UTOPIAN EXPERIMENTS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA

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III-58 Classify the various communistic groups which were started during the period and describe a leading community of each class or type.

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For the first half of the nineteenth century, the United States was a testing ground not only for the American dream but for the Utopian dream, as well. The availability of relatively cheap land, the lure of religious freedom, and the conservatism of the European nations in which most of these experiments had their birth were among the factors contributing to the establishment and growth in America of "utopias" of all kinds.

These colonies ranged from small, sometimes strange, religious sects to large movements based on new socio-economic theories. But, while the basis for their foundation varied, most ultimately turned for practical reasons to a communist way of living as the best method of economic organization, although many did not start with this intention. Many adopted similar systems of government and encountered similar problems with those systems. It is not surprising, then, that most of these "utopias" declined at about the same time and failed for similar reasons.

This paper deals with seven utopian experiments which are representative of the several types that flourished: the many Shaker religious communities,

the Oneida Perfectionist community, the German immigrant communities at Harmony and Zoar, the Icarian community founded by the Frenchman, Étienne Cabet, the groups known as Phalanxes, based on the social theories of another Frenchman, Charles Fourier, and the intellectual community at Brook Farm, which later became a Phalanx. Those whose methods were adapted by later groups are treated in detail.

The American utopias can best be categorized according to the nature of their goals. The religious groups, such as the Shakers and the Oneidists, held that the highest development of man is a spiritual one. Because they were organized to foster man's spiritual development, and not to propagate communism, they were willing to employ hired labor when necessary. Consequently, they were better able to adapt to changing economic conditions and survived longer than the non-religious groups. The communities at Harmony and Zoar were also religious, but their doctrines were more conventional than the Shakers' or the Oneidists'. Cabet's Icaria and the Fourieristic Phalanxes are examples of communities based on social and economic principles. Some groups tried to replace society's religious dogmas with ethical codes, but other were content to

develop what they considered a superior social and economic organization and leave religion to the individual.

The communities differed greatly in their conceptions of their roles in society. The Shakers, Harmony, and Oneida were exclusive communities, intended to serve only a limited group and not supposed to be extended as a way of life for current society as a whole. Cabet's Icaria and the many Fourieristic Phalanxes, on the other hand, were designed as experimental or pilot communities to work out the basic problems of socialism with the hope of becoming prototypes for a universal organization. Ironically, the exclusive communities were generally more successful, and lasted much longer than the pilot communities.

The Shakers founded the first, themmost successful, and the longest lasting American utopian communities. John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Oneida Community, acknowledged the debt of all American utopian experiments to the Shakers:

> It is no more than bare justice to say that we are indebeted to the Shakers more than to any or all other social architects of modern times. Their success has been the "specie basis" that has upheld all the paper theories, and counteracted the failures, of the French and English schools. It is very doubtful whether Owenism or Fourierism would have existed, or if

> they had, whether they would have moved the practical American nation, if the facts of Shakerism had not existed before them, and gone along with them.[1]

Yet the Shakers began as a religion, not as a utopian social movement, They adopted communal living for strictly practical reasons, then justified it by their religion.

Known officially as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, the Shakers were formed in Bolton and Manchester, England, by Jane and James Wardley in about 1747. Among the Wardley's convictions was the belief that the destruction of the world and Christ's Second Coming were imminent. They also believed that for the Second Coming, Christ would appear as a woman instead of a man.

In 1758, the Wardleys were joined by Ann Lee, a woman in her early twenties. The daughter of a poor blacksmith, she was pious, introspective, and mystical, and gloried in punishment and sacrifice. Because she had strange visions and revelations, she became a dominant part of the Wardley group. In 1770, she was imprisoned for her beliefs and starved for two weeks. Instead of dying, she emerged

[1] quoted in Ernest Sutherland Bates, American Faith, p. 360.

in fine condition, a "miracle" which earned her the admiring title of "Mother Ann" among the Wardley group and she assumed a position of leadership in the movement. Actually she had been fed milk and wine through a pipe-stem inserted in the key-hole in her cell, but it was popularly believed that she had remained alive through divine help.

Supposedly directed by a revelation from heaven, Mother Ann, her husband, and seven others came to America in 1774. Ann remained with her husband for two years in New York, while the seven others established a Shaker settlement at Niskeyuna (later Watervliet) New York. When her husband deserted her, she rejoined the rest of her group.

By 1780 the sect had begun to attract converts, so that when Mother Ann died in 1784, foundations had been laid for eleven Shaker communities. Mother Ann was succeeded by James Whitaker, and soon after by "Father" Joseph Meacham, who organized the group into "families" (groups of thirty to one hundred members) and developed Mother Ann's mystic faith int into a consistent and elaborate system of belief.

Because Mother Ann had believed that sexual intercourse was the root of all sin, the Shakers were complete celibates. Her advocacy of celibacy is, however, attributed by most experts to her

unhappy marriage and the death of her four children. The Shakers did not, however, wholly condemn marriage; they considered it proper for those who had not been called to the higher spiritual order. Their attitude is indicated in a conversation between Mother Ann and a visitor named Daniel Mosely, to whom she said:

> Do not go away and report that we forbid to marry; for unless you are able to take up a full cross, and part with every gratification of the flesh, for the Kingdom of God, I would counsel you, and all such, to take wives in a lawful manner, and cleave to them only; and raise up in a lawful posterity, and be perpetual servents to your families: for of all lustful gratifications that is the least sin.[1]

The Shakers believed that God is a dual being, male and female, Jesus representing the male element and Mother Ann the female element. Man, created in the image of God, was originally also of a dual character but a separation of the sexes occured when God, at Adam's request, created Eve. They believed that it is possible to live a sinless life and that, although there is no resurrection of the body, there is a restoration of the spirit.

They divided the religious history of mankind into four cycles, each having a separate heaven and hell. The first included the period from Adam to

[1] Testimonies of the life, character, relations and doctrines of our ever blessed Mother Ann Lee, Hancock, 1816, quoted in Edward Deming Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 23.

Noah, the second embraced the Jews until the arrival of Jesus, the third extended to the period of Mother Ann, and the fourth is still continuing. It was during the fourth period that the Shakers were to attain complete perfection.

Their religious ideals were expressed in a celibate life, universal bbotherhood, complete pacificism pacificism, separation from the world, and "Christian communism." Formal worship consisted of a series of songs, marches, ring dances, and other devotional exercises. At first the service had no definate order, but by the1830's it consisted of a pbescribed order of songs and elaborate dances. It still involved much emotion, however, as individual worshippers received "gifts" (divine inspirations) to perform certain actions, and the entire group joined in. One observer described the climax of a typical meeting:

> As the singing and dancing progresses, the Worshippers become more zealous, than frantic with excitement--until nothing but what the "wor "World" would call disorder and confusion reigns. As the excitement increases, all order is forgotten, all unison of parts repudiated, each sings his own tune, each dances his own dance, or leaps, shouts, and exults with exceeding great joy--The more gifted of the Females engage in a kind of whirling motion, which they perform with seemingly incredible velocity their arms being extended horizontally and their dresses blown out like a Ballon all around their persons by centrifugal force occasioned by the rapidity of their motion. After performing from Fifty to One thousand revolutions each, they either swoon away and fall into the arms of their Friends, or suddenly come to a stand, with

> apparently little or no dizziness produced. Sometimes the Worshippers engage in a race around the Room, with a sweeping motion of the Hands and Arms, intended to present the act of sweeping the Devil out of the Room.[1]

It was from this form of worship that the Shakers were given their popular name. Because they were an outgrowth of the Quakers, they were originally known as "Shaking Quakers" but this name was eventually shortened to Shakers. Although this name was first used mockingly, the Shakers eventually accepted it and even found Biblical justification for it.[2]

While their worship sometimes seemed chaotic, the Shakers were generally orderly. Each family was governed by two Elders and two Eldresses, who had charge of spiritual affairs, and by two Deacons and two Deaconesses, who had charge of temporal matters. All these officials were directly responsible to the central ministry at New Lebanon, New York. All members of a family usually lived in a single house, but "brothers" and "sisters" (men and women) were carefully separated. The Millennial Laws of the Shakers contain many restrictions on contact between the sexes, such as the following:

> ~~2. One brother and one sister, must not be together alone, at any time, longer than to do a short and necessary duty~~

[1] Peter Douglas Gorrie, Churches and Sects in the United States, 1850, quoted in Edward Deming Andrews, The Gift to be Simple, p. 156.

[2] Haggai: II: 6-7.

> 2. One brother and one sister, must not be together alone, at any time, longer than to do a short and necessary duty or errand; and must not have private talk together at all, which they desire to have unknown to the Elders. Neither should brethren and sisters touch each other unnecessarily.
> 7. Brethren and sistern may not pass each other on the stairs.
> 8. Brethren and sisters may not shake hands together.
> 15. Sisters must not mend, nor set buttons on brethren's clothes, while they have them on.
> 19. None should sit crosslegged nor in any awkard posture, in the time of any meeting for worship; and in union, or singing meeting there should be at least five feet distance, between the seats of brethren and sisters, when there is sufficient room to admit of it.
> 23. Brethren's and sister's shops, should not be under one and the same roof, except those of the Ministry.[1]

At the religious services, brethren and sisters sat on opposite sides of the room and danced in separate lines which did not intermingle.

In contrast to the outside world, women in the Shaker communities had as much say in the organization and management of the families as the men. This equality appealed to women, so that they nearly always outnumbered the men in the Shaker communities two to one and sometimes by a much larger ratio.[2]

[1] Millenial Laws of the Shakers . . . by Father Joseph Meacham and Mother Lucy Wright, New Lebanon, 1821, revised 1845 by the Ministry and Elders, quoted in Andrews, The People Called Shakers, p. 266-7.

[2] Bates, op. cit., p. 364.

The Shakers were divided into three classes or orders. The Novitiate, or lowest order, consisted of communicants of the church, who resided outside of the society and managed their own temporal concerns. The Juniors were probational members, who resided within the society and gave up their individual property, but who could return to the world and recover their property at any time. The Seniors, or Church Order, consisted of members who had absolutely parted with their property and irrevocably devoted themselves to the service of the Shaker church.

Their lives were carefully regulated. Books, except for the Bible and literature cognate to it, were forbidden, as were pictures, and anything decorative or suggestive of ornamentation. Instrumental music was, in general, frowned upon.

But the Shakers were not, as is often believed, an unhappy people. They managed to put great enthusiasm into their work and developed an excellent reputation for good work and honest dealing. Through most of their history their communities were not just self-supporting, but actually profitable. Their principal industries were the raising of garden seeds and medicinal herbs, although they also engaged in several mechanical industries, such as manufacturing brooms, cahirs, and tinware. Shakers are credited with having

invented the corn broom, tongue-and groove machinery, cut nails, Babbitt-metal, an improved washing-machine, an improved lathe, a pea-sheller, and, most important, the circular saw.

The Shakers were not destroyed by success, however, and retained their ideals for as long as they possibly could. No money circulated within the community. Members were never given fixed hours of labor and the usual number was not more than six hours a day.[1] When, during the 1870's, the Shakers began to decline, many regulations which had once been rigidly enforced were modified or dropped, but the basic tenets of the Shaker faith were never touched. There was less restriction regarding the use of books published outside of the Societies and more freedom in conversation. Shaker dress became less somber. Functionalism, which had been a basic rule, was sometimes disregarded during the later days of the society. Photographs, which had once been strictly forbidden, were allowed but not encouraged.

However, the Shakers' refusal to sacrifice their basic doctrines of celibacy and separation from the world made their decline inevitable. As old members died and no converts replaced them, the Shakers found themsel

[1] Bates, op. cit., p. 365.

themselves with large areas of unused land, which was expensive to maintain. The impact of the ~~industr~~ industrial revolution produced cheap competition for some of their important hand products. Of the more than sixteen-thousand Shakers who once lived, only about twenty--all women--are still alive. These old women are the guardians of about $10,000,000, a fortune which attests to the economic success, if not to the immortality, of Shakerism.

Ironically, the Shakers are known more for their crafts than for their religion, which was to them the most important thing. Shaker furniture is universally acclaimed for its simplicity and beauty. Many Shaker buildings are masterpieces of design and are now in use as museums. There has been some recent interest in the strange Shaker tunes, that were part of their religious service. But, for the most part, the Shakers themselves are a forgotten people.

The Oneida Perfectionists, like the Shakers, based their community on their religion. But where the Shakers regarded the sexual impulse as something to be repressed, the Oneidists attempted to employ it deliberately as a symbol of the spiritual union of believers. The system of multiple marriage, which they devised, made Oneida the only utopian community

in America that combined communism in economics with communism in sex. According to this plan, every man was the husband of every woman, and mating was directed by the community.

John Humphrey Noyes, Oneida's founder, was the son of an old and respected New England family. After graduating from Dartmouth and studying law for a while, he became passionately religious at a revival meeting in 1831 and subsequently entered the Andover Seminary. Later, he transferred to the Yale Theological Seminary, where he developed many of his religious theories. He preached that the Second Coming of Christ had taken place within a generation after the first coming, and that complete perfection was therefore possible. When his doctrine of perfection led to his dismissal from the Divinity School and the revocation of his license to preach, he commented: "I took away their license to sin and they go on sinning; they have taken away my license to preach but I shall go on preaching."[1]

In 1834 Noyes began to convert his family to his views about religion and sex, and in 1839 a group of relatives, neighbors, and believers organized "The Putney [Vermont] Bible Class." With the adoption of

[1] Pierrepont Burt Noyes, My Father's House, p. 5.

communism in 1846, the group became the "Putney Community." At this time Noyes also led the group to accept his ideas of male continence (actually coitus interruptus) and complex marriage. This enraged the already angry residents of Putney, and in 1847 Noyes was indicted on the grounds of adultery. The group was forced to disband and Noyes led a few of his followers to the town of Oneida, in New York, a town within easy reach, in a emergency, of the Canadian border.

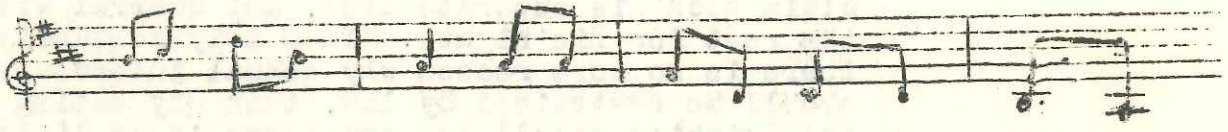
Oneida began in 1848 with only four members and about twenty-five thousand dollars but after Noyes's two daughters married two of the members, others joined the group, and children were born, the group became a community. By 1849 the membership had grown to eighty-seven; by 1850 it was one-hundred seventy-two; by 1851, two-hundred five.[1] It is interesting to note that the Oneida Community was the only important sectarian community of purely American origin. The bulk of its members consisted of New England farmers and mechanics, but they also had a large number of professional men, and their standard of culture and education was considerably above the average.

Despite considerable objection, the group continued

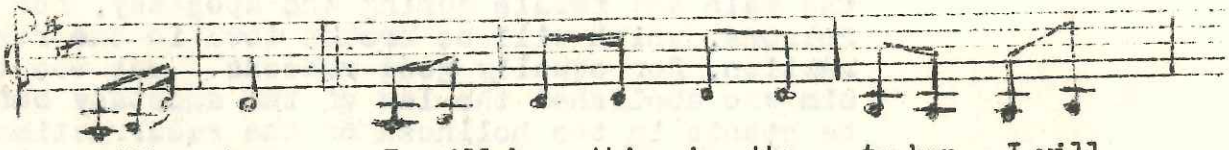
[1] Ibid., p. 8.

I WILL BOW AND BE SIMPLE

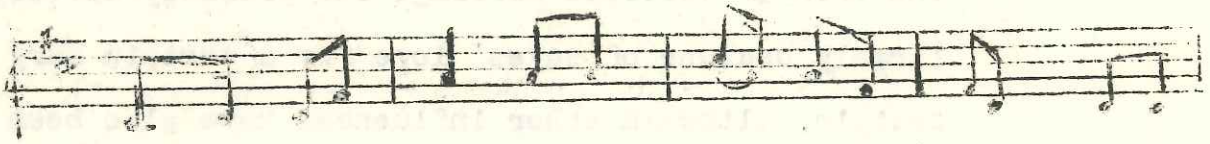
I will bow an d be sim ple, I will bow and be



free, I will bow and be hum ble, yea bo w like the



willow tree. I will bow this is the to-ken, I will



wear the easy yoke, I will bow and be broken, Yea I'll

fall up-on the rock.

Male continence and complex marriage were also supposed to overcome the suffering which was then the common experience of women in childbirth. By freeing women from the bondage of unplanned pregnancy, Noyes believed that he could make women equal to men in the sex act, making ~~the~~equally pleasurable for both. In a pamphlet describing the system, Noyes indicated both this and also the spiritual value of sexual intercourse:

> It is held in the world that the sexual organs have two distinct functions, viz., the urinary and the propagative. We affirm that they have three, the urinary, the propagative, and the amative, i.i., they are the conductors first of the urine, secondly, of the semen, and thirdly, of the social magnetism . . . . We insist that the amative function--that which consists in a simple union of persons, making "of twain one flesh," and giving a medium of magnetic and spiritual interchange--is a distinct and independent function . . . superior to the productive.[1]

Furthermore, this system, by which the elders of the society gave only certain couples permission to have complete intercourse, provided an ideal opportunity to employ what is now known as eugenics. In Bible Communism, Noyes expressed his belief in scientifically controlled propagation:

> We are opposed to random procreation, which is unavoidable in the marriage system. But we ar are in favor of intelligent, well-ordered

[1] Calverton, op. cit., p. 273.

> procreation. Procreation is controlled and reduced to a science in the case of valuable domestic brutes; but marriage and fashion forbid any such system among human beings. We believe the time will come when involuntary and random propagation will cease, and when scientific combination will be applied to human generation as freely and successfully as to that of other animals. The way will be open for this when amativeness can have its proper gratification without drawing after it procreation as a necessary consequence. And at all events, we believe that good sense and benevolence will very soon sanction and enforce the rule that women shall bear children only when they choose. They have the principal burdens of breeding to bear, and they rather than men should have their choice of time and circumstances, at least till science takes charge of the business.[1]

Babies were cared for by the mother until weaned, when they were placed in the infant's department of the children's house. Parents were not separated from their children for long periods of time, but gradually gave up all personal responsibility for the child's care.

The basis of discipline in the community was "mutual criticism," an idea which Noyes derived from the Andover Seminary, where it was practiced by the students to further their spiritual development. Anmember of the community would be criticized publically by the entire society, or by a committee selected from among those best acquainted with him.

[1] Holloway, op. cit., p. 185-6.

Individual members would often undertake criticism every morning and every night, hoping to profit from the advice of their friends, who were doing the criticizing. The ceremony of criticism also became the center of religious life in the community, and the Oneidists believed that criticism permitted the divine spirit to act upon a believer. Criticism was even regarded by some as a cure for certain physical ailments.

Mutual criticism proved effective in maintaining internal discipline, so the Oneidists never had to turn to elaborate restrictions, such as those used by the Shakers. Freedom of education was encouraged, and the Oneida library contained the works of Thomas Huxley, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer. Members engaged in most of the popular arts and amusements. They were encouraged to spend some time at the community's summer resorts at Oneida Lake and at Short Beach, Connecticut. In general, there was little regimentation of individuals.

Unlike most of the American utopian communities, Oneida concentrated mainly on industry, although the community had several orchards and one hundred head of cattle. The principal industry, and financial backbone of the community, was the manufacture of steel traps, but the community also produced much

silk thread, did much fruit and vegetable canning, and made fine silverware.

Noyes was especially interested in labor-saving, and often altered the entire way of life of the community to reduce wasted effort. Because the task of preparing three meals a day was "subjecting females almost universally to the worst of slavery,"[1] Noyes persuaded the community to abolish two of the usual three meals, but to keep the pantry open all day. Noyes also changed the womens' costumes to make them more practical. The Oneida women wore short dresses, pantalets, and short hair.

The government was managed by twenty-one standing committees and forty-eight administrative departments. Each year the Business Board, which consisted of the heads of all the departments, met to lay out the work for the coming year. Any member of the community could submit projects, and matters were decided by general consent. The women had as much voice in the government as the men.

Although this sounds like an extremely complex system, it functioned satisfactorily until about 1876. In that year Noyes attemptedtbo transfer the leadership of the community to his agnostic son, Dr.

[1] Robert Allerton Parker, A Yankee Saint, p. 49.

Theodore Noyes. The community disagreed with many of the new policies introduced by the doctor, and Noyes was forced to resume control. But Oneida had already developed factions and Noyes felt obliged to leave in June, 1876.

He kept in contact with the community, however, and in 1879 wrote to the community suggesting that complex marriage be abolished, as a practical measure to answer popular opinion against the community, and not as a rejection of the basic principles of the institution. The proposal was accepted, and individual members began to marry. In 1881 communism was abandoned, and a joint-stock company set up. When the community became The Oneida Company, Ltd., any hope of achieving a utopia at Oneida was completely lost.

Except for the Shakers, the German sectarian groups were the most firmly established, and also the longest-lasting communities in America. The Rappite Society lasted ninety-eight years and the Zoarite, eighty-three. Significantly, neither of these two groups had originally intended to be communistic and neither adopted other major social reforms of the day. They had no interest in the emancipation of women, abolition, or industrial

reform, and when they accepted communism, it was for practical, not idealistic, reasons.

Both the Rappites and the Zoarites came from Württemburg and had broken away from the Lutheran Church. Both consisted mainly of artisans and peasants, so they were well prepared to establish their own settlements. But, in the end, the Rappites were the more successful, largely because the Zoarites lost ~~any~~ never really had) any great religious enthusiasm and became so involved in acquiring wealth that they failed to keep up a strong community.

George Rapp, the son of a small farmer, was the founder of the Rappite sect and community. A devoted Bible student, he expected the Second Coming of Christ to occur soon, probably within his lifetime. In Württemburg he founded a religious group based on his beliefs which, despite much persecution, grew to a body of three-hundred families.

In 1803 Rapp sailed for America and bought five thousand acres of land north of Pittsburgh. In 1805, six-hundred members of his sect, who had followed him to the United States, joined him and formally organized themselves into the Harmony Society. Because some of the members were unable to provide for themselves, the society adopted a communist economy.

Their community quickly grew and became moderately prosperous but, because they had no water connection with the outside world and had to do all their shipping by wagon, they sold their entire community for $100,000 and bought thirty-thousand acres of land in the Wabash Valley of Indiana. By 1815 the transformation was completed and their new home, known as New Harmony, soon became even more prosperous than the old. Their satisfaction with the affairs of the community is indicated by the fact that in 1818 they burnt the book that contained the records of what each family had originally contributed to the common fund.

In 1824, however, troubled by many unpleasant neighbors and by malaria, the Rappites again moved their entire colony. They sold their community to Robert Owen, an English utopian theorist, for $150,000 and established their final home at Economy, in Pennsylvania on the eastern bank of the Ohio in 1825.

The success of the Rappite community was due largely to the leadership of "Father" George Rapp and his adopted son, Frederick. Father Rapp was the spiritual leader, while his son took charge of the government. Frederick was responsible for bringing the six-hundred colonists across the Atlantic from

Germany, and for organizing the two transfers of the community--both extraodinary tasks--as well as for laying out the three villages and designing the major buildings.

As previously mentioned, another factor aiding the sect was the great religious enthusuasm of its members. This developed largely in 1807 when, gripped by a religious fervor, they adopted celibacy and gave up the use of tobacco. Married couples continued to live together with their children but refrained from sexual intercourse. The group believed that the strength of their religious conviction was sufficient to insure celibacy so any rules, such as the Shakers had adopted, were considered unnecessary. This faith in the potential goodness of man is expressed in the Treatise of the community:

> One cannot expect to commune with God who can not get on with his fellow men. Only in social life can mankind attain its destiny. Only in such a society is life truly free. There political and religious institutions are united. There is no fear of slavish laws and penalties; for the good man is also the truly free man, for he obeys the law of nature, as well as of truth, from a good sense of love. When he recognizes what is true, good, and useful, he does it without compulsion, entirely because it is good and true. This freedom prevails in the Harmony Society.[1]

The Rappites felt that their community was proof of

[1] Calverton, op. cit., p. 79.

their superior religious and economic way of life, and they did not attempt to convert others to their sect. Most people who applied for membership were rejected. The Rappites always believed, however, that their ideals could eventually form the basis of a new social order in the world.

Vititors to Economy during the first half of the nineteenth century were especially impressed by the beauty of the community. The streets were carefully laid out, each house had its own garden, and there was also a community garden. There was a large plantation and several modern factories, that produced the finest beer, whiskey, and alcohol in the area and cutlery known throughout the world. The Rappites were among the first Americans to purchase a steam engine and utilize steam power as a productive force. When the Duke of Saxe-Weimar visited Economy in 1828, he was particularly moved by the general attitude that seemed to prevail among the members:

> With real emotion did I witness this interesting scene. Their factories and work-ships were warmed during the winter by means of pipes connecting with the steam-engine; and all the workmen had very healthy complexions, and moved me deeply by the warm hearted friendliness with which they saluted the elder Rapp. I was also much gratified to see vessels containing fresh, sweet-scented flowers standing on all the

the machines. The neatness which universally reigned ~~throughout~~ was in every respect worthy of praise.[1]

But as the Rappites grew old, they began to lose much of their original spirit. When William Alfred Hinds, author of the important book, American Communities, visited Economy in 1876, he found many houses unoccupied and the factories idle.[2] Although in 1828 there had been more than one-thousand members, in 1876 the group had decreased to about one-hundred, most of them over sixty years of age. The group became smaller and smaller until it disbanded in 1905.

The Separatists of Zoar, who resembled the Rappites in many ways, were in general more radical and also less successful in forming a utopian community. In Germany, they spoke against the government and refused to serve in the army or to educate their children in the public schools. They were greatly persecuted but, with the assistance of some wealthy English Quakers, they managed to go to the United States and purchase several thousand acres of land in Tuscarawas County, Ohio. Two hundred Separatists, led by Joseph Baumeler, arrived in 1817 and founded the town of Zoar. Like the Rappites, they had no

[1] Calverton, op. cit., page 79.

[2] William Alfred Hinds, American Communities, p. 7.

intention of forming a communistic society but found a need to do so. After the adoption of communism in 1819, the community began to prosper.

But as they grew richer, much of the original idealism was abandoned. The Zoarites had begun as celibates but, in order to insure the continuation of the community, they began to permit marriage, and Baumeler himself was one of the first to marry. When Hinds visited Zoar in 1876, he reported that less than one-third of the community was present at the general meeting on Sunday, and that there was no meeting in which all took part. What worried him most, however, was the attitude of the younger generation:

> This man is so sincere that he frankly admits that he is a little discouraged about the future of Zoar--discouraged because the younger generation do not come under the same earnestness that controlled the original members. They fall into the fashions and ways of the world, and will not brook the restraints that religious Communism requires. The unfavorable conditions of Zoar in this respect may well excite reflection. Evidently it is not enough that a Community had a religious afflatus and intelligent, earnest men at its beginning. It must find a means to keep that afflatus alive and strong, and to replace its founders, as occasion requires, with men of equal intelligence and earnestness . . . .[1]

Hinds was correct in showing concern about the future leadership of Zoar. Although the Zoarites grew steadily

[1] Ibid., p. 36.

wealthier, until in 1874 their communities was said to be worth more than $3,000,000, they began to squabble among themselves, and the community was forced to dissolve in 1898.

Icaria, unlike the communities already described, was based entirely upon social and economic theories, and not upon religious beliefs. Furthermore, it was an almost perfectly democratic society, which made it sharply different from the Shakers and most other successful utopias.

Étienne, Cabet, a Frenchman, had been well known as a politician, editor, and historical writer before he published his Voyage en Icarie in 1840. In this novel, he set forth his ideas about utopias and through it became known as a social theorist and the leader of hundreds of thousands of Icarian Communists in Europe.

Voyage en Icarie is, according to Cabet, a treatise on morality, philosophy, and social and political economy, but Cabet had never expected to be able to put his theories into practice. The Icaria of this book is supposed to be isolated from the world by mountains on the North and South, a river at the East, and the sea at the West. The community is subdivided into one-hundred provinces, each of whidh is divided into ten communes, and each commune into

eight villages. Each village is a modern metropolis with such conveniences as glass over the sidewalks to protect against rain, and special dust collectors that keep the community clean. The food is regulated by a committee of scientists, so that disease is almost unknown. There is a progressive income tax and state regulation of wages so that everybody is required to work and there are no rich. Everybody is required to marry. The government is an almost perfect democracy, in which women can state their views in assembly, but cannot vote. Most important, there is a thorough and liberal system of education.

When Voyage en Icarie became popular throughout Europe and Cabet had a tremendous following, he decided that he would experiment in practical communism, and in 1847 began to formulate plans for the establishment of a community in America. Robert Owen, the British social theorist who had founded an American utopian community in 1825, convinced Cabet that Texas was an ideal location and Cabet immediately bought one-million of acrea of land there. The land was to become his only if he occupied it before July 1, 1848, but this did not seem to be a problem at the time.

On February 3, 1848, a selected group of sixty-nine Icarians left France to begin constructing the

new community. When they arrived in America, they found that they owned only one-hundred thousand acres of wilderness two-hundred fifty miles from any major river. Furthermore, they had been allocated alternate squares of land laid out in chessboard fashion, and in order to lay claim to the pieces of land, they had to construct a building on each square within the short time remaining until July first--an obvious impossibility.

Nevertheless, they decided to make the best of it, and set themselves to work constructing as many buildings as possible, and clearing land for farming ~~They were at first hampered~~ They were at first hampered by a lack of practical experience, and soon by a outbreak of malaria, which forced them to retreat to New Orleans. There they met Cabet with his four-hundred and fifty followers and after about two hundred Icarians had withdrawn from the group, the remaining two-hundred and eighty moved to Nauvoo, Illinois. Nauvoo had until then been the most prosperous town in Illinois but the Mormons has almosted deserted it in 1847. Thus, the Icarians had very little difficulty establishing themselves. By 1855 the colony had almost doubled in population, and was running work-shops, farms, a distillery, a school, and a newspaper. There was also a theater with Icarian artists and a musical

band with about fifty instruments.

The government was founded on the principle of pure democracy, and the officers had no powers other than the execution of the decisions of the General Assembly, which consisted of all adult males. The Icarians were proud that their president, "could not sell a bushel of corn without instructions from the meeting of the people."[1]

Although this system seemed to safeguard all democratic rights, some members felt that Cabet was assuming to much power. The community split into a Cabet group and an anti-Cabet group. In 1856 three Cabet and three anti-Cabet directors were elected, and the Cabet faction refused to recognize the other. Violent conflict followed, with the anti-Cabet group finally winning and Cabet formally expelled from the community. He left, leading a group of about one-hundred and eighty followers, but died of apoplexy a week later. His followers started the Cheltenham Community a few miles from St. Louis but soon went bankrupt and were forced to dissolve in 1864.

The Nauvoo group, although weakened by the division of their community, continued until 1860,

[1] Charles Nordhoff, Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 393.

when they moved to a new location in Iowa. At this time they had only thirty-five members, but the Civil War brought about a new prosperity and by 1876 they had eighty-three members and fifty applications for membership still pending.

New internal conflicts developed, however, which led to the complete dissolution of the community by 1898. The central problem was a clash between the new and old generations regarding the degree of communism in the community. The younger party wanted to abolish the private gardens and vineyards, and to begin publicizing their community so that the communistic ideal would become wider known. They also wanted to increase the industrialization of the community, improve the educational facilities, and let the Icarian women vote. When their proposals were rejected by the General Assembly, they demanded a formal separation on these terms:

> That a division of land and stock be made pro-rata, each stockholder, man, woman and child, to be given ten acres of land; that henceforth we carry on our own affairs, agricultural, industrial and financial, as two distinct branches of one Community; that the land be held on both sides in usufruct only, each branch having the privilege of mortgaging its land to one-fifth of its appraised valuation; that each branch admit to its ranks such new members as it may deem proper (births being reckoned as new admissi admissions); and that the surplus of land remaining, after the division shall be made according to the above proposition, shall be held in common at the

> disposal of both sides for the use of its new members. In case of death on either side, if the portion held in the name of the deceased is not taken up by a new admission within a specified time, the opposite party shall have the right to claim it.[1]

But this was also rejected, so the younger party took the matter to court, where the charter of the community was declared invalid because the community had engaged in manufacture, although registered only as an agricultural concern. The younger group reincorporated itself as "The Icarian Community" but failed to prosper and was forced to disband in 1887. The older group reorganized as "The New Icarian Community" and successfully continued their old life, but made no effort to acquire new members. Thus, when they became too old to manage the colony, it also disbanded and the property was divided among the members.

Charles Fourier, like Cabet, conceived of a utopia based entirely on enlightened social theories. He decided that, since God had created a mathematically harmonious universe, there must be a harmony between everything that exists. Rather than modify human nature, he wanted to find out exactly what it actually is, and then employ it to create a natural utopia.

[1] Hinds, op. cit., p. 77.

He found the basis of his utopia in the passions of man, the natural instincts of all individuals, which, he believed, could be used for social purposes. According to Fourier, there are twelve basic passions of all men. The first five, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, are the sensitive passions and tend to create elegance, refinement, and the cultivation of all the fine arts. The four affective passions, friendship, love, ambition, and paternity, tend to establish harmonious social relations between men. But most important are the three "distributive" passions, the emulative, the alternating, and the composite. The emulative passion creates rivalry of groups, and can be used to create competition for industrial improvements. The alternating passion, the desire for change and variety, can be employed to destroy the monotony of work and make work attractive. Finally, the composite passion, the combination of two or more other passions, permits people to associate and work together.

Fourier's utopia was to operate in a group of self-contained co-operative communities known as phalanxes. Each phalanx would contain about two-thousand members and occupy an area of about three square miles. The main building on each Phalanx would be the Phalanstery, which would contain all

the living, eating, manufacturing, and recreational space needed. Most of the land would be devoted to fields, orchards, and gardens.

According to this system, individual impulses would not be discouraged, as long as they did not interfere with the operation of the community. Members of a Phalanx would continue to be individuals and there would be a balance between individualism and the maintenance of the public good.

But Fourierism is not completely democratic. The phalanx was to be owned as a joint stock company, and profits were to be distributed in the ratio of five-twelths to labor, four-twelths to capital, and three-twelths to special skills. There was no interest in complete equality, and the communities were to be governed by a system that was almost a monarchy. In short, the class system was not to be abolished.

Fourier died in 1837, however, and never saw a complete realization of his thoeries. The Fourieristic communities in America were founded by Albert Brisbane, who had studied under Fourier from 1832 until 1834, and who believed strongly in most of Fourier's ideas. In 1840 Brisbane published his Social Destiny of Man, which contained a concise exposition of Fourierism and also gave suggestions as

for adapting Fourierism to America. Brisbane won the support of Horace Greeley, the newspaper editory who lent some space in his paper for a column on Fourierism, and also wrote and lectured about the possibilities of establishing a phalanx in America.

Brisbane, in his book, had modified a few of Fourier's ideas, but had left most of them intact. For instance, Fourier had declared that a membership of between one and one-and-a-half-thousand and a capital of about one million francs was necessary to form a successful phalanx, but Brisbane changed this to four hundred people and four-hundred thousand dollars. Brisbane also changed Fourier's statement that it was impossible to achieve a co-operative world without religion, by making religion only a secondary element.

With these few changes, Fourierism became an extremely popular idea and gained support throughout the nation. Fourierist societies were formed in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan, and in April of 1844 a National Convention of Associationists (another name for Fourierists) was held. But most of the more than forty Associationist groups were formed without adaquate planning (no group had more than eight-thousand dollars capital,

for instance), so only three survived longer than two years, and only another three longer than fifteen months. The most successful were the North American Phalanx in New Jersey, which lasted for twelve years, the Wisconsin Phalanx, which lasted for six years, and Brook Farm, which lasted for five years but spent only two of them as a Phalanx.

The Wisconsin Phalanx, founded in 1844, was conducted on the soundest business principles and far surpassed the other Fourierist experiments in material prosperity. Warren Chase, the founder, wisely advised the group to pay cash for their land and to have only a little capital remaining, rather than burden themselves with a loan. Because most of the members were experienced farmers, they were prepared to do the work necessary to begin a large community. They were, however, not very interested in culture or education, so in this respect the Wisconsin Phalanx was below average.

But as their property became valuable, the members began to lose interest in the original purpose of the Phalanx and sold the community to make money. Thus they dissolved in 1850, making one-hundred and eight per-cent on their original investments. According to one observer, "Love of money and the want of love for Association were the causes of its breaking

up."[1]

The North American Phalanx, established in September of 1843, came nearest to the ideal of a phalanx and was generally regarded as the testing-ground of Fourierism in America. As in the Wisconsin Phalanx, the members concentrated on the economics of their organization, and, although they raised the value of their property from eight-thousand dollars to eighty-thousand dollars in only nine years, they did little to further culture or education. A three-story Phalanstery with a frontage of one-hundred and fifty feet was constructed, and large gardens were laid out, and workshops were outfitted. The community was seemingly fit for a long existence. But after twelve years the North American Phalanx was destroyed by fire, and, because the group did not have enough spirit to attempt to rebuild, the community disbanded.

The most widely known phalanx, and the only nineteenth century utopian colony to gain the affection of many important intellectuals, was Brook Farm, a small farm near Roxbury, Massachusetts. Founded in 1841 by George Ripley, a Unitarian minister who had resigned his post largely because of his dissatisfaction

[1] Holloway, op. cit., p. 151.

with the social and ethical standards of his congregation, Brook Farm was an intimate part of the Transcendental movement, which formed the basis for much of America's literature during the Romantic Period.

Ripley derived his idealof a "Christian community" largely from William Ellery Channing, the founder of Unitarianism. But Ripley later conceived of the community as more than just a religious group; it was to be a new form of social organization. He described it as:

> A community . . . to be formed, to promote more effectually the great purpose of human culture, to apply the principles of justice and love to social organizations; to substitute brotherly co-operation for selfish competition; to prevent anxiety in men by a competent supplying in them of necessary wants; to guarantee each other the means of support.[1]

In 1841, with an investment of less than $15,000 and a membership of less than twenty, Brook Farm was started. The Articles of Association provided for ownership of the community by shares of stock, for uniform compensation for all labor, for free education and use of the library, and for the support of members unable to support themselves. But the group did not adopt complete communism. They attempted to be a co-

[1] Calverton, op. cit., p. 198.

operative community but to retain their private property; they believed that the exclusion of competion from their economic system was sufficient to create a harmonious community.

Unlike most of the American utopias, Brook Farm attempted to preserve individual cultural values within the context of the community. According to Elizabeth Peabody, a leading transcendentalist writer, the Brook Farmers desired:"to secure as many hours as possible from necessary toil," which they could use "for the production of intellectual goods." They wanted to provide "not only all the necessaries, but also the elegances desirable for spiritual health: books, appartus, collections for science, works of art, [and] means of beautiful amusement, . . ."[1] This emphasis upon the individual attracted the attention of such intellectuals as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller, and helped to connect the colony with the transcendentalists. Although Hawthrone was the only of these to join the Farm, the others were frequent visitors and agreed with most of the aims of the community.

One of the most important features of Brook Farm was its school, probably the most advanced of its day

[1] Holloway, op. cit., p. 127-128.

and now regarded as one of the first schools to make wide use of the techniques which constitute modern progressive education. All subjects were electives, and students were encouraged to develop their individual creative abilities. Memorization, and traditional rules and regulations were, therefore, minimized. Timothy Fuller, one of the teachers, called the Brook Farm School a place where children,

> would learn for the first time, perhaps, that all these matters of creed and morals are not quite so well settled as to make thinking nowadays a piece of superogation, and would learn to distinguish between truth and the "sense sublime," and the dead dogma of the p past.[1]

The school received much criticism for its radically new methods, of course, but did not change its basic theories, and continued to teach as before.

Brook Farmers spent most of their time either working on the farm or engaging in intellectual pursuits. They worked about sixty hours a week from May to October, and forty-eight from November to April, but members all took turns at the various types of work so that they would not lose interest. This rotation system was considered preferable to a more rigid division of labor which would, however, have been more efficient.

[1] Lindsay Swift, Brook Farm, Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors, p. 74.

Despite its great intellectual appeal, Brook Farm never became a financial success. Moreover, many conservative newspapers satirized or caricatured it, some politicians unjustly attacked it as a center of free love, and many other people found ways to denounce it. By 1843 it was almost ruined financially and there was little hope of obtaining sufficient aid through contributions. It was at this point that the Brook Farmers began seriously to consider the advantages of Fourierism.

Brisbane convinced Ripley and the other members that the change to Fourierism was permit the colony to continue, so in 1844 Brook Farm officially became a phalanx. This change provided some financial relief, but completely destroyed the intellectual life of the community. Instead of interesting discussions, there were now long dull lectures about the intricacies of Fourier's theories. The individual had once been all-important at Brook Farm, but after the conversion to Fourierism, the individual was only a part of a larger social machine. Many the the new members of Brook Farm were artisans and mechanics who wanted a comfortable way of life but had little or no interest in the original intellectual theories of Ripley and his disciples. Commenting on the change that had taken place, Margaret Fuller declared:

> The community begins to seem a mechanical attempt to reform society, instead of a peotic attempt to regenerate it.[1]

Emerson had the same idea in mind, and stated:

> If Fourier's system were really carried out we should all be reduced to a set of machines and individuality would become a lost word in the English language.[2]

Despite these many attacks, the Brook Farmers actively worked at building a tremendous phalanstery, which was completed in the spring of 1846. The day after its completion, however, it caught fire and was burnt to the ground. Most of the members did not have the spirit to rebuild, and if they had, there seemed no reasonable way of obtaining more money. Thus the group rapidly declined, from one-hundred members before the fire to less than fifty six month after it. The next year, Ripley was forced to sell the Farm in order to get enough money to cover some of the many debts that had accumulated.

By the end of the nineteenth century, most of the utopian experiments had come to an end and the rest were rapidly declining. The communities had been founded at a time when the common man could do little by himself to beter his condition. They promised a

[1] Calverton, op. cit., p. 215.

[2] Ibid., p. 215.

more prosperous life to those who joined a group and worked actively for the communal good. As America became more industrialized, however, the small utopian communities could not compete with the lure of newly formed industries to attract new members. The promises of the utopian groups were no longer strong enough to offset the stronger promises of the American free-enterprise system. The latter seemed to offer most of the economic advantages of the former, without the many personal restrictions usual in the utopias. The sectarian communities, which had their spiritual message to offer, in general lasted a little longer than the other groups. But as Americans became more involved in the practicalities of life, even the religious groups had difficulty in obtaining converts. The communities that drew most of their membership from the European countries were doomed when social reforms in Europe slowed the influx of workers seeking a better life in America.

In this country, too, the coming of social and economic reforms injured the utopian movements. Idealists turned their efforts toward bettering the lot of all Americans, instead of building isolated "perfect" communities. It is in this form that the utopian movement can be said to still persist in American life.

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ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE SHAKERS

Linda Gaines
January 31, 1955.

INTRODUCTION

For those who are aware of the existence of the Shaker Society, the importance of this sect seems to be only in the realm of history - the history of religion, the history of American thought, and, perhaps, the history of Utopian Socialism. Although it seems natural to relegate the Society to the past, there are less than fifty Shakers living today, there are aspects of Shakerism that have influenced contemporary society, e.g., functionalism in modern art, production methods, machinery (esp. the circular saw). It is the purpose of this paper to discover, after a prolonged discussion of the economic aspects of Shakerism, one of the important contributions of the Shakers to the past; that is, to the history of Utopian Socialism. It is also its purpose to show that the Shakers could be an important example in the economic world today. This will be done by analysing the economic success of the Society and deducting a concept which, the author believes, should be recognized and employed by contemporary society as a corrective to the capitalist system.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE SHAKERS

The United Society of Believers in the Second Appearance of Christ came to be known to the world as the Shaking Quakers because of the shaking dances in their religious ceremonies. For the sake of brevity, they were called 'Shakers'. The Shakers had their origin in the English Quaker Church and in a sect of French Prophets, the Camisards, who believed that the destruction of the world was imminent and that Christ was about to appear for the second time.

The United Society was founded by James and Jane Wardley in England, about 1747. In 1758, Ann Lee, a blacksmith's daughter, joined the order. Because of her strong personality and her inspired utterances and visions, she soon became the leader of the movement. In a vision, it was revealed to Ann that God possessed "two natures, the masculine, the feminine, each distinct in function yet one in being, Co-equals in Diety"[1], that she had been annointed "Ann the Word", the Bride of the Lamb, and that the secret of man's sin lay in "the premature and self-indulgent use of sexual union".[2] This vision also brought with it "the Command to abstain from such indulgence".[3] Research into the life of Ann Lee reveals that she was herself unhappily married (later divorced), and that her four children all died in infancy. This perhaps accounts for the importance that Ann placed on celibacy.

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1. White and Taylor. Shakerism: It's Message and Meaning. Columbus, Ohio. 1905. p. 19. quoted from Andrews. The Community Industries of the Shakers. p. 16.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.

The central doctrine of the Society was that the second appearance of Christ had manifested itself in Mother Ann Lee, that she was the "spiritual regeneration" and the "new birth" of the Christ spirit. The seven principles of the Church were "duty to God, duty to man, separation from the world, practical peace, simplicity of language, right use of property, and the virgin life".[1] In the practical application of their faith, the Shakers incorporated with a celibate life:

> "honesty and integrity in all words and dealings", "humanity and kindness to friends and foe", diligence in business; prudence, temperance, economy, frugality, "but not parsimony"; to keep clear of debt; suitable education of children; a "united interest in all things", which means community of goods; suitable employment for all; and a provision for all in sickness, infirmity, and old age.[2]

In May, 1774, Ann Lee sailed to New York with eight followers. One of the members of the little band was of sufficient means to purchase a piece of land near Albany, in a place then known as Niskeyuna (Watervliet). In 1779 a religious revival took place in New Lebanon, New York, and the people there were told of the group at Niskeyuna. Three representatives, two of them being Baptist preachers, were sent to investigate the community. These men returned fully convinced that "what they had seen and heard" (men and women living together in a celibate society, holding all goods in common, working industriously with their hands, and preaching that Christ had come to deliver all believers to a perfect, sinless,

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1. Green and Wells. A Summary View of the Millenial Church. Albany, N.Y. 1823. p. 51. quoted from Andrews. The Gift to Be Simple. p. 6.
2. Nordhoff. The Communistic Societies of the United States. p. 135.

everlasting life) "was the work and truth of God".[1] Visitors began coming to Niskeyuna in crowds during the middle of 1780, and many were converted to the Shaker faith.

The phenomenon of revivalism is not peculiar to the American scene. In fact, most of the explanations of it pertain more to European revivals than to American ones. The explanation that religious doctrines that resulted in socialism were the result of the need for an outlet for suppressed aspirations of a submerged people does not entirely fit the picture of revivalism in America in the seventeen and eighteen hundreds. The converts that turned to these sects, and this is particularly true of the Shakers, were not the submerged masses. They were, instead, mainly prosporous farmers and craftsmen. Among the Shakers, it was these converts that furnished the initial investment that made communal life possible. Nor can these sects be regarded as sublimated expressions of revolt against a hostile social environment. The persecution of the Shakers was the consequence rather than the cause of their religious and social ideas. It appears that the phenomenon of revivalism in America can be explained only with reference to the character of the American personality. These were a people searching for a good life and willing to risk everything to attain higher and higher levels of it. They had achieved political freedom and now wished Christian perfection and freedom from sin. It is interesting to note that the Shakers were extremely successful in recruiting new members from the revival meetings. Considering the fact that they preached celibacy among agricultural people to whom children were an economic asset, and that they offered a certain

1. The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing. Albany. 1810. p. 495. quoted from Andrews. The Community Industries of the Shakers. p. 18.

rigid life to people that were searching for freedom, one would imagine the reverse. However, children are not necessary to do chores when one has "brothers" and "sisters", and freedom is not the opposite of order.

> Shaker doctrines so fulfilled the expectations of the radical revivalists that some of them were persuaded in spite of the sacrificies involved. The American revivalist was becoming ever more preoccupied with release from sin. The Shakers met this need with their rigorous but concrete ethics of self-denial...The great problem of the revivalists had been the inevitable relapse into sin which followed the waning of revival fervor. The Shakers met this issue by boldly asserting that perfection was rational, a way of life rather than a state of mind. 1.

This early conversion encouraged Ann Lee and her followers, and, in 1781, she started eastward to spread their faith. Wherever they went, they were followed by severe persecution, and in August, 1783, were driven from New Lebanon.

When Mother Ann (as she came to be called) died in 1784, the foundations had been laid for colonies in Tyringham, Harvard, and Shirley, Massachusetts; Enfield and Canterbury, New Hampshire; Alfred and Sabbathday Lake, Maine; Watervliet and New Lebanon, New York; and at Enfield, Connecticut. After Ann Lee's death, Father James Whitaker succeeded her as head of the order, and, in 1785, he directed the building of the first Shaker Church in New Lebanon. This was completed in the early part of 1786, and from this date on New Lebanon was the home of the sect. Joseph Meacham, one of

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1. Egbert and Persons. Socialism and American Life. Vol. I. p. 134.

the first converts and also one of the original three investigators, became the leader of the Society following Whitaker's death in 1787. One of Meacham's first acts was to notify those residents of New Lebanon who had accepted the faith, that they could become members of the Shakers upon application. At the close of the year, membership exceeded one hundred persons.

Elder Joseph organized the Church into communities holding a common property. The supreme body on earth was the Central Ministry, a self-perpetuating group, located in the New Lebanon society. Following the Shaker principle of equality of sex, there were two female as well as two male Ministers. The authority of the Ministry was all-encompassing, and its power was apparently checked only by mass appeal from the Believers. The system of government of the Shaker society could be called theocratic. They believed that the function of temporal authority was to teach and enforce the word of God on earth. However, the connotation of repression of the individual which theocracy usually implies should not be applied to the Shaker system. Within the authority of their spiritual and temporal life remained scrupulous regard for the spiritual integrity of the individual. This assured a high degree of practical equality, particularly the equality of women on all levels of their society.

> They presumed that the theocracy of the kingdom would be both monarchial, in that God's will would prevail, and democratic, in that men would sustain it gladly. They recognized the necessary differences of functions and levels of authority in any society, but preferred to sanctify every

> function rather than offset inequalities with the opportunity for political expression offered by the democratic system.[1]

The basic social unit of the Shakers was the "family". These were composed of both male and female members and ranged in numbers from a mere handful to more than one hundred. The Shakers believed that they had derived the concept of the family from their belief in the dual sexuality of the Godhead - Christ was God, the Father; Ann, God, the Mother. The spirit of love here revealed had at last made a truely spiritual social organization possible. The model was the family, brothers and sisters living together under the guidance of God, the Father and Mother. It was a "social organization, permanently founded on the principles of equality of the sexes, virgin purity, unworldliness, the confession of sin, and community of property".[2] The family was presided over by an Elder and an Eldress, appointed by the Central Ministry, who led the family in spiritual concerns. Deacons, Deaconesses and Trustees, also appointed by the Central Ministry, supervised the temporal and economic life of the family. The Deacons and Deaconesses provided for the support and convenience of the family and regulated its industry. The Trustees regulated business and made all transactions with the world. Each of the trustees kept a separate business account, and the two registers of disbursements and receipts were compared by the Ministry at the end of each year. Distribution of goods through the office or store was under the supervision of the

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1. Egbert and Persons. Socialism and American Life. Vol. I. p. 137.
2. Shaker Manifesto. XIII(June, July, 1883.) p. 129-130, 148-149. quoted from Egbert and Persons. Socialism and American Life. Vol. I. p. 138.

Deacons or Trustees. The products of the farms and ships were obtained directly from the heads of these departments, articles were purchased from the world by the Trustees, and these were distributed according to need by the Deacons.

The combination of Families in a particular area formed a Society. The Central Ministry appointed Ministers for each society. While these Ministers were generally in charge of inter-family relations, their main duties were to instruct and train neophytes and to go out into the world to preach when it was desirable.

Aside from the religious standpoint, the division of the Shaker society into families had distinct economic advantages. Each family was an independent economic unit and was largely self-sustaining. While each family provided for its own basic needs, there was some specialization as far as manufactures were concerned. The South Family at New Lebanon, for instance, specialized in the manufacture of chairs, while the Canterbury community in New Hampshire was noted for its medicinal herbs. If one family suffered a reverse, it could thus be limited to a given area and repaired with the aid of other families. Occasionally, several families would unite in an industry or business venture or maintain a common store for manufactured articles.

The community life of the Shakers developed spontaneously, without benefit of socialist theory. The practical perfectionism of the Believers could not function smoothly within society, and withdrawal from the world was inevitable. There is no evidence whatever

that Shaker communitarianism was undertaken with any knowledge of previous socialist theory or experiments, but rather, that communism was the natural outgrowth of the Shaker faith.

Many of the early converts were prosperous landowners, and it became customary for those without property to gather on these properties and work them jointly. Others continued to live apart, gathering together for worship only. The pattern establish by Joseph Meacham for the first community at New Lebanon was a pattern of governmental structure and not of communalism. Even with the founding of this first community, the Shakers had no formal pattern in mind for community life. Their practices grew out of the daily needs of group work and worship.

> To constitute a true church of Christ, there must necessarily be a union of faith, motives, and of interest, in all the members who compose it. There must be "one body and one bread": and nothing short of this union in all things can constitute a true church, which is the body of Christ.[1]

Community of property, a concept of practical rather than theoretical origin with the Shakers, became one of the basic principles soon after the organization of the New Lebanon society. Joseph Meacham made one of the earliest statements concerning common goods:

> All members of the Church have a just and equal right to the use of things, according to their order and needs; no difference ought to be made,

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1. Green and Wells. A Summary View of the Millennial Church. Albany, N.Y. 1823. p. 51. quoted from Egbert and Persons. Socialism and American Life. Vol. I. p. 136.

> between Elder or younger in things spiritual or temporal, than that which is just, and is for the peace and unity, and good of the whole.[1]

At first included in an oral agreement, the first written statements concerning these agreements and rules for membership were signed in 1795. The fourth article of that covenant stated:

> All members that should be received into the Church, Should possess one Joint Interest, as a Religious right, that is, that all should have Just and Equal rights and Privileges, according to their needs, in the use of all things in the Church, without Any difference being made on account of what any of us brought in, so long as we remain in Obedience to the Order and Government of the Church, and are holden in relation as members. All of the members are likewise Equally holden, according to their abilities, to maintain and support one Joint Interest in union, in Conformity to the order and Government of the Church.[2]

Those who were newly converted were received into the novitiate order and were allowed to retain their own property and family relationships. In the junior order, the use of property was given to the Society, but it was returnable upon withdrawal. In the highest order, the Church Family, the consecration of time, talent, and property was an irrevocable step sealed by the signing of the Covenant. The property of each society was held in the name of the Trustees for convenience and for legal reasons.

The majority of the property acquired by the Shakers came from

1. Andrews. The People Called Shakers. p. 59.
2. Order and Covenant of a Church in Gospel Order. New Lebanon, N.Y. 1795. quoted from Andrews. The People Called Shakers. p. 62.

donations of new property-owning members. Because the Society met with a certain amount of antagonism from the outside world, they had to be particularly careful to avoid legal entanglements. Therefore, the rules concerning donation of property and its distribution were extremely rigid. The first rule was that no property of any sort could be accepted unless the donor was free from debt and free from the demands of heirs. If only one member of a family joined the Society, and questions arose concerning the disbursement of funds, "it was felt right for the Father to have twice as much as the Mother, the Mother twice as much as the Son, the Son twice as much as the Daughter".[1] Further protection was afforded by the "discharge", a form signed by any seceders, which released the Society from any subsequent demand that might be made for property or services. In return, seceders were granted sums from twenty to several hundred dollars and usually clothing and a set of tools to start life anew in the outside world. When a member joined the Society an inventory was taken of his or her contributions, and if the member left the order an attempt was made to return the equivalent.

While subsistence rather than affluence was their aim, the Shakers managed to achieve both. Through mutual help, successful industry, thrift, the conversion of people of property, the Shakers prospered. Savings were chiefly invested in land, shops, and supplies. Hired laborers cultivated these outlying farms, and houses

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1. Andrews. The People Called Shakers. p. 67.

were built for them. Few of the families kept accurate accounts, so it is impossible to indicate the rate of increase of their prosperity.

The longievity of the Shaker society cannot be attributed to their spiritual sincerity alone. The chief distinction between the Shakers and other, short-lived, communitarian sects is their thorough economic organization. Thus, it is to the agricultural and industrial success of the Shaker communities that their long life must be attributed.

At the basis of the economic structure of the Shaker communities was a strong affiliation between their religious beliefs and their work attitudes. The term labor was used in a dual sense, denoting both spiritual and temporal values. In worship they labored to perfect a spiritual kingdom on earth, and they labored with their hands to build a sound and growing temporal order.

> Two factors which are almost entirely absent in present-day American industrialism contributed most to the continuous success of every branch of agriculture and manufacturing adopted by the Shakers - the reliance upon cooperative methods and the religious actuation which dominated the occupational life.[1]

Perhaps the most interesting of Mother Ann's teachings were those concerning labor, craftsmenship, and work habits.

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1. Andrews. The Community Industries of the Shakers. p. 265.

> "Put your hands to work and give your hearts to God." ..."Do all your work as though you had a thousand years to live; and as you would if you knew you must die tomorrow." ..."Be diligent with your hands, for godliness does not lead to idleness."...To some farmers who had gathered...to listen to her instruction: "It is now the spring of the year, and you have all had to privilege of being taught the way of God: and now you may all go home and be faithful with your hands. Every faithful man will go forth and put up his fences in season, and put his crops into the ground in season; and such a man may with confidence look for a blessing.[1]

Work was made a part of the Shaker religion and so became an act of piety. The most menial service acquired a dignity of its own. All members of the Society were expected to maintain a common interest, and, therefore, all had to work with their hands for the benefit of themselves and the rest of the Family to which they belonged. Ministers, Elders, Deacons, were all employed in some manual occupation.

As work was a religious attitude, consecration and not compulsion lay at the basis of the Shaker economy. There was a recognition of individual abilities, age, and sex in assignments to work. Also recognized were the satisfactions that come from a diversity of occupations. The Shakers believed in "variety of labor, for variety of occupation is a source of pleasure."[2] As far as women were concerned, as advanced as the Shakers were in their attitude toward the equality of women in leadership, they held to the time-honored

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1. Nordhoff. The Communistic Societies of the United States. p. 129.
2. Dixon, William H. New America. Philadelphia. 1869. p. 315. quoted from Andrews. The Community Industries of the Shakers. p.31.

belief that the woman's place was in the house and the man's out-of-doors. All members were employed in some manual occupation. The Shakers understood the virtues of moderate rather than excessive toil. Work was to remain a satisfaction of life on earth and was never to become a drudgery.

> Shakers do not toil severely. They are not in a haste to be rich; and they have found that for their support, economically as they live, it was not necessary to make labor painful. Many hands make light work; and where all are interested alike, they hold that labor may be made and is made a pleasure.[1]

In every industry a careful division of labor was carried out under the direction of caretakers, subordinates to the deacons. Each brother and sister had a specific task at a specific time.

The basis of the Shaker economy was agriculture. They numbered among the first to develop agriculture as a coordinated activity, to bring it from a household scale to that of mass-production, and to introduce combination of labor to the field. While all occupations were marked with some sort of a spiritual connotation, this was particularly true of agriculture.

> The careful study of agriculture was exalted by the Shakers into a kind of religious ritual. They looked upon the soil as something to be redeemed from "rugged barrenness into smiling fertility and beauty." This thought is expressed in many ways. Dixon (in New America. p.321) found the Shakers believing that "if you would have a lovely garden, you should live a lovely life," and in the introduction to the Gardener's

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1. Nordhoff. The Communistic Societies of the United States. p. 141.

> Manual published in 1843, the writer insists that the garden is "an index of the owner's mind." 1.

To indicate the total scope of Shaker agriculture is almost impossible. Almost every conceivable type of produce was raised in one or another of the Shaker families. Leave it suffice to say, that the Shakers used the field and orchard to their utmost advantages, raised stock and poultry, and processed all dairy products.

While agriculture was the basis of the economy, industries developed early in the life of the Shaker society. These included garden seeds, medicinal herbs, broom and brush making, tanning, baskets, knitware, and chairs. There were many shops in each family, each furnished with the latest equipment. Many of the machines and time-savers were inventions of the Shakers themselves. They are credited with inventing, among other things, the first circular saw in America (presumably invented by a woman who saw it in a vision), the common clothes-pin, cut nails, and a double-spinning head. They designed their own printing press, mower-and-reaper, and a revolving harrow. The presence of large numbers of workers in these cooperative ventures necessitated certain organizational and inventive practices of which the Shakers were leaders in America.

> In working out a satisfactory industrial system which would insure the welfare of their institution and the survival of their faith, the Shakers set an example of progressive business enterprise, on a plan of joint interest, which marks them as pioneers in this regard. 2.

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1. Andrews. The Community Industries of the Shakers. p. 61.
2. ibid. p. 11.

Several different methods of conducting business were adopted by the Shakers. One practice, which originally applied to many kinds of commodities and was later employed only in the garden seed business, was to consign goods to established agencies, to be sold on a commission basis. Another was the establishment of regular routes to solicit orders and deliver goods. Certain manufactures were sold at family stores on a retail basis, while others were sold wholesale to distributing houses in larger business centers. Many Shaker articles thus gained a wide reputation. Prominant among such products were the Shaker garden seeds, brooms, medicinal herbs, and Shaker chairs. The latter were handled in quantity by such concerns as Marshall Field in Chicago, Lewis and Conger in New York, and in leading Boston houses. The Shakers were extremely shrewd businessmen. "Of the Shaker society, it was formerly a sort of proverb in the country that they always sent the devil to market."[1]

Lucy Wright succeeded Meacham in 1797, and during her administration the movement was extended to Ohio and Kentucky. During the second quarter of the Nineteenth Century, the Shakers reached their peak, with a total membership of about six thousand.

There was, in the eighteen-forties and fifties, another widespread spiritualist movement in the United States. Between 1830 and 40, membership in the Shaker society seemed to reach a leveling off; that is, while the number of members did not decline, there were

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1. Emerson, R.W. The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. quoted from Andrews. The People Called Shakers. p. 115.

few new recruits. Had spiritualism retained its religious affiliation, this new revival might have provided soil for missionary activity. But the spiritualism of the revival turned in the direction of free love, anarchism, and materialism, three areas in strong opposition to Shaker principles. By 1874, the Society had resorted to advertising in the newspapers for members, offering a "comfortable home for life" to those who would embrace Shaker principles.

As the world about them grew further away from their religious ideas, the Shakers of the Nineteenth Century tended to place the communal aspects of their society above the religious. This was particularly true of Elder Frederick W. Evans, the most notable of the later Shakers. Evans, an Englishman by birth, was perhaps the only important Shaker with a knowledge of Socialist theory. Before joining the Shakers, he had been a reformer - for land reform, the rights of labor, and against the U.S. Bank and other monopolies - and later a Socialist. After trying life in several communities in the United States, he finally joined the Shakers at Mt. Lebanon. Evans told Charles Nordhoff, socialist historian, that:

> Every commune, to prosper, must be founded, so far as its industry goes, on agriculture. Only the simple manners of a farming people can hold a community together. Wherever we have departed from this rule to go into manufacturing, we have blundered.[1]

Whether this accounts for the curtailment and eventual abandonment of almost every branch of manufacturing during this later period, is

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1. Nordhoff. The Communistic Societies of the United States. p. 161.

a matter of conjecture. In all likelihood, however, this was caused by the fact that the decline in numbers was accompanied by an ever-increasing ratio of women to men. Thus, the sisters industries (herb gathering, spinning and weaving, bonnets, baskets, knitware, dairy products) gradually assumed the greatest economic importance.

The Shakers were extremely shrewd in the business world, and this, along with the excellence of their products, enabled them to amass a goodly fortune, particularly in land and buildings. All means which were not used for support were used to purchase land, in and outside of the family units. Evans was quite disturbed about the inconsistency of this situation with Shaker communal beliefs. He felt that a community should be successfully self-sufficient, but that it should not attempt to enrich itself beyond this point.

> Moreover we ought not to make money. We ought to make no more than a moderate surplus over our usual living, so as to lay by something for hard times. 1.

It was only in these later years that the Shakers developed anything that could be considered a Socialist theory. This was a theory that related the Shaker community to society as a whole. It was this very relation that gave impetus to the formation of the ideology. As the Shakers declined in number and became less and less self-sustaining, their relation with the world became more and more important. The ideology which developed at this time did not differ greatly in spirit from other prevailing Socialist modes of thought.

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1. Nordhoff. The Communistic Societies of the United States. p. 162.

Following the seven epochs of the millenial era (history is divided into religious periods according to the Shakers, rather than the economic periods of Marx) the "new earth" promised in the revelation of St. John would appear. The result would be the perfection of secular democracy.

> Men and women would then be found to participate equally in social and political privileges: land for cultivation would be distributed by the state, and would revert to the state upon the death of the cultivator; education would be free and universal; doctors, lawyers, priests, speculators, soldiers and customs collectors would be unnecessary; poverty, anxiety, conflict and war would be known no more. The "new heavens" in these last times would be the Shaker societies, still living apart from the world and filled with "spiritual celibates", but to whom the citizens of the new earth would turn for moral guidance and spiritual insight. 1.

Although it was only in the area of religion that the Shakers meant to influence the outside world, and it was only in this area that they did missionary work, Shaker influence was and still is widespread in other areas. With this in mind and with the knowledge that communitarianism was not a motivating factor but merely an outgrowth of the Shaker faith, it is interesting to note that the Shakers were considered an example by early Socialists.

Robert Owen, Nineteenth Century English socialist and reformer, was unquestionably encouraged in his plans to develop a self-sufficient socialist community in the United States by reports of the

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1. Egbert and Persons. Socialism and American Life. Vol. I. p. 140 paraphrased from Evans. Shaker Reconstruction of the American Government. Hudson, N.Y. 1888.

success of the Shakers. He visited several Shaker families before organizing the New Harmony group. In the Economist, the literary organ of the Owenites, Robert Owen wrote:

> It would be easy to form other societies, under all the regulations and principles of the Shakers, which are really valuable - and rejecting - of course, their idle peculiarities - foolish prejudices - and disgusting prohibitions.[1]

Another reformer of the same period was A.J. MacDonald. In an attempt to show the advantages and benefits of communitarianism, he drafted the following notes in 1843, comparing the standard of living attained by the Shakers with the living conditions of average mechanics and farmers of the time.

SHAKER MECHANICS	WORLD'S MECHANICS
1. No fear of want.	1. General Fear of Want.
2. Clean and healthy workshops in the country.	2. Dirty and unhealthy in a city.
3. Regular meals of the very best kind of wholesome food.	3. Generally regular but not equal in quality.
4. Clean and good clothing never ragged.	4. Inferior in cleanliness and especially in healthiness.
5. Clean beds and Bedrooms with temperature regulated according to the weather.	5.
6. Attention in sickness.	6. In sickness wages stopped, cost of medical attendence and nursing.

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1. Owen, Robert. The Economist. #19. London. June 2, 1821. quoted from Andrews. The People Called Shakers. p. 132.

SHAKER AGRICULTURALISTS	WORLD'S AGRICULTURALISTS
The same advantage as the Mechanics with the addition of :	
1. Superior cattle of all kinds.	1. Inferior cattle.
2. Good tools always kept in repair.	2. Inferior tools and accomodation for repair.
3. Good teams, good seeds, clean fields and gardens, and generally superior crops.	3. Inferior teams, unclean fields and especially gardens. 1.

Perhaps the person who realized the influence of the Shakers to the greatest extent was J.H. Noyes, Nineteenth Century American social reformer and founder of the Oneida Community

> ...The example of the Shakers had demonstrated, not merely that successful Communism is subjectively possible, but that this nation is free enough to let it grow...Then the Shaker movement with its echoes was sounding also in England, when Robert Owen undertook to convert the world to Communism...France also heard of Shakerism before St. Simon or Fourier began to meditate and write Socialism...It is very doubtful whether Owenism or Fourierism would have ever existed, or if they had, whether they would have ever moved the practical American nation, if the facts of Shakerism had not existed before them and gone along with them. 2.

The first part of this statement can be readily believed, for it is merely a statement of fact. The Shakers did develop communism in the United States, and they were successful. The second statement, however, must be taken for what it is worth - an opinion.

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1. Journal of A.J. MacDonald. 1843. (manuscript) quoted from Andrews. The People Called Shakers. p. 133.
2. Noyes. History of American Socialisms. Philadelphia. 1870. quoted from Andrews. The People Called Shakers. p. 130.

The most interesting thought of all is that of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He felt that the Shaker experiment was not one of Socialism at all, but of a new form of Capitalism. The Shakers definitely functioned on a communal basis within the confines of their communities, but in every aspect of their dealings with the outside world, the Shakers functioned as a corporate capitalist.

> What improvement is made, is made forever... this Capitalist never dies, his subsistence was long ago secured, and he has gone on now for long scores of years in adding easy compound interests to his stock.[1]

Emerson must thus be defining Capitalism as a mode of distribution alone. However, as many definitions as Capitalism has, almost all would agree that it is primarily a mode of production. In this aspect the Shakers were definitely socialistic.

In every aspect of their economic life, the Shakers achieved that for which Nineteenth Century Utopian Socialists sought. What was the factor that enabled the Shakers to develop a successful community while the others failed? Granted, the Society eventually developed an economic structure based on sound principles that no other communal sect ever had, but how then would you account for the fact that the Society managed to survive for fifty years or so without any real organization? Being products of, among other things, the modes of thought in contemporary psychology and the Twentieth Century business world, two other possible motivating factors come

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1. Emerson. The Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson. quoted from Andrews. The People Called Shakers. p. 130.

to mindx - sustenance and competition. The latter can be eliminated for this purpose, for the individual Shakers received neither monetary nor laudatory gain for the manufacture of a product or the completion of a chore. As far as sustenance is concerned, this is a basic drive in all human beings, even unsuccessful ones. It appears that the motivation here must be an ideological one. As was mentioned before, every aspect of Shaker communal life developed from their religious principles. Each task accomplished, each product finished was a rededication of the individual to a religious idea. It was a reaffirmation of faith - a concrete expression of a spiritual perfectionism. If one is to look on the surface, the moral that will be drawn is, that, in order for a group to be economically successful with the motivation of competition, they must be spiritual perfectionists. However, from a truely penetrating analysis, I think a more widely applicable concept can be deducted; that is, each individual must achieve some personal goal in his vocational life in order to achieve anything more than bare subsistence without resorting to competition. It may be the love of the work or the pleasure from the result, or merely a deep sense of satisfaction from a task well-done. The Shakers have set a very high example for us.

> Sound construction and perfection of workmanship the Shakers viewed as indispensible evidence of man's willingness to labor faithfully and honestly according to God's holy ordinance...they achieved a functionalism that functioned in fact without benefit of elaborate theory. Their intention was to eliminate beauty. But in spite of themselves they achieved it in forms so pure, so nakedly simple, so free from all self-consciousness, as to shame the artificial artlessness

and meretricious chastity that characterizes so many shrewdly reticent modern creations. So it is that Shaker furniture, no less than Shaker polity, calls for consideration from a later generation.[1]

We should not assume...that the Shakers were unhappy because they were subject to restrictions and repressions that might seem to us unbearable. The facts of Shaker craftsmenship alone, deny unhappiness. No one who was frustrated, repressed, discontented, or ill-adjusted to life could have produced such simple and elequent work, which breathes the air of tranquillity and fulfillment. It is only when we begin to cast an eye on the tortured furniture, the gaudy and tawdry trappings, and the grotesque upholstery of the "world" at the same period that we can see the products of frustration and neurosis. Whatever the psychologists might make of the peculiar religious attitude of the Shakers, the Shakers themselves found fulfillment in it.[2]

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1. Andrews. Shaker Furniture. p. viii.
2. Holloway. Heavens on Earth. p. 74.

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Peter Sozes 1961

The Shakers

When a problem arises in a society, it usually takes a strong group of people to take hold of it and to seek a solution. This is the story of the Shakers. They were spiritual adventurers who tried an experiment in human brotherhood and attempted to understand the human spirit.

The early Shakers came mainly from the lower middle class. It was started because some of the people were disturbed about the social and economic evils of society, and the uglier side of human nature. Because of this reaction about the world around them, the Shaker religion was started in the hope that they could get away from the world and its evils.

Jean Cavalier, a French baker, was the leader of the Camisards, who were considered the spiritual ancestors of the Shakers. He and his friends went along the French countryside predicting that God's kingdom on earth was soon to arrive. In this kingdom, he told that the people would be free from the evils of the world. As his followers started to grow in size, they began to be persecuted and tortured because of their different religious beliefs. For this reason, Cavalier and a few friends escaped to England in the early 1700's.

In 1747 James and Jane Wardley joined this new movement and announced that there was going to be a second coming of Christ very shortly. They believed it was going to be in the form of a female. The Wardley's added new fire to the movement which had been losing its strength.

In 1758 Ann Lee, a daughter of a blacksmith, joined the order, and soon by the vigor ofher personality became the accepted leader of a new movement.

Ann Lee was born in Manchester, England on February 29, 1736. She had no schooling and so she was unable to read or write. In her early teens she worked at a texile mill. At 20 she became a cook at a public infirmary. In September 1758, she joined the dissenters led by James and Jane Wardley (Wardlaw). They had to have semi-secret meetings in the British Isles because they were persecuted for their strange belief. At this time they hadn't formulated a doctrine for this new religion because they hadn't really decided on the exact rules and principles for the religion.

On January 5, 1762 Ann Lee got married to Abraham Stanley, a Manchester blacksmith who had worked for her father, a lusty, good-humored fellow, but unsuited to the woman he had wed. The next few years were critical ones. Four children were born of the marriage, all of whom died in infancy. Ann saw the deaths of her children as judgments of her "concupiscence"[1] Because of this, she was unable to sleep peacefully.

Remorse and misgiving, in time, developed into the conviction that only by full mortification of the body, could her soul be purified. She therefore deprived herself of the everyday things that "her soul might hunger for nothing but God".[2] From this, believing that she could become pure if she deprived herself of the customary luxuries, she became so weak that at times she had to have her friends assist her in getting up. After purifying herself, she felt that she would become closer to God.

After the death of her last child, Ann took a larger role in the Wardley's order. The Wardley's meetings served as a source of comfort as well as a place where she could release her emotions.

Ann Lee's days of soul searching and agonizing ended by her famous vision which signalized the birth of the Shakers. This vision came to

her when she was in prison on the charge of disturbing the peace. In this vision she pictured Jesus telling her that she was going to be the leader of this new religion which would be a way of life leading to the spiritual perfection over the dead body of man's physical nature, proving that self-denial can bring greater ecstasy than self-indulgence. The four foundation principles were : 1. confession of sins; 2. community of goods; 3. celibacy; 4. withdrawal from the world.

After this vision, Mr. Wardley acknowledged Ann Lee as the spiritual head of the society.

As the Wardley's order grew, tales of strange worship with shaking, "tongue-speaking and dark prophecies, spread throughout the manor and the surrounding towns. Charges of fanaticism, heresy, even of witchcraft, were raised against the sect, breeding a spirit of intolerance and leading eventually, to overt acts of oppression."[3]

Some of the members left the society, because they lacked the courage to face persecution, The handful that remained strengthened themselves by being loyal to one another and in the firmness of their convictions.

The Shakers would have been unmolested if they kept their religion and daily practice of living, separated. Instread, after having made an honest public confession at a meeting, they went back into the world determined to sin no more. This idea of practicing what you preach (which was done by the Shakers) was one of the reasons the Shakers had to leave England. The Shakers, after hearing about the English colonies in America where democracy and freedom were being discussed, decided to travel to America. So on May 19, 1774, they set sail from Liverpool, England to New York. The Wardleys remained behind; their part in the great adventure was finished.

John Hocknell, who arranged for the voyage to America, paying a large share of the passage money, also bought a tract of land in Albany, New York where the Shakers first found a real home. During the summer of 1776, they worked at Niskayuna, New York (near Albany), draining and clearing the land putting up buildings, preparing the soil for crops, so that they might become a self-sufficient community. For the next three and a half years they worked and worshipped in peace that seemed like a heavenly interlude between the persecutions and hardships they left behind in England. Some of the members began to get restless, fearing that their mission had come to a dead end since no new members came to join them. Mother Ann was not worried and promised that in a little while there would be many in search for the Shaker gospel. Mother Ann Lee was right. In the spring of 1779, New Lebanon, New York became the center of religious revival meetings which were common in American colonies during the last half of the 18th century. It is claimed that these revivals were started because of their reaction to deism. This took place during the American Revolution. The revivalism was a form of hysteria springing from the fear and unfulfilled desires of religion and war. The theme of the New Lebanon revival sermons was the second coming of Christ. The people were ready to make any sacrifice to follow anyone who would led them to a fuller, truer way of life.

Soon after, most of the hysteria had died out. The few who remained didn't give up hope in finding a way of life leading to the spiritual perfection over man's physical nature. Finally the revivalists in New Lebanon learned about the Shaker's gospel in Albany and adopted it. In a few years, New Lebanon became the center of Shaker life in the New World.

One of chief reasons why Shakerism out-lived some of the other societies of its tim e was because of its thorough organization on the material side, and its success in agriculture and industry.

Shaker industries were set up to supply the needs of their society with an eye to the demands of the outside world. Both the farm and the shops functioned towards each of these ends. The products of each were as necessary for the well being of the Believers as they were useful in the world which lay beyond their secluded domains. The Shakers tried to use each item they made or bought to their best advantage, and in doing so they improved the particular item.

Entrance into the church involved not only freedom from all involvements but a full dedication of all personal property. This meant that in order to become a Shaker, you had to separate yourself from the outside world and also give up all your personal properties to the Shaker church. As Mother Ann Lee so well put it, "To work is to worship",[4] and that the Believers should, "put their hands to work and their hearts to God."[5]

Every incoming member was assigned to the work which he or she could most profitably do. If a man was engaged in a particular trade before entering the Shakers, he usually found the opportunity to continue in this same trade once he joined the Believers. Some of the brethren had two or more trades. The Shakers also believed in "variety of labor, for variety of occupations is a source of pleasure."[6] In the daily journals kept by some of the brethren and sisters, they state that the variety of chores and tasks were often a part of a daily routine, and that expression of satisfaction or relief were common in the diaries when the diarist was about to enter or leave some particular occupation in which a system of rotation of labor was practised.

The actual business affairs of the society were under the direction of trustees. There were 2 of these officers in each order who could be removed by the elders of that order. Each of these trustees kept an account of all disbursements and receipts, and the two registers were then compared by the ministry at the close of each year.

The society was not "one great community of temporal interests," [7] but was divided into communities or families, each having a separate organization.

The reasons for the division of the society were that they thought that the management of the property would be less difficult and "that in case of a great loss by one Family the others help bear the burden." [8] The trustees also bought and sold products to the outside world as well as to other families.

In such industries as tanning, broom making, the cultivation of garden seeds, the extraction of juices from barks and plants, manufacture of boxes, hats, gloves, fans, baskets, and the production of furniture they carried out a careful division of labor. Each member had his or her appointed job at a certain time. In these early group activities of the Shakers, one can recognize the starting of large scale or mass production enterprises.

Their spiritual destiny accounts for the progress in the applied sciences and the success in business. They were working for the ends which were more stimulating and significant than personal advancement.

The proof of their genius for efficiency and improvements is shown in their many inventions and labor-saving devices. The inventions catered not to frailities of human nature but to the genuine needs of society; the inventions were meant to serve a real need.

The Shakers achieved an enviable reputation for their reliability and honesty and their uniformity of high quality goods. "Nearly all of their many valuable inventions have been unpatented. To the Shaker, patent money savors of monopoly, the opposite of the Golden Rule."[9] If one Family needed a piece of equipment which they didn't have, they would borrow it from another family or from the outside world.

Several different methods of conducting business were adopted by the early Shakers; the consignment of goods to established agencies; the establishment of regular routes for the purpose of soliciting orders and delivering goods; the retailing of manufactures; wholesaling of products through distributing houses; and also exchange. Some of their best products were garden seeds, brooms, medical extracts, chairs and foot benches. Because of the Shaker regulations, most of the productswere sold for cash. The principals and rules of the society forbade trustees or assistants from doing business on credit.

According to the Shaker philosophy and religion, beauty was one of the devil's snares to catch the worldly-minded. For this reason they had no interest in the theories of esthetics, but they had a profound interest in practical techniques. They were craftsmen with pride in their craft, and pride in the contribution of their handling of their craft. Everything was for usefulness not for display. They were concerned with the strength, lightness, and suitability for their products. Shaker functionalism is really summed up in the Shaker phrase that, "Every force involves a form."[10]

The informality found in Shaker life and culture gave the Shakers their beauty and their distinction from other societies. The English founders belonged to the artisan class which was very little removed from the peasants. Most of the United States members also came from the same class in society. The Swedishhad a lot of influence in Shaker dress and furniture.

The best period of craftsmanship fell in the era just before the Civil War. This happened because the original desire for simplicity and order was still warm and creative. The furniture was simple because of this passion for essentials, rather than lack of imagination. The craftsman labored for neither master nor market demand, but for a community which he believed would be timeless."[11]

Mother Ann Lee was convinced in equal rights for women. For this reason all women who entered the Believers were coequal with men in all the privileges and responsibilities of leadership and labor. Much of the time the Shaker sisters were occupied by such domestic tasks as washing ironing, cooking, cleaning, mending, and taking care of the many girls who were placed in their care.

Religious emphasis was placed on order and cleanliness, and since most of the dwellings were rather large, you can see that the household occupations represented no small undertaking. The work was carefully organized and through routine a high standard of efficiency was maintained. The system of rotation in such places as the kitchen kept the necessary routine from being monotonous. Some of the other duties of the sisters was to help the brethen in the herb and seed garden, print labels used on herb packages, made paper and cloth bags and helped inthe preparation of apply sauce.

The Shakers used to get their recretation by dancing and singing after a long days work. Music and dance also played a large part in their religious ritual. Before the 1780's neither dancing nor singing showed any ordered form. The songs were syllables or phrases repeated over and over again in the key that the singer chose. The dances which consisted of whirling and leaping had no regularity of rhythum and had no planning for general effect. The first songs called solemn songs were

chanted without words. The earliest dancing was called promiscuous although this didn't imply the mingling of sexes, but simply unorganized individual dancing in the sister and brethren groups.

Singing and dancing were either spontaneous outward expressions of inner joy and exaltation or exercises of abasement and the trampling os sin underfoot. It was a "laboring to get good." [12]

Unlike the time of the Shakers when people were able to get away from the evils of the world, today unfortunately we aren't able to. I sometimes feel sorry that I am not able to get away from some of the present-day horrors such as the atomic bomb and prejudice. Since we are not able to get away from the evils by leaving the world, we should follow example shown by the Shakers who tried to make a better world. The Shakers got what they worked for and yet by worldly standards, failed. Perhaps this judgment is not the final one.

FOOT NOTES

1. Edward D. Andrews, The People Called Shakers, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953) p. 8

2. Ibid, p. 8

3. Ibid, p. 9

4. Edward D. Andrews, The Community Industries of the Shakers, (Albany; New York State University, 1932) p. 30

5. Ibid, p. 30

6. Ibid, p. 31

7. Ibid, p. 36

8. Ibid, p. 36

9. Ibid, p. 39

10. Marguerite F. Melcher, The Shaker Adventure, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941) p. 193

11. Ibid, p. 195

12. Ibid, p. 219

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Redway, George W., The Encyclopedia Britannica, London: Encyclopedia Britannica Company, 19 9, p. 433.

_____, The Encyclopedia Americana, Chicago: Encyclopedia Americana Company, 1958, p. 642.

Dear Sib and Jerry,

I was very sorry it took me so long to contact the people about their record[illegible] but lately I have been really tied down with work. A side from the regular school homework I have also been involved in sports. In the fall I was on the Junior Varsity Soccer Team and now I'm on the Junior Varsity Basketball Team. I am also involved in a few of the school's activities which just adds a little more to my mass confusion.

I was sorry that I couldn't go to Winter Reunion but due to basketball practice I wasn't able to go. From what I heard, it was a lot of fun and everybody got something out of it. By the way, are there skiing rates for groups? I was wondering because I belong to a ski group in Great Neck and I thought that we might be able to go to Shaker for a day or so.

Please send my regards to Peter and I'm sorry I put you to all that trouble about the records.

Sincerely,
Pete Lazes

47 Stephen Mark Lane, New Hyde Park

Robert C. Ogdahl

SHAKER SYMBOLIC MUSIC

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An interlinear arrangement of the old and conventional forms is shown in Figure 1. The old form consists only of the words and the symbols below them.

The following information explains and supplements the figures.

The songs were used for worship as devotional hymns, prayers, and during exorcising dances. Of necessity, the latter had a strong, steady beat.

At rare times, some intended note is beyond the voice range. In this case, a pair of notes is shown; the lower one is the alternate.

The songs were written on lined writing paper; these lines help identify the intended octive. Every note has a unique symbol within an octive range. Notes related by an octive are shown by the relative positioning of the notes around a casual reference line.

All songs are written in C Major or D Minor (or in the Dorian Mode). The singers use a relative key; i. e., a C Major song might be sung in F Major for the singers convenience.

The note duration is changed by: 1) a suffixed dot to indicate one and one-half times the orginal values, 2) a vertical bar for doubling the original values, 3) a dash above or below the note to indicate one-half of the original value, 4) a double or triple dash above the note to indicate one-fourth or one-eighth of the original value; 5) a slur across several notes to show that the effective duration is the sum of both original notes, and 6) a combination of these notations. The notes (symbols) without any dots or dashes should be considered a one-fourth note.

The related scales and time values are shown in Figure 2.

The rhythm and tempo are indicated at the beginning of the song by a fraction, a small number, and/or a symbol. The prefixed fraction written in many of the Shaker songs is not a time signature as in conventional notation.

Each song belongs in one of two classes: 1) an even number of notes per beat as in conventional 2/4, 4/4 time or 2) an odd number of notes per beat as in conventional 3/8 or 6/8 time. This division can be seen in the rhythm and tempo indication at the beginning of each song.

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1. Write the words below the staff.
2. Assume initially that the song is written in either 4/4 or 6/8 time. Cf. Figure 3.
3. Translate the symbolic notes into conventional staff notation. A note with no time adjustment (i.e. suffixed dots or associated bars) is a 1/4 note.
4. Assign appropriate bars to indicate the measures. It might be helpful to sing the song and identify the important natural first beats at several places in the song. Calculate the full measures forward and backward from these key notes. This may help to make pickup notes more obvious.
5. Place repeat signs in the proper places. Usually, the song is in two parts. (Each part is sung twice in succession and the total song is repeated as often as is desired.)
6. The beginning and ending measure of each part will sometimes need adjustment in order to complete the measure satisfactorily.
7. Prefix the correct time signature and the key notation if D Minor is intended.
8. At this point, the song may be in an awkward key. Translate it to a convenient relative key.

Figure 3: Rhythm and Tempo Signature

$\frac{X}{2} = \frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{4}$ time; where X denotes tempo, and the 2 indicates that there will be two major beats per measure.

(See Figure 1b for example.)

	X	$\frac{1}{4}$ notes/minute	Length (inches) of string of speediometer
Adagio	1	80	22
Largo	2	91	17
Allegro	3	106	12.5
Presto	4	128 to 160	8.75 to 5.5

$\frac{N}{\mathcal{C}} = \frac{6}{8}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ time; where N denotes tempo

(See Figure 1a for example.)

N	$\frac{1}{8}$ notes/minute	Length of string (inches) of speediometer
1	106	12.5
2	122	9.5
3	142	7
4	170 to 213	4.75 to 3.125
5	213	3.125
6	250 to 300	2.75 to 1.5
7	300	1.5

$L = \frac{140 \times 10^3}{f}$

L = inches

f = frequency (cycles/minute)

These values have been adopted from an old book printed at New Lebanon in 1843.

Figure 1c

Song from 1st book

page 38

♩ = 106

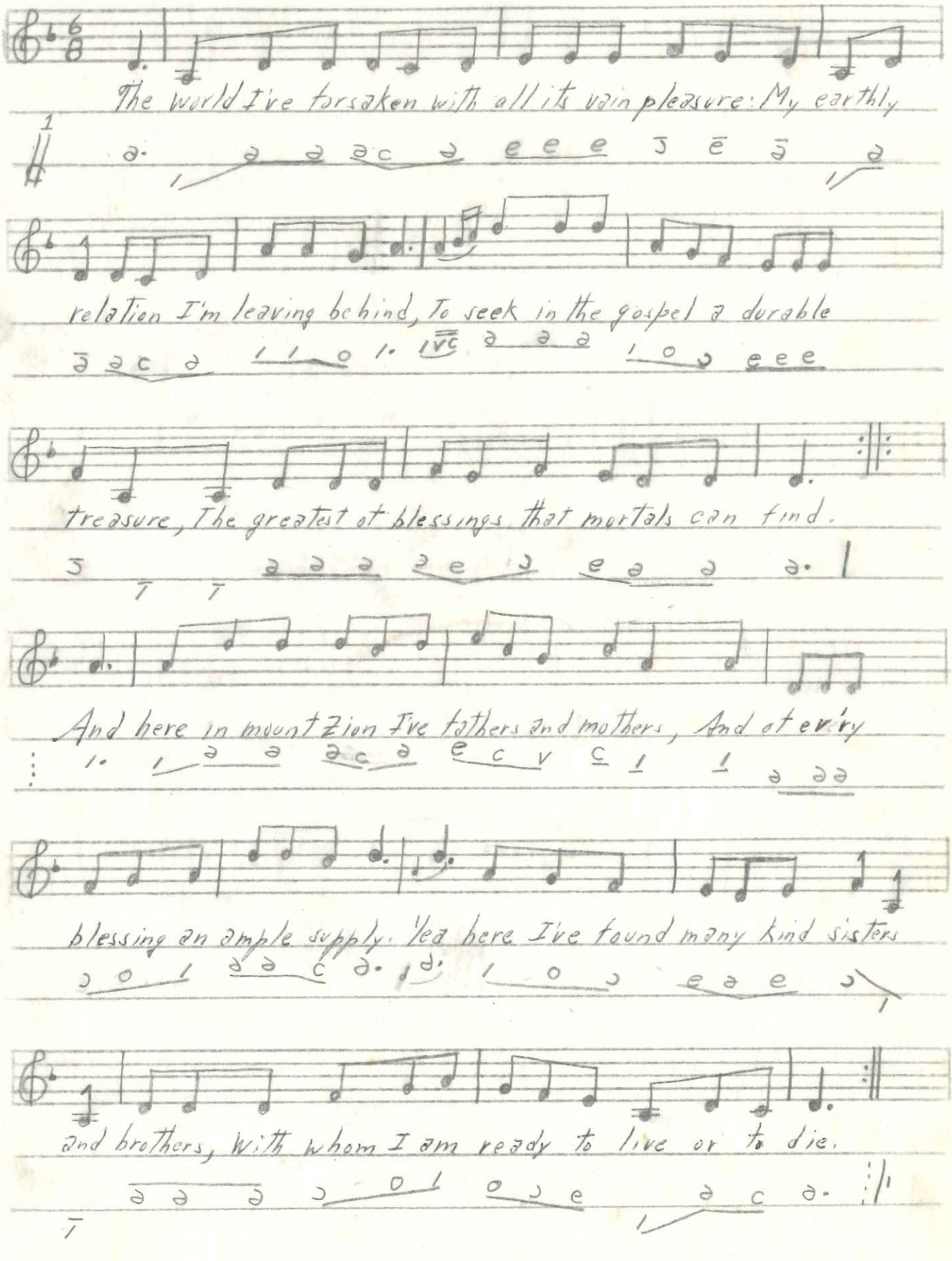
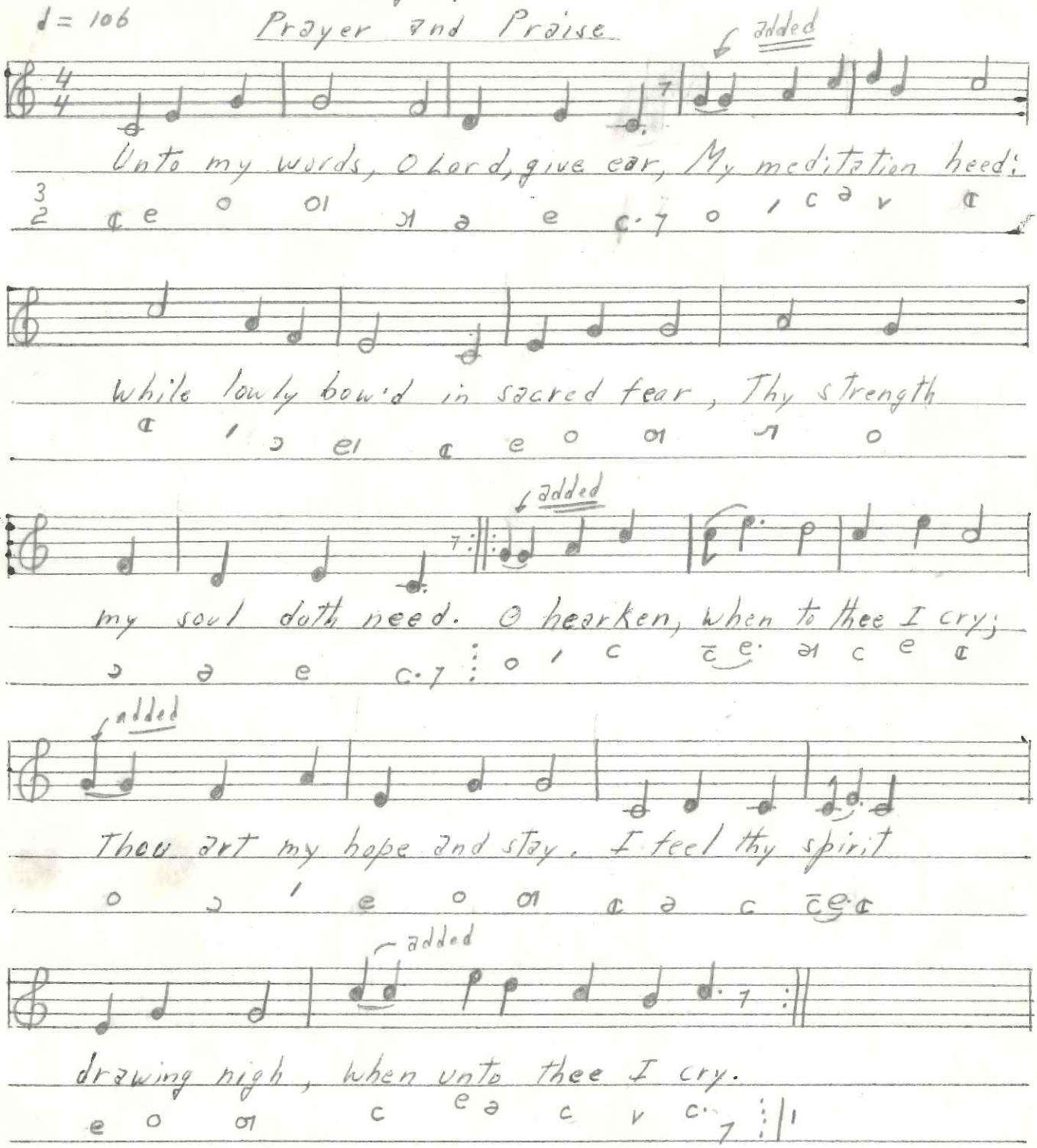


Figure 16

Song from 1st book
page 39

♩ = 106

Prayer and Praise



4 measures have been filled out with added notes - a ¼ rest could be used but this would not give as smooth a rhythm pattern. R.O.

Figure 2

Related Scale and Time Values

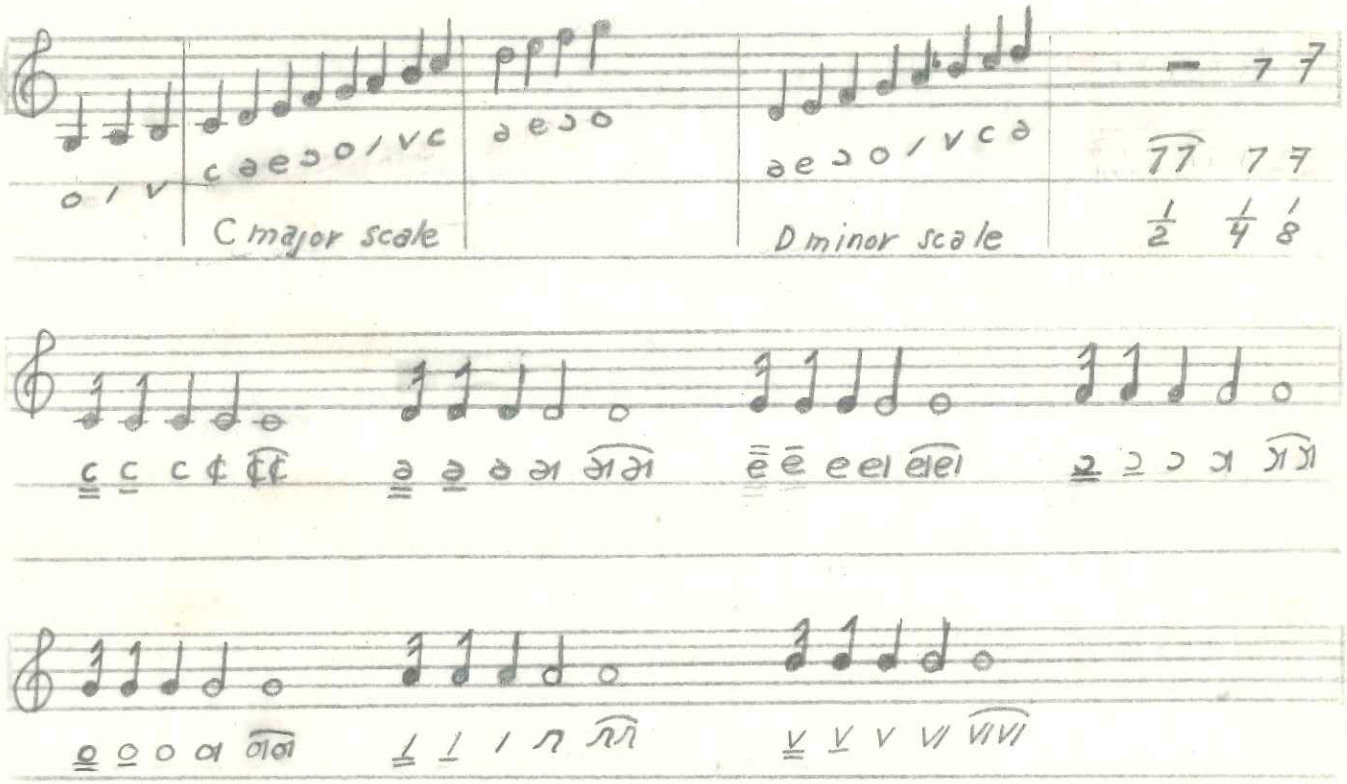
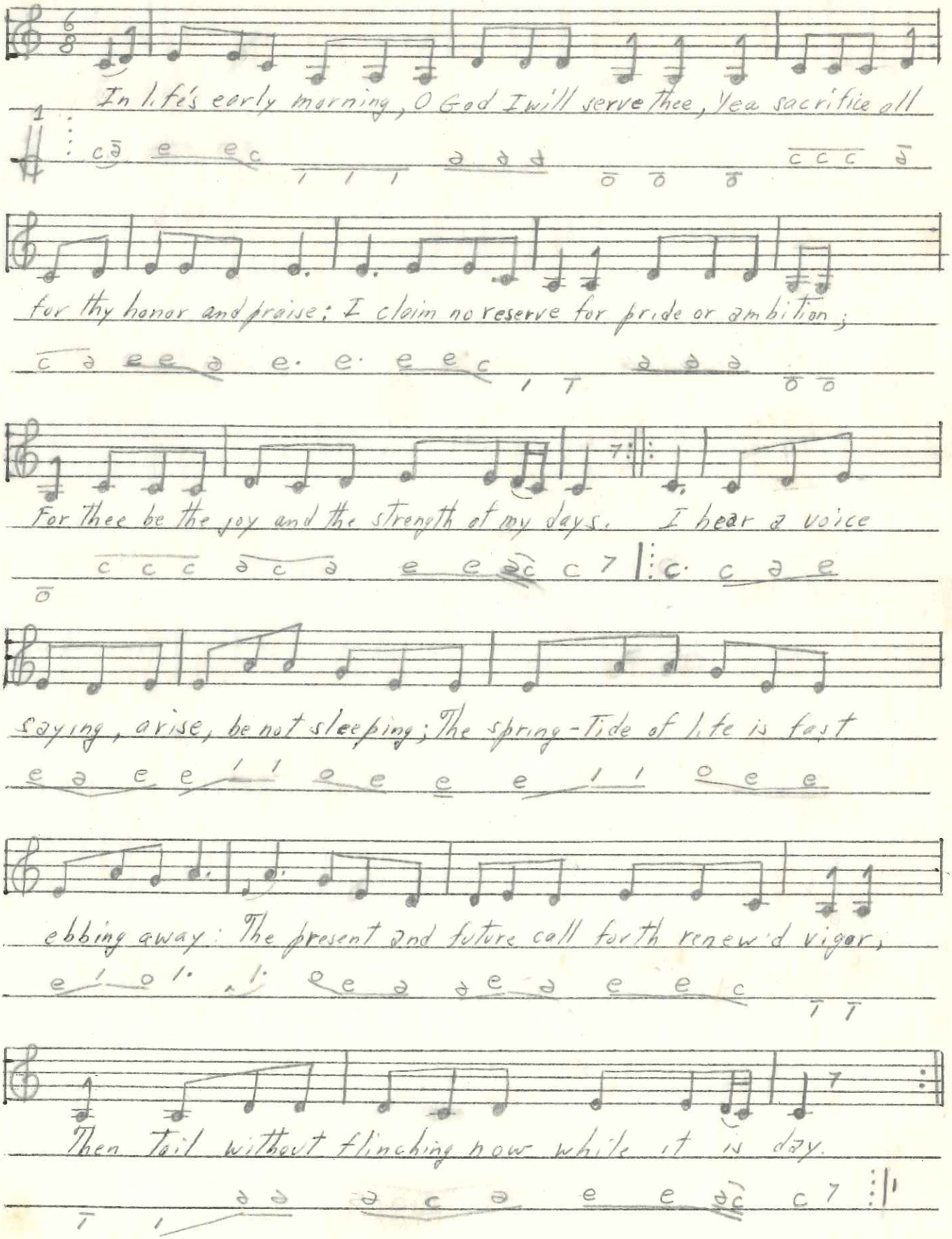


Figure 1a

Song from 1st book
Page 45

♩ = 106



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X		¼ notes per minute	Length (inches) of string of speediometer
Adagio	1	80	22
Largo	2	91	17
Allegro	3	106	12.5
Presto	4	128 to 160	8.75 to 5.5

N

$= \frac{6}{8}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ time; where N denotes tempo

(See Figure 1a for example.)

N	1/8 notes/minute	Length of string (inches) of speediometer
1	106	12.5
2	122	9.5
3	142	7
4	170 to 213	4.75 to 3.125
5	213	3.125
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$L = \frac{140 \times 10^3}{f}$

L = inches

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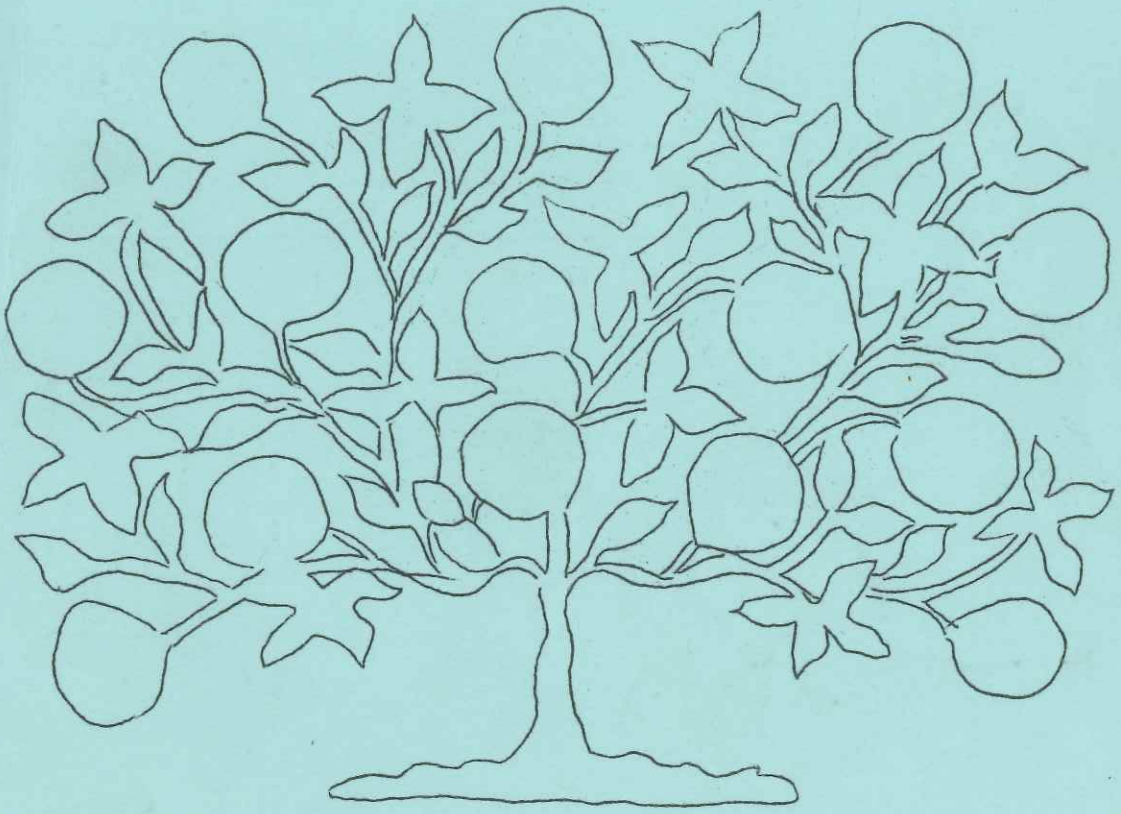
THE SHAKERS



Junior Museum
Troy, N.Y.

THE SHAKERS

HANDS TO WORK AND HEARTS TO GOD-

This was the motto of that remarkable group known as Shakers, whose workshop is on exhibit in the JUNIOR MUSEUM today. The Shakers were, like the Puritans before them, one of the many groups who have fled persecution in the old world and found refuge in America, but they have particular significance for us in this area because their first settlement was in Watervliet, then known as Niskeyuna, (the Indian name for good maize land), in 1776. They were led by Mother Ann Lee, a courageous and hard-working woman, whose religious message spread to many places. Mother Ann Lee is buried in the little Shaker cemetery in Watervliet. At New Lebanon, (or Mount Lebanon as it is sometimes called) New York, and at Hancock, Massachusetts, were two of the important Shaker settlements in this vicinity. New Lebanon, in particular, set the pattern for all the other Shaker communities to follow. Here was set up the Shaker system of government, which included elders and eldresses, deacons and deaconesses, and trustees, to carry on the religious teachings, to enforce the social

rules, and to run the practical business affairs of the Shakers for well over a hundred years. Shakers never married. The sisters and brethren lived in separate quarters in the same house; each had a separate set of duties to perform, and met together for common worship.

Separation from the world did not, however, mean cutting off all worldly associations. The Shakers desired to work out their own salvation, but they maintained themselves by developing at an early period several industries which brought them into many business relationships with the outside world.

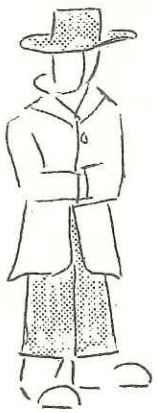
The purpose of our exhibit here at the Junior Museum is to show how, through objects used in the everyday life of the Shakers, we become more conscious of the rich national inheritance they left us. Shaker products are symbols of their creed, free from all unnecessary ornament. Their furniture is unpretentious, like the people who made it. It is perfectly simple, but not plain, and each piece seems to have an identity of its own. Unless a thing were useful, it was superfluous. They worked for perfection in everything.

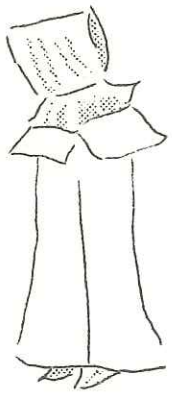
Farming and gardening were the chief employments at the three Shaker settlements in New York State. Besides raising broom corn for brooms, sweet corn for the dried sweet corn industry, and horticultural products for the garden seed and extract business, the Shakers made mops, mats, fans, dusters, clocks, oval boxes, horse-whips, buttons, fancy baskets, cloaks,

fur and wool hats, bonnets, and many other things. They developed a chair-making business which brought them great fame, and the following little verse shows oven their flair for advertising:

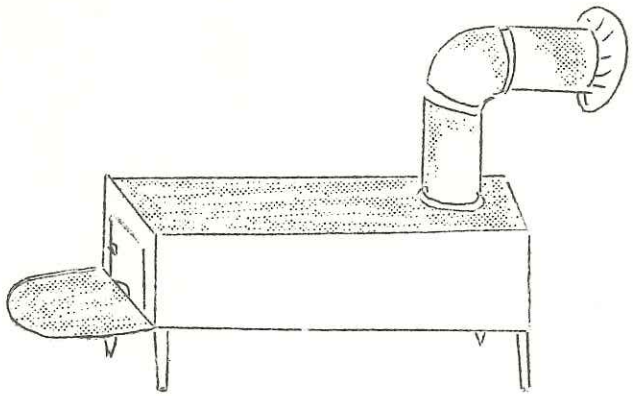
Should any one care
for a good Shaker chair
At Mount Lebanon, N.Y. let them call,
We have them just right
Cherry color and white
And can suit both the great and the small.

At the height of the Shaker movement, just before the Civil War, there were Shaker communities in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio, with about six thousand members. But after the Civil War they began to decline. Wars and depressions limited their funds, competition deprived them of their industries. Fewer and fewer converts, and especially few children and young people came into the movement. Today there are only three active groups, in Canterbury, New Hampshire, at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, and at Hancock, Massachusetts, with some thirty-five members. They are proud of their past, and hope that some day their society will live again.



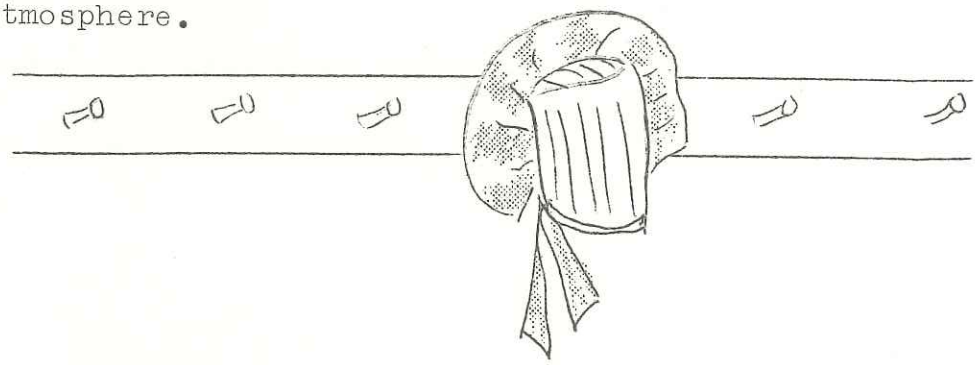


The two "Shaker ladies" in our JUNIOR MUSEUM are dressed in authentic Shaker costumes, and the room in which they stand is a reproduction of one of the Sisters' workrooms. Here we see the peg board that was part of every Shaker room, so that chairs could be hung up during cleaning, and upon which outside clothing, clocks, and tools could be hung, for to the Shakers order was Heaven's first law. Pegs on the outside of wood-boxes, on furniture, and on cabinets held brooms for the immediate removal of a speck of dirt, for "there is no dirt in Heaven." Here also is the tailoress's table, with its fifty-four inch ruler, the pair of Shaker shears, and the sewing machine, where the Sisters worked diligently on the dresses and cloaks which they wore, and sometimes sold to the "world's people", as outsiders were called. The sewing chest and button box, and also the tailor's goose (which is an iron) and the trivet, were, of course, part of the Sisters' equipment. The Shaker stove in our room was a Shaker invention, and the Sister used it to heat her iron too. The piece of woolen cloth which one of the Shaker ladies holds was woven and dyed by the Sisters.



The large chest you see as you enter the Shaker room is a wonderful example of Shaker cabinet work, and inside you may see some of the Shaker hats and bonnets, and the molds on which they were made. Notice, too, the famous Shaker chairs.

On the floor underneath the smaller table is a Shaker rug, and the unpapered walls, the shining floor, and the plain finish of the woodwork all help to create the Shaker atmosphere.



In the corridor of our Museum the cases contain maps of the Shaker settlements, and more examples of Shaker industry. Here we see a basket molded in a graceful shape, one of their beautiful oval boxes, a metal pen, and a clay pipe made by them. Here also is a large brown seed box, and inside some of the seeds, medicinal herbs, and sieves made from horsehair and silk and used in preparing medicines. The labels, too, were distinctively Shaker products, for which they invented special machines. The Shakers were among the first in this country to practice a more or less scientific gathering and classifying of herbs for medicinal uses. Some

of the herbs were cultivated, but a large number were found wild, and gathered in woods and fields by Shaker children. Rose water, attar of roses, and violet water were other products they made and sold in large quantities and in many places.

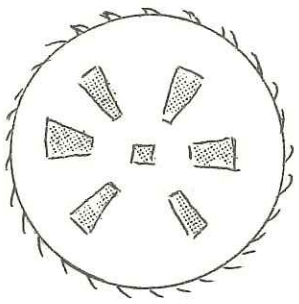
In the smaller case we see a picture of the Mount Lebanon "family". There is also an old account book of the Meneely Bell Company, of Troy, showing an entry of sale of one of the famous Meneely bells to the Mount Lebanon Shakers.

We can see from the articles on display in the third case how ingenious and inventive the Shakers were and how indebted we are to them today. The modern broom we show is a direct result of the inventions of the Watervliet Shakers. Shaker brooms were outstandingly good brooms, well-sewn, for one of the brethren had invented the pierced needle with which this work was done. Before the Shaker design, brooms had been round, but the Shaker brother developed a two-jaw wooden vise which flattened the rounded broom and it was then sewn to hold its form. The Shaker broom is almost a symbol of Shakerism. Its manufacture was one of their favorite industries; they never disgraced it by making it stand behind a door, but it was always hung up against the wall when not in use. The clothespins we use today are also based on a Shaker design.

The circular saw in our case is credited to Sister Sarah Babbitt, - the story is told that while watching some brethren saw, she noticed the lost motion, and the idea of a circular saw came to her. She made herself a notched disk out of tin, this she slipped onto her spinning wheel, and finding it adequate to saw shingles, told of her work, which resulted in the one-piece metal circular saw still used today.

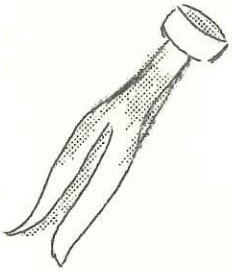
The Shaker sweater shown has a characteristic Shaker knitting stitch, and many fashionable stores feature this bulky type of sweater today. The sweater in our case has on it the letter "W" for Williams College, whose students purchased many of these sweaters from the nearby Shakers.

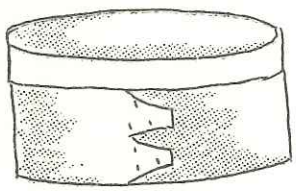
The preparation of wholesome food was considered important by the Shakers, and they achieved a considerable reputation for their recipes and meals. They were among the first to advocate a greater use of vegetables and fruit, and the use of whole wheat grain in making flour. Our modern Shaker cookbook recreates some of their dishes and tells of the ingredients to be used.

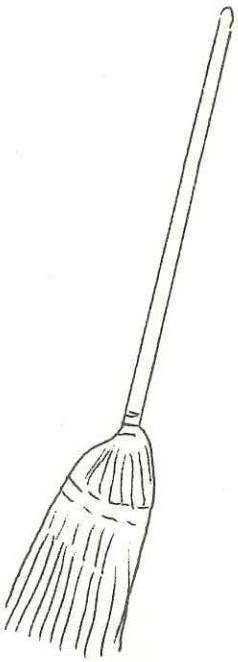


Undoubtedly today the most widely appreciated and best known product of the Shakers is their furniture, cabinet work, and architectural design. The reprint from the magazine "HOUSE AND GARDEN" in our display devotes a large part of this issue to illustrating the use of Shaker designs today. Shaker built-in cabinets are studied and copied in many modern houses, their furniture and the small objects which were part of their everyday living are being collected as contributions to American art, and the plans of their various buildings, both inside and out, are often followed today. They have an order and balance which are timeless.

The list of their inventions, designs, and labor-saving devices is a long one; very few were patented, but were made for the whole world to use. They have left an indelible impression on many phases of our daily lives for which we may all well express a feeling of gratitude.







If you would like to learn more about the Shakers, you might read one of the following books:

THE SHAKER ADVENTURE by Marguerite F. Melcher

THE PEOPLE CALLED SHAKERS by Edward D. Andrews

THE COMMUNITY INDUSTRIES OF THE SHAKERS by Edward D. Andrews, (New York State Museum Handbook 15).

Or perhaps when you are out for a drive some pleasant day, you might stop at the Mount Lebanon villages off Route 20, as shown on our map. There you will see the long, five-story stone barn of the North Family; the arched-roof Shaker church of the Church Family, in the Darrow School area; the old Shaker schoolhouse, the stone apple drying house, and further up the mountain the old chair factory of the South Family in the Shaker Work Camp area. On the other side of the mountain, in Hancock, Massachusetts, is the famous circular stone barn, and an old Shaker burying-ground. You might also like to visit the Shaker Museum at Old Chatham, New York, which contains a fine collection of Shaker industries, and, even nearer to us, the most extensive collection of all- the New York State History Collection at 1260 Broadway, Menands.

And when you pass the Ann Lee Home, which was built by the County of Albany on land purchased from the Watervliet Shakers, or watch the planes at the Albany Airport, remember that here was the first home of these valiant people, and that we are proud that they chose this site.

THE SHAKER EXHIBIT IS ON DISPLAY AT

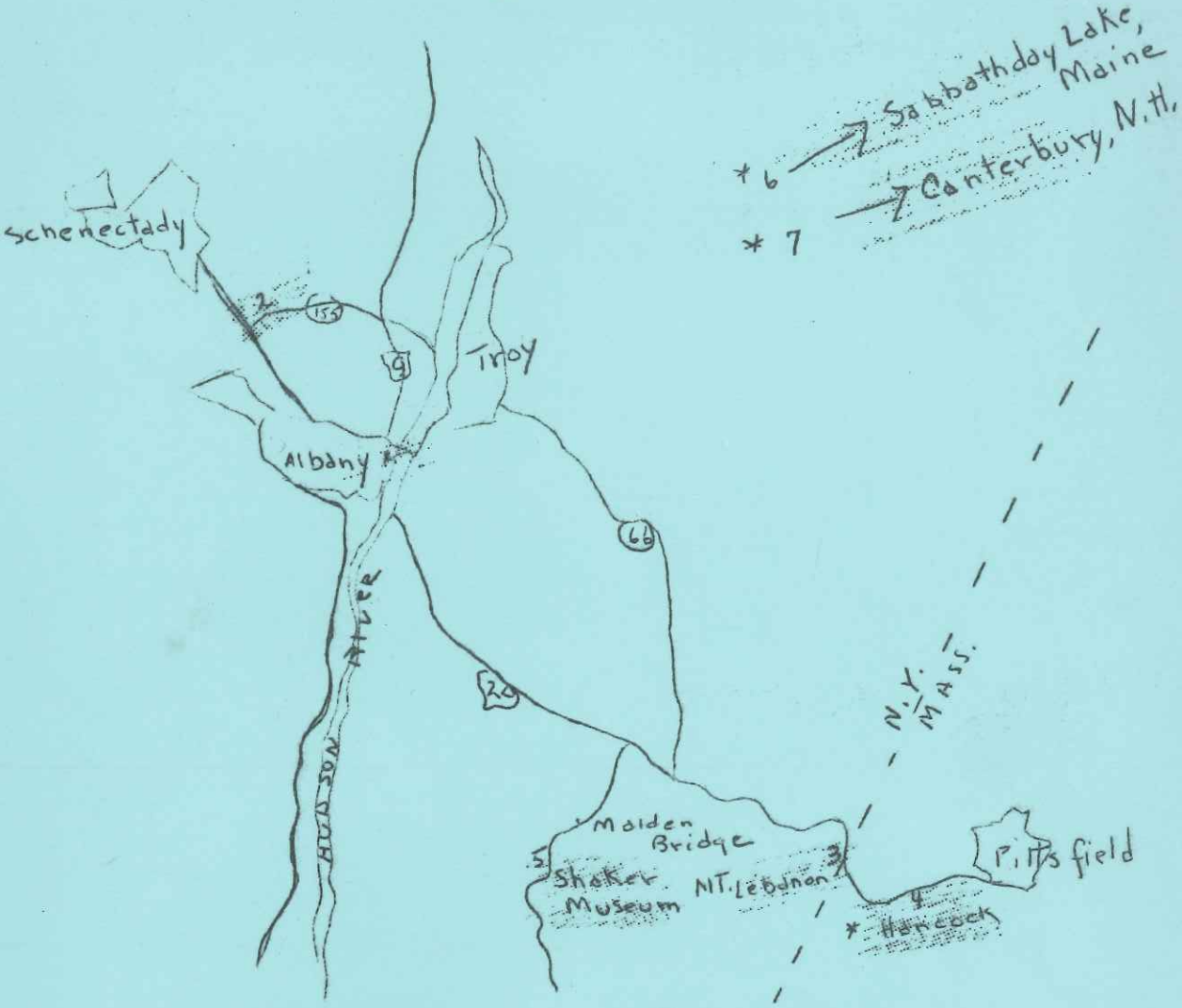
THE RENSSELAER COUNTY JUNIOR MUSEUM

From October 11, 1957 to Feb. 15, 1958.

This booklet has been compiled by Mrs. Samuel Rezneck and Mrs. Marcus L. Filley of the Museum staff.

The cover was designed and adapted by the Shaker Village Workshop Group from a Shaker "Spirit Drawing" made by Sister Hannah Cohoon in 1854, entitled "Tree of Life."

Where to Study the Shakers today!



1. N.Y.S. History Collections - 1260 Broadway, Albany, N.Y.
2. Shaker Cemetery - Albany Airport
3. Mt. Lebanon, N.Y.
   The Darrow School
   Shaker Work Camp
* 4. Hancock - private
5. Shaker Chatham Museum
* 6. Sabbathday Lake, Maine - open to public
* 7. Canterbury, N.H. - open to public

* Approximately 30 Shakers are living in these places.