

AMERICA'S
COMMUNAL
UTOPIAS

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30. *Improvement Era*, December 1938, 740.

31. Oral interview, January 4, 1973, LDS Church Archives. See also Ensign, November 1975, 127. A review of the history philanthropic outreach by the Latter-day Saints is in Dean L. May, "Body and Soul: The Record of Mormon Religious Philanthropy," *Church History* 57 (September 1988): 322–36.

32. Cited in Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*, 37.

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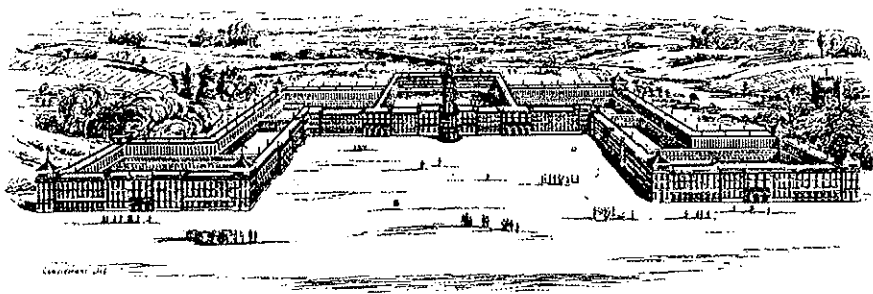
CARL J. GUARNERI

Brook Farm and the Fourierist Phalanxes

Immediatism, Gradualism, and American Utopian Socialism

Born in Besançon, France, in 1772 into an age of revolutionary upheaval, Charles Fourier saw with a clarity that bordered on madness that his mission was to bring order and justice to humanity. During his career as a traveling salesman and commercial employee, Fourier became fed up with the frauds of commerce: adulteration of products, loan sharking, speculation in currency, and the creation of devastating artificial shortages. In Lyons the misery of silk workers fighting with master merchants over declining wages awakened him to the coming Industrial Revolution. To reconcile conflicting social interests, Fourier began to tinker with schemes for model cities and cooperative warehouses. By the time he was thirty, he had come to believe that an entire economic system based on the anarchy of free competition was wrong. A radical change was necessary, but it must be constructive, orderly, and peaceful. Having lost his inheritance in the French Revolution when Parisian troops destroyed his entire stock of goods, Fourier hated social conflict and hoped instead for a society guaranteeing class harmony through scientific organization.¹

About the same time that his fellow utopian visionaries Henri de Saint-Simon in France and Robert Owen in Scotland were developing their ideas of social reform, Fourier decided that the cure for the evils of competitive civilization was the establishment of meticulously planned cooperative com-



This design for a Phalanstery, Charles Fourier's concept of the communal palace that was to house the world in exactly 2,985,984 communities, was published by Victor Considerant in *Description du phalanstère* in Paris in 1848.

munities called "phalanxes," which would gather persons of all classes and characters and spread throughout the world. In each community there would be a huge central dwelling or "phalanstery" located on a large countryside plot and surrounded by the workshops, fields, and cultural institutions that provided a varied and fulfilling existence for every resident. Beginning in 1808 Fourier described this communal vision with painstaking detail in disorganized and difficult writings that went virtually unread until in the wake of the July revolution of 1830 a circle of young French intellectuals embraced them as the bible of their movement.²

Nothing was known of Fourier's theory in the United States until it was brought across the Atlantic by a young and energetic American convert. Albert Brisbane, the pampered and somewhat pushy son of an upstate New York landowner, embarked on a student's tour of Europe in 1828. His search for a creed took Brisbane to Victor Cousin's lectures at the Sorbonne, to Hegel's in Berlin, to Saint-Simonian soirees in Paris, and finally in 1832 to Fourier himself, whose private lessons converted the American into a dedicated phalansterian within two months. The encounter gave Brisbane his life's work. Henceforth his "only aim," he wrote to a friend, was "to transmit the thought of Charles Fourier to my countrymen." For a year and a half Brisbane remained in Paris, working with Fourier's French disciples. Upon his return to New York he tried to accumulate enough funds through land speculation to finance personally the first American Fourierist community. But when the bank panic of 1837 and subsequent depression ruined this scheme, Brisbane had to rethink his plans. Instead of sponsoring a community himself, he would translate Fourier's works and initiate a utopian socialist journal in the hope of building popular support for a phalanx experiment. In *Social Destiny of Man*, published in 1840, Brisbane provided the clearest and most compre-

hensive exposition of Fourier's theory then available in English. He had no inkling, however, that a few years after its publication over two dozen miniature phalanxes would be established in the United States, or that Fourierism (pronounced here as "Foor-yur-ism") would become America's most popular and dynamic secular community movement of the entire nineteenth century.³

Though they are often lumped together as "utopian," American movements that have employed communal living have had varied constituents and purposes. Some were immigrant groups fleeing persecution or seeking to preserve an Old World way of life in a New World setting; others were religious sects that established godly enclaves apart from the world in order to practice their beliefs or await Christ's second coming. There have also been anarchist or single-tax advocates attempting to demonstrate a monetary theory in a controlled setting, secular reformers experimenting with new lifestyles, and even profit-seeking colonization companies tinged with elements of cooperation.

Among America's communal utopias the Fourierist phalanxes hold a special place. They are the classic case of the nineteenth-century ideology that Marx and Engels derisively called "utopian socialism," as opposed to their allegedly "scientific" brand. A more neutral name was supplied by Arthur Bestor, who called these kinds of plans "communitarian socialism." Whatever the label, the idea was to supplant existing society with model communities derived from a rational philosophy and a clear blueprint. In the aftermath of the Enlightenment, communitarianism emerged as a reform program that might leapfrog over the slow, piecemeal changes of politics, yet also avoid the violence of revolution. This "third force," discovered by reason and spread through example, would reconstruct society totally but peacefully.⁴ The Fourierists were the most persuasive of those preaching such an all-embracing "social science." Unlike the Shakers, Mormons, or Oneidans, they were not a religious sect, nor did they adopt communalism provisionally or practice it in isolation from the world. Like the Owenites or the Icarians, but with a far larger American contingent and a much clearer program, they embraced communalism as the form by which—and to which—they hoped to convert all of society. The phalanxes were self-consciously part of a movement that aimed to reshape a conflict-ridden and disordered society into a new world of harmony and order. Model communities were both the levers of social change and the ultimate form the renovated society would take.

In fact, for Fourierists, as for no other group, the precise form of the utopian future was clearly marked out.⁵ Humanity, according to Fourier, was inexorably progressing through increasingly complex stages of existence be-

ginning with Savagery and Barbarism and continuing through Civilization and would eventually culminate in a Harmonic society of intricately planned phalanxes. But there was a much shorter road to utopia. Ever since the Greeks, the material preconditions of Harmony had been satisfied; only the correct theory was missing. It was Fourier's genius—as he immodestly proclaimed—to have discovered this “divine social code,” the precise arrangements that would impel a sudden leap to Harmony. Deducing the details of phalanx existence from a scientific analysis of human “passions,” Fourier claimed that they had all the rigor of mathematical calculations. Fourierist communities were thus demonstrations rather than experiments, intended to illustrate scientific truth rather than to proceed by trial and error. To Fourier's mind, a communal way of life did not develop; it was simply set up in full dress from a rational plan.

That plan was grandiose as well as specific. According to Fourier, exactly 1,620 men, women, and children—twice the number of distinctive human personality types that Fourier had found—were to inhabit a sprawling, multistory phalanstery whose wings enclosed landscaped inner courtyards and whose entrance faced a vast parade ground. Inside, a splendid variety of apartments, communal rooms, and circulation galleries would house residents and promote spontaneous association. Across from the main dwelling, workshops and storehouses would frame the public square. This central cluster of buildings would be situated on a beautiful tract of 6,000 acres with abundant gardens, carefully tended orchards, and inviting forests. Members would arrange themselves through the simple force of attraction into hundreds of specialized work groups gratifying every interest, and their contented labor would produce so much that consumption and leisure, not production, would be their main preoccupation.

The grand and all-too-specific vision of Fourier's phalanx dazzled American reformers in search of a concrete community plan, but ultimately it hurt the Fourierist movement. With expectations for palatial living aroused so absurdly high, Fourierists were too easily disappointed with struggling little communities that looked nothing like Fourier's phalanx. And Fourier's “instant” rather than gradual approach to communalism steered movement leaders in the wrong direction when they were faced with scaled-down projects and real-world decisions. In the end, leaders such as Brisbane and the faithful rank and file found it hard to accept that the American phalanxes might never approach Fourier's monumental plan.

Few commentators have recognized, however, that the Fourierist movement involved far more than phalanxes. Hoping to demonstrate cooperative principles and to spread their influence in the larger society, the Fourierists

established outside the phalanxes a reform network comprising dozens of local clubs, mutual insurance groups, cooperative stores, and urban communes. Fourier himself had paid only fleeting attention to such transitional projects; they represented an important amendment by his disciples to the “instant community” idea. Ironically, it was in these gradualist institutions, more than in the short-lived phalanxes, that the impact of American Fourierism endured.

Fourier's theory was actually a vast and eccentric universal philosophy that included ideas about the origins and demise of the solar system, the psychological makeup of humanity, and the course of human and animal history, as well as visions—much too explicit for most nineteenth-century tastes—of a free-love utopia where “passional attraction” governed relationships. When Brisbane and his American colleagues imported it, they carefully edited the master's ideas, peeling away what Fourier called “the new amorous world” from “the new industrial world,” then paring down the remainder to a practical communitarian program while still preserving enough of the larger theory to show that their blueprint was “scientific.” Basically three main ideas were left: a critique of present-day society, a community plan, and an overlay of propaganda harmonizing Fourierism with prevalent American beliefs.⁶

At the start there was the conviction that the competitive system of the present must be replaced. Competition under capitalism reduced society to an “insane war of efforts and interests” whose waste, anxieties, and exploitations victimized all classes.⁷ With uncanny foresight the Fourierists predicted that unlimited competition would lead to an “industrial feudalism” where people would either endure enslavement by monopolies and corporations or lead a bloody rebellion against them. European society was mired in poverty and oppression, but in the New World there was still time and space to plant the seed of a different order.

Fourier's phalanx was that seed. In contrast to the chaos of current “Civilization” the world of the phalanx would be both personally fulfilling and socially harmonious. In these model communities individuals would voluntarily form “groups” and then “series” of groups oriented around one task, such as carpentry, education, household work, or gardening. Working in teams and alternating jobs about every two hours, community members would be stimulated to greater productivity and at the same time develop the various aptitudes of their personal makeup. Cooperation would be ensured by guaranteeing everyone a minimum wage and maintenance in sickness or old age; by adopting a complex system of dividing up the community's profits (certain fractions going to labor, capital, and skill); and by having each member own part of the community through joint-stock shares.

Finally, the Fourierists presented their theory as a universal and all-reconciling reform. While declaring that theirs was a nonsectarian venture in which all religions were welcome, Brisbane and the American Fourierists made a special appeal to evangelical and liberal Protestants. To these they asserted that the phalanx was Christian love in practice and its dissemination would bring the millennium so many nineteenth-century Americans thought was at hand. To temperance, peace, and antislavery reformers, the Fourierists extended their sympathies and presented communitarianism as the indispensable precondition for realizing their goals. To conservatives worried about overturning established society, Fourierists demonstrated that their proposal was nonviolent, respected the rights of capital, and created a true "harmony of interests" between social groups and classes. To those wary of pledging allegiance to a single philosopher's doctrine, the Fourierists explained that the principles of "social science" were universal, and they adopted the name "Association" rather than "Fourierism" for their creed.

Fourier himself would settle for nothing less than the full complement of 1,620 Harmonians ensconced in a Versailles-like palace. Legend has it that the Frenchman waited in his apartment every noon for the millionaire who would underwrite the first phalanx. But Brisbane, impatient for success and sensing that the time was ripe, streamlined Fourier's blueprint for the American audience. In his popular pamphlet *Association* (1843), he advocated stripped-down phalanxes of a few hundred persons in the countryside not far from major cities, and he provided a model constitution. Brisbane stressed the compatibility of the phalanx plan with American ideals of self-government, personal freedom, equity, and social progress. Nowhere in French Fourierist literature did such a simple and practical version of the phalanx appear.

Within just three years after addressing the public, Brisbane was rewarded with two major victories. The first was the conversion of Horace Greeley, the colorful and soon-to-be famous editor of the *New York Tribune*. When he read the copy of *Social Destiny of Man* that Brisbane presented to him, Greeley sensed in Fourier's plan the kind of partnership between labor and capital he had been preaching as a Whig publicist. Greeley promptly offered Brisbane a column in his daily paper, and on March 1, 1842, a series of articles, "Association; or, Principles of a True Organization of Society," was inaugurated. Through the *Tribune* and other papers that picked up the column Brisbane was able to introduce Fourier's theory into thousands of reform-minded households across the northern states. Long after the editorial agreement ter-

minated, Greeley gave the Associationist movement valuable publicity, defended it against critics, attended its conventions, and invested thousands of dollars in its phalanxes.⁸

Brisbane's second major triumph came when Brook Farm enlisted in the Fourierist movement. Perhaps the most celebrated of all American communal experiments, Brook Farm was founded in 1841 at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, outside Boston by George Ripley and a circle of Transcendentalist ministers, reformers, and writers. Among them was the young Nathaniel Hawthorne, who drew on his brief Brook Farm experience for the novel *Blithedale Romance* (1852). Ripley's idea, as he wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, was to share the Transcendentalist version of the good life in a model cooperative society:

Our objects, as you know, are to insure a more natural union between intellectual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry; . . . and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions.⁹

Emerson, like the spirited feminist Margaret Fuller, was too individualistic to join such a community, but Ripley attracted a talented group of young idealists. Throughout its brief life Brook Farm had a campuslike atmosphere, where unmarried men and women in their twenties predominated, social and literary discussion flourished, and room visits and moonlight walks created a casual and free—though quite proper—social life. Its showpiece was the community's school, which attracted students from around the country and gave them excellent practical as well as classical training.

By late 1843 the Brook Farmers wanted to broaden their membership and increase the community's efficiency. Through Brisbane's badgering, Ripley and other Transcendentalists were already familiar with Fourier's theory, and they were encouraged to adopt it by Greeley, a frequent visitor, and by their friend William Henry Channing, nephew of the great Unitarian preacher William Ellery Channing. Early in 1844 the Brook Farm Association announced its intention to become the Brook Farm Phalanx. The transition to Fourierism was actually quite smooth, contrary to the assertions of Lindsay Swift and others.¹⁰ Ripley had always envisioned Brook Farm as a model experiment in class cooperation, and Fourierism linked this mission to a growing national movement, boosting the community's morale and democratizing



Josiah Wolcott's *Large Landscape of Brook Farm* pictures the tranquil rural setting of the Fourierist community in the 1840s. The urban expansion of nearby Boston later swallowed this scene.

its membership through the recruitment of carpenters, shoemakers, and other artisans. Brook Farm, in turn, became the Associationists' propaganda headquarters, whose members took over the Fourierist weekly *Harbinger*, made it into a first-class organ of literary and social criticism, and lectured on Association across New England and upstate New York.¹¹ Until a disastrous fire destroyed its new phalanstery in March 1846, the community was the lively center of American Fourierism.

With Brisbane and the Brook Farmers promoting Association and Greeley endorsing it, Fourierism was bound to command a hearing in reform circles. But no one was prepared for the enthusiastic, almost frenetic response to communitarian socialism in the early 1840s. The depression of the late 1830s had put clerks and craftsmen out of work; religious revivals left converts anxious to practice a more fervent Christianity; and middle-class Americans were swept up in a wave of reform enthusiasm. Fourier's rejection of partial and gradual measures coincided with the emergence of a new romantic faith in immediate and drastic action among reformers on both sides of the Atlantic.¹² These events converged with long-term trends such as the decline of artisan

self-employment under early industrial capitalism and the rise of journalism and reform as legitimate career choices for middle-class youths. The stage had been set for communal experimentation, and Fourierism's assurance of rapid success, its appeal to American ideals, its prestigious backers, and its seemingly scientific blueprint made it the preferred doctrine among communitarians. The Associationists' propaganda succeeded beyond their wildest dreams: no less than twenty-eight miniature phalanxes sprang up on American soil between 1843 and 1858. At least 15,000 Americans became personally involved at one time or another in the Fourierist movement.

A brief look at three of the most important phalanxes illustrates some of the forces at work in the rise and fall of the communal phase of the Fourierist movement. The Sodus Bay Phalanx was one of several communities founded in the "Burned-over District" of western New York. This region was a notorious seedbed of new religions and reform crusades—Finneyite revivalism, the Millerite movement, and Mormonism among them—and after Brisbane's lecture tour late in 1843, Fourierism swept through it like wildfire.¹³ Spurred by local religious revivals and reeling from declining wheat prices and the slowdown of traffic on the Erie Canal—effects of the recent depression—Rochester Fourierists flocked into four different phalanx attempts. The Sodus Bay, the most promising of them, was established in 1844 at a scenic site on Lake Erie formerly inhabited by Shakers. Yet despite the community's strategic location and the substantial buildings and fine orchards it inherited, the experiment was a disastrous failure. A too-generous admission policy and the promise of a year's sustenance before any payment was due brought a rush of unqualified applicants who quickly put the community in debt. Overcrowded accommodations hastened the spread of typhoid fever, which depleted the labor force. To add to the community's problems, a serious dispute broke out between evangelical Protestants and religious liberals over issues such as work on Sunday and control of phalanx education. The two factions became, according to one observer, "opposite and hostile elements, which have no more affinity for each other than water and oil, or fire and gunpowder."¹⁴ As families began leaving in 1845, the community sold its crops to repay them for cash advances and went bankrupt. In April 1846 the handful of remaining members dissolved the experiment.

Although it was a much more efficient and prosperous community, the Wisconsin Phalanx nevertheless fell prey to some of the same difficulties. Founded in 1844, it was representative of the Fourierist communities on the midwestern frontier. Southport (now Kenosha), Wisconsin, had been settled by migrants from upstate New York and Vermont. When business in the Lake Michigan seaport stagnated, this band of artisans gathered to discuss Bris-

bane's *Tribune* columns, then headed inland with their families to try cooperative farming. (Unlike Brook Farm the western phalanxes recruited members with farming experience and had almost as many children as adults.) As hard workers without the busy social life of the Brook Farmers, they built a solid economic base: the community ran a successful farm and reduced its debt year by year. But there were underlying conflicts and pressures. While the community's leader, Warren Chase, was a militant freethinker, other members were Baptists and Methodists committed to a strict code of personal conduct. And whereas Chase and his followers wanted to adopt Fourier's communal system as quickly as possible, other members were interested in cooperative production but not in "unitary dwellings" and shared meals. Finally in 1850, when key members leaped at the chance to sell their property at a hefty profit, the Wisconsin Phalanx disbanded.¹⁵

The North American Phalanx was established in 1843 with Brisbane's assistance by a group of Albany storekeepers and artisans. Within a few years it became, according to a contemporary observer, "the test-experiment on which Fourierism practically staked its all in this country."¹⁶ On the sandy soil of New Jersey a diverse band of Associationists recruited from throughout the northern states built the most profitable and carefully organized phalanx. As the Fourierist community closest to New York City, the North American attracted a steady stream of visitors, received ample publicity in the *Tribune*, and benefited from the investment capital of sympathetic New York merchants. And as the last surviving phalanx, it attracted faithful Fourierist veterans from communities that had already dissolved. The surges of both capital and membership were mixed blessings, however. There was constant tension because Brisbane and the New York patrons wanted to build the North American into a full-scale model phalanx immediately, while resident members preferred to evolve slowly. In addition, some influential members, mostly nonresidents, wanted to make the phalanx more religious. In 1852 they split off to form a competing phalanx, the Raritan Bay Union, a few miles away. When in September 1854 the North American Phalanx's mill burned down, the remaining members voted not to rebuild it with outside capital. One year later the community closed.¹⁷

Each of the twenty-eight antebellum phalanxes had its own history, and important differences existed among them; but from this distance one can see common patterns. In the initial excitement neighbors and strangers organized the little phalanxes far too hastily and with too little capital. Most of them compounded the problem either by failing to secure full title to the property or by buying far too much acreage for their needs. Added to this was the failure to screen new members carefully: in many cases a useful skill or some

capital to invest was the only requirement, and the probationary period was allowed to pass without a careful look at the candidate. The result was that, as Horace Greeley lamented, "scores of the conceited, . . . the selfish, . . . the pugnacious, . . . [and] the idle" were permitted to join the new phalanxes.¹⁸

All the phalanxes faced the problem of how far they should—or could—implement Fourier's formidable plan. Brook Farm was unique in that as a pre-existing communal experiment converted to Association it expected to adopt Fourierist practices gradually. All the other communities were founded under the Fourierist rubric, but they too had to compromise. Because of their limited membership and capital, none could aim to be a model phalanx along Fourier's guidelines. But most communities put into practice, to the degree they felt was possible or desirable, Fourier's system of work in groups and his idea of differential rewards for different kinds of work. Most gathered together persons from diverse religious and occupational backgrounds: far from being havens of dreamy ministers and intellectuals, as many people today still believe, the phalanxes attracted an artisan majority—large numbers of formerly self-employed carpenters, printers, masons, and shoemakers—but unfortunately in most communities not enough farmers.¹⁹ Most community members lived in scaled-down phalansteries that resembled modern two-story apartment buildings and shared their meals in a common dining hall, although a few families inhabited separate cottages. Despite Fourier's dictates to the contrary, all the phalanxes were conservative in sexual and family relations: within a somewhat freer social atmosphere than Victorian households, the traditional nuclear family still predominated, sex roles were governed by nineteenth-century stereotypes, and children were raised by their parents. Thus for reasons ranging from lack of capital to ideological disagreement, Fourier's specifications for a full-blown model phalanx could not be met.

In many ways Fourierism had promised everything to everybody with the idea that "social science" would harmonize any differences that resulted from full freedom. Behind this lay the naive faith that under the proper conditions Baptists would get along with freethinkers and intellectuals would make great farmers. It did not work out that way. Disputes arose at various phalanxes over issues such as compulsory religious services, communal dining, drinking of alcohol, and differential wages.²⁰ Even when phalanxes were successful, there was always the temptation to sell one's shares at a profit and buy cheap land nearby. Faced with these kinds of pressures and disagreements, most of the antebellum phalanxes died early deaths. Twelve lasted just one year, only eight survived for more than three years, and the longest-lived, the North American Phalanx, held out for a mere dozen years.

Studies of long-lived utopian communities have found that genuine com-

munal feeling is something that takes root among like-minded people rather than being imposed by a structure. Communal entrants have to be willing to sacrifice individual expression for the benefits of group identity and cohesion.²¹ The Fourierists' confidence that their "scientific" arrangements could quickly and painlessly reconcile religious, ideological, class, and personality differences was perhaps the greatest illusion of their master's mechanical community blueprint. Fourier's complex organization, his "visible hand," worked no better than the laissez-faire capitalists' invisible one, which supposedly guided self-interested action automatically toward the common good.

Since the founding of phalanxes was meant to be the culmination of the Associationist movement, in theory at least, they should not have been established until the Fourierists organized local clubs, rallied public support through systematic national propaganda, and amassed a huge building fund. In practice, the virtually spontaneous rush into phalanxes made this impossible. Only after the first wave of little phalanxes began to crash did Brisbane, Ripley, Parke Godwin, and other national Fourierist leaders begin to gain control over the movement. Through *The Harbinger* they attempted to standardize doctrine and answer the Fourierists' critics. In 1846 they formed the American Union of Associationists, which organized local "unions" or Fourierist clubs, held annual conventions at which movement policy was voted on, underwrote extensive lecture tours, and opened subscriptions to a fund to build a model phalanx.

Viewed from a developmental perspective, the Fourierist movement really proceeded backward, beginning with the founding of communities and only then moving to organize a support network for them. Yet the situation might have been salvageable had Associationist leaders not compounded the problem by abandoning the existing communities in favor of an ever-elusive model phalanx yet to be established. Faced with fledgling communal experiments they viewed as unacceptable, national leaders decided to start over again, in effect dooming a dozen little self-proclaimed phalanxes still struggling to stay alive. Brisbane and his colleagues had shown admirable flexibility in the early 1840s when they pared down Fourier's blueprint and encouraged modest communal ventures. But when they reversed their course and retreated unimaginatively to Fourierist orthodoxy, they made a major strategic mistake. Despite their protests that the miniature phalanxes were not fair trials of Fourier's theory, public opinion identified them as Fourierist, and the decision to let the communities die fatally discredited the movement. A true model phalanx was so elaborate and expensive it could never be set up. There was absolutely no guarantee that it would succeed, either. On the other hand, there was the real possibility that a few of the existing phalanxes could have

progressed through experiment and with outside support into stable cooperative communities—not exactly according to Fourier's blueprint, but worthy nonetheless.

All these points were driven home in a debate between Brisbane and John Humphrey Noyes, the Fourierists' rival and the shrewd, charismatic founding father of the Oneida Community. In response to Brisbane's statement of Fourier's scientific claims, Noyes made a distinction between the "deductive socialism" of the utopian socialists and his own "inductive" brand. "We do not believe," Noyes wrote, "that cogitation without experiment is the right way to a true social theory." Enduring communities evolved gradually from experience rather than from a preconceived blueprint, however imposing and apparently scientific. By patiently building consensus rather than expecting it as "the miraculous result of getting together vast assemblages," the Oneidans claimed to sidestep "the limitations and impossible conditions of Fourierism."²² Noyes, whose Oneida experiment lasted thirty-three years, had the better of the argument. Clearly Fourier's vision of an immediate, monumental, and conclusive communal demonstration damaged the Associationist movement. Once they had read Fourier's splendid description and seen the palatial phalanstery in the engraving Brisbane brought back from France, Associationist leaders could not let go of the dream of a grand model phalanx established quickly from a "fresh start."

The last such fresh start was attempted in 1855 as the North American Phalanx was breaking up. For years Brisbane had been trying to interest Victor Considerant, the leader of the French Fourierists, in founding a Fourierist colony on the American frontier. When Louis Napoleon's coup d'état put an end to socialist agitation in France, Considerant finally looked to the New World. In 1853 he and Brisbane toured the American West on horseback and chose a site near present-day Dallas for a gathering of the Fourierist remnant from two continents. The result was the ill-fated colony of La Réunion, where a few dozen Americans and 300 Frenchmen struggled with drought, rattlesnakes, and internal divisions before giving up in 1859.²³ Thus as an organized community movement Fourierism was dead in the United States by the Civil War, though an impressive but isolated experiment, Silkville, was established by a wealthy Franco-American patron in Kansas in 1869.²⁴

The American phalanxes were not, as it turned out, the germs of a new social world. But they did serve in more subtle ways as agents of change. The experience of living in community, however short lived, was not easily forgotten. As Paul Goodman once observed about small communal experiments, "Per-

haps the very transitoriness of such intensely motivated intentional communities is part of their perfection. Disintegrating, they irradiate society with people who have been profoundly touched by the excitement of community life, who do not forget the advantages but try to realize them in new ways. . . . Perhaps these communities are like those 'little magazines' and 'little theatres' that do not outlive their first few performances, yet from them comes all the vitality of the next generation of everybody's literature."²⁵

From this point of view communal experiments are educational environments that send out "graduates" to enact many of the group's ideals through their lives in the larger society. The later careers of the Associationist movement's "alumni" testify to their enduring commitment to innovation and reform. Several phalanx leaders, most notably Charles Sears, Nathan Meeker, and Alcander Longley, led or joined subsequent communitarian experiments after the Civil War. Albert Brisbane and other ex-Fourierists helped to organize the reform-oriented American Social Science Association in 1865. John Orvis of Brook Farm carried cooperative principles to the Gilded Age labor movement through his leadership of the Sovereigns of Industry and the Knights of Labor. Building on their apprenticeship with *The Harbinger*, George Ripley later became the dean of American book reviewers, and his former colleague John Dwight was recognized as America's leading music critic. Elizabeth Blackwell of the Philadelphia Associationists graduated as the first woman medical doctor in America, and Fourierist ideals played an important part in her lifelong drive to extend medical care to women and the poor. Henry James Sr., father of the great novelist, blended Fourierism with the mystical theology of Swedenborg to emerge as a distinguished philosopher in his own right. Stephen Pearl Andrews became one of the first American anarchists and the man who introduced phonetic shorthand to the United States. The outspoken, charismatic feminist Marie Howland continued her Fourierist-inspired campaign for the liberation of women through communal work and cooperative households into the 1890s. Dozens of Fourierist men and women, including William Henry Channing and the influential journalist Parke Godwin, played important roles in the Republican Party's crusade against slavery, seeing it as the culmination of their quest for a just American society.²⁶ Even when Fourierist communalism was a brief phase in members' lives, it made a lasting impact through them on society at large.

It is especially important to recognize that the Fourierist movement encompassed much more than the phalanx experiments. In two dozen cities Fourierists formed local clubs affiliated with the American Union of Associationists where ordinary people heard utopian-socialist lectures, read and debated Fourier's works, and contributed funds to the national movement. A

"Religious Union of Associationists" was organized, with William Henry Channing as minister, to function as a nondenominational socialist church.²⁷ The "Woman's Associative Union" made and sold craft work to support the movement. The New England Industrial League promoted workers' producer associations, while the Workingmen's Protective Union organized cooperative stores. These Fourierist-inspired organizations existed simultaneously with the phalanxes, so that at any point in time the movement embodied different forms and degrees of cooperative socialism among which members and sympathizers could choose, ranging from fundraising groups to cooperatives to the phalanxes themselves.

All this represented a substantial innovation in Fourierism. Especially after the sudden leap to Harmony through phalanxes failed to materialize, many Associationists turned to more limited and gradual reforms. These were meant to demonstrate the benefits of Association on a small scale and win new converts. As a series of increasingly encompassing cooperative institutions, they might also serve as stepping stones to full cooperative living in a phalanx. Occasionally in his writings Fourier had mentioned or sketched such transitional institutions as communal kitchens, model farms, and mutual credit institutions, but he never considered them more than an unattractive last resort. As Nicholas Riasnovsky has noted, Fourier's "heart and hope remained in the trial phalanx."²⁸ His American followers made an important departure from the idea of instant community when the American Union of Associationists embraced such transitional reforms.

In *The Harbinger* local utopian-socialist clubs were urged to create a progressive system of "guarantees" (Fourierist jargon for cooperative institutions) among members. Cooperative stores were established by clubs at Albany, New York, and Lowell and Nantucket, Massachusetts, while Philadelphia and Albany Fourierists also set up disability and life insurance plans.²⁹ One group of projects, pioneering plans for "unitary dwellings," was especially forward looking. Thirty years before the first large-scale apartment building appeared in America, Fourierists developed elaborate blueprints for hotellike residences with common dining and recreation rooms, to be located in town or in the suburbs near a commuter railroad. Members would live in separate apartments and most would hold jobs in the outside society until enough capital was collected to begin group workshops. Such cooperative households were established in existing housing during the 1840s by two groups from the Boston Union of Associationists, and in the next decade by as many as 100 utopian socialists who joined the "Unitary Household" on Fourteenth Street in New York City. Married and single members moved together into townhouses and ran them as cooperatives, sharing housework, meals, and

rental expenses. These "combined households" were America's first urban communes.³⁰

Outside the affiliated unions, the Fourierists' publicity and support for gradualist reforms had even greater influence. The Associationists promoted mutual life insurance as a positive reform because the mutual method of democratic control and profit sharing through dividends was a perfect example of Fourierist techniques. One of their warmest supporters, Elizur Wright Jr., became known as the "father of life insurance" for his invention of reliable valuation tables and his crusade to rid the young industry of unethical practices.³¹ In addition, such Fourierist authors as Brisbane, Thomas J. Durant, Charles Sears, and Victor Considerant, by promoting interest-free mutual banks and currency reform, contributed to an important debate over "greenbacks" and the credit system among Gilded Age reformers.³²

The most impressive result of the Associationists' promotion of limited reforms was the cooperative movement. Whereas in England it was Owenite ideas that stimulated working-class cooperatives (through the Rochdale model), in the United States the Fourierists virtually founded the movement. Through their magazines and clubs the Fourierists encouraged and sponsored consumer cooperatives, which they called Protective Unions. By the end of the 1840s more than 230 such Protective Union stores were in operation in New England and New York, and many kept their doors open until the Civil War.³³ When Brisbane and other American Fourierists returned from a visit to France in the late 1840s, they brought with them details of producer associations started among French workers. Thanks to their publicity, by the early 1850s cooperative workshops were organized among ironmolders, tailors, printers, and seamstresses in Cincinnati, Boston, Pittsburgh, Providence, and New York.³⁴ Through their inspiration and support for cooperatives the Associationists extended genuine practical benefits to tens of thousands of men and women workers—far more than were touched by phalanxes. All these "transitional" organizations expanded the reach of Fourierism, and many of them lived on long after the phalanxes disappeared. The success of such gradualist reforms was a tacit rebuke to the theory of instant community through phalanxes, but it also demonstrated the enduring appeal of Fourierist ideals among nineteenth-century Americans.

Chronology

- 1772 Charles Fourier is born in Besançon, France.
- 1808 Fourier publishes *Theory of the Four Movements*, his first substantive work.

- 1832 First Fourierist journal, *La Réforme industrielle*, published in Paris. Albert Brisbane meets Fourier.
- 1837 Charles Fourier dies.
- 1840 Albert Brisbane publishes *Social Destiny of Man*.
- 1841 Brook Farm founded in West Roxbury (now Boston), Mass.
- 1842 Brisbane's column in the *New York Tribune* begins. First American phalanx, the Social Reform Unity, established in Pennsylvania.
- 1843 North American Phalanx begins operations in Monmouth County, N.J.
- 1844 Brook Farm officially converts to Fourierism. Fourierism peaks with twelve phalanxes founded in 1844, including the Wisconsin Phalanx, near Ripon, Wisc.
- 1845 First Fourierist-inspired cooperative store set up.
- 1846 American Union of Associationists formed. Fire at Brook Farm precipitates breakup.
- 1849 Wave of Fourierist producer cooperatives.
- 1850 Wisconsin Phalanx disbands.
- 1855 North American Phalanx dissolves; La Réunion colony of French and American Fourierists settles near present-day Dallas, Tex.
- 1859 Breakup of La Réunion.
- 1867 End of the Protective Union (cooperative store) movement.
- 1869 Kansas Co-operative Farm (Silkville) Phalanx founded near Ottawa, Kans.
- 1892 Demise of Silkville, the last Fourierist experiment in America.

Notes

1. For an excellent scholarly biography of Fourier, see Jonathan F. Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
2. Saint-Simon, Owen, and Fourier were often grouped together by contemporaries, and they even accused one another of plagiarism. See Fourier, *Pièges et charlatanisme des deux sectes Saint-Simon et Owen* (Paris: Bossange, 1831). There is no adequate history of the French Fourierist movement. Hubert Bourgin, *Fourier: Contribution à l'étude du socialisme français* (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, 1905), 409–536; Henri Desroche, *La Société Festive: Du Fourierisme écrit aux Fourierismes pratiques* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975), 241–98; and Adolphe Alhaiza, *Historique de l'Ecole Sociétaire Fondée par Charles Fourier* (Paris: La Rénovation, 1894), 19–59, contain important information. See also the sources on Victor Considerant cited in n. 23, below.
3. Brisbane, as quoted in Jean Manesca to Charles Fourier, 30 January 1836, Archives Sociétaires, French National Archives. Brisbane's autobiography, Redelia Brisbane, *Albert Brisbane, a Mental Biography* (Boston: Arena, 1893), details his conversion to Fourierism, but because it was dictated in old age, it contains many inaccuracies. For a more careful reconstruction, see Arthur Bestor Jr., "Albert Brisbane—Propagandist for Socialism in the 1840s," *New York History* 28 (April 1947): 128–40. Bestor's article should be supplemented by Brisbane's correspondence in the French National Archives and his travel diaries of 1830–32 in the Brisbane Papers, George Arents Research Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y. The fullest history of the movement Brisbane founded, and the source of much of this chapter's information, is Carl J. Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).
4. See Friedrich Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (1892; reprint, New York: International Publishers, 1975), and Arthur Bestor Jr., *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian Origins*

and the Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism in America, 1663–1829, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), vii–17, 256.

5. The most complete edition of Fourier's writings is *Oeuvres complètes de Charles Fourier*, 12 vols. (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1966–68). The heart of Fourier's theory is available in English translation through *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983); Mark Poster, ed. and trans., *Harmonian Man* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971); and Charles Gide, ed., *Design for Utopia*, trans. Julia Franklin (New York: Schocken, 1971). The clearest and most comprehensive survey of Fourier's thought in English is Nicholas V. Riasnovsky, *The Teaching of Charles Fourier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), but for a penetrating psychological interpretation, see Frank Manuel and Fritzie Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 641–75.

6. The following section on the Americanization of Fourierist doctrine is based on Carl J. Guarneri, "Importing Fourierism to America," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (October–December 1982): 581–94.

7. Albert Brisbane and Osborne Macdaniel, "Gradual Abasement of the Producing Classes," *Phalanx* 1 (March 1, 1844): 73.

8. Bestor, "Albert Brisbane," 144–45, 150–53, carefully sorts out conflicting accounts of the Brisbane-Greeley connection. For Greeley's subsequent role in promoting Fourierism, see Cecelia Koretsky, "Horace Greeley and Fourierism in the United States" (M.A. thesis, University of Rochester, 1952).

9. Ripley to Emerson, 9 November 1840, quoted in Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *George Ripley* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882), 307–8. Histories of Brook Farm include Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors* (New York: Macmillan, 1900), and John Thomas Codman, *Brook Farm: Historic and Personal Memoirs* (Boston: Arena, 1894). For other sources, see Joel Myerson, ed., *Brook Farm: An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide* (New York: Garland, 1978).

10. Swift, *Brook Farm*, 14, 135, 277–81, stresses the incompatibility of Fourierism with early Brook Farm ideals and practices. But see Charles Crowe, "This Unnatural Union of Phalansteries and Transcendentalists," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (October–December 1959): 495–502; Crowe, "Fourierism and the Founding of Brook Farm," *Boston Public Library Quarterly* 12 (April 1960): 79–88; and Richard Francis, "The Ideology of Brook Farm," *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1977): 1–48, for a useful corrective.

11. A detailed study of *The Harbinger* is Sterling F. Delano, *The Harbinger and New England Transcendentalism: A Portrait of Associationism in America* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983).

12. See David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49 (September 1962): 209–30, and John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815–1865," *American Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1965): 656–81.

13. The classic study of agitation in the region, Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), should now be supplemented by Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), and Michael Barkun, *Crucible of the Millennium: The Burned-over District of New York in the 1840s* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1986). Arthur Bestor's pioneering study, "American Phalanxes: A Study of Fourierist Socialism in the United States (with Special Reference to the Movement in West-

ern New York)" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1938), contains the best account of the Sodus Bay Phalanx.

14. John A. Collins, quoted in John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1870; reprint, New York: Dover, 1966), 290.

15. For histories of the Wisconsin Phalanx, see S. M. Pedrick, "The Wisconsin Phalanx at Ceresco," *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (1902): 190–226, and Joan Elias, "The Wisconsin Phalanx: An Experiment in Association" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968). The phalanx's records are in the Ceresco Community Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Noyes, *American Socialisms*, 411–48, reprints valuable contemporary accounts.

16. Noyes, *American Socialisms*, 449.

17. Published histories of the North American Phalanx include Herman J. Belz, "The North American Phalanx: Experiment in Socialism," *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society* 81 (October 1963): 215–46; George Kirchmann, "Unsettled Utopias: The North American Phalanx and the Raritan Bay Union," *New Jersey History* 97 (Spring 1979): 25–36; and Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790–1975* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976), 148–85. The phalanx's records are in the Monmouth County (N.J.) Historical Society. Several contemporary accounts are reprinted in Noyes, *American Socialisms*, 449–511.

18. Horace Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life* (New York: J. B. Ford, 1868), 154.

19. For an occupational profile of the phalanxes, see Carl Guarneri, "Who Were the Utopian Socialists? Patterns of Membership in American Fourierist Communities," *Communal Societies* 5 (1985): 65–81.

20. Noyes, *American Socialisms*, 648–53, gloomily reviews the causes of conflict in the phalanxes.

21. See Benjamin Zablocki, *The Joyful Community: An Account of the Bruderhof, a Communal Movement Now in Its Third Generation* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1972); Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972); and David French and Elena French, *Working Communally: Patterns and Possibilities* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1975). Two contemporary observers of nineteenth-century communitarianism concurred. John Humphrey Noyes stressed that successful community life required "subordination" of self and a prior "bond of agreement." See Noyes, *American Socialisms*, 656, 672. Charles Nordhoff concluded that "patience, submission[, and] self-sacrifice" were the most important determinants of communal success. See Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States: From Personal Visit and Observation* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1875; reprint, New York: Schocken, 1965), 409.

22. Noyes, *American Socialisms*, 667, 672.

23. For the history of La Réunion, see Russell M. Jones, "Victor Considerant's American Experience, 1852–1869," *French-American Review* 1 (1976–77): 65–94, 124–50; Rondel V. Davidson, "Victor Considerant and the Failure of La Réunion," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 76 (January 1973): 277–96; William J. Hammond and Margaret Hammond, *La Réunion: A French Settlement in Texas* (Dallas: Royal, 1958); and Jonathan Beecher, "Une utopie manquée au Texas: Victor Considerant et Réunion," *Cahiers Charles Fourier* 4 (1993): 40–79.

24. Garrett R. Carpenter, "Silkville: A Kansas Attempt in the History of Fourierist Utopias, 1869–1892," *Emporia State Research Studies* 3 (December 1954): 3–29.

25. Paul Goodman and Percival Goodman, *Communitas: Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life* (New York: Vintage, 1960), 109.

26. On Longley's later ventures, see Hal Sears, "Alcander Longley, Missouri Communist: A History of Reunion Community and a Study of the Constitutions of Reunion and Friendship," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 25 (1969): 123–37. Meeker's role in the Union Colony of Colorado is noted in Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 260–87. Sears's continuing involvement in communitarianism is evident in Carpenter, "Silkville," 22–29. For the Fourierist connections of the American Social Science Association, see Luther Bernard and Jessie Bernard, *Origins of American Sociology: The Social Science Movement in the United States* (New York: Crowell, 1943), 527–67. On Orvis, see Swift, *Brook Farm*, 175–81, and David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862–1872* (New York: Vintage, 1967), 414. For Ripley's later career, see Frothingham, Ripley, 199–305; for Dwight's, see George Willis Cooke, *John Sullivan Dwight, Brook Farmer, Editor, and Critic of Music* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1898). Fourierist influence on Blackwell is apparent in her memoirs, *Pioneer Work in Opening the Medical Profession to Women*, Everyman's Library Edition (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1914), 10–11, 47, but can be traced most clearly in the Blackwell Family Papers, Library of Congress. On James, see Alfred Habegger, *The Father: A Life of Henry James, Sr.* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1994). Andrews's adventures are followed in Madeleine B. Stern, *The Pantarch: A Biography of Stephen Pearl Andrews* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968). For Howland's life and ideas, see Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 91–113, and Paul M. Gaston, *Women of Fair Hope* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 19–65. Godwin's contribution to the antislavery Republican Party is outlined in John R. Wennersten, "A Reformer's Odyssey: The Public Career of Parke Godwin of the New York Evening Post, 1837–1870" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1970).

27. *Harbinger* 7 (17 June 1848): 56, reported Affiliated Unions of the American Union of Associationists functioning in Bangor, Maine; Boston, Lowell, Newburyport, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Amesbury, Nantucket, and Springfield, Mass.; Brandon, Clarendon, Middlebury, and Pittsford, Vt.; Providence, R.I.; Albany, King's Ferry, Utica, Westmoreland, and New York, N.Y.; Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pa.; Wheeling, Va.; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Ceresco, Wisc. Two other unions, at Washington, D.C., and Manchester, N.H., were formed later. For the Religious Union of Associationists, see Charles Crowe, "Christian Socialism and the First Church of Humanity," *Church History* 35 (1966): 93–106, and Sterling F. Delano, "A Calendar of the Meetings of the Boston Religious Union of Associationists," in *Studies in the American Renaissance 1985*, ed. Joel Myerson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1985), 187–267.

28. Riasnovsky, *Teaching of Fourier*, 138.

29. "Doings in Albany," *Harbinger* 6 (22 January 1848): 93; "Annual Meeting of the American Union of Associationists," *Harbinger* 7 (13 May 1848): 13; Philadelphia Union of Associationists, *Constitution of the Group of Actuation* (Philadelphia: n.p., n.d.).

30. The most detailed plan for such a "unitary dwelling" was the *Constitution of the Philadelphia Unitary Building Association* (Philadelphia: U.S. Job Printing Office, 1849). For one Boston "combined household," see Helen Dwight Orvis, "A Note on Anna Q. T. Parsons," in Marianne Dwight, *Letters from Brook Farm, 1844–1847*, ed. Amy L. Reed (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Vassar College Press, 1928), xv; Cooke, *Dwight*, 129–30; and William Henry Channing to Julia Channing, 29 November 1848, William Allen Family Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. This and the second commune can be found in the Manuscript Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, Suffolk County, Mass. For the New York "Unitary Household," see Laura Stedman

and George M. Gould, *Life and Letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman* (New York: Moffat, Yard, 1910), 1:151–77, and Luisa Cetti, *Un falansterio a New York: L'Unitary Household (1858–1860) e il riformismo prebellico americano* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1992).

31. Wright attended Associationist meetings and, like Greeley, arranged for a column of his newspaper to carry Fourierist news and ideas. A sparkling summary of Wright's work in insurance reform is in Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York: Random House, 1974), 175–80.

32. See Albert Brisbane, *The Philosophy of Money* (n.p., 1863); Thomas J. Durant, *Free Money, Free Credit and Free Exchange* (Washington, D.C.: Gibson Bros., 1874); Charles Sears, *Representative Money* (Ottawa, Kans.: n.p., 1878); and Victor Considerant, *Three Hundred Millions of Dollars Saved in Specie by the Meaning of a Word* (New York: n.p., 1867).

33. Edwin C. Rozwenc, *Cooperatives Come to America: The History of the Protective Union Store Movement, 1845–1867* (1941; reprint, Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975).

34. Albert Brisbane, "Co-Operation in America," *Christian Socialist* 2 (27 September 1851): 202–4; James Harrison Wilson, *Life of Charles A. Dana* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1907), 92–94; Norman J. Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840–1860* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), 193–97.

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JONATHAN G. ANDELSON

The Community of True Inspiration from Germany to the Amana Colonies

In gently rolling countryside along the Iowa River in east-central Iowa are the seven small villages of the Amana Colonies, home to one of the most successful communal societies in American history. The villages nestle into the flanks of the valley on either side of the river, which meanders southeast toward the Mississippi River seventy-five miles away. Five of the villages lie in a scraggly line one or two miles apart on the north side of the river. The other two are separated by five miles on the south side of the river. The bottomland adjacent to the river and some of the higher hills are forested. The rest of the land has been cleared and is used for cattle grazing and crops; fields of corn, soybeans, and hay thrive in the rich alluvial soil. Good stewardship is evident in every direction.

Six of the villages have a grid-shaped layout, while one consists of a single long street. Virtually all of the buildings on Amana property are located in the villages. Numerous barns and other farm buildings can be found in one or two clusters near the perimeter of each village. Modern houses, with widely varying architecture, are concentrated in several locations. The core of each village consists of houses, outbuildings, and shops dating from the nineteenth century and obviously built according to a general plan. The architecture is reminiscent of Georgian style: orthogonal lines, symmetrical form, and a solid, no-nonsense look. The discerning eye can catch occasional intrusive elements, such as picture windows, shutters, elaborate porches, and half-timbering, all twentieth-century additions.