not place a time constraint on their beliefs. What they attempted to exercise was good, common business sense in a region that had developed into the industrial capital of the United States.

Changes were occurring in the Harmony factory shops, basically because the work force was dying off. The silk making industry pioneered by Gertrude Rapp proved to be unprofitable; the whiskey makers all died.<sup>13</sup> Realizing that the advanced age of Harmony Society members would prohibit a mass deployment to Palestine for Christ’s Second Coming, and that Society members could no longer produce profits in the factories and fields, Baker and Henrici raided George Rapp’s underground money vaults and invested Harmony Society funds in the up-and-coming industries of western Pennsylvania. The Society acquired over six thousand acres of

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<sup>11</sup> Hinds, *American Communities*, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Successors and Material Heirs*, 152.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

land in nearby Warren County which Baker planned to use to harvest lumber, the land to be worked by young contracted laborers living in the region.<sup>14</sup> At around the same time, the Society business agents purchased coal mines in the Pittsburgh region as investments.<sup>15</sup> While managing the timber operation in Warren County, Baker and Henrici were told that oil had been found on their acreage, and the Harmony Society, through the formation of the Economite Oil Company, became the first group to drill for oil in the region, tapping 76 wells between 1860 and 1873, and becoming innovators in laying oil pipelines and refining oil.<sup>16</sup>

Jacob Henrici attempted to generate income for the Society by investing George Rapp's Palestine fund into American commercial and industrial ventures. In 1859, the Society purchased land in nearby Beaver Falls through a liquidation sale administered by the local sheriff. Right after the Civil War ended, the Harmony Society began to develop Beaver Falls, creating the Economy Savings Institution and establishing the Cutlery Company.

Lacking Harmony Society workers, Henrici sought to staff the cutlery factory with cheap labor, hiring 165 Chinese coolies to replace the German-American plant workers earning larger salaries.<sup>17</sup> He justified the hiring of the Chinese workers as a fulfillment of Scripture prophecy from Isaiah 55:5, "Behold, thou shall call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God."<sup>18</sup> The German-American workers in Beaver Falls sensed that if the Harmony Society's experiment with Chinese workers resulted in lower operating costs and higher profits, other Pennsylvania industries would import cheaper foreign labor as well. However, after the four year contract of the Chinese workers expired, the

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<sup>14</sup> J.T. Henry, *The Early and Later History of Petroleum, With Authentic Facts in Regard to its Development in Western Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: James B. Rodgers, 1873), 262.

<sup>15</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs*, 68.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>17</sup> Edward J.M. Rhodes, "'White Labor' vs. 'Coolie Labor': The 'Chinese Question' in Pennsylvania in the 1870s," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

Chinese left Pennsylvania, but what resulted was American worker resentment against corporate management, which helped foster the need for worker unionization.<sup>19</sup> Although he was involved in innovating many cost cutting features, Henrici's business sense was lacking, and he still needed to borrow a half million dollars from his own Beaver Falls bank to keep the cutlery business afloat.<sup>20</sup>

One of the last links to the original settlement of George Rapp's Harmonie was severed in January 1868, when business trustee Romulus Baker died at age 75, leaving Jacob Henrici in charge of all business and spiritual affairs.<sup>21</sup> Dr. Benjamin Feucht, son of the infamous Hildegard Mutschler, Father Rapp's former confidant, criticized the Society's post-Rapp years on the occasion of Baker's death:

Now Baker has died and the entire direction of the Society still depends on Henrici, and as soon as he dies the entire Society will dissolve because no one will be found who knows anything, especially since the entire Council of Elders consists only of fools and blockheads. What can these prescribe to Henrici, how he is to act, much less call him to account.<sup>22</sup>

Henrici moved most of the Society's business ventures away from Economy, generally to towns north of the third settlement. When *New York Herald* correspondent Charles Nordhoff visited Economy, Pennsylvania in 1874, as part of his study of the successes and failures of American communistic societies, the mostly grey haired population still retained their German culture and language, and still awaited the arrival of Christ, even though their prophetic patriarch, George Rapp, had been dead for 27 years.<sup>23</sup> Nordhoff described a walk he took on Economy's main street:

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Because of mounting debt, the Cutlery Company, which had been one of the largest cutlery factories in the world, went bankrupt and ceased operation in 1886.

<sup>21</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs*, 99.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>23</sup> Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, 68.

Once it was a busy place, for it had cotton, silk, and woolen factories, a brewery and other industries; but the most important of these has now ceased; and as you walk along the quiet, shady streets, you meet only occasionally some stout, little old man, in a short light-blue jacket and a tall very broad-brimmed hat, looking amazingly like Hendrick Hudson's men in the play of Rip Van Winkle; or some comfortable-looking dame, in Norman cap and stuff gown; whose polite "good-day" to you, in German or English as it may happen, is not unmixed with surprise at sight of a strange face; for, as you will presently discover at the hotel, visitors are not nowadays frequent in Economy.<sup>24</sup>

Sensing the emerging importance of railroads, and convincing himself that railroads were somehow connected to the Second Coming of Christ, Jacob Henrici made large investments on behalf of the Harmony Society in the Little Saw Mill Run Railroad Company, and the Pittsburgh, Chartiers, and Youghiogheny Railway Company, being elected to the Board of Trustees of both lines.<sup>25</sup> The most important railroading investment, however, was a \$300,000 stake in the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad, a 135 mile long venture, starting in Pittsburgh and terminating in Youngstown, Ohio.<sup>26</sup> Henrici made the biggest business deal ever for the Society when he sold Harmony Society shares of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie line to Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt and his son William for \$1.1 million dollars in January, 1884, but the money from the sale went toward paying off the Society's debts.<sup>27</sup>

Because of its oil wells, coal concerns, real estate holdings, and railroad stock, many citizens of the United States began looking upon the Harmony Society as having deep pockets. Jacob Henrici was called "Santa Claus" by Society historian Karl Arndt.<sup>28</sup> Henrici went on a charitable donation spree, giving money to such diverse causes as Catholic convents, buildings

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 64-65. Nordhoff later discovered that the Economy Hotel no longer accepted guests, but rather became a nightly gathering spot for ragged vagrants, who were fed daily by the Society. The night of Nordhoff's visit, twenty-five homeless men were fed.

<sup>25</sup> *Poor's Manual of the Railroads of the United States*, Issue 22 (New York: K. Poor, 1889), 173, 288. These were both small connecting rail lines, the Little Saw Mill being having 8 miles of track and the P,C, and Y having just over 19 miles.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 286. The Pittsburgh and Lake Erie line was so large it had 44 locomotives in its fleet.

<sup>27</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs*, 68.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 121.



for Mississippi State University, money for the blind, money for veteran's causes, a fund to help rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and several hundred thousand dollars to feed the poor in Iceland.<sup>29</sup> As Harmony Society debts mounted, the Council of Elders, in 1891, demanded that Henrici conduct an accounting of Society funds. It took Jacob Henrici seven months to complete his report, since the aging and infirmed leader, "kept his accounts under his hat."<sup>30</sup> The accounting revealed that although the Harmony Society had multiple investments in land, oil, and railroads, it needed to immediately borrow over \$100,000 to pay its everyday expenses.<sup>31</sup> To meet future expenses, Henrici mortgaged several Society properties for \$400,000, but did not have to pursue any matters further as he passed away at age 89 on December 25, 1892.<sup>32</sup>

The rise of John Duss to business Trustee status led to the final demise of the Harmony Society. Duss became a Society member as a young boy as his mother sought shelter for both of them after his father was wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg, later dying in a Baltimore army hospital.<sup>33</sup> When Jacob Henrici died, John Duss at age 32 was named President of the Harmony Society, spending his time defending the remaining Society assets from lawsuits initiated by former members, their families, and so-called distant German relatives of George Rapp. Duss, in *George Rapp and His Associates* claims that when he took over as President, the Society was \$1.5 million in debt, "and our dear old members were directly in line for the poorhouse."<sup>34</sup>

The Harmony Society asset case eventually was settled by the United States Supreme Court. By April 1896, only eight Society members were still alive. The lawsuit claimed that the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 122-123. Henrici was inclined to contribute to Catholic causes because their priests and nuns practiced celibacy.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 192-193.

<sup>33</sup> Antoinette Bosco, *Mother Benedict: Foundress of the Abbey of Regina Laudis* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 34-35. The Duss family history was recalled by John Duss' granddaughter Mother Benedict Duss, a Catholic nun who founded the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut.

<sup>34</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 42.

Harmony Society had ceased to exist, and that all assets of the Society remaining under the control of John Duss revert back to the heirs of the original members who had contributed to the success of the Society over the years.<sup>35</sup> On October 27, 1902, Supreme Court Chief Justice Melville Fuller delivered the court's decision, declaring the validity of the Harmony Society's existence, the validity of the presidency of John Duss, and affirmation that the Society's assets were solely owned by the remaining eight members.<sup>36</sup>

Although John Duss fought to preserve Society assets, he did so for selfish reasons. Considering himself a master musician, orchestra conductor, and musical wonder, Duss used Harmony Society funds to achieve his lifelong ambition. Duss went to New York City where he purchased the financially desperate Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, made himself conductor, and staged lavish operatic spectacles, billing himself as the star.<sup>37</sup> In 1903, Duss used \$100,000 of Harmony Society money to convert the original Madison Square Garden into the site of his operatic production *Venice in New York*, the set being a replica of Venice, with canals, gondolas, and a 1,000 member chorus.<sup>38</sup> Duss became the king of publicity stunts, employing dwarfs to roam Manhattan advertising his shows, and dumping 800 glass bottles containing prizes into the waters off of Long Island, promoting himself as the Harmony Society millionaire.<sup>39</sup> Duss paid the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra wages much higher than the standard rate and further depleted

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<sup>35</sup> *United States Reports, Volume 187, Cases Adjudged in the Supreme Court at October Term, 1902* (New York: The Banks Law Publishing Company, 1903), 8-9.

<sup>36</sup> *The Supreme Court Reporter, Volume 23, October Term, 1902*, (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company, 1903), 10-16. The Case was *Christian Schwartz, et. al., v. John Duss, et al.*, argued April 22 and 23, 1902.

<sup>37</sup> Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes*, 80.

<sup>38</sup> Robert P. Sutton, *Communal Utopias and the American Experience: Religious Communities, 1732-2000* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 46.

<sup>39</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs, 1847-1916*, 272-275. Duss went on another spending spree, purchasing a music library for \$40,000, using \$100,000 to publicize his tour

the Society's monetary funds by taking the entire orchestra on a coast-to-coast tour.<sup>40</sup> Finally, when the Harmony Society money ran out, Duss retired from the music business.

In early May 1903, John Duss sold over 26,000 acres of Harmony Society land at Economy, Pennsylvania to the Liberty Land Company for \$4 million, with the payment to be made to Duss, his wife Susanna, and four other living Society members.<sup>41</sup> After pilfering the Society coffers, John Duss, resigned as Harmony Society Trustee and his wife Susanna Duss was appointed sole Trustee and to the Council of Elders. After one hundred years of Harmony Society presence in America, Susie Duss had assumed the role of leadership once held by George Rapp.<sup>42</sup> In late May 1903, individuals who claimed to be heirs of George Rapp filed suit in United States District Court against John Duss, his wife, and the living Society members, the Liberty Land Company, and "all others having had anything to do with the transactions in the attempted sale of the properties of the Harmony Society."<sup>43</sup> The suit alleged a conspiracy on the part of Duss and his wife to abscond all profits from the sale of the town Economy, which was rightfully founded and developed by George Rapp, not John Duss.<sup>44</sup> The claims of George Rapp's so called heirs were ignored and John and Susanna Duss prevailed. In 1905, the Dusses formally disbanded the Harmony Society.

What happened to Economy, Pennsylvania after the Harmony Society disbanded? The force behind the purchase of Rappite land in 1903 was the American Bridge Company which proceeded to build the world's largest bridge building and structural steel fabricating facility in the world, employing and housing over 4,000 workers on Economy land, including construction

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<sup>40</sup> Sutton, *Communal Utopias and the American Experience*, 46.

<sup>41</sup> "To Buy Out Harmony Society," *New York Times*, May 2, 1903, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs*, 322-323. The only other Elder was Franz Gillmann, who claimed to be "about" 76 years old.

<sup>43</sup> "Harmony Society Suit," *New York Times*, May 26, 1903, 1. The lead complaint was filed by G.L. Rapp of Keyport, NJ. There is no proof that this claimant was related to Rapp; Rapp's daughter Rosina never married, nor did his granddaughter Gertrude. Frederick Rapp had no children.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

of a steel barge facility, the company's headquarters building, and a hospital and hotel.<sup>45</sup> The American Bridge Company replaced George Rapp's Divine Economy and the town became known as Ambridge, Pennsylvania. After suffering through more years of litigation over survivor payments and monies owed to the state, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania officially dissolved the Harmony Society on February 3, 1916. Insulting George Rapp and his followers who gave up all to settle in the young United States, Pennsylvania ruled that "None of the said property ever was or is held by any religious society or for any religious or charitable uses."<sup>46</sup>

The Dusses moved to Florida; John Duss lived until 1951. As described by former Economy resident William Bowan in a 1991 article :

At the north end of the orchard was the Harmonists' cemetery. The cemetery is located at today's Eleventh and Church streets. About five hundred members of the society including Father Rapp, his wife, his daughter (sic) Gertrude, Frederick Rapp, all of the trustees and John S. Duss and his wife Susanna, are buried there.<sup>47</sup>

Writing of his visit to Economy in 1888, Rudyard Kipling, in *From Sea to Sea*, composed a concise history of the Harmony Society as he saw it:

...that quaint forgotten German community, the Brotherhood of Perpetual Separation, who founded themselves when the state was yet young and land cheap, and are now dying out because they will neither marry nor give in marriage, and their recruits are very few. The advance in the value of land has almost smothered these poor old people in a golden affluence that they never desired.<sup>48</sup>

When George Rapp died in 1847, the Harmony Society died as well. Although Romulus Baker and Jacob Henrici attempted to keep Rapp's vision of the Second Coming of Christ alive, the dwindling Rappite population and the innovations associated with an industrialized America

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<sup>45</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs*, 319-320. On the site of the former Harmony Society town of Economy, the steel for the following structures was fabricated: the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, New York's Verrazano Bridge, the Maine Turnpike, Michigan's Mackinaw Bridge, and the NASA Vehicle Assembly Building at Cape Kennedy, Florida.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>47</sup> William J. Bowan, "Flashbacks to Old Economy and the Harmony Society – 1912," *Milestones* 16, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 1.

<sup>48</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea, Letters of Travel, Part II* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 263.

forced the Society's Council of Elders to refocus. The Society hired young workers from neighboring towns to work in the many Society business ventures for paid wages. Factories within the town of Economy closed, and the settlement was just short of a ghost town. Manufacturing and other business ventures were moved to Beaver Falls and Pittsburgh. Coal, oil, and railroads became the focus of Society life. Money continued to accumulate but the dwindling number of members, although well taken care of physically, lost their spiritual guidance. Money was also lost in defending lawsuits filed by former or non-members looking to cash-in on the Society's successes.

After Jacob Henrici's death, the Society lost practically all of its religious focus. John Duss was really an outsider. He had never known Frederick Rapp or George Rapp. He attended a regional school and lived away from Economy for many years during his young manhood. Duss never aspired to greet Christ at the Second Coming. He saw the Society's assets as a means to his own ends of musical fame. Before Christian Schwartz's case against John Duss was ruled on by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1903, Schwartz filed an appeal in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, claiming that John Duss "abandoned" the Society, was "immoral," and renounced "the religious principles generally upon which the society was founded."<sup>49</sup>

In his own defense, Duss claims that he found the Society in financial disarray when he became its Trustee and needed to resign in 1903 because he was "broken in health and spirit."<sup>50</sup> But although John Duss conducted the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, he never conducted religious services with the remaining Society members, nor did he ever acknowledge Christ's Second Coming. As summarized by Timothy Miller, "The Harmonists did manage to withstand

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<sup>49</sup> Schwartz et al. v Duss et al., *United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Volume 43* (Rochester, NY: Lawyers' Cooperative Publishing Company, 1901), 326-327. The Court of Appeals ruled in Duss' favor, and the plaintiff Schwartz took the case to the United States Supreme Court who again ruled in Duss' favor based on the Harmony Society constitution and contract.

<sup>50</sup> Duss, *George Rapp and His Associates*, 42.

the onslaughts and finally died with a whimper, after a new member joining late in the game looted the treasury and shut the movement down.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Timothy Miller, “Controversial Christian Movements: History, Growth, and Outlook,” *New Religious Movements and Religious Liberty in America*, Derek H. Davis and Barry Hankins, editors (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 15.

## **Afterword and Conclusion: Rapp Rejects Jackson**

“...we know from various traditions, that, soon as the Military Spirit predominates, the downfall of a Republic may be considered near at hand.”

~ Frederick Rapp (1828)

George Rapp rejected Andrew Jackson, Jackson’s supporters and Jacksonian Democracy. Generally speaking, Andrew Jackson’s American ideology clashed with the European model of rule that George Rapp was familiar with and chose to impose on his followers. “Elite” rulers dictate to others their course in life. In case of the Harmony Society, George Rapp was God’s prophet, appointed by God to be their ruler.

Before coming to the United States, George Rapp had an ongoing battle in Wurttemberg with the gentry who were the civil leaders of government. Rapp was just a weaver and vine tender by trade, two occupations that did not place him in a position of power. He found his power base in Pietist, separatist religion. He attracted his followers through assertions that God spoke to him directly and through visions, boldly declaring in 1791, “I am a prophet and am called to be one,” thus elevating his status from serf to patriarch.<sup>1</sup> Rapp’s goal from that point forward was to retain his status at all costs, challenging anyone who was a threat to his sphere of influence.

George Rapp’s initial attraction to America was its wilderness, agricultural potential, acceptance of Germans, freedom of religion, and non-interference by government officials. He admired Thomas Jefferson and the founding fathers of the United States, and after his arrival in America, he considered himself the founding father of his own isolated congregation, the Harmony Society, which he believed could expand to thousands of followers, all of which he would lead to the near-at-hand second coming of Christ. But when his first settlement at Economie was surrounded by resentful German settlers, he moved further west to the isolated

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<sup>1</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 15.

Indiana Territory. He convinced Harmony Society members that Indiana was Christ's chosen location for reappearance by claiming that the Angel Gabriel visited him and proved it by producing the footprints on 'Gabriel's Rock'. Surrounded by English settlers at New Harmony, George Rapp decided to return to the Pittsburgh area, now believing that it was not America where Christ would return, but Palestine, and not too far into the future. Economy, Pennsylvania settled primarily as a manufacturing town put the Society nearer to populated markets in order to generate the massive amounts of money needed to transport Society members to Palestine. As Rapp settled in Economy in 1824, a drastic change to the American political and societal landscape occurred. Andrew Jackson emerged as a national political figure and began to garner supporters who would place him in the White House in early 1829. It was when Jackson assumed the presidency that George Rapp made his specific determination that the Second Coming of Christ would occur on September 15, 1829.

George Rapp's philosophy was in total conflict with Jacksonian principles. According to Robert Remini in *The Life of Andrew Jackson*, the power of democracy was nestled in the people, who elect their agents and representatives and instruct those agents as to the will of the people, giving the public the right to dispose of those leaders.<sup>2</sup> George Rapp would have none of that. He was the sole voice of the Harmony Society, not elected by his followers but chosen by God as His prophet to dictate to the Society how they would dress, how they would work, how they would live, what they would eat, and how they would worship and be saved. Jacksonian Democracy, in the form of a voice given to the common man, was a threat to Rapp's status as supreme despot over his followers.

The Rappites supported both Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams. Clay's "American System" was employed by Frederick Rapp as the Harmony Society moved from being

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<sup>2</sup> Robert V. Remini, *The Life of Andrew Jackson*, 305.



agriculturally dependent to manufacturing oriented.<sup>3</sup> They admired John Quincy Adams, as he appeared to be religious and knowledgeable of Scripture.<sup>4</sup> Frederick Rapp personally corresponded with Clay on several occasions. In 1833, just prior to his death, Frederick wrote to Clay regarding land issues and concern that Congress was considering lowering the duties on imports, which would be harmful to Harmony Society business.<sup>5</sup>

There were several points of disagreement Harmonists had with Jackson. First, Frederick Rapp voiced his opinion that the ascension of a military leader to a position of political power would lead to the ruin of a republic.<sup>6</sup> This may have been Frederick's personal opinion. After Frederick's death, George Rapp and the Harmony Society did not have a problem supporting Whig candidate William Henry Harrison, and even welcomed the former General at his 1841 stop-over in Economy on Harrison's journey to Washington for his presidential inauguration. Nevertheless, the Harmonist were pacifists whose overall negative attitude toward the military most likely came from their time in Europe, where they were ruled by militaristic German and Prussian regimes, and abhorred the bold escapades of Napoleon, whom they considered the Anti-Christ. But Old Tippecanoe, a military legend who defeated Jackson's protégé Martin Van Buren in the Election of 1840, was acceptable as the new leader of the United States.

Second, the Harmony Society voiced their opposition to black slavery, and even gave sanctuary to runaway slaves prior to the Civil War. While a delegate to the Indiana Constitutional Convention in 1816, Frederick Rapp supported a constitutional amendment

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<sup>3</sup> As described by Kimberly C. Shankman in *Compromise and the Constitution: The Political Thought of Henry Clay* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999), 48, the American System relied on a protective tariff, infrastructure improvements to promote domestic trade, and a national bank to provide funding to grow American manufacturing.

<sup>4</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 394.

<sup>5</sup> Melba Porter Hay, editor, *The Papers of Henry Clay: Supplement, 1793-1852* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1992), 249. Frederick Rapp wrote a letter to Henry Clay on January 21, 1833 and received a reply on January 27, 1833, in which Clay extended his best wishes to Father Rapp and Gertrude Rapp.

<sup>6</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 395.

banning slavery in the new state, and the Society established an internal indenture process at New Harmony which helped free several slaves.<sup>7</sup> After observing Frederick Rapp's efficient agricultural system, Frances Wright believed that Rappite system of farming could be adopted to abolish southern slavery by increasing production, eliminating the need for a large slave population.<sup>8</sup> Andrew Jackson, a slaveholder, resented interference by northerners on the slavery issue, fearing that Federalism would be revived by such interference.<sup>9</sup>

Third, although the Harmony Society settlements in Pennsylvania were void of Indians, the Rappites did interact with the Native American tribes of Indiana. As Gert Hummel reports, during the Society's days in New Harmony, the Rappites interacted well with local tribes, but built fortified structures, such as their granary, to offer protection against their white neighbors.<sup>10</sup> The Rapps voiced no public opinion on the treatment and removal of Native Americans under the presidencies of both Jackson and Van Buren, but sensing that they were considered different by outsiders, Harmonists were generally against the displacement of any minority group.

Fourth, George and Frederick Rapp did not trust Andrew Jackson's stance on the protective tariff. The Rapps totally supported tariffs on European manufactured goods entering the United States, a system supported by the northern Democrat Van Buren to protect American milling operations from the influx of cheaper European products. But when Democratic New York Congressman Gulian Verplanck introduced a bill in 1833 to reduce the tariff, a measure considered by Jackson, Frederick Rapp feared that Jackson would be swayed to support Verplanck's bill. Frederick wrote to his friend Henry Clay, asking Clay to use his congressional

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<sup>7</sup> Pitzer, *New Harmony Then and Now*, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Helen Elliott, "Frances Wright's Experiment with Negro Emancipation," 145.

<sup>9</sup> Sean Wilentz, *Andrew Jackson* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 124.

<sup>10</sup> Hummel, "Hope for a New World," 8.

powers to block any tariff reduction.<sup>11</sup> The Rapps viewed this Democratic action as an attempted attack on Harmony Society manufacturing, and in turn, a sabotage of the Society's ability to partake at Christ's Second Coming.

Fifth, the Rapps viewed Jackson's attack on the Second Bank of the United States (BUS) as a direct attack on the Harmony Society. In 1838, Second BUS President Nicholas Biddle made a secret deal with Society business manager Romulus Baker to convert a Society withdrawal of \$50,000 into gold sovereigns, enhancing the account value, as long as Baker kept silent on the deal.<sup>12</sup> The Rapps were appalled at the Jackson-Van Buren attack on the Bank and their good friend Biddle. George Rapp believed that Jackson's attack on the Second BUS would destroy both the bank and assets of the Harmony Society, prompting Rapp to withdraw a total of almost \$200,000 in specie. Rapp sensed that the Jacksonian war on the BUS could lead to the bank's collapse and the bankruptcy of the Harmony Society.

Finally, the Harmony Society was at odds with Andrew Jackson over the federal funding of internal improvements to the country's infrastructure. Frederick Rapp needed to see an improvement in roads, canals, and river navigation in order to ship Society Golden Rose products more quickly and easily to market. Jackson's refusal to allocate federal funds for such improvements hurt what the Rapps determined was their ability to sell more products and realize higher profits for funding the Society's exodus to Palestine.

But the crucial aspect of Jacksonian Democracy feared by both George and Frederick was the growing national movement elevating the status of the working man. The mutiny of

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<sup>11</sup> Hay, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay*, 249. Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 406. In order to protect southern interests, John C. Calhoun worked out a compromise on the tariff, lowering the tariff in small increments over the next eight years, culminating at twenty percent in 1842, at which time Frederick Rapp was long dead and George Rapp was age 85.

<sup>12</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 553-554. Biddle wore silk suits given to him by the Society.

one-third of Harmony Society members during the 1833 visit of Count Leon at Economy showed how fragile the bond between patriarch and Society member had become. Some Rappites, especially younger members, became aware that they could achieve salvation and partake in Christ's Second Coming under Leon, without having to sacrifice personal needs and property, and without being forced to live a celibate lifestyle.

The rise of the "workingman's" political parties spotlighted the growing power of worker's rights. As described by Joseph Dorfman, the new labor movement was "anti-aristocratic, not anti-capitalistic," promoting a distribution of profits in the form of increasing wage-earner salaries.<sup>13</sup> Rappite workers toiled in the fields and factories from dawn until dusk, without owning their property, directly sharing in the Society's profits, or having the freedom to make their own decisions. George Rapp and Frederick Rapp feared Jacksonian Democracy as a new American force which could possibly lure away their followers and with it their source and control of wealth. As Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. writes in *The Age of Jackson*, the rising working class consciousness was awakened, as "Jacksonian speeches roused it, much Jacksonian legislation was based on it, the Jacksonian press appealed to it."<sup>14</sup> The Jacksonian press in Pittsburgh mounted an attack against George Rapp criticizing his control over the voting rights of Harmony Society members, referring to him as a "despot," further alienating Rapp's Harmony Society from American society.<sup>15</sup>

Andrew Jackson elevated the status of the common man, preaching that it was the "people's duty not to obey government, but to direct its course."<sup>16</sup> What George and Frederick

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<sup>13</sup> Joseph Dorfman, "The Jackson Wage-Earner Thesis," *The American Historical Review*, 54, no. 2 (January 1949): 300, 304.

<sup>14</sup> Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson*, 339.

<sup>15</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 400.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas S. Langston, "A Rumor of Sovereignty: The People, Their Presidents, and Civil Religion in the Age of Jackson," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Fall 1993): 674.

Rapp feared about Jacksonian Democracy was the destruction of their means of control and wealth. If Harmony Society members adhered to these new American principles of self-determination, it would undermine George Rapp's dictatorial leadership and spiritual and financial hold over members of the Society. The principles of Jacksonian Democracy would sabotage Rapp's means of passage to Palestine to partake in Christ's Second Coming.

George Rapp outlived Andrew Jackson by two years, but Jacksonian principles did not die with the General.<sup>17</sup> Rapp's Harmony Society did not disintegrate after his death either, as there were no great desertions of members to join this renewed American political process of self-determination. Instead, the Harmony Society disintegrated as a result of Rapp's 1807 celibacy edict. German theologian Karl Knortz attempted to visit Economy in 1875 but was denied permission to do so by Jacob Henrici. Knortz came anyway and interviewed several elderly Society members who defended Rapp's edict, citing that death would be preferred over physical relations between the sexes.<sup>18</sup>

The political liberation and self-determination granted workingmen in Jacksonian America came at a cost: the possibility of failure. As observed by a staunch old Rappite interviewed by Knortz: "How easily could all men find happiness, if they only wanted; but the world today no longer wants to obey, everyone wants to be his own boss, and to what misery this leads is proved to us each day by the 30 to 40 bums who seek bread and shelter by us."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Remini, *The Life of Andrew Jackson*, 357. Jackson died in 1845, Rapp died in 1847.

<sup>18</sup> Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs*, 118.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

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